



WESTHOLME

PREP | SENIORS | SIXTH FORM

YOUR GCSE OPTIONS

WELCOME



Dear Year 9,

This is an exciting stage in your education! You are about to embark on making choices about your future study and this booklet is designed to help you do so. It provides a brief outline of all the GCSE subjects available at Westholme that you may consider taking in Years 10 and 11.

We recommend that you consider the breadth of subject options available to you at GCSE, when making your final choices. Studying a combination of subjects, such as a language, a humanity and a creative arts subject would ensure a broad, balanced range of qualifications, but we are not prescriptive about the choices students make.

Many of you will not be certain about your future career at this stage, so try to choose subjects that you like and are good at. Never choose a subject simply because your friends are choosing it, or because you like the teacher that you have had this year; the groups and teachers may well change for Years 10 and 11.

Finally, enjoyment and interest are crucial. If a subject really appeals to you then you are going to be motivated and enthusiastic over the two years of the course.

Good luck, happy picking, and keep asking those questions you are avidly seeking the answers to; we are here to help!

Mr P Taylor
Principal

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MAKING YOUR CHOICES

Options Information Evening: 17 March 2026

Options choices to be returned: 30 March 2026



It is important that your GCSE curriculum choices continue to have breadth and balance. For this reason, your timetable will include a core of compulsory subjects along with options which you will choose. All Westholme students study 9 GCSE's in total. Core GCSE subjects that everyone will study are English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Science options.

The different pathways are:

Separate Sciences - 3 GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, 3 core subjects and 3 chosen subjects.

Combined Science – the study of all 3 disciplines equating to 2 GCSEs, 3 core subjects and 4 chosen subjects.

The scientific pathway students should pursue is guided by current student performance and the professional judgement of our Science team due to the extra demands and rigour associated with the study of Separate Sciences. Students will be advised accordingly as part of the options process.

Alongside your GCSE subjects you will have PE lessons, Careers and PSHE programme which consists of a variety of activities and talks by internal and external speakers.

Ensure you are fully informed about the choices you have made and keep an open mind. We would always advise you to think carefully about the type of assessment you respond best to. For a few subjects, Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) forms part of the assessment and you need to consider if you are the type of student who performs well in independent study. Know yourself and make choices that will give you the very best chance of success!

Your form tutor, subject teachers, Head of Year and the wider staff team will be able to offer you specific advice about your options and are able to answer any questions that you might have about the choices that you are considering; we will all guide you through the process

of arriving at your final decision. If you are unsure about anything, please make sure that you take time to ask someone.

Students will be asked to submit their choices in school, on Monday 30 March. We will guide them through the process and staff will be on hand to help. Once we have received all student choices, we will then look at which subject combinations are possible for the cohort. We always aim to achieve a 90% satisfaction rate but do have to be mindful of specialist room availability and class size for the more practical subjects. In light of this, all students will be asked to nominate a reserve subject which will be considered in the event that their initial choices cannot be facilitated. Changes in options can be made after the deadline but inevitably will be determined by remaining availability.

Mrs L Cowan

Deputy Head



CLUBS, ENRICHMENT AND CO-CURRICULAR

Clubs and Enrichment

All academic departments at Westholme offer enrichment and support opportunities through drop in sessions, subject specific clubs, enrichment activities, in school subject development sessions, visiting speakers, university visits, links with local and national businesses, off-site trips and many more development opportunities. At Westholme, it is not just about the education that you receive in the classroom; we take an all-round view of education and provide opportunities for all students to develop their academic profile well beyond the scope of their chosen GCSE courses. For students considering their GCSE options, we recommend you attend subject specific clubs where you can sample subjects to broaden your understanding. This will help you to make informed decisions before you make your final selection.

Co-Curricular Programme

Our vibrant and varied Westholme co-curricular programme continues from Lower Seniors, offering opportunities to enrich and supplement the academic provision that students in Years 10 and 11 follow. Students will continue to be able to take part in new activities, find and develop their talents and foster passions that can both complement and enhance their academic GCSE studies. Each year group is given a bespoke co-curricular timetable which is updated on a termly basis, facilitating a varied and dynamic programme, to meet the needs and interests of the students within each year group. If there is an activity that you would like us to offer, just ask and we will see if we can organise a club to provide it for you! Take a look at our impressive Co-Curricular Booklet advertising over 70 clubs, societies and activities to enjoy.



DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is designed to help participants to develop skills and confidence. Holding one of the DofE Awards demonstrates that participants have developed their "soft skills" through involvement in co-curricular activities such as communication, commitment, leadership, teamwork, confidence and resilience. The DofE Awards are nationally and internationally recognised, as well as being recognised by universities and employers, providing evidence of a range of skills beyond those demonstrated by academic qualifications.

Year 10 pupils will have the opportunity to apply to take part in the Bronze Award. The Award has four sections at Bronze level:

- ▶ Volunteering
- ▶ Skills
- ▶ Physical
- ▶ Expedition

The programme at Westholme requires attendance at one after-school training session per week to learn the skills required to complete the expedition section and to receive support with the other three sections. These sessions will also provide support in the use of the DofE website to log progress and upload supporting evidence.

The programme at Westholme requires attendance at one after-school training session per week for the term

leading up to the expedition, to learn the skills required to complete the expedition section and to receive support with the other three sections. We additionally offer two lunchtime sessions a week, which will also provide support in the use of the DofE website to log progress and upload supporting evidence.

The Volunteering, Skills and Physical sections allow participants to design a programme of activities to satisfy the criteria of the award and require a time commitment of approximately one hour per section per week. The Westholme co-curricular programme provides a range of suitable activities for each of these sections, although we do encourage students to complete these sections outside of school as best they can. For the Bronze Award, participants take part in each of these sections for three months, choosing one of the sections to continue for a total of six months. The expedition section involves planning, training for and completing an unaccompanied, self-reliant expedition. For the Bronze Award, participants will complete two 2-day expedition weekends (one for training and one for assessment).

The Westholme DofE programme continues with the Silver Award in Year 11 and Gold Award in the INSPIRED Sixth Form. Completion of a previous level is not required (e.g. direct entry to the Silver Award is possible without holding a Bronze Award) but does reduce the length of time required to complete the Volunteering, Skills and Physical sections of a subsequent Award.

BIOLOGY (AQA)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Students start to work on content from the GCSE Biology course offered by the AQA exam board at the beginning of Year 9 and will continue to cover all of the relevant content from this specification throughout Years 10 and 11. Students following the Biology course will be taught by specialist subject teachers for a total of 3 lessons per week.

The study of Biology emphasises the importance of science in our everyday lives. Students will develop their understanding of issues facing the modern world and develop their knowledge of how scientific ideas can be used to interpret and question media reports and their ability to argue a rational case based on scientific data.

The traditional scientific ideas and concepts covered thus far in students' education will be explored in greater depth and built on to enhance students' understanding and to boost confidence in their application. Some of the additional scientific ideas and questions covered during Years 10 and 11 include: How can genetically modified foods help to feed our ever-growing population? What is the role of stem cells in future medicine?

Biology is an important and interesting subject and is the starting points for many careers in disciplines such as Medicine, Forensics, Conservation, Health Professions, and Research. Science works to explain the world in which we live, and it provides technology that has a significant impact on our society and the environment.

ASSESSMENT

There is no coursework in the Separate Sciences course.

Throughout the course students are required to carry out a number of required practicals (these are experiments that students will undertake during lessons) to develop specific practical skills. These skills will then be assessed on the written examination papers.

Written exams include 2 exam papers of 100 marks each (1 hour 45 mins each).

BUSINESS STUDIES(AQA)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

In GCSE Business Studies you will learn about how the world of business works and its relevance to almost every aspect of modern society. You will cover a range of topics in relation to businesses in the real world: both small and large. The main topics covered include:

- ▶ External influences on business, such as globalisation
- ▶ Human resources which covers factors such as motivation in the workplace
- ▶ Marketing which will look at factors such as promotion and pricing strategies
- ▶ Finance which will allow you to interpret business financial documents and introduce basic accountancy
- ▶ Operations management which gives you knowledge on how businesses work with suppliers across the world.

These topics will be covered in lessons in preparation for the two examinations which are taken at the end of the course. Both examination papers are worth 90 marks and include short answer questions, essays, along with case studies and data analysis. Throughout the course you will also develop a range of skills including entrepreneurship, communication, problem solving and quantitative skills.

This GCSE course opens exciting opportunities to study business-related subjects at A Level and beyond. Business can be the gateway to a number of great career choices and is one of the most popular degree disciplines to study at university because

of its versatility in securing employment across many fields. Business Studies provides students with a unique insight into the world of work.

Through its study, students discover how businesses operate and learn about their key elements and essential business functions.

- ▶ Would you like to set up your own business and be a successful entrepreneur?
- ▶ Would you like to be a manager for a large business such as Nike, Unilever or Apple?
- ▶ Have you got an interest in the news and how the government and their policies affect your life?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, then Business Studies may be the GCSE for you!

ASSESSMENT

Examination

100% of total mark.

Two written papers at the end of Year 11.

Unit 1 – 50%: Influences of Operations and Human Resource Management on business activity.

Unit 2 – 50%: Influences of Marketing and Finance on business activity.

CHEMISTRY (AQA)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Students start to work on content from the GCSE Chemistry course offered by the AQA exam board at the beginning of Year 9 and will continue to cover all of the relevant content from this specification throughout Years 10 and 11. Students following the Chemistry course will be taught by specialist subject teachers for a total of 3 lessons per week.

The study of Chemistry emphasises the importance of science in our everyday lives. Students will develop their understanding of issues facing the modern world and develop their knowledge of how scientific ideas can be used to interpret and question media reports and their ability to argue a rational case based on scientific data.

The traditional scientific ideas and concepts covered thus far in students' education will be explored in greater depth and built on to enhance students' understanding and to boost confidence in their application. Some of the additional scientific ideas and questions covered during Years 10 and 11 include: How can we deal with global warming? How can we produce materials sustainably?

Chemistry is an important and interesting subject and is the starting points for many careers in disciplines such as Medicine, Health Professions, Engineering and Research. Science works to explain the world in which we live, and it provides technology that has a significant impact on our society and the environment.

ASSESSMENT

There is no coursework in the Separate Sciences course.

Throughout the course students are required to carry out a number of required practicals (these are experiments that students will undertake during lessons) to develop specific practical skills. These skills will then be assessed on the written examination papers.

Written exams include 2 exam papers of 100 marks each (1 hour 45 mins each).



COMBINED SCIENCE (AQA)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Combined Science Students will follow the course offered by the AQA examination board, leading to the award of two GCSE grades at the end of Year 11. Students following the Combined Science course will be taught by specialist subject teachers for a total of six lessons per week. The Combined Science course provides fundamental knowledge which can lead on to further study in a host of scientific fields, including providing the opportunity for A Level study in individual Science subjects or other Science-related courses.

All the science GCSEs are now linear with those studying the combined course sitting six, 75-minute examination papers at the end of Year 11 – two papers for each branch of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The Combined Sciences option provides students with the best preparation for further study in a Science based subject and covers an introduction to many of the topics that are studied in further detail in the A Level Science courses.

ASSESSMENT

Examination

There is no coursework in the Combined Science course.

Throughout the course students are required to carry out a number of required practicals (these are experiments that students will undertake during lessons) to develop specific practical skills. These skills will then be assessed on the written examination papers.

Written exams include two 75-minute papers each for Biology, Chemistry and Physics, taken at the end of Year 11 (six in total).

COMPUTER SCIENCE (OCR)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Computer Science has become vitally important in all our lives. Computer systems affect most of the things that we do, for example doing business, controlling machinery, navigating planes, supporting administration and communicating with each other. Computer Science refers to what we have to do in order to obtain a solution to a problem by mathematical or numerical means.

Computer Science is a practical subject, developed in conjunction with companies like Microsoft and Google, where learners can apply the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to real-world problems. It is an intensely creative subject that involves invention and excitement. Our Computer Science qualification values computational thinking, helping learners to develop the skills to solve problems and design systems that do so.

Component 01 – Computer Systems

The first component is an exam focused on computer systems covering the physical elements of computer science and the associated theory – examined at the end of Year 11 (50%).

Component 02 – Computational Thinking, Algorithms & Programming

This component is focused on the core theory of computer science and the application of computer science principles – examined at the end of Year 11 (50%).

20 hours of Programming

As part of the course, students must undertake at least

20 hours of programming, they will do this using Python 3. This will help them to deepen their understanding, building upon the coding that they undertook in Key Stage 3. This will be assessed as part of the written exams. Through this qualification, students can:

- ▶ Develop their understanding of current and emerging technologies and how they work.
- ▶ Look at the use of algorithms in computer programs.
- ▶ Acquire and apply creative and technical skills in a range of contexts.
- ▶ Develop computer programs to solve problems.
- ▶ Evaluate the effectiveness of computer programs.

ASSESSMENT

Examination 100% of total mark.

At the end of Year 11: Two papers (2 x 1.5 hours) Components 01 & 02.

DANCE (AQA)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Studying the exciting and diverse GCSE Dance will help you to understand and appreciate a variety of choreographic styles and genres and will test you on far more than just your dance ability.

You may wish to study this subject because you already enjoy dance outside of school, or if you aspire to a career in the Arts. This course will give you a grounding in a variety of dance styles and develop your ability to critically respond to both your own work and professional work. You will also improve your skills as a dancer and a choreographer through studying this course and could go on to study Dance at A-Level and beyond.

ASSESSMENT

Practical Assessment (60%)

The practical element of the course is split into three distinct assessment areas. The first is a solo performance of set phrases from a choice of four: ‘Breathe,’ ‘Flux,’ ‘Shift’ and ‘Scoop’. You will learn all four set phrases but will be assessed on two of them. All the set phrases are designed to test your posture, balance, coordination and control, amongst other key physical and technical dance skills.

The second practical element is a group performance, choreographed by the teacher. It allows you to demonstrate your skills and dance knowledge to create a challenging and sophisticated performance. Although danced together, this piece is marked individually. The solo performance and duet or trio combined, account

for 30% of your overall grade. The final element of the specification is working from a stimulus to create your own choreography for between 1 and 5 dancers. To support this work, you will also write a 150-word evaluation, detailing the decisions you made during the process. This element is worth 30% of your overall grade.

Written Exam (40%)

As part of the specification, you will study an anthology of six professional dance works, including works from established and respected choreographers, examples of inclusive dance variety of styles and choreographic approaches from ballet to contemporary. Studying this anthology will enrich your understanding of choreography and of dance itself and develop your ability to evaluate performances. This part of the course is assessed through a written exam taken at the end of Year 11, worth 40% of your overall grade.

This paper also assesses your understanding of choreographic intent and your ability to critically assess your own performance.

The GCSE Dance Anthology provides the focus for learning how to critically appreciate professional set works. The anthology contains the following professional set works:

DANCE WORK	DANCE COMPANY	CHOREOGRAPHER
<i>Artificial Things</i>	Stopgap Dance Company	Lucy Bennett
<i>A Linha Curva</i>	Rambert Dance Company	Itzik Galilli
<i>Infra</i>	The Royal Ballet	Wayne McGregor
<i>Shadows</i>	Phoenix Dance Theatre	Christopher Bruce
<i>Within Her Eyes</i>	James Cousins Company	James Cousins
<i>Emancipation of Expressionism</i>	Boy Blue Entertainment	Kenrick H2O Sandy



DESIGN TECHNOLOGY: PRODUCT DESIGN (AQA)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

The GCSE in Design and Technology is an academically challenging qualification as well as a subject which explores some aspects of traditional skills. GCSE Design and Technology prepares students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world.

Students gain awareness and learn from wider influences including historical, social, cultural, environmental, ethical and economic factors. Students get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making, whilst applying technical and practical expertise. Students will also focus on their specialism, but show they understand the process of design in a wider context. This qualification gives students both a creative and academic foundation, which can lead to a wide variety of careers; it is ideal for those who seek to work within business or the creative industries.

In Year 10 of the GCSE programme, students will focus on the theoretical content of the subject and combine this with the development of their practical skills needed in the Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) in Year 11. The course allows students to study core technical, designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials techniques and equipment.

Students will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth, whilst exploring 3D printing and laser cutting. In the first term of Year 11, students will complete the design and manufacturing stages

of their NEA, with the evaluation due by the February half-term break. Subsequent lesson time will then be used for examination preparation. This creative yet academic GCSE is demanding but students will significantly benefit from the qualification when applying to Westholme's INSPIRED Sixth Form, as well as opening many career routes into industry and business.

ASSESSMENT

Examination 50% of total mark.

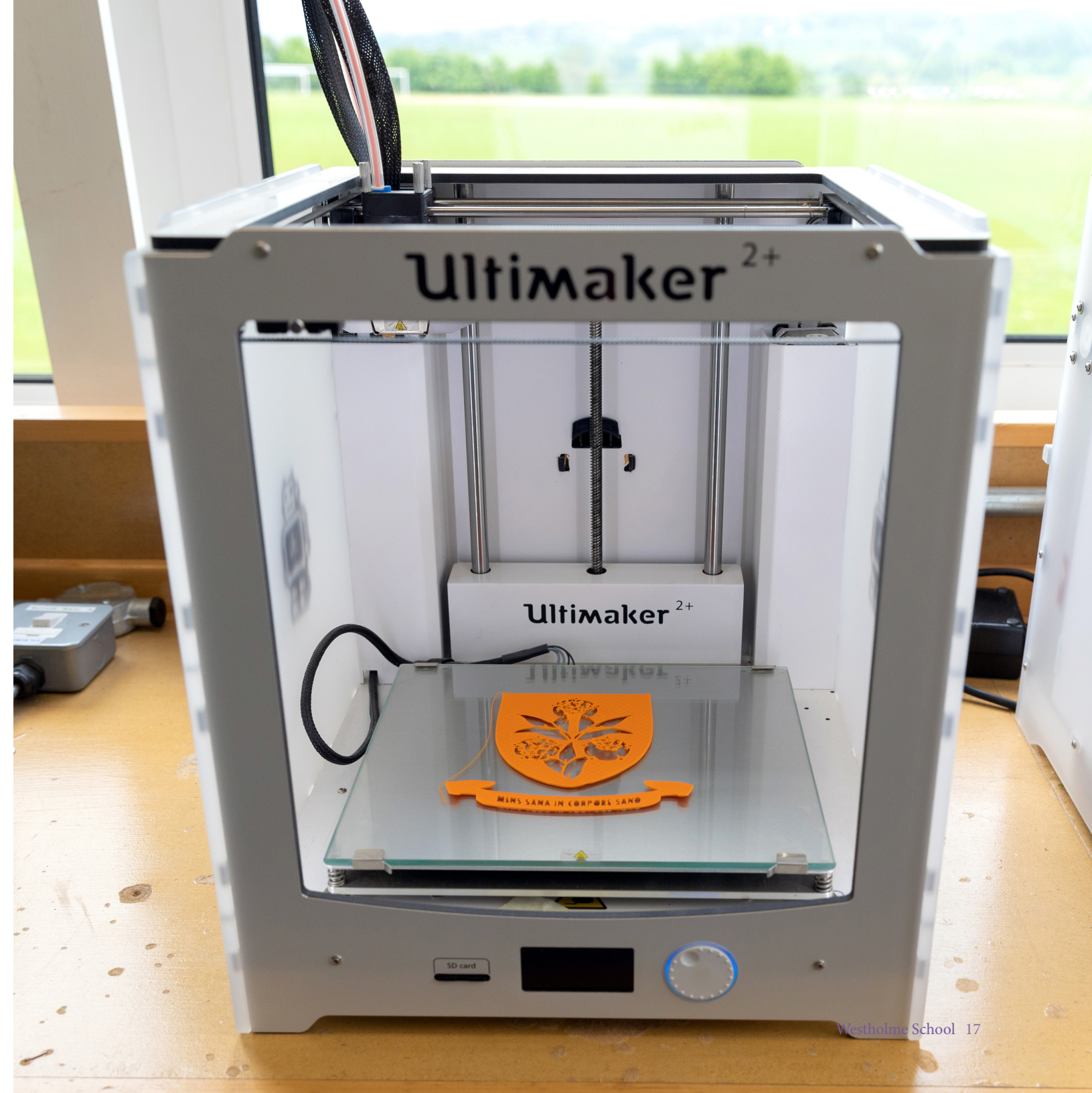
At the end of Year 11.

Written paper:

Two hours (100 marks). Section A – Core technical principles
Section B – Specialist technical principles
Section C – Designing and making principles.

Non-Examined Assessment 50% of total mark.

Summer Year 10 to Spring Year 11. Approximately 30 –35 hours (100 marks). Students undertake a design-and-make activity, selected from a range of exam board set tasks in their chosen specification.





DRAMA (EDUQAS)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Candidates may choose Acting or a Theatre Design Skill for each performance unit:

- ▶ Stage Design
- ▶ Lighting or Sound Design
- ▶ Costume and Make-up

Drama is a subject that allows you to be who you want to be and act the way you want to. There are very few rules, and no right or wrong answers. There are no limits to how, who, or what you want to be. Drama is like your own psychologist allowing you to show how you're feeling, then reviewing it and seeing if you could respond in a different way. Drama gives you confidence; the ability to be able to stand up and say – this is who I am and what I'm capable of. It helps you to understand life from a different view, taking on different characters, emotions and problems. It trains you for the future when you may experience similar scenarios in your own life.

“Movies will make you famous; Television will make you rich; but theatre will make you good.”

- Terrence Mann

- ▶ You will need to have focus and concentration
- ▶ You will need to be imaginative
- ▶ You will need to be willing to take risks
- ▶ You will need the ability to laugh at yourself

It's not hard to imagine the number of successful actors, designers, theatre technicians who have studied drama at school and then been inspired to go on and do something because of it. Yes, that's right, drama isn't just about acting – there are so many jobs that you can do with drama experience, and, they don't have to have anything to do with theatre or television. Communication and confidence are key skills in any job, and drama is a key player in teaching you them.

Assessment

Examination 40% of total mark. At the end of Year 11. One paper.

Non-Examined Assessment 60% of total mark. During Year 10 and Year 11.

Unit 1: Devised Practical

Performance and Written Report (40%).

Unit 2: Performance from a Text (20%).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE (EDEXCEL)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Students will start to work on content from the iGCSE English Language specification offered by the Pearson Edexcel exam board in the final term of Year 9. They continue to cover all of the relevant content from these specifications throughout Years 10 and 11. Students are assessed on their ability to understand, interpret and comment on a variety of literary texts from 1800 to the present day. They are also given the opportunity to write for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Being taught how to construct descriptive, narrative and non-fiction texts allows them the opportunity for students to vary how they use language to influence different audiences. The course offers an exciting opportunity to refine their reading skills, learning more about how writers utilise language to influence the reader. Communication continues to be an important aspect of English lessons.

Within the English Language specification is the Spoken Language component. Students’ achievement within this area of the specification will appear on their certificate as a separately reported grade. This assessment is common across all exam boards. Students are expected to plan and craft a speech on a subject of their course. This is performed to an audience and they are required to answer a series of questions afterwards.

Written Assessment: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

What’s assessed:

Section A: Reading - a mixture of short and long- answer questions related to a non-fiction text from Part 1 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology and one previously unseen extract. Total marks: 45 marks.

Section B: Transactional Writing - one 45-mark writing task, from a choice of two, involving a given audience, form or purpose.

Candidates will be provided with the anthology text in the examination.

Assessed

Written exam: 2 hours 15 minutes
90 marks
60% of GCSE

Non-Examined Assessment

What’s assessed:

Assignment A: Poetry and prose texts – one 30-mark essay question based on any three poetry or prose texts from Part 2 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology. At least one poetry text and one prose text should be compared in detail.

Assignment B: Imaginative writing – one 30-mark imaginative writing task. one prose text must be discussed in the assignment.

Assessed

Written tasks: 2 x 30 marks per question
40% of GCSE



ENGLISH LITERATURE (EDEXCEL)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

English Literature gives students the opportunity to delve into the past and explore how context can influence how the text is understood. It helps students to develop their use of English by encouraging them to develop a wider range of vocabulary. Furthermore, students will be encouraged to read around the subject and, perhaps, even explore texts written by the same author.

Component 1: poetry and modern prose

How it's assessed:

- ▶ 60% of total mark - assessment is 2 hours.
- ▶ The total number of marks available is 90.
- ▶ Closed book: texts are not allowed in the examination. However, students will be provided with the anthology poems in the examination.

Content:

Section A – Unseen Poetry: one 20-mark essay question exploring the meaning and effects created in an unseen poem. The poem will be reproduced in the question paper.

Section B – Anthology Poetry: one 30-mark essay question from a choice of two, comparing two poems from Part 3 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology.

Section C – Modern Prose: one 40-mark essay question from a choice of two on each of the set texts.

Component 2: Non-examined assessment

How it's assessed:

- ▶ This component is made up of two coursework assignments, internally set and assessed.
- ▶ Total number of marks is 60 (each assignment is 30 marks each)
- ▶ 40% of total mark

Content:

Assignment A - Modern texts: Modern Drama: one essay response to a teacher-devised assignment on the studied text.

Assignment B – Literary Heritage Texts: one essay response to a teacher-devised assignment on the studied text.

FINE ART (AQA)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Fine Art enables students to explore and refine creative ideologies through a range of different sources and materials. Fine Art practice is defined as the need to explore an idea, convey an experience or respond to a theme or issue of personal significance. Throughout the course, students will study periods of significant Art History and select appropriate materials and processes to refine their ideas. They will explore a wide range of materials and techniques using 2D and 3D media, such as drawing, painting and sculpture, lino-printing, silkscreen printing, photography, ceramics, moving image and lens/light-based media, mixed media and land art.

We look at and use the work of contemporary and traditional artists and movements for inspiration which involves going to see exhibitions in locations around the UK. Each year we provide the opportunity to work with an artist in residence during whole day workshops. These sessions enhance students' coursework portfolios and provide students with practical experience alongside other professionals to encourage wider practice. We have worked with renowned artists such as Ian Murphy and Joan Aitchinson in previous years.

Skills gained within the Fine Art GCSE are transferable in a variety of other disciplines and careers such as: Photography, Architecture, Art History, Graphics, Web Design, Industrial Design, Textiles, Interior Design and Curating amongst many more. Many of our students have continued to study at degree level in a range of different areas such as Architecture, Special Effects Make-Up, Fashion Design, Animation, Fine Art, Dentistry and

Advertising and Marketing. Fine Art enables students to think outside the box and express themselves creatively without limitations.

ASSESSMENT

Non-Examined Assessment. Through Year 10 and into Year 11.

Coursework 60% of total mark.

Examination 40% of total mark.

The exam takes place in the Spring term of Year 11. It is an entirely practical exam which involves guided preparatory work and a timed final outcome.





GEOGRAPHY (AQA)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

The study of GCSE Geography can help you to:

- ▶ Develop a knowledge and understanding of local and global events that will affect your future.
- ▶ Develop a range of skills that are useful across the curriculum and in future careers such as: literacy, statistics, ICT, carrying out independent fieldwork, mapwork and analysing data and graphs.
- ▶ Gain an understanding and appreciation of the cultures and backgrounds of people from all over the world and develop an appreciation of the causes of inequality.

You will study a wide range of topics on the AQA course:

Physical Geography

- ▶ Natural Hazards including volcanoes, earthquakes, tropical storms, extreme weather and climate change.
- ▶ Physical Landscapes: Rivers and coastal areas, as well as the landscape of the UK.
- ▶ Ecosystems including tropical rainforests and cold environments.

Human Geography

- ▶ Urban issues and Challenges: Studies of cities in a newly emerging economy (Rio de Janeiro) and urban change in Leeds.

- ▶ The Changing Economic World: Development issues, population growth and economic change in the UK.
- ▶ The Challenge of Resource Management: Food, water and energy issues.

Geography could lead you to exciting career prospects. It is a well-respected academic subject; at A Level is one of the facilitating subjects preferred by the top universities and is compatible with a wide range of degree courses.

ASSESSMENT

Paper 1: Physical Geography exam

35% of total mark. At the end of Year 11.
Living with the physical environment.

Paper 2: Human Geography exam

35% of total mark. End of Year 11.
Challenges in the human environment.

Paper 3: Skills/applications exam

30% of total mark. End of Year 11.
Geographical applications: Issue evaluation, fieldwork, geographical skills.

“Geography is the Subject Which Holds The Key To Our Future”

– Michael Palin

GERMAN (EDEXCEL)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Over the two year course, students build on the work completed in Key Stage 3 and explore new areas. The language content is taught across six broad, thematic contexts:

- ▶ My personal world
- ▶ Lifestyle and wellbeing
- ▶ My neighbourhood
- ▶ Media and technology
- ▶ Studying and my future
- ▶ Travel and tourism

Students will be entered for Foundation Tier or Higher Tier for all four skill areas. This will be decided in Year 11 by the class teacher in consultation with students and parents. Entry at Foundation Tier allows access to Grades 1-5 and entry at Higher Tier allows access to Grades 4-9.

German is the second most widely spoken language in Europe and commonly referred to as the “money language”. It is also an important language in business, science, engineering, pharmaceuticals and academia.

ASSESSMENT

Listening Examination (25%)

At the end of Year 11. This paper comprises a mixture of questions to be answered in English based on listening material in German, including a dictation.

Speaking Examination (25%)

At the end of Year 11. This is a final examination of between 7 and 12 minutes. The test will begin with a read aloud text and follow up questions then a role play scenario. The final section is questions based on a picture stimulus with the topic being chosen by the student.

Reading Examination (25%)

At the end of Year 11. This paper is comprised of a mixture of questions to be answered in English based on reading material in German and includes a translation from German into English.

Writing Examination (25%)

At the end of Year 11. Students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in German for different purposes and audiences. Students are required to produce extended responses of varying lengths and types to express ideas and opinions in German. In addition to this, there is a translation from English into German.

HISTORY (AQA)



In 2019, Westholme's History Department was awarded the Gold Historical Association Quality Mark.

SUBJECT INFORMATION

- ▶ Why were the KKK so frightening?
- ▶ How important was Martin Luther King really?
- ▶ Why did Europe go to war in 1914 and what was it like to fight in the trenches?
- ▶ What exactly was the Black Death?
- ▶ How did we learn to cure diseases?
- ▶ Why did Queen Elizabeth I never get married?

These are some of the important questions you will be asking during our exciting GCSE History course. You will also find out that there are many different interpretations of historical events, such as the Civil Rights Movement in the USA which will give you the opportunity to exercise your own powers of analysis and argument.

Why should I think about taking GCSE History?

- ▶ You have enjoyed History so far.
- ▶ You are interested in the topics covered by the course.
- ▶ You like finding information out for yourself, questioning historical sources, looking at both sides of an argument and making up your own.
- ▶ You want to become more skilled at asking questions, even awkward ones!

- ▶ You want to further develop empathy and understanding of the actions and achievements of others; you want to draw conclusions and make judgements.
- ▶ These skills are highly desirable in many different careers and History is excellent training for any career where you have to use evidence or make decisions.

ASSESSMENT

Examination

100% of the total mark is assessed at the end of Year 11 in the following examinations, both of which are an hour long. There are extra marks available for good use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Paper One: Understanding the Modern World (50%).

Section A: The USA 1920 – 1973

Section B: Conflict and Tension, The First World War 1914 - 1918

Paper Two: Shaping the Nation (50%).

Section A: Britain – Britain: Health and the People c.1000 to present day.

Section B: Elizabethan England 1568-1603.

MATHEMATICS (EDEXCEL)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Students will follow the Edexcel GCSE Mathematics specification. The content of the course is organised into six main topic areas:

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

The course contains many new topics and areas of study, as well as building on the knowledge developed in Mathematics up to this point, with students developing their understanding of work they have covered in previous years. Work covered in Years 7 and 8 is also assessed at GCSE level, with regular consolidation and revision of previously covered topics also forming part of students' study throughout Years 9 to 11.

There are two tiers of entry in Mathematics – Higher Tier with results graded 4 to 9, and Foundation Tier with results graded 1 to 5. Most students will follow the Higher Tier course throughout, although knowledge of the Foundation Tier content will form the basis for further study in the Higher Tier course.

It may be that by consultation and discussion some students will sit the Foundation Tier. This decision would be made at an appropriate point in the course. It should be noted that most Higher Education courses and many employers may require evidence of achievement in Mathematics at GCSE Grade 4, with higher grades often required to commence further study in a Mathematics based course. Many A Level courses with significant mathematical content have a minimum requirement of GCSE Grade 6.

Higher performing students will be offered the opportunity to study for the AQA level 2 Certificate in Further Mathematics as an additional optional subject. Further Mathematics lessons take place after school one day a week during the final term of Year 10 and throughout Year 11. This course is of particular value to those wishing to study Mathematics or Further Mathematics at A Level.

The Mathematics Department runs various enrichment activities which include the option of being able to attend external competitions, taking part in the UKMT challenges, as well as a number of lunchtime Mathematics clubs. Students can also choose to attend one of the weekly lunchtime clinics to receive additional support with their studies or to explore other Mathematical ideas with staff. In the run up to the GCSE examinations, additional Year 11 revision clinics will be provided.

ASSESSMENT

Examination

100% of total mark.

At the end of Year 11.

Three papers including 1 non-calculator paper.





MUSIC (EDEXCEL)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

GCSE Music gives you the skills to be an outstanding musician. Outstanding musicians can perform to a high standard, can write their own music and also understand music from a range of different styles – and this is what the course is about!

30% of the course is performing, consisting of two performances recorded in Year 11. These need ideally to be at Grade 4 standard or above – this enables full marks to be scored. 30% comes from two compositions completed throughout the course. One of these is free choice; the other in response to a brief published at the start of Year 11.

The remaining 40% is from the listening and appraising exam, which is based upon 8 set pieces. These set pieces feature a range of styles, from Beethoven to Queen, Star Wars to Wicked. Through study of these set works, pupils learn to appreciate music from this range of styles and apply new techniques to their own work.

GCSE Music is recommended for all those going on to A Level Music or Music Technology, but it is also a course which can give everyone the ability to enjoy performing, composing and hearing music throughout their lives.

ASSESSMENT

Listening Examination (40%)

At the end of Year 11.

One listening and writing paper.

Non-Examined Assessment (60%)

During Year 11.

30% performing, 30% composing.

PHOTOGRAPHY (AQA)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Studying Photography at GCSE will not only teach you how to improve the quality of your images but also how to use a DSLR camera in a sophisticated and innovative way. In today's society, photographs are used to not only document our everyday lives and experiences through Apps such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, but they also open the door to a range of career opportunities.

Photography is a highly diverse medium which is used within many genres including fashion, film, food, engineering, advertising, portraiture, editorial, forensic, industrial, documentary, aerial, wedding, sports and travel.

This course will teach you how to compose your images in different ways by using the formal elements of Photography with skills such as viewpoint, line, symmetry, black and white or colour and repetition. You will become competent in the use of Adobe Photoshop which you will use to organise, edit and enhance your photos. By exploring a wide range of themes and photographers we aim to inspire our students to generate innovative imagery.

Westholme's photographic studio is a huge asset and can be used to experiment with different lighting techniques, lenses and props to take your work to the next level. In addition to the production of high-quality photographs you will also learn how to use a

wide range of creative techniques to present them in both 2D and 3D formats, such as silkscreen printing, multiple exposures, photomontage, collage and transfer printing.

In Year 11 you will produce an exhibition of your most successful work to showcase your skills, for other students, teachers, parents and governors to view. Trips out of the school environment and the classroom provide students with first-hand experience of exhibitions, contemporary culture and new locations to capture exciting imagery in places such as London, York and Liverpool.

ASSESSMENT

Examination 40% of total mark.

Before Easter in Year 11.

An entirely practical exam which involves guided preparatory work and a timed final outcome.

Non-Examined Assessment 60% of total mark.

Through Year 10 into Year 11: A minimum of 3 coursework assignments within a range of themes and media.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (OCR)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

If you enjoy sport, then you will enjoy this GCSE option. The course will equip you with the knowledge, understanding and skills to develop your own performance in sport. You will also develop an understanding of the different influences on participation within sport, and the benefits of physical activity towards health, fitness and wellbeing.

You will be assessed in three practical activities – one from the 'individual activity' list, one from the 'team activity' list and one from either list. Out-of-school activities such as sailing, horse riding and dance can also be assessed. In the 'Analysing and Evaluating Performance' section, each candidate will produce an action plan to improve the quality and effectiveness of the performance for their specified sport. It is strongly advised that students opting to do this subject, attend sports practices in their three chosen sports and participate in sport outside of school.

There are two main sections of the course:

1. PHYSICAL FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE

This section includes 'Applied Anatomy and Physiology' which explores the effects of exercise on the body and 'Physical Training', which includes practical sessions on how to improve your overall fitness and prevention of injury.

2. SOCIO-CULTURAL ISSUES AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY

The 'Socio-Cultural' section looks at the external influences on participation and performance including ethical factors, drugs and violence in sport. 'Sports Psychology' examines how movement skills are learned, goal setting and mental preparation and finally there is a section on 'Health, Fitness and Wellbeing', that investigates the benefits of exercise to health, the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle and diet and nutrition.

GCSE PE links well with a number of other subjects and provides each pupil with a greater insight into sport and exercise. There are numerous career paths linked with the field of sport including sports scientist, nutritionist and sports psychologist, physiotherapist, sports coach, and sports analyst. Sports based courses also support entry into careers in the armed forces, police and fire service. Even if you do not pursue a career in sport, this GCSE course can serve to promote a healthy and active lifestyle, which will undoubtedly benefit you throughout your GCSE, A Level and University studies, as well as for the rest of your life.

ASSESSMENT

Theory Examination (60%)

End of Year 11.

Two written papers (1 hour each) – 30% for each paper.

- ▶ Applied anatomy, physiology and physical training.
- ▶ Socio-cultural influences, sports psychology, health, fitness and well-being.

Practical Section (40%) March Year 11

Course assessment of practical skills in three activities: 30%

Analysing and Evaluating Performance in one activity (AEP): 10%



PHYSICS (AQA)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Students start to work on content from the GCSE Physics course offered by the AQA exam board at the beginning of Year 9 and will continue to cover all of the relevant content from this specification throughout Years 10 and 11. Students following the Physics course will be taught by specialist subject teachers for a total of 3 lessons per week.

The study of Physics emphasises the importance of science in our everyday lives. Students will develop their understanding of issues facing the modern world and develop their knowledge of how scientific ideas can be used to interpret and question media reports and their ability to argue a rational case based on scientific data.

The traditional scientific ideas and concepts covered thus far in students' education will be explored in greater depth and built on to enhance students' understanding and to boost confidence in their application. Some of the additional scientific ideas and questions covered during Years 10 and 11 include: How did the universe begin? Are mobile phones safe?

Physics is an important and interesting subject and is the starting points for many careers in disciplines such as Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, Medical Physicist, and Research. Science works to explain the world in which we live, and it provides

technology that has a significant impact on our society and the environment.

ASSESSMENT

There is no coursework in the Separate Sciences course.

Throughout the course students are required to carry out a number of required practicals (these are experiments that students will undertake during lessons) to develop specific practical skills. These skills will then be assessed on the written examination papers.

Written exams include 2 exam papers of 100 marks each (1 hour 45 mins each).



RELIGIOUS STUDIES - ETHICS, PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION (EPR) (EDUQAS)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Are you interested in the crucial issues facing your society? Do you want to know more about the choices and paths that different people make in life? If ‘yes’, then this course is for you. GCSE students gain an excellent understanding of what is going on globally and in their own society.

They have independent minds, are highly confident in discussion, can offer balanced and rational viewpoints and have sound academic ability. With these abilities, an EPR GCSE is an asset on any CV. You will learn about Buddhism and Christianity and consider ethical, philosophical and religious approaches to medical issues, debates surrounding the law, crime and punishment, marriage and relationships, identity, human rights, life after death and good and evil.

The GCSE equips you with 21st Century Essential Skills which are beneficial to most careers. Research highlights that employers expect ‘diversity awareness’ in their employees. In any field, when problem-solving and dealing with different people, employees need to show a sense of awareness about the wider world, and they need the emotional intelligence to be capable of engaging with different people, different issues and different perspectives. EPR also plays a crucial role in giving students the opportunity to develop their minds through a focus on the 21st Century Essential Skills of curiosity, critical and reflective thinking, confidence and discussion - all of which are instilled in all students in every EPR lesson and are necessary for a successful career path.

Classes are based on academic rigour and a creative approach to the subject. To help you have a real insight into the religions studied, namely Buddhism and Christianity, you will experience a ‘Buddhism Study Day’ (an introduction to the basics of Buddhism including lectures and discussions at a Buddhist Centre) and encounter people and projects in the community.

Superb co-curricular activities are on offer for your CV: JAC Team (Justice, Awareness and Charity Team). You may opt to be a part of the EPR team which organises the ‘Night at the Movies’ for Year 7 pupils. You will develop skills in organisation, teamwork and take on new responsibilities when planning and hosting this exciting event.

ASSESSMENT

Examination

100% of total mark.
End of Year 11.

Three papers:

- ▶ Philosophical and Ethical Issues in the Modern World (50%)
- ▶ Study of Christianity (25%)
- ▶ Study of Buddhism (25%)



SPANISH (EDEXCEL)

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Over the two-year course students build on the work completed in Key Stage 3 and explore new areas. The language content is taught across six broad, thematic contexts:

- ▶ My personal world
- ▶ Lifestyle and wellbeing
- ▶ My neighbourhood
- ▶ Media and Technology
- ▶ Studying and my future
- ▶ Travel and tourism

Students will be entered for Foundation Tier or Higher Tier for all four skill areas. This will be decided in Year 11 by the class teacher in consultation with students and parents. Entry at Foundation Tier allows access to Grades 1-5 and entry at Higher Tier allows access to Grades 4-9.

Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world with over 400 million native speakers. 22 countries, from Argentina to Uruguay, have Spanish as their official language. It is the second language used for international communication and the third most used language on the Internet.

ASSESSMENT

Listening Examination (25%)

At the end of Year 11. This paper comprises a mixture of questions to be answered in English based on listening material in Spanish, including a dictation.

Speaking Examination (25%)

At the end of Year 11. This is a final examination of between 7 and 12 minutes. The test will begin with a read aloud text and follow up questions then a role-play scenario. The final section is questions based on a picture stimulus with the topic being chosen by the student.

Reading Examination (25%)

At the end of Year 11. This paper is comprised of a mixture of questions to be answered in English, based on reading material in Spanish and includes a translation from Spanish into English.

Writing Examination (25%)

At the end of Year 11. Students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing in Spanish for different purposes and audiences.

Students are required to produce extended responses of varying lengths and types to express ideas and opinions in Spanish. In addition to this, there is a translation from English into Spanish.

KEY INFORMATION

Options Information Evening: 17 March 2026
Options choices to be returned: 30 March 2026

STAFF WHO CAN HELP YOU:

Deputy Head: Mrs L Cowan - cowanl@westholmeschool.com
Assistant Head (Staff Development): Mrs R Oracz – oraczr@westholmeschool.com
Head of Careers: Mrs C Hibberd – hibberdc@westholmeschool.com
SEND/CO: Mrs A Cunliffe – cunliffea@westholmeschool.com

Head of Year 9: Mr J Fialho– fiahloj@westholmeschool.com
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Mr S Hamid(Longridge) – hamids@westholmeschool.com
Mrs H Hodgson (Pendle) – hodgsonh@westholmeschool.com
Mr J Charnock (Pendle) – charnockj@westholmeschool.com

KEY ACADEMIC STAFF:

Biology: Mr R Carey – careyr@westholmeschool.com
Business Studies & Economics: Mr M Zourmand – zourmandm@westholmeschool.com
Chemistry: Mrs A Anafi – anafia@westholmeschool.com
Computer Science: Miss S Cooper – coopers@westholmeschool.com
Dance: Miss R Loudonsack – loudonsackr@westholmeschool.com
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