

# **HECKMONDWIKE GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

## **OPTIONS BOOKLET**



**Year 8**



Dear Student

Year 8 is an exciting and important year in your school career. This year you will make some decisions about the subjects you will study at GCSE level from September 2026.

The decisions you make could affect your future, so you must make your choices carefully and from an informed position. We will do all we can to help you with this so that you make **the right choices for you**.

This booklet is intended to guide you through the options choice process and to give you some of the information you will need to help you to decide what to do.

You should also consider any advice you get from others, such as:

**Your form tutor**, including the content of careers sessions we will and have provided

**Your subject teachers**

**Careers staff**

**Parents, older brothers and sisters, and friends of the family**

**Other materials** published by subject departments, and on careers websites

You will find that you do not have *complete* freedom to choose all your subjects. Some subjects are compulsory and for some you have an element of choice. However, there is sufficient choice available for you to personalise your curriculum to suit your strengths, your aspirations and your interests.

We need to know your options choices now so that we can begin the lengthy planning process to make sure we have the staff and resources in place to teach the courses that you choose by September. We will do our best to accommodate everyone's choices, although it is important to point out that **very occasionally, we cannot provide the exact combination of subjects that you have chosen**. This is caused by the practicalities of staffing, rooming and scheduling the timetable, and if it happens, we will tell you about it and ask you to consider an alternative combination.

### **The Framework of choices**

Your subject choices will lead you to GCSE qualifications at the end of Year 11 and will be made up of two parts, or elements:

1. The compulsory element
2. A further choice element (four subjects)

Each of these elements is described in further detail on the following pages.



## 1. Compulsory element:

All students in years 9 to 11 follow courses which will lead to GCSE qualifications in:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics\*
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics

\*Depending on which set they are in, students may take an extra qualification in either  
FSMQ – Additional Mathematics or  
GCSE – Further Mathematics

There are also compulsory non-examined courses in Games, Religious Education & PSHE. These subjects will not result in a qualification

## 2. Further choice element:

Pupils have **FOUR** further subject choices from:

- Art and Design\*
- Business
- Computer Science
- Drama\*
- Food Preparation and Nutrition\*
- French\* ♦
- Geography\*
- DT Graphics\*\*
- History\*
- Music\*
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- DT Resistant Materials\*\*
- Spanish\*♦

\* It is likely that you will need to choose this subject if you wish to study this subject at A-level.

♦ If choosing French or Spanish, pupils must already have been studying the same language in year 8.

★ Due to the large amount of controlled assessment (coursework) for these subjects, pupils can only choose one of these subjects.

### Reserve Choice

Students are asked to make a reserve choice and whilst we will do everything we can to allocate all students to the subjects of their first choice, this is not always possible. Some subjects have limited numbers of places available. If these are oversubscribed, priority will be given on the grounds of aptitude and attitude to learning, which may be evidenced by prior performance in that subject or a related subject(s).

**Please read all the information contained in this booklet, be proactive and speak to all your teachers, then take time to reflect honestly on your interest for and ability in each subject, alongside any future aspirations, and make an informed, personal choice.**



# Further Choice Subjects:

## Art and Design

### Introduction

GCSE Art provides numerous avenues for you to express your creativity in a way that best suits your creative interests and skills. This may be explored via a variety of techniques and disciplines, such as drawing, painting, print-making, fashion and textiles, sculpting and photographic/digital editing.

### Discipline Choices:

This year, we have decided to streamline the subject into 2 distinct routes – students will need to specify which specialism they would like to take as part of the options process. The rationale for doing this is to allow students to specialise in their chosen areas of study and become experts in that area quicker. Those choices are:

#### GCSE Art, Craft and Design – 2D

Students will choose to specialise in 2D ways of working, such as drawing, painting, print-making, collage, digital drawing, photography, mixed media, some 2D textiles work etc.

#### GCSE Art, Craft and Design – 3D

Students will choose to specialise in 3D ways of working such as ceramics, wire building, cardboard, mixed media, ready-made assemblage, installations, 3D fashion and textiles (garment production), jewellery making etc.

It is important to add that if a student on either of these options, finds that once they complete year 9, they prefer the 'other discipline' of 2D or 3D – we will work with them to access their preferred artistic technique rather than limit their creativity. Ultimately, we want students to succeed and selecting a specialism provides time to do this more effectively, but we see it as an enhancement of, not a restriction to their creative production.

### What will it be like?

You will spend the vast majority of the 3 year course making artwork; experimenting with a range of materials and developing your making skills. In year 9, you will spend some time developing your base skills in your chosen discipline as directed by your teacher. As you progress into Year 10 and 11, you will choose your own project themes from a selection of starting points that interest you.

### Assessment:

**GCSE Art and Design is entirely practically assessed – there is no written exam involved in the assessment process.**

The assessment of the course is divided into **two** distinct components, the **Portfolio of Work** and the **Externally Set Task (Exam)**.

- The **Portfolio of work** is selected from the project work that you do throughout Year 9, 10 and 11. This comprises the best work from three separate projects. The Portfolio of work accounts for **60%** of your eventual grade.
- The **Externally Set Task** (exam project) is like a further Coursework project but this time the theme is set by the exam board (AQA). The exam project follows the same project structure as the Portfolio of coursework, but it is limited to approx. 12-14 weeks. The student then has to undertake a 10-



hour period of study (broken into 2 school days) during which they create a 'final outcome' for the exam project. This work is then assessed against the same criteria as the portfolio work, but is marked separately and accounts for the remaining **40%** of the final grade.



# Business

## Introduction

GCSE Business is an examination of the business world. If you choose to study Business you will look at real businesses and see how they operate. You will examine what it takes to set up a business and make it a success. You will discover the factors which determine whether a new product or an entrepreneur succeeds or fails. You will examine how a business develops beyond the start-up phase and how business decisions are taken in terms of marketing, operations, human resources and finance.

## What will it be like?

Business examines the key areas that affect all businesses:

- **Enterprise and entrepreneurship**
- **Spotting a business opportunity**
- **Putting a business idea into practice**
- **Making the business effective**
- **Understanding external influences on business**
- **Growing the business**
- **Making marketing decisions**
- **Making operational decisions**
- **Making financial decisions**
- **Making human resource decisions**

**You will enjoy this course if you want to study a subject that:**

- Is relevant to the world you live in, and to your future.
- Focuses on the world of business through researching real case studies and visits to firms in London / Yorkshire.
- Gives you the opportunity to investigate how real businesses work.
- Sets you up for a future career in Business or Finance.

## Assessment

There are two exams, both comprising of calculations, multiple-choice, short answer and extended writing questions.

Two thirds of the questions are based on business contexts (case studies) given in the papers. Both exams are 1 hour and 45 minutes and each is 50% of the qualification.



# Computer Science

## **Introduction**

Computing is of enormous importance to the economy, and the role of Computer Science as a discipline itself and as an 'underpinning' subject across science and engineering is growing rapidly. Computer technology continues to advance rapidly and the way that technology is consumed has also been changing at a fast pace over recent years. The growth in the use of mobile devices and web-related technologies has exploded, resulting in new challenges for employers and employees. For example, businesses today require an ever-increasing number of technologically-aware individuals.

## **What will it be like?**

### **Paper 1: Computational Thinking & Problem Solving**

#### **What is assessed**

- Fundamentals of algorithms
- Programming

#### **Questions**

A mix of multiple choice, short answer and longer answer questions assessing programming, practical problem solving and computational thinking skills

#### **How it is assessed**

- Written exam: 2 Hours
- Total: 90 marks
- 50% of GCSE

### **Paper 2: Computing Concepts**

#### **What is assessed**

- Fundamentals of data Representation
- Computer systems
- Fundamentals of computer networks
- Cyber security
- Relational databases and SQL
- Ethical, legal and environmental impacts of digital technology

#### **Questions**

A mix of multiple choice, short answer and longer answer and extended questions assessing SQL programming skills and theoretical knowledge.

#### **How it is assessed**

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- Total: 90 marks
- 50% of GCSE



# Drama

## Introduction

GCSE Drama enables students to explore both scripted performance texts and devised theatre through practical study as a performer or designer. Students examine a range of published plays and create original performance work for a target audience, developing performance and rehearsal skills alongside the ability to critically analyse live theatre and both classical and contemporary texts. The course also fosters highly transferable skills, including precise communication, analytical thinking, collaboration, creativity, ethical awareness, problem-solving under pressure and emotional intelligence, supporting success in demanding academic and professional pathways.

## What will it be like?

This course is open to all pupils who have a genuine passion and commitment to drama and theatre. During Year 9, you will focus on developing the core skills needed for GCSE. This will include creating and performing devised pieces of theatre, developing vocal, physical and characterisation skills and an introduction to our set text; *The Crucible*. You will study Drama as a performer, director and designer in order to prepare you for GCSE study. During Year 10 and 11, you will formally begin the course, using the skills you developed in Year 9. You will learn and develop the appropriate skills used in creating, performing and evaluating drama.

The Autumn term in Year 10 will include a mock devising brief, which will consist of creating both a performance and completing a portfolio.

In the first half of spring term, students will revisit '*The Crucible*' by Arthur Miller as their set text. The text will be studied from the point of view of a performer, director and designer.

From February until June, students will focus on Component 1: Devising. They will respond to a range of stimuli and then create an original, innovative performance for a specific target audience, in addition to creating their portfolio to document and reflect on their process and performance.

In Year 11, students will complete Component 2: Performance from Text, which will involve 2 performances to an external examiner. They will also prepare for Component 3, which will include revision of *The Crucible* and Live Theatre.

## Assessment

\*In all practical assessments, students can select to be assessed as a performer or designer. Design options offered are: Set, Lighting or Costume.

### Component 1: Devising (40% of the qualification)

- You will create, develop and perform a devised piece from a stimulus (15 marks).
- You will produce a portfolio to evidence your creating process. This can be written / typed evidence up to 2000 words OR recorded evidence between 8-10 minutes (45 marks).
- This unit is a combination of practical and written.

### Component 2: Performance from Text (20% of the qualification)

- You will perform in two key extracts from a performance text to an external examiner.
- This unit is entirely practical with the exception of a 200-word written intention for both extracts performed.

### Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice (40% of the qualification) 1hr45 written examination

- You will practically explore and study *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller in preparation for your written examination.
- Section A of the exam consists of six questions about one extract from the chosen text.



## Beyond GCSE

Beyond the wide range of careers within drama, theatre, television and media, GCSE Drama equips students with exceptional communication, critical thinking, leadership and emotional intelligence skills that are actively sought by aspirational universities and employers. Alongside confidence, creativity and collaborative working, these skills are highly valued in competitive fields such as law, medicine, business, politics, engineering and the civil service. Studying Drama also demonstrates intellectual risk-taking and versatility, enabling students to stand out in rigorous academic and professional pathways well beyond the theatre.



# Food Preparation & Nutrition

## **Introduction**

This course embraces and emphasises understanding of and enjoyment of different cuisines. There will be significant focus on developing high level cooking skills. Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the functional properties and chemical processes as well as the nutritional content of food and drink.

## **What will it be like?**

This is a GCSE course with a strong practical focus. You will master a variety of technical skills and become proficient in the kitchen. In addition, you will develop an in-depth knowledge of food science, food safety, food choice, nutrition and health.

You will also develop transferable skills such as:

- Analysis
- Evaluation
- Communication skills
- Working independently
- Time management
- The ability to interpret information and data

Food Preparation and Nutrition will allow students to develop a greater understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials. You will learn about food from around the world, through the study of British and international culinary traditions as well as developing an understanding of where food comes from and the challenges regarding food security.

You will master culinary skills and appreciate the science behind food and cooking. This is an exciting and creative course that will allow you to demonstrate your practical skills and make connections between theory and practice.

Food Preparation and Nutrition also helps you to learn how to work independently and manage your time – skills valued by both higher education institutions and employers alike.

## **Assessment**

Assessment will be in the form of a written paper (50%) and controlled assessment tasks (50%). The controlled assessment will involve two components; a food investigation task in which students will write a report on the working characteristics, function and chemical properties of ingredients. The second task is a food preparation assessment where students will plan, prepare, develop and present a themed menu of three dishes in three hours.

Both controlled assessment tasks are set by the exam board and can only be completed in Year 11.



# French

## **Introduction**

Learning a foreign language is a vital skill that will make you stand out to future employers, as well as opening the door to further opportunities. Spoken by over 300 million people, French is an official language in 29 countries across five continents, making it a truly global language. Studying French equips you with the skills you need to advance in today's globalised world, as well as improving your communication skills and confidence. It equally would provide you with the opportunity to travel, study and potentially even live abroad.

French works well with all subjects. Students who have a GCSE in French go on to do all sorts of careers, working in areas such as law, diplomacy, medicine, journalism, translation, teaching, hospitality, marketing, engineering and tourism. You will develop problem-solving, teamwork and critical thinking skills. What's more, learning a language has far-reaching cognitive benefits, improving your attention span and long-term memory.

## **What will it be like?**

The French GCSE has been designed to be more accessible and relevant to students, spanning areas such as relationships, sports, music, social media and gaming. In lessons, you will be encouraged to speak French and to develop your opinions. You will also deepen your grammatical knowledge to produce increasingly complex language, as well as building on your knowledge of phonics and improving your comprehension skills (listening and reading).

Studying the culture is a fundamental part of learning a language, meaning your cultural capital is developed. The MFL department frequently runs trips to France, allowing our students to practise what they have learnt in real-life scenarios and with native speakers.

## **Areas of study will include:**

- My personal world: family, friends, relationships, equality
- Lifestyle and well-being: physical well-being, mental well-being, food and drinks, sports
- My neighbourhood: places in town, shopping, environmental issues, the natural world
- Media and technology: social media, gaming, music, TV and film
- Studying and my future: school and future opportunities (work, travel, higher education)
- Travel and tourism: transport, accommodation, tourist attractions



## Assessment

Students will be entered for GCSE with the Pearson Edexcel examinations board. Assessments are designed to minimise surprises: each year there will be the same question types, in the same place, for the same number of marks, so you will know what to expect. Students will hear the listening recordings three times, have to prepare for the speaking element (15 minutes) and all instructions are in English.

### **Paper 1 Speaking: maximum 12 minutes speaking with 15 mins preparation, 25%.**

- Task 1: Read aloud and 2 short unprepared questions
- Task 2: Role play
- Task 3: Picture description (choice of 2), 2 short unprepared questions and follow-on conversation

### **Paper 2 Listening and Understanding: 1 hour, 25%.**

- Section A: Listening - multiple-choice, multiple-response and short-answer open response questions. All questions set in English.
- Section B: Dictation

### **Paper 3 Reading and Understanding: 1 hour, 25%.**

- Section A: Reading - multiple-choice, multiple-response and short-answer open response questions. All questions set in English.
- Section B: Translation into English

### **Paper 4 Writing: 1 hour 20, 25%.**

- Two written responses (1x 80–90-word paragraph and 1x 130–150-word paragraph)
- Translation into French



# Geography

## Introduction

Geography is the study of the world in which we live. It comprises learning about the physical characteristics of the world, and how humans are influencing its natural form. Students will develop their own opinion on whether that influence is positive or negative, and discussions on this are encouraged throughout the three-year course.

## What will it be like?

Geography is an incredibly versatile subject with cross curricular links to a vast range of other subjects. It supplements learning in science, mathematics, English, modern foreign languages, history and business studies. It is a fantastic choice for people considering a career or university course in a variety of sectors. People with Geography qualifications work in almost every field of employment as the skills learnt in this subject make it one of the most employable subjects on the curriculum.

Some of the key skills that students will gain from this course are: communication (written and verbal), decision making, problem solving, data analysis, teamwork, adaptability, and time management. One of the biggest beauties of Geography is the ability to experience classroom learning outside of the classroom, as Geography is everywhere. To that end, we take students on 2 compulsory field trips and there is also **an opportunity to visit Iceland** as part of the course.

## Areas of study and Assessment

There are 3 components that are assessed in this course.

**1. Living with the Physical Environment** (Written Paper: 1 hour 30 minutes - 35% of the total marks)  
In this unit, students will develop an understanding of the processes and forms associated with tectonic, geomorphological, biological and meteorological processes in different environments. Students will start to understand how the world is a system, and how the processes and forms interact with one another. Students will learn about the need for management strategies of these processes and forms and will consider the direct and indirect effects of human interaction with the Earth and the atmosphere. Topics include:

- i. **The Challenge of Natural Hazards** (Earthquakes, Extreme Weather, Tropical Storms, Climate Change)
- ii. **Physical Landscapes in the UK** (Rivers and Coasts)
- iii. **The Living World** (Ecosystems, Rainforests, and Deserts)

**2. Challenges in the Human Environment** (Written Paper: 1 hour 30 minutes - 35% of the total marks)  
This unit will teach students about human processes, systems and outcomes, and how these change both spatially and temporally, in turn producing a diverse variety of human environments. Students will explore how globalisation is changing places all over the world, how economic growth is causing significant change to environments, the need for sustainable management of human change, and what the future might hold for human landscapes. Topics include:

- i. **Urban Issues and Challenges** (Urbanisation, Lagos, and London)
- ii. **Changing Economic World** (Development, Nigeria, and the UK)
- iii. **The Challenge of Resource Management** (Food, Water and Energy)

**3. Geographical Applications** (Written Paper: 1 hour 30 minutes – 30% of the total marks)

This unit assesses students' deep geographical understanding in 2 ways. Most of the marks come from an issue evaluation, where students are asked questions on a geographical issue. Students are given a pre-release booklet detailing the issue in Easter of Year 11 and must use their geographical thinking to answer questions based on this. Additionally, this unit also assesses students' understanding of



fieldwork. We take students to Halifax and Hornsea over the 3 years, and the knowledge and data gained from this must be applied to a range of questions.



# Design Technology: Graphics

## Introduction

This GCSE follows the OCR specification for Design & Technology and builds upon the Design & Technology subjects studied at Key Stage 3 in Years 7 and 8. As part of this GCSE, students will develop their knowledge and understanding of the 'core' Design and Technology principles with further focus on the 'specialist' area of Graphics. They will also complete a controlled assessment project that is worth 50% of their GCSE.

## What will it be like?

In year 9 and 10 students will complete a range of mini projects that have been designed to develop their knowledge and understanding of the principles, materials and manufacturing techniques commonly associated with the Design & Technology industries. Projects will include a range of design and make activities based on the 'core' and 'specialist' areas:

Core Design & Technology Principles	Specialist Graphics Principles (papers and boards/polymers)
New and emerging technologies Energy storage and generation Modern and smart materials Systems approach to designing Mechanical devices Materials and their working properties	Selection of materials and components Forces and stresses Ecological and social footprint Scales of production Sources and origins of materials Using and working with materials Stock forms, types and sizes Specialist techniques Surface treatment and finishes

In Year 11, all students will complete a major project as part of controlled assessment that is worth 50% of the final GCSE grade. The project will require students to follow an iterative design process in order to produce a final concept prototype in response to the design challenge. As part of their projects, students will be required to:

- Conduct research using appropriate sources of knowledge including product analysis
- Generate and develop appropriate design ideas
- Evaluate the success of their design against the consumers' needs

## Career pathways

Many of our Design & Technology students go on to study A' Level Product Design to prepare for potential careers in Advertising, Architecture, CAD, Engineering, Graphic Design, Product Design, Media Design, UX/ UI (User Experience & User Interaction), Manufacturing and Textiles.

## Assessment

The controlled assessment coursework is a single design and make project based on a design challenge set by the examination board. The challenge provides students with an area of focus (i.e. security of personal belongings) and give them the flexibility and freedom to develop a design of their own choice. Students will be timetabled in a Graphics room for their practical sessions however they are free to explore and use any material in their final prototype.

- Final exam = 50% of GCSE
- Controlled assessment coursework = 50% of GCSE



# History

## Introduction

GCSE History is a great choice if you enjoy learning about the past and understanding how it has shaped the world we live in today. The course helps you explore exciting events, powerful people, and important changes across different time periods. You will learn to think carefully about evidence, ask questions, and explain your ideas clearly, helping you build skills that are useful in many subjects and future careers.

## What will it be like?

You will study a period of international conflict and tension between the two world wars. This includes learning about the Treaty of Versailles, the League of Nations, and the causes and outbreak of the Second World War.

You will also study the history of Germany over a 50-year period. This covers Germany's journey from Kaiser Wilhelm and the First World War, through the rise of the Nazi Party, to life in Nazi Germany up to 1945.

In addition, you will complete a thematic study called *Power and the People*. This will help you understand how the relationship between the people and the government in Britain has changed over time. You will explore themes such as war, religion, government, and the economy.

You will also study Norman England in depth. This includes the Norman Conquest, how the Normans established control, and what life was like under Norman rule.

While studying GCSE History, you will develop skills in analysing, interpreting, and evaluating a wide range of sources. These include written sources, pictures, films, and other types of evidence. You will also learn how to assess sources by considering the historical context in which they were created.

## Assessment

### Paper 1: Understanding the Modern World: Written Exam: 2 hours

- Conflict and tension, 1918 – 1939
- Germany 1890 - 1945: Democracy and Dictatorship

### Paper 2: Shaping the Nation: Written exam: 2 hours

- Britain: Power and the people: c1170 to the present day
- Norman England, c1066 - c1100

## Career pathways

GCSE History can lead to a wide range of career pathways. The skills you develop are valued by many employers. History is useful for careers in law, journalism, teaching, politics, business, media, and the civil service. It also helps prepare you for further study and university, showing that you can think critically and work independently.



# Music

## Introduction

As you may know we have an enviable and rich variety of music taking place at HGS. So, if performing or composing is your thing, GCSE Music is the obvious direction to choose. Whether you are a traditional clarinettist, a singer or a rock guitarist or if you wish to develop some music technology skills this course is available to you.

## What will it be like?

Edexcel GCSE music focuses on the three primary activities you will have become familiar with - **Performing, Composing and Appraising**. You will be required to **perform** both solo and, in an ensemble, and **compose** two pieces. You will also learn about **four areas of study** – **Instrumental Music, Vocal Music, Fusions and Music for Stage and Screen** culminating in a listening and appraising exam. These key aspects will be studied throughout all parts of the course and will form the basis of your coursework and examinations. During year 9 we will particularly focus on integrating and developing performing, composing and appraising skills, along with increasing student's understanding of music theory and composition.

Whilst the course naturally attracts instrumentalists and vocalists, and previous theoretical knowledge is an advantage, no previous music exam grades are required. You should however be performing at the equivalent of ABRSM grade 2 or higher as you start the course or regularly achieving grade 7, 8 or 9 performing grades in your year 8 lessons.

## Assessment

### **Performing music (30%)**

During the course you will have to record **TWO** performances – one '**solo**' and one as part of an '**ensemble**'. In some cases, these may have been prepared for a concert or show. There will be numerous performance opportunities across both years which will all be recorded and you pick the best ones to submit. The total time of the two performances combined is four minutes of music equivalent to ABRSM grade 4 standard or higher. You can play alongside any musician (e.g. staff, students, friends etc) or if you perform out of school (e.g. stage school, rock group, local choir etc) these could also be used. Performances do not have to be in public and there are no sight-reading tests or scales. Remember we have an excellent peripatetic instrumental staff to help you and a wide range of regular ensemble opportunities available to join.

### **Composing music (30%)**

During the course you will have to compose **TWO** pieces of a combined duration of three minutes. One composition is a free choice and the other is in response to a brief set by the exam board which relates to the areas of study. Whether you compose a string quartet, a rock song or a film score with beats and samples this part of the course is very free to explore your style and creativity. Compositions are mainly completed in school time. You may use music technology software such as Sibelius or Cubase - or you could create and record your piece using the recording studio - or maybe you could just simply use good old-fashioned pencil and paper!

### **Appraising music (40% externally marked)**

This is the only examination part of the course and is taken at the end of Year 11. The 1-hour 45m exam draws on music taken from the eight-set works, plus one unfamiliar piece. The eight set works link to each of the four Areas of Study mentioned above and includes pieces by **Bach** and **Beethoven**, music from the show **Wicked** and the film **Star Wars**, pop music by **Queen** and two fusion pieces with mixtures of **Jazz, Samba, African drumming** and **sampling** in them. The test covers breadth as well as depth of knowledge and builds upon much of the work you have already been developing in years 7 and 8.



# Physical Education

## **Introduction**

The AQA PE course covers the key scientific and socio-cultural aspects of sport and physical education. Students will learn to apply theory to a range of different sports and physical activities. The course has a straightforward assessment structure and has been updated to include current technological advances and issues in modern sport on the world stage.

## **What will it be like?**

Pupils learn to evaluate and improve practical performance, as well as studying the effects of physical activity on the human body and the position of sport and physical activity within society. This new specification provides a thorough study of all the key components of Physical Education and Sports Science including sports psychology, diet, nutrition, training, fitness, injury rehabilitation and biomechanics. The focus in Year 1 is on practical performance and analysis. Year 2 and 3 will cover the theoretical aspects.

The new GCSE forms part of a linear progression to A' level and degree level study.

## **The course is split into three modules:**

### **Component 1**

- The human body and movement in Physical activity and sport
- Applied Anatomy, physiology, movement analysis and physical training

### **Component 2**

- Socio -Cultural influences and well-being in Physical activity and sport
- Sports psychology, socio-cultural influences, health, fitness and well-being.

### **Component 3**

- Performance and analysis in Physical Education
- Performance in three activities
- Analysing and evaluating performance in one sport

## **Assessment**

**Component 1 : 75 minute paper : 30%**

**Component 2 : 75 minute paper : 30%**

**Component 3 : Non-examined assessment : 40%**



# Philosophy, Ethics and Religion

## **Introduction**

Ever wondered why people believe different things? Or how our beliefs shape the way we live and the choices we make? In GCSE Philosophy, Ethics and Religion, you'll delve into these fascinating questions and many more.

Building on what you've learned in Year 8, GCSE Philosophy, Ethics and Religion takes you deeper into the world of belief, morality, and the human search for meaning. You'll explore how different worldviews – including Christianity, Islam, and atheism/Humanism – influence people's lives, from their everyday actions to their views on the biggest issues facing our world.

## **What will it be like?**

### **Content of Paper 1, year 9 - 10 – Religion and Ethics - Christianity**

- **Belief in God:** Unpack the mysteries of the Trinity, explore the life and significance of Jesus, and grapple with questions about creation, evolution, and the problem of evil.
- **Marriage and the Family:** Dive into Christian perspectives on marriage, relationships, family life, and ethical dilemmas surrounding divorce and contraception.
- **Living the Religious Life:** Discover the role of worship and pilgrimage in Christian practice, and explore the global reach of the Church and its future in the modern world.
- **Matters of Life and Death:** Confront challenging ethical issues such as abortion and euthanasia, and delve into Christian beliefs about the sanctity of life, the afterlife, and issues of prejudice and discrimination.

### **Content of Paper 2, year 10 -11 – Religion, Peace and Conflict - Islam**

- **Belief in God:** Explore the Islamic understanding of God, key beliefs and practices, and how Muslims respond to the problem of suffering in the world.
- **Crime and Punishment:** Investigate Islamic perspectives on justice, crime, and punishment, including beliefs about the afterlife, the aims of punishment, and controversial issues like capital punishment.
- **Living the Religious Life:** Discover the importance of the Qur'an, the Five Pillars of Islam, and the role of prayer, pilgrimage, and festivals in Muslim life.
- **Peace and Conflict:** Explore Islamic teachings on peace, conflict resolution, and the ethics of war, including concepts like Just War, holy war, pacifism, and terrorism.

GCSE Philosophy, Ethics and Religion isn't primarily about learning facts; it's about exploring the big questions that have challenged people for centuries. With Christianity and Islam shaping the lives of over half the world's population, you'll delve into these faiths and other worldviews in order to better understand the people in your society. You'll learn to think critically, analyse different arguments, and form your own opinions on complex issues. Through debate and discussion, you'll engage with diverse perspectives and develop a deeper understanding of yourself and the world around you. Are you ready to challenge your assumptions and see things in a new light?

## **Assessment**

You'll be assessed by two 105-minute exams at the end of Year 11. The content each paper will examine you on is as specified above.



# Design Technology: Resistant Materials

## Introduction

This GCSE follows the OCR specification for Design & Technology and builds upon the Design & Technology subjects studied at Key Stage 3 in Years 7, 8 and 9.

As part of this GCSE, students will develop their knowledge and understanding of the 'core' Design and Technology principles with further focus on the 'specialist' area of Resistant Materials. They will also complete a controlled assessment project that is worth 50% of their GCSE.

## What will it be like?

In year 9 and 10 students will complete a range of mini projects that have been designed to develop their knowledge and understanding of the principles, materials and manufacturing techniques commonly associated with the Design & Technology industries. Projects will include a range of design and make activities based on the 'core' and 'specialist' areas:

Core Design & Technology Principles	Specialist Resistant Materials Principles (timber/ metal-based materials/polymers)
New and emerging technologies Energy storage and generation Modern and smart materials Systems approach to designing Mechanical devices Materials and their working properties	Selection of materials and components Forces and stresses Ecological and social footprint Scales of production Sources and origins of materials Using and working with materials Stock forms, types and sizes Specialist techniques Surface treatment and finishes

In Year 11, all students will complete a major project as part of controlled assessment that is worth 50% of the final GCSE grade. The project will require students to follow an iterative design process in order to produce a final concept prototype in response to the design challenge. As part of their projects, students will be required to:

- Conduct research using appropriate sources of knowledge including product analysis
- Generate and develop appropriate design ideas
- Evaluate the success of their design against the consumers' needs

## Career pathways

Many of our Design & Technology students go on to study A-Level Product Design to prepare for potential careers in Advertising, Architecture, CAD, Engineering, Graphic Design, Product Design, Media Design, UX/ UI (User Experience & User Interaction), Manufacturing and Textiles.

## Assessment

- Final exam = 50% of GCSE
- Controlled assessment coursework = 50% of GCSE

The controlled assessment coursework is a single design and make project based on a design challenge set by the examination board. The challenge provides students with an area of focus (i.e. security of personal belongings) and give them the flexibility and freedom to develop a design of their own choice. Students will be timetabled in a Resistant Materials workshop for their practical sessions however they are free to explore and use any material in their final prototype.



# Spanish

## **Introduction**

Learning a foreign language is a vital skill that will make you stand out to future employers, as well as opening the door to further opportunities. Spoken by over 500 million people, Spanish is an official language in 21 countries and is second only to Mandarin in terms of the number of native speakers. Studying Spanish equips you with the skills you need to advance in today's globalised world, as well as improving your communication skills and confidence. It equally would provide you with the opportunity to travel, study and potentially even live abroad.

Spanish works well with all subjects. Students who have a GCSE in Spanish go on to do all sorts of careers, working in areas such as law, diplomacy, medicine, journalism, translation, teaching, hospitality, marketing, engineering and tourism. You will develop problem-solving, teamwork and critical thinking skills. What's more, learning a language has far-reaching cognitive benefits, improving your attention span and long-term memory.

## **What will it be like?**

The Spanish GCSE has been designed to be more accessible and relevant to students, spanning areas such as relationships, sports, music, social media and gaming. In lessons, you will be encouraged to speak Spanish and to develop your opinions. You will also deepen your grammatical knowledge to produce increasingly complex language, as well as building on your knowledge of phonics and improving your comprehension skills (listening and reading).

Studying the culture is a fundamental part of learning a language, meaning your cultural capital is developed. The MFL department frequently runs trips to Spain, allowing our students to practise what they have learnt in real-life scenarios and with native speakers.

## **Areas of study will include:**

- My personal world: family, friends, relationships, equality
- Lifestyle and well-being: physical well-being, mental well-being, food and drinks, sports
- My neighbourhood: places in town, shopping, environmental issues, the natural world
- Media and technology: social media, gaming, music, TV and film
- Studying and my future: school and future opportunities (work, travel, higher education)
- Travel and tourism: transport, accommodation, tourist attractions



## Assessment

Students will be entered for GCSE with the Pearson Edexcel examinations board. Assessments are designed to minimise surprises: each year there will be the same question types, in the same place, for the same number of marks, so you will know what to expect. Students will hear the listening recordings three times, have to prepare for the speaking element (15 minutes) and all instructions are in English.

### **Paper 1 Speaking: maximum 12 minutes speaking with 15 mins preparation, 25%.**

- Task 1: Read aloud and 2 short unprepared questions
- Task 2: Role play
- Task 3: Picture description, 2 short unprepared questions and follow-on conversation

### **Paper 2 Listening and Understanding: 1 hour, 25%.**

- Section A: Listening - multiple-choice, multiple-response and short-answer open response questions. All questions set in English.
- Section B: Dictation

### **Paper 3 Reading and Understanding: 1 hour, 25%.**

- Section A: Reading - multiple-choice, multiple-response and short-answer open response questions. All questions set in English.
- Section B: Translation into English

### **Paper 4 Writing: 1 hour 20, 25%.**

- Two written responses (1x 80–90-word paragraph and 1x 130-150 word paragraph)
- Translation into Spanish



# Compulsory Choice Subjects

## English Language

### **Introduction**

GCSE/Key Stage 4 courses in English Language and English Literature (AQA) will be offered. We expect all our students will enter for both subjects. There are eight parallel teaching groups: students are not set by ability.

### **What will it be like?**

This course aims to develop skills and abilities in the following areas:

#### **(i) Spoken Language**

To develop students' ability to:

- Use the vocabulary and grammar of Standard English.
- Formulate, clarify and express ideas.
- Adapt speech to a widening range of circumstances and demands.
- Listen, understand and respond appropriately to others.

#### **(ii) Reading**

To develop students' ability to:

- Read accurately, fluently and with understanding.
- Understand and respond to the texts they read.
- Read, analyse and evaluate a wide range of texts, including literature from the English literary heritage and from other cultures and traditions.

#### **(iii) Writing**

To develop students' effective use of:

- compositional skills – developing ideas and communicating meaning to a reader using a wide-ranging vocabulary and an effective style, organising and structuring sentences grammatically and whole texts coherently.
- A widening variety of forms for different purposes.

### **Non-examination Assessment: Spoken**

Presenting / responding to questions and feedback / use of Standard English

### **Examinations will involve work based on the following Units:**

**Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing** is a 1 hour 45 minutes written examination worth 80 marks (50% of GCSE)

- **Section A: Reading:** One literature fiction text
- **Section B: Writing:** Descriptive or narrative writing

**Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives** is a 1 hour 45 minutes written examination worth 80 marks (50% of GCSE)

- **Section A: Reading:** One non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text
- **Section B: Writing:** Writing to present a viewpoint



# English Literature

## Introduction

English Literature is taught in the same groups and lessons as English Language. It is expected that all students will sit the GCSE examinations in both subjects.

## What will it be like?

This course aims to enable students to develop:

- The ability to read, understand and respond to a wide range of literary texts, and to appreciate the ways in which authors achieve their effects.
- Awareness of social, historical and cultural contexts and influences in the study of literature.
- The ability to construct and convey meaning in speech and writing, matching style to audience and purpose.

Students will study:

- A Modern prose or drama text
- A 19<sup>th</sup> century novel
- Poetry – an anthology and unseen poetry
- Shakespeare

**Assessment by final examination will involve work based on the following units:**

**Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel. Assessed by a 1 hour 45 minutes written examination worth 64 marks (40% of GCSE)**

- **Section A: Shakespeare:** students will answer one question on their play of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the play and then to write about the play as a whole.
- **Section B: The 19th-century novel:** students will answer one question on their novel of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the novel and then to write about the novel as a whole.

**Paper 2 : Modern texts and poetry. Assessed by a 2 hour 15 minutes written examination worth 96 marks (60% of GCSE)**

- **Section A: Modern Texts:** students will answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied modern prose or drama text.
- **Section B: Poetry:** students will answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster.
- **Section C: Unseen Poetry:** Students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.



# Mathematics

## Introduction

In Years 9, 10 and 11 we prepare our students for Mathematics Higher GCSE with the AQA examination board.

## What will it be like?

Mathematics builds on knowledge learnt in years 7 and 8. Students will study the following elements:

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

The structure involves three assessment objectives:

Assessment Objective	What it is	What this means	% Of marks in the exam
A01	Recall and use knowledge of mathematics taught	Standard questions testing your knowledge of each topic	40
A02	Select and apply mathematical methods in a range of contexts	Deciding which method you need to use to get to the correct solution to a problem in context	30
A03	Interpret and analyse problems and generate strategies to solve them.	Solve problems by deciding how and explaining why	30

Therefore, we place a big emphasis on students being analytical in their approach to studying mathematics and being fluent in explaining their methods and reasoning. Appropriate use of a calculator is also important.

## Assessment

Students sit three examinations at the end of Year 11, each 1½ hours long. They carry equal weighting for the final mark. Two are calculator papers and the other is a non-calculator paper. It is our intention that all our students are entered for Higher tier. The grades available are 4 to 9, with 9 being the highest.

## Extra Qualifications in Mathematics

For some students, we also offer extra qualifications at the end of year 11. Decisions about who takes these exams will be made at the beginning of year 11.

**OCR Level 3 FSMQ Additional Mathematics.** The grades available here are A to E, all of which are pass grades. UCAS points are awarded according to the grade achieved.

**AQA Level 2 Further Mathematics.** The grades available here are 9 to 5.



# Biology

## Introduction

All students take three separate science GCSEs. In biology we follow the **Edexcel** specification. This two-year course is a thorough, high-level, traditional biology course, well-suited to the students at Heckmondwike Grammar School.

## What will it be like?

The course includes a comprehensive coverage of modern biology, including biochemistry, cell biology, human physiology, plant biology, genetics, ecology, evolution and biotechnology. All of these topics lend themselves to practical work, and students will experience a wide range of practical activities.

The GCSE course also places great weight on working scientifically, which is assessed by questions in the terminal exams. Lessons therefore include interesting and adventurous investigative work, aimed at developing the skills of scientific enquiry. Biology is a quantitative science and 10% of the exam marks will be for maths and data analysis questions.

## Assessment

Assessment is in the form of two exam papers (1hour 45min each) at the end of the GCSE course in Y11. The two papers test the following topics:

### **Paper 1**

Overarching concepts in biology  
Cells and control  
Genetics  
Natural selection and genetic modification  
Health, disease and medicines

### **Paper 2**

Overarching concepts in biology  
Plant structures and their functions  
coordination, control and homeostasis  
Exchange and transport in animals  
Ecosystems and material cycles

Students will be awarded grades on the 9-1 scale. We expect most of our students to achieve grades 7, 8 or 9.



# Chemistry

## **Introduction**

All students study a separate GCSE Chemistry and we follow the **AQA** specification. This is a linear qualification and students will sit all their examinations at the end of the course. The qualification provides an excellent grounding in Chemistry and is an ideal preparation for further study at A 'Level.

## **What will it be like?**

The specification covers the following topics:

- Atomic structure and the periodic table
- Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter
- Quantitative chemistry
- Chemical changes
- Energy changes
- The rate and extent of chemical change
- Organic chemistry
- Chemical analysis
- Chemistry of the atmosphere
- Using resources

## **'Working Scientifically'**

An important emphasis of the specification is to develop an appreciation of the methods of scientific enquiry and the vital application of science and technology in our society. Teaching methods will encourage students to research and discuss the important scientific questions of today, and will develop their abilities to present their arguments cogently and debate these issues in an informed and accurate way.

## **Assessment**

The GCSE grade depends on the performance of the student in two examinations at the end of the course. Both papers are 1 hour 45 minutes long and consist of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions. Paper 1 covers topics 1-5 and paper 2 covers topics 610.

## **Practical Work**

Students are expected to carry out eight required practical activities through the course which develop the use of a range of apparatus and experimental techniques.



# Physics

## Introduction

All students study a separate GCSE in Physics and we follow the **AQA specification**. This provides a thorough grounding in this subject, and prepares students for further study at A' level.

## What will it be like?

We will follow the **AQA GCSE Physics 8463** specification. The specification covers the following content:

- Forces
- Energy
- Waves
- Electricity
- Magnetism and electromagnetism
- Particle model of matter
- Atomic structure
- Space physics

## Assessment

This is a linear course assessed by two written exams taken at the end of Year 11. There is no assessed coursework.

### **Paper 1: What's assessed**

Energy  
Electricity  
Particle model of matter  
Atomic structure

### **Paper 2: What's assessed**

Forces  
Waves  
Magnetism and electromagnetism  
Space physics

### **How it's assessed**

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes  
100 marks  
50% of GCSE

### **How it's assessed**

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes  
100 marks  
50% of GCSE

## Practical Work

Students are expected to carry out required practical activities through the course which develop the use of a range of apparatus and experimental techniques.

