KS4 Options Booklet

For courses commencing September 2026

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February 2026

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As students move into Key Stage 4, they will be asked to make important choices about the subjects they will study in Years 10 and 11. These decisions are significant, as most courses lead to qualifications that support future education, training and employment.

Making the Right Choices

Some students may already have a clear idea of the pathway they wish to follow, while others may prefer to keep their options open. Both approaches are entirely appropriate. What matters most is that students choose subjects that reflect their interests, strengths and aspirations.

Employers and further education providers value a broad range of skills, including strong literacy and numeracy, teamwork, problem-solving, initiative and effective use of technology. Students are encouraged to research their subjects carefully, speak to their teachers and ask questions before making their final decisions.

Support and Guidance

This booklet has been produced to guide students and parents through the options process and to provide clear information about the courses available. Throughout the process, students will be supported by their teachers, Form Tutors and Raising Standards Leader. Careers guidance is also available through the school for those who require it.

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum

All students will follow a compulsory core curriculum, which includes:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical Education (non-exam)
- Philosophy and Ethics (non-exam)
- Personal Development (non-exam)

Alongside this core curriculum, students will choose option subjects from a range of GCSE and vocational courses, details of which are provided later in this booklet.

Unique Opportunity for Hurstmere Students

We are pleased to host end2end TV, who offer a BTEC Tech Award in Creative Media Production on our site. **This course is not part of the Year 9 options**

process but is available to students to study after school alongside their other subjects, at competitive fees. For further details, please follow the link: https://www.end2endtv.co.uk/btec

Important Dates and Events

There will be several opportunities for parents and students to find out more and to seek guidance, including:

- Online subject options presentations
- Virtual Year 9 Parents' Evenings
- An Academic Review Day, where individual guidance will be provided by senior leaders and key staff, on Friday 6th February 2026.

After Options Are Submitted: DEADLINE – Monday 23rd February 2026

Once option choices have been submitted, the school will begin the process of constructing the timetable and allocating staffing. While every effort is made to accommodate students' preferences, it is not always possible to run all subject combinations or courses with low uptake. Where this occurs, we will work closely with students and parents to agree suitable alternatives. Changes to option choices after submission will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. A change of mind will not be regarded as an exceptional circumstance.

Expectations for Years 10 and 11

Years 10 and 11 are a crucial stage in a student's education. Students will be expected to work consistently, meet deadlines and attend school regularly. Strong attendance during this period is essential, as absence can have a significant impact on progress and final outcomes.

Final Message

This is an exciting stage in each student's educational journey, and we look forward to supporting them as they move into Key Stage 4. We wish all students every success as they make their options choices and begin the next phase of their learning.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs L. Davis
Senior Vice Principal

The information in this booklet was correct at the time of publication. However, some of the details may be subject to change.

Helping your Son Choose his Option Subjects:

The following pathways will guide you into helping your son make choices that will challenge him, engage him and build upon his past learning, to ensure he is following a curriculum that will give him success, suit his needs and will not create potential barriers for his future.

EXTEND	Profile	Choices
	• May have a history of high academic scores from test going back to primary school. • Achieves well with academic challenges. • May have very high target grades (6+) • May be aspiring to go to a top university. • Will probably be thinking about A'levels Post-16.	Should choose: • French in one block • One of either History or Geography in another block • 2 further free choices but should strongly consider the Separate Sciences.
ENHANCE	Profile	Choices
	• Aiming for 5 and above in English, Maths, Science and in a range of other GCSEs. • May have target grades of 5+. • Will probably be thinking about A'levels and/or Level 3 Technical Awards	Must do at least one of either: • History • Geography • French Plus 3 further free choices.
ENRICH	Profile	Choices
	• May do best when more practical and 'hands-on' subjects are mixed with academic subjects. • May be more successful in project work and unit tests, rather than everything based on a final exam at the end of 2 years. • May be considering Level 3 Technical Qualifications, Apprenticeships or vocational courses Post-16.	Should seriously consider one of: • History • Geography • French Alongside GCSE equivalents/more practical-based subjects, but 4 free choices.

Guidance for Choosing Subjects on the Options Form

After the Academic Review Day on 6th February 2026, parents/guardians will receive a link to the Options Forms where students will select their subject choices. Please read the guidance carefully.

General Instructions:

Choose one subject from each block: Block 1, Block 2, Block 3, and Block 4. For each block, you must rank your choices in order of preference (1-4), with 1 being your most preferred subject. You must also select a reserve choice – this is important, as we may not be able to accommodate all your selections.

NB: Art and 3D Design cannot be studied together, as the subjects overlap significantly in skills and assessment. Selecting either Art or 3D Design enables students to broaden their overall curriculum by studying a wider range of subjects.

Key Points to Consider:

- Choose wisely – think about your interests, strengths, and future aspirations.
- Check course requirements – some subjects may be beneficial for specific careers or further education.
- Consider balance – select a mix of subjects that keep your options open.
- Think about your reserve choice carefully – you may end up studying this if we cannot allocate your preferred options.

Option Subject Blocks:

Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
Art	Business Enterprise	Art	Computer Science
Business Enterprise	Computer Science	Business Enterprise	French
3D Design	French	History	Geography
French	Geography	Media Studies	History
Geography	Music	Photography	Physical Education
History	Physical Education	Physical Education	Religious Studies
Hospitality & Catering	Religious Studies	Separate Sciences	Separate Sciences
Media Studies			

Remember: Once submitted, changes may not be possible, so discuss your choices with your teachers and family before finalising your form.

Deadline:

Ensure your form is completed and submitted by the 23rd February 2026 deadline to maximise your chances of getting your preferred choices.

The option subjects are:

Art & Design (Fine Art)	Hospitality & Catering
Business & Enterprise	Media Studies
Computer Science	Music
3D Design	GCSE PE
French	Photography
Geography	Religious Studies
History	Separate Sciences

When making his choice your son should seek advice from:

- his family
- his teachers
- the Careers Adviser.

He should consider:

- the subjects he likes best
- the subjects he is good at
- the subjects he needs for a career or for further education
- the balance of subjects – more academically able students are strongly encouraged to choose French and History or Geography. This will offer your son a wider choice of Sixth Form providers.

When he has completed his courses in Year 11, he must do one of the following:

- join a Sixth Form elsewhere for higher level courses
- follow a course at a college of further education
- find a job with further training.

Whilst the school aims to offer all students their first-choice subjects, some option groups may be limited in number. Where a subject is oversubscribed, places will be allocated based on students' ranked preferences, followed by their school record in the subject or a related subject up to the end of Year 9.
Once option choices have been submitted, changes can only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and timetable constraints may limit the subjects that can be offered.

Information and advice are available for all aspects of option choices and career direction from the school. There are many websites to assist your research, for example:

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize - search 'GCSE options'
https://careerpilot.org.uk/information/gcses

The following pages contain an outline of Key Stage 4 courses, both compulsory (core) and options and are arranged in alphabetical order.

Course: Art & Design (Fine Art)
Curriculum Leader: Ms A Whiteland
Examination Board: AQA
Syllabus Number: 8202

AQA 8202 - Art and Design Specification

Course content:

GCSE Art & Design is an important option choice for those considering a career or job in one of the creative industries, which include all design disciplines, architecture, fine art, fashion, animation and film.

Post 16 opportunities increasingly require skills covering the following areas:

- the ability to work consistently, quickly and accurately
- good communication
- flexibility and adaptability
- spatial skills
- motor skills
- self-awareness and confidence
- co-operation - the ability to work as a team
- making decisions
- the ability to use initiative in the absence of set procedures - to be creative and inventive
- the ability to resolve tasks successfully.

Art and Design, by its nature, fulfils these criteria. On a practical level, the GCSE course enables each student to experience and develop skills and techniques in both 2D and 3D media. These areas can cover painting, drawing, printing, textiles, graphics and 3D work in a variety of materials.

Students will be expected to look at a range of artists, styles and cultures and make connections in the context of their own work. Written work in the form of annotation forms part of the course.

Assessment structure:

Component 1 (Portfolio) will take the form of two projects and supporting studies set over the two-year GCSE course, accounting for 60% of the final grade. During the Spring Term of the second year - candidates will be set Component 2 by the examination board (an externally set assignment) which accounts for the remaining 40% of the grade.

Course: Pearson BTEC Level 2 Tech Award in Enterprise
Curriculum Leader: Mr A Mahmoudi
Examination Board: Pearson (Edexcel)
Syllabus Number: 7063

BTEC 7063 - Enterprise Specification

Course Content

The Pearson BTEC Level 2 Tech Award in Business & Enterprise is a vocational qualification designed to develop students' understanding of how enterprises operate and how business ideas are planned, marketed and financed. The course focuses on practical, real-world application, developing transferable skills that are highly valued by employers and further education providers.

Students will study three mandatory components:

Component 1: Exploring Enterprises

Students explore different types of enterprises and how they operate in the real world. They investigate the purpose of enterprises, different types of ownership, the characteristics and skills of successful entrepreneurs, how enterprises are influenced by internal and external factors, and how success is measured.

Component 2: Planning and Presenting a Micro-Enterprise Idea

Students develop and plan their own micro-enterprise idea. They generate and develop an idea, carry out market research, identify target markets and customer needs, plan how the enterprise will operate, and present and justify their enterprise proposal.

Component 3: Marketing and Finance for Enterprise

Students develop knowledge and understanding of key marketing and financial concepts including market research, market segmentation, the marketing mix, pricing strategies, sources of finance, costs, revenue, profit and loss, cash flow and break-even.

Assessment Structure

The qualification is assessed through a combination of internally assessed coursework and one externally assessed examination, taken across Years 10 and 11.

Year 10 – Internally Assessed Components (60%)

Component 1: Exploring Enterprises – Internally assessed coursework (30%)
Component 2: Planning and Presenting a Micro-Enterprise Idea – Internally assessed coursework (30%)

These components are assessed through assignments, projects and presentations, set and marked by teachers and quality assured by Pearson.

Year 11 – Externally Assessed Component (40%)

Component 3: Marketing and Finance for Enterprise – 2-hour external written examination.

Course:	Computer Science
Curriculum Leader:	Mrs V Hirani
Examination Board:	Cambridge OCR
Syllabus Number:	J277

OCR J277 - Computing Specification

Course content:

Studying Computer Science is more important - not less - in the age of AI. AI systems amplify the need for people who understand how they work, can build them responsibly, and can think critically about their impact. AI systems are built on algorithms, data structures, computational thinking, and systems design - exactly what Computer Science teaches. Without these foundations, students will not be able to truly understand or shape the technology driving modern life. As AI becomes embedded in every product and service, the ability to understand how complex systems fit together is essential. This "systems thinking" is a uniquely human skill and a core outcome of studying Computer Science.

This qualification gives students an in-depth understanding of how computer technology works and an opportunity to investigate computer programming, including algorithms. This course should help students to gain an insight into related sectors and prepare them to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices. This is a very technical course and, in order to succeed, the student wishing to take it should have previously shown some interest and aptitude in Computing at Key Stage 3. The course comprises two components, both of which are examined at the end of Year 11.

Component 01: Computer Systems

Introduces students to the central processing unit (CPU), computer memory and storage, data representation, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, system security and system software. It also looks at ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with computer science. The exam is 90 minutes in duration, consists of 80 marks and makes up 50% of the qualification. The examination will be undertaken in the Summer term of Year 11.

Component 02: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

Students apply knowledge and understanding gained in component 01. They develop skills and understanding in computational thinking: algorithms, programming techniques, producing robust programs, computational logic and translators. The exam is 90 minutes in duration, consists of 80 marks and makes up 50% of the qualification. The examination will be undertaken in the Summer term of Year 11.

Students are also given the opportunity to undertake programming tasks during their course of study which allows them to develop their skills to design, write, test and refine programs using a high-level programming language. Students will be assessed on these skills during the written examinations.

Course: 3D Design
Examination Board: AQA
Syllabus Number: 8205

AQA 8205 - 3D Design Specification

Course content:

This qualification is intended for students who enjoy designing and making 3D products. Year 10 and 11 both involve short practical skills building activities, where new processes and skills will be explored and developed. Extended design and make assignments also take place where more time is given for imaginative ideas to develop, and making skills to be explored in greater depth.

During year 11, students also complete a final assignment set by the exam board. The ability to research and analyse existing products and designers will be developed, along with sketching/drawing skills, how to best respond to a design brief, how to carry out written annotation and how to effectively evaluate designs and products.

Coursework/Exam:

60% Portfolio – Demonstrating your overall learning/skills in 3D Design, including one project
40% Assignment – Externally set task, to include preparation and a timed practical exam

Assessment:

AO1: Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.
AO2: Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.
AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.
AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

Future Opportunities:

Upon completion students could progress onto a Level 3 course such as A Level Product Design. This course is also an ideal starting point for further study at degree level or HND/HNC and careers or apprenticeships in: Product/Industrial Design, Architecture and Construction, Jewellery, Graphic Design, Theatrical Design, Engineering, Technical Support, Teaching.

Course Name: English Language & English Literature
Curriculum Leader: Mrs A Elliott
Exam Board: AQA
Syllabus Numbers: Language 8700 and Literature 8702

AQA 8700 - English Language Specification
AQA 8702 - English Literature Specification

Course content:

The English course is compulsory and provides opportunities to develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing in a wide variety of contexts.

Students will be engaged in studying for two separate GCSE examinations in this subject: English Language and English Literature. Students will cover work on a wide variety of texts, consisting of:

- a complete play by Shakespeare
- a pre-19th Century novel
- a pre-20th Century play
- poems from the "Poems Past and Present: poetry anthology", published by the Examination Board
- non-fiction texts.

In addition, students will also have the opportunity to write creatively, developing vital skills to help them express a point of view as well as to write descriptively.

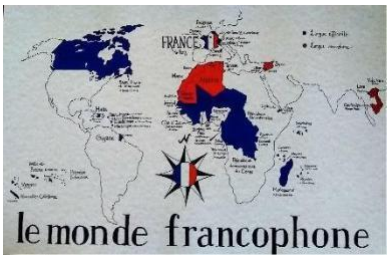
Assessment structure:

- English Language and English Literature count as two separate GCSE qualifications and are given separate grades on the GCSE certificates.

- Final assessment is through terminal examination only:
  - GCSE English Language comprises two examination papers consisting of questions based on unseen texts provided by the Examination Board and two creative writing tasks.
  - Non-examination assessment: Spoken Language. Students will give a formal presentation. They will need to respond appropriately to questions and to feedback, asking questions themselves to elicit clarification.
  - GCSE English Literature includes two examination papers based on the texts studied over the course. These assessments are 'closed-book' and any stimulus required for the exams will be provided as part of the question paper.

Students looking to move beyond GCSE to college or sixth form have several options. There is a selection of AS English courses offering a qualification at a more demanding level, which is recognised as a qualifying contribution to Higher Education. For example, students can study AS-Levels in either English Language, English Literature or English Language and Literature combined. High level communication skills are vital for success in the world of work.

Course: French
Curriculum Leader: Dr M Goodwin
Examination Board: AQA
Syllabus numbers: 8652



AQA 8652 - French Specification

Course content:

This modern course aims to build students' cultural knowledge of the French-speaking world, while developing their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. GCSE French is recommended for any student wishing to strengthen their communication skills, demonstrate an interest in the wider world and enhance their job prospects across many fields, such as: Business, Sports Management, International Relations, Travel & Tourism and Media.

Students study the following 3 themes on which the assessments are based:

Theme 1: People and lifestyle (Identity and relationships with others; Healthy living and lifestyle; Education and work).

Theme 2: Popular culture (Free-time activities; Customs, Festivals and celebrations; Celebrity culture).

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us (Travel and tourism; Media and technology; The environment and where people live).

Assessment structure:

This qualification is linear, which means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course. GCSE French has a Foundation Tier (grades 1-5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4-9). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier and in the same series.

Paper 1: Listening written paper (25% of GCSE):

Foundation 35 minutes
Higher 45 minutes

- Section A: listening comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally
- Section B: dictation where students transcribe short French sentences

Paper 2: Speaking one-to-one with teacher (25% of GCSE):

Foundation Tier 7-9 minutes + 15 minutes supervised preparation time Higher Tier 10-12 minutes + 15 minutes supervised preparation time

- Role-play
- Reading aloud task and short conversation
- Photo card discussion

Paper 3: Reading written paper (25% of GCSE):

Foundation 45 minutes
Higher 1 hour

- Section A – reading comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally

- Section B – translation from French to English (Foundation Tier 35 words; Higher Tier 50 words)

Paper 4: Writing written exam (25% of GCSE):

Foundation Tier : 1 hour 10 minutes

- Question 1 – 5 short sentences in response to a photo
- Question 2 – short passage of 50 words in response to 5 bullet points
- Question 3 – 5 short grammar tasks
- Question 4 – translation of sentences from English to French (35 words)
- Question 5 (overlap) – structured writing task of 90 words in response to 3 bullet points

Higher Tier : 1 hour 15 minutes

- Question 1 – translation of sentences from English to French (50 words)
- Question 2 (overlap) – structured writing task of 90 words in response to 3 bullet points
- Question 3 – open-ended writing task of 150 words in response to 2 bullet points

GCSE students will be expected to develop and use their knowledge of grammar throughout their course.

They will be expected to know 1,200 lexical items for Foundation tier, and a further 500 lexical items for Higher tier.

Course: Geography
Curriculum Leader: Mr T Baston
Examination Board: AQA
Syllabus Number: 8035

AQA 8035 - Geography Specification

Course content:

This GCSE Geography course covers areas in Physical and Human Geography incorporated into a series of themes. Students will travel the world from the classroom, exploring case studies in the United Kingdom (UK), newly emerging economies (NEEs) and lower income countries (LICs). Topics of study include climate change, poverty, deprivation, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use. Students are also encouraged to understand their role in society, by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes. Throughout the two years, students will study a variety of topics including:

Living with the Physical Environment
- The challenge of natural hazards
- Physical landscapes in the UK
- The living world

Challenges in the Human Environment
- Urban issues and challenges
- The changing economic world
- Challenge of resource management

Geographical Applications

- Section A: Issue evaluation
- Section B: Fieldwork

Geographical Skills

- Geographical skills (Ordnance Survey map work, how to interpret a satellite image and data interpretation).

Assessment structure:

Assessment will include three final examinations:

Paper One (35%): The challenge of natural hazards, physical landscapes in the UK, the living world and Geographical skills.

Paper Two (35%): Urban issues and challenges, the changing economic world, the challenge of resource management and Geographical skills.

Paper Three (30%): Issue evaluation, fieldwork and Geographical skills.

Field Trip opportunities:

During the two-year course there are several opportunities for field trips or additional off-site learning opportunities. Several of these will be in and around the school grounds. However, as part of the course, students need to undertake two geographical enquiries, each of which must include the use of primary data, collected as part of a fieldwork exercise. Therefore, fieldwork will have to take place off-site (possibly a residential visit) and there will be a cost implication for this part of the course.
Students who choose Geography also have the opportunity to visit Iceland in their Year 11 as part of a final revision opportunity. This provides students with first-hand knowledge linked to various aspects of the course.

Geographical skills check list:

The following skills will be acquired by students studying GCSE Geography:

Cartographic skills

- use and understand gradient, contour and spot height on OS maps and other isoline maps (e.g. weather charts, ocean bathymetric charts)
- interpret cross-sections and transections
- use and understand coordinates, scale and distance
- describe and interpret geo-spatial data presented in a GIS framework (e.g. analysis of flood hazard using the interactive maps on the Environment Agency website).

Graphical skills

- select and construct appropriate graphs and charts to present data, using appropriate scales and including bar charts, pie charts, pictograms, line charts, histograms with equal class intervals
- interpret and extract information from different types of graphs and charts including any of the above and others relevant to the topic (e.g. triangular graphs, radial graphs, wind rose diagrams, proportional symbols)
- interpret population pyramids, choropleth maps and flow-line maps.

Numerical skills

- demonstrate an understanding of number, area and scale and the quantitative relationships between units
- design fieldwork data collection sheets and collect data with an understanding of accuracy, sample size and procedures, control groups and reliability
- understand and correctly use proportion and ratio, magnitude and frequency (e.g. 1:200, flood and logarithmic scales such as the Richter scale, in orders of magnitude)
- draw informed conclusions from numerical data.

Statistical skills

- use appropriate measures of central tendency, spread and cumulative frequency (median, mean, range, quartiles and inter-quartile range, mode and modal class)
- calculate percentage increase or decrease and understand the use of percentiles
- describe relationships in bivariate data: sketch trend lines through scatter plots; draw estimated lines of best fit; make predictions; interpolate and extrapolate trends
- be able to identify weaknesses in selective statistical presentation of data.

The syllabus forms a good basis for students who wish to go on and study Geography at A' level and has connections with technical awards such as Travel and Tourism.

GCSE Geography is a flexible subject that can lead to courses in a wide range of A' Levels and technical courses. Geography is highly regarded by many employers and colleges, due to the high content of numeracy and literacy work, supported with IT skills.

Course:	History
Curriculum Leader:	Mr J Page
Examination Board:	Edexcel
Syllabus Number:	1HI0

Edexcel 1HIO - History Specification

This qualification aims to enable students to:

- develop and extend their knowledge and understanding of key events, periods and societies in local, British, and wider world history; as well as the diversity of human experience
- engage in historical enquiry to develop as independent learners, critical thinkers and reflective individuals
- ask relevant questions about the past, investigate issues critically and make valid, well-supported historical claims using a range of sources in context
- understand why certain people, events and developments have been considered historically significant and how and why different interpretations of the past are constructed
- organise and communicate historical knowledge clearly and effectively, reaching substantiated judgements.

Course content:

Paper 1 - Thematic study:
Medicine in Britain 1250 to present, including a study of the British sector of the Western Front in World War One.

Paper 2 - Period Study:
Superpower Relations and The Cold War 1941-91.

Paper 2 - British Depth Study:
Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060-88.

Paper 3 - Modern Depth Study:
The USA 1954-75: Conflict at Home and Abroad, focusing on the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War.

Assessment structure:

All units are examined through three examination papers at the end of Year 11. There is no coursework or controlled assessment.

What Skills Will Students Develop?

Studying History builds essential skills including:

· analysing and evaluating evidence

· constructing clear, balanced arguments

· interpreting events from multiple perspectives

· developing problem-solving and critical thinking abilities

· understanding the context of the modern world

This is a demanding and rewarding course that requires commitment, resilience and strong literacy skills.

Why Choose History?

History is a highly respected subject, valued by both employers and further education providers. It develops transferable skills such as critical thinking, communication, independent research, organisation and the ability to form well-reasoned judgements—all of which are sought after in a wide range of careers.

Choosing GCSE History keeps many future pathways open. It is excellent preparation for:

· A-Level History

· Politics

· Law

· Sociology

· English

· Philosophy

· Psychology

Employers particularly value History students for their ability to write clearly, analyse information, work independently and understand complex issues. Careers linked to these skills include journalism, law, public services, business, teaching, heritage, civil service, and many more.

Above all, History helps students make sense of the world around them and become informed, thoughtful global citizens. Something that has never been more important.

Course:	Hospitality & Catering
Course Name:	WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Award in Hospitality & Catering
Examination Board:	WJEC
Syllabus Number:	603/7022/1

WJEC 7022 - Hospitality and Catering

Hospitality and Catering is a dynamic, vibrant and innovative sector delivering vital jobs, growth and investment in the heart of our local communities - important culturally, socially and economically.

Businesses which make up the hospitality sector include hotels, restaurants, coffee shops, pubs and bars, leisure parks, stadia, nightclubs, contract caterers, food service operators, entertainment and visitor attractions. Employment can range from waiting staff, receptionists and catering assistants to chefs, hotel and bar managers, and food technologists working for supermarket chains. Some of these roles require further education and training either through apprenticeships or further and higher education.

The WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Award in Hospitality and Catering is made up of two mandatory units:

- Unit 1 The Hospitality and Catering Industry (Written paper worth 40% of grade)
- Unit 2 Hospitality and Catering in Action (Non-Exam Assessment worth 60% of grade)

The grading breakdown for the course is as follows:

- Level 1 Pass, Level 1 Merit, Level 1 Distinction and Level 1 Distinction*.
- Level 2 Pass, Level, 2 Merit, Level 2 Distinction and Level 2 Distinction*.

This structure has been designed to develop in learners the knowledge and understanding related to a range of hospitality and catering providers; how they operate and what they must consider to be successful.

There is the opportunity to learn about issues related to nutrition and food safety and how they affect successful hospitality and catering operations. In this qualification, learners will have the opportunity to develop some food preparation and cooking skills as well as transferable skills of problem solving, organisation and time management, planning and communication.

Through the two units, learners will gain an overview of the hospitality and catering industry and the type of job roles that may be available to assist them in making choices about progression. Successful completion of this qualification could support entry to qualifications that develop specific skills for work in hospitality and catering.

Course: Mathematics
Curriculum Leader: Mrs K Cross
Examination Board: AQA
Specification Number: 8300

AQA 8300 - Mathematics Specification

Course content:

This will be a two-year GCSE Mathematics course and entry is at one of two tiers: Foundation or Higher. Grades available at these levels of entry are: Foundation tier (grades 1-5) and Higher tier (grades 4-9). Students must complete three question papers at the same tier; all question papers must be taken in the same series.

Assessment structure:

Wholly assessed by the written examination at the end of Year 11. A final grade is awarded based on the combined marks of all papers.

Paper 1 (Non- calculator): 1 hour 30 minutes (80 marks), 33.3% of the GCSE grade
Paper 2(Calculator): 1 hour 30 minutes (80 marks), 33.3% of the GCSE grade
Paper 3 (Calculator): 1 hour 30 minutes (80 marks), 33.3% of the GCSE grade

GCSE Mathematics is a core subject and is therefore compulsory for all students. Students are set by ability which is dependent on their prior attainment as well as their potential within the subject.

Students will study a wide range of mathematics across all strands of the curriculum; algebra, geometry, number, data, probability and ratio and proportion, which builds on the skills and knowledge from Key Stage 3.

The weighting of the topic areas has been prescribed by Ofqual and is common to all exam boards. The table below shows the approximate weightings of the topic areas for the overall tier of assessment, not for each individual question paper.

Topic Area	Foundation Tier (%)	Higher Tier (%)
Number	25	15
Algebra	20	30
Ratio	25	20
Geometry	15	20
Probability and statistics (combined)	15	15

This course teaches patience, discipline and encourages students to develop the confidence and capacity to problem-solve and make informed decisions. Higher tier students will find that the course provides a strong basis to undertake an Advanced Level (A Level) Mathematics course in post-16. For those with a substantial background in mathematics, there is an unlimited number of career opportunities and prospects available – almost all the top fifty jobs in the 'best' jobs list involves mathematical reasoning and knowledge.

Course: Media Studies
Curriculum Leader: Mrs L Murphy
Examination Board: AQA
Syllabus Number: 8572

AQA 8572 - Media Studies Specification

Course content:

GCSE Media Studies encompasses all aspects of media including the key concepts of language, representations, industries and audiences, giving students both an overall and in-depth understanding of how media impacts on the world around them. New topics in the recently amended specification offer a broad overview of the subject, as well as a more detailed study of relevant and contemporary content.

Students should opt for Media Studies if they enjoy English and other creative subjects such as Art, alongside a proficiency in ICT. Students are expected to write at length, including longer responses and analytical answers, deploying media theory and vocabulary. They will also be required to carry out independent/group research and planning. Students will be expected to draw and design production pieces, such as storyboards and mock websites. Students will discuss and present their work on a regular basis, either individually or in groups.

Assessment structure:

This qualification is linear, meaning students will sit all their exams and submit their non-exam assessment at the end of the two years. Students are required to study media products from all of the following media forms:

- audio-visual forms (TV, film, radio, advertising and marketing, video games and music video)
- online forms (social and participatory media, video games, music video, newspapers, magazines, advertising and marketing)
- print forms (newspapers, magazines, advertising and marketing).

70% of a student's grade is assessed through two written examination papers taken at the end of Year 11. The written examination paper is assessed externally under formal examination conditions.

30% of a student's grade is assessed through one non-exam assessment. The brief will be released by AQA and change for every year of study. This will be teacher assessed. Students will be required to complete work to strict deadlines and will produce a statement of intent and a media product for an intended audience. Examples include a music video/advertising campaign.

This course provides a very useful grounding for anyone considering a career in any area of the media, such as television, journalism and advertising. Specialist courses such as Film Studies are available at sixth form colleges as well as Advanced Level Media Studies.

Course: Music
Curriculum Leader: Mr C Ballard
Examination Board: WJEC
Syllabus Number: C660QS

WJEC C660QS - Music Specification

Course Content:

This specification enables learners to develop knowledge and understanding of music through four interrelated areas of study:

Area of study 1: Musical Forms and Devices

Area of study 2: Music for Ensemble

Area of study 3: Film Music

Area of study 4: Popular Music

The specification has three components based on the three skills of performing, composing and appraising. An integrated approach to the three skills is encouraged through each area of study and serves to highlight the importance of the relationship between composer, performer and audience.

Performing

Total duration of performances: 4-6 minutes

Non-exam assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated 30% of qualification 72 marks

Composing

Total duration of compositions: 3-6 minutes

Non-exam assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated 30% of qualification 72 marks

Appraising

Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes (approximately) 40% of qualification 96 marks. There are 8 questions in total, 2 of which are on the following set works:

- AOS1 – Musical Form and Devices - Badinerie by J.S.Bach

- AOS4 - Popular Music – Toto Africa

Assessment Structure:

The course is broken down into 2 main sections – written exam (40%) and then internally assessed NEA (60%).

Progression from GCSE:

- A Level Music or A Level Music Technology
- BTEC Level 3 Music Performance, Composition or Music Technology
- BTEC Level 3 Performing Arts

Course:	GCSE PE
Curriculum Leader:	Mr J Eiffert
Examination Board:	AQA
Syllabus Number:	8582

AQA 8582 - PE Specification

Course content:

All students participate in "core" Physical Education. It is also possible to choose PE as an option which leads to gaining a GCSE.

The AQA GCSE Physical Education (PE) course is designed to inspire, motivate, and transform students by offering a broad and engaging curriculum that is both fulfilling and worthwhile. The course encourages students to develop a deep appreciation of physical education in a cultural context, helping them understand the diverse roles that physical activity plays across different societies.

Throughout the course, students will enhance their creativity and decision-making skills, allowing them to plan and perform effectively in a range of physical activities. They will learn to adapt to changing situations, fostering a mindset that is flexible and responsive to the demands of various sports and physical challenges.

The course also supports students in making informed decisions about their future, whether it be in terms of further education opportunities or potential career paths in the fields of sport, fitness, and health. By the end of the course, students will have gained valuable insights into the benefits of physical activity and how it can contribute to lifelong well-being.

In addition to their five lessons of GCSE PE, students will also have three lessons of Core PE every fortnight.

Non-Exam element (40%):
Practical activities will be taught over 2 lessons per fortnight.

Practical performance in physical activity and sport

What is assessed?

- practical performance in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity)

- analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.

How it is assessed

- assessed by teachers
- moderated by AQA
- 100 marks
- 40% of GCSE.

Questions for each of their three activities, students will be assessed in skills in progressive drills (10 marks per activity) and in the full context (15 marks per activity). Students will be assessed on their analysis (15 marks) and evaluation (10 marks) of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.

Exam Element (60%):

The theory aspects of the course will be taught over 3 lessons per fortnight. This element will be assessed over 2 exam papers sat at the end of the course.

Paper 1: The Human Body and Movement in Physical Activity and Sport

What is assessed?

- Applied Anatomy and Physiology
- Movement Analysis
- Physical Training
- Use of data.

How it is assessed

- Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes
- 78 marks
- 30% of GCSE.

Questions will be a mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.

Paper 2: Socio-cultural Influences and Wellbeing in Physical Activity and Sport

What is assessed?

- Sports Psychology
- Socio-cultural differences
- Health, fitness and well-being
- Use of data.

How it is assessed

- Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes
- 78 marks
- 30% of GCSE.

Questions will be a mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.

Students looking to study Physical Education Sports Science at A' Level will need to have studied the subject at GCSE level. The qualification can help lead to a career in the leisure industry, in coaching or PE teaching.

Course:	Photography
Curriculum Leader:	Ms A Whiteland
Examination Board:	AQA
Syllabus Number:	8206

AQA 8206 - Photography Specification

Course content:

GCSE Photography is new to the options list for 2026, and this is first time the subject will be offered at Hurstmere. If you enjoy the idea of taking photographs using a camera and manipulating them on photoshop or by hand this would be the option for you. Students will have access to DSLR cameras, professional lighting kits and backdrops. Students will also have access to photoshop which is an editing software that is widely used in many creative industries.

Photography is not just about taking photographs. You must also be creative and enjoy working on the computer. You will:

- learn skills that you will use in industry
- work to a brief like a professional photographer
- learn to interpret and create images using Adobe Photoshop

Over time, you will critically reflect upon your creative journey encouraging you to have independent views and opinions.

Coursework is produced every lesson and photography is a 100% practical subject with an element of written analysis and annotation in your sketchbook.

Assessment structure:

Coursework is worth 60% of your grade and the Exam is worth 40% of your final grade. The coursework and exam will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives:
A01 – Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.
A02 – Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.
A03 – Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.
A04 – Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

In January of Year 11 you will receive your exam paper. You will get to choose ONE of the questions and develop your ideas culminating in a 10-hour exam. The Exam paper is issued to students well in advance of the examination to allow students to prepare their ideas fully and this preparation work is a considerable part of the final examination grade. This element makes up 40% of your final grade.

Please note that to study Photography, students will need to provide their own equipment or pay a charge to the school to loan the required equipment.

Course: Religious Studies
Curriculum Leader: Mrs H Knight
Examination Board: AQA
Syllabus Number: 8062

AQA 8062 - Religious Studies Specification

As well as expanding your understanding of Christianity and Buddhism, the GCSE content for this specification covers a wide range of exciting ethical issues, such as the acceptability of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the efficacy of our current legal system on the instances of crime, and the role of science in extending human life.

Course Structure:

Paper 1:

- The study of religions – Beliefs, teachings and practices (Christianity and Buddhism)

Paper 2: Religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes

- Peace and conflict.
- Crime and punishment.
- Human rights and social justice.
- Religion and life.

Assessment structure:

Assessments use multiple-choice, short answer and extending writing/essays to assess knowledge, understanding, application and evaluation skills.

Two 1 hour and 45-minute written examinations

Why should I study Religious Education at GCSE?

We live in a diverse society: understanding religious ideas, beliefs and outlooks, means we can have a better understanding of the world we live in.

Many of our students apply to local schools and colleges for their sixth form studies and this qualification will feed nicely into several A' Levels including Sociology, Law and Religious Studies.

If you then decide to go on to study at University, Religious Education is greatly sought after by many of the top institutions.

Religious Education develops critical thinking, evaluation and empathy, all of which are in high demand with potential employers,

It is a subject that asks the big questions in life!

Courses:	GCSE Combined Science Separate Sciences
Curriculum Leader:	Mr N. Scott
Examination Board:	AQA
Syllabus Number:	*Combined Sciences: 8464 *Separate Sciences: Biology 8461; Chemistry 8462; Physics 8463

AQA Science Specifications

Course Content:

GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy (2 GCSEs)

GCSE Combined Science offers students knowledge of Science, by studying units from Biology, Chemistry and Physics and providing a firm foundation to go on to study A' Level Science subjects. The course is structured to encourage enthusiasm about Science, leading to continued study and the development of:

- students' understanding of the science around them that affects them in their everyday life
- students' questioning, analytical and evaluative approach to scientific problems
- students' practical skills in Science and an understanding of how Science works.

GCSE Combined Science is for learners of any ability, whether they intend to study Science further or not. The course presents Biology, Chemistry and Physics in separate teaching and learning units.

This course is appropriate for students who may wish to progress to AS/A2 Levels in Science subjects. Grammar Schools in the borough accept students to study A Level Sciences who have good grades in Combined Science. This results in a double award GCSE in Combined Science

Assessment Structure:

All exams will take place in May/June of Year 11. There are six papers: two Biology, two Chemistry and two Physics. Each of the six written exams will be 1 hour 15 minutes and each will count towards 16.7% of the GCSE.

Questions in the written exams will draw on the knowledge and understanding students have gained by carrying out a series of practical activities throughout the course. These questions will count for at least 15% of the overall marks for the qualification. Many of the written exam questions will also focus on investigative skills and how well students can apply what they know to practical situations often in novel contexts.

The tier of entry can be Higher or Foundation, but the same tier must be sat in all papers. Students can score grades from 1-1 to 5-5 at Foundation level and grades 4-3 to 9-9 at Higher level. Anything below a grade 4-3 results in a U grade being awarded for Higher candidates.

Separate Sciences program (GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry and GCSE Physics)

Separate Sciences is also offered as an option. Students will study AQA exam board's program for GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics courses. Due to the high level of scientific understanding these courses require, this option is only suited to those students who are consistently achieving a level 6 or above in Science and who have a real enthusiasm for the subject. In addition, students who take this option would be expected to be aiming to study a Science or Sciences at AS/A2 Level and beyond. This course requires the students to study science for 15 hours a fortnight in lessons (as well as separate homework and home projects for each subject) and is therefore only appropriate for the most motivated students. In order to take this option, it is necessary to discuss beforehand whether this is the most suitable course for you with your Science teacher. You may also speak to the Head of Science.

Assessment structure:

All exams will take place in May/June of Year 11. Each GCSE will be assessed by two papers, each worth 50% of the GCSE. Each of the exams will be 1 hour 45 minutes.

Questions in the written exams will draw on the knowledge and understanding students have gained by carrying out a series of practical activities throughout the course. These questions will count for at least 15% of the overall marks for the qualification. Many of the written exam questions will also focus on investigative skills and how well students can apply what they know to practical situations often in novel contexts.

This results in three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.