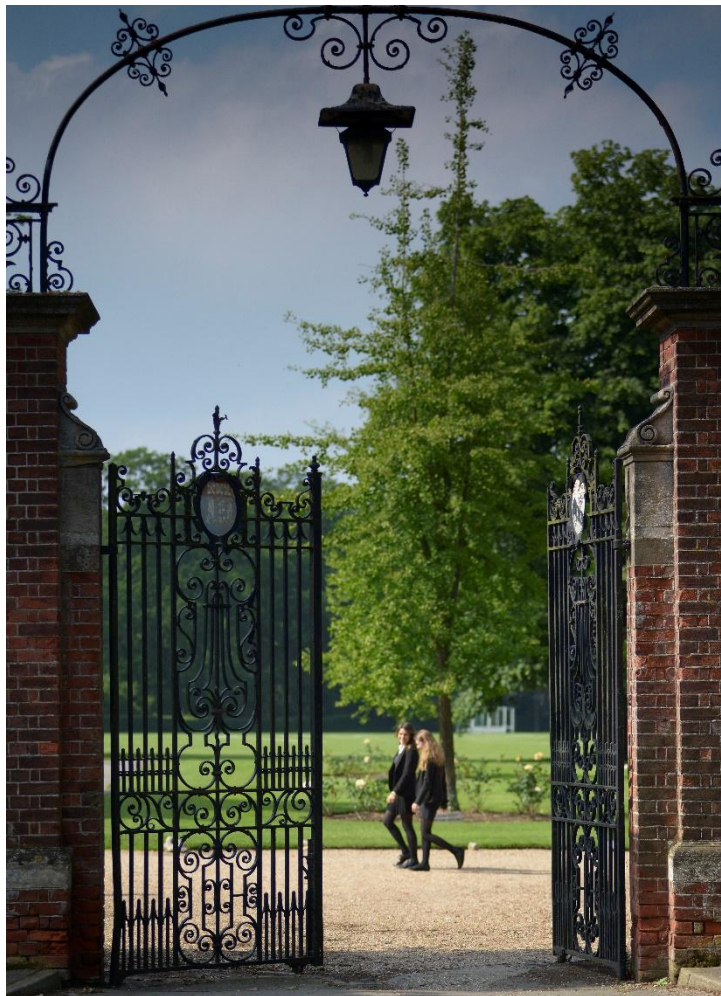




## GCSE Information Booklet: Years 10 and 11



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## **OVERVIEW**

The GCSE years are an exciting and transformative stage of a pupil's education. At Gresham's, our Years 10 and 11 curriculum is carefully designed to offer both breadth and choice, enabling pupils to pursue their academic interests while building a strong foundation for future success.

We believe that education should open doors, inspire ambition and foster a genuine love of learning. Our GCSE pathways allow pupils to deepen their knowledge in subjects they are passionate about, while maintaining the broad and balanced education that keeps future opportunities wide open. Whether a pupil's interests lie in the sciences, humanities, languages, creative arts or beyond, their programme of study is designed to support a range of post-16 pathways and future career aspirations.

More than simply preparing pupils for examinations, the GCSE experience at Gresham's encourages them to discover who they are as learners. As they progress through Years 10 and 11, pupils develop the academic maturity, intellectual curiosity and independent study skills that will serve them throughout their lives. They begin to see themselves not just as students, but as scientists, historians, linguists, artists, mathematicians and thinkers.

Academic rigour is at the heart of a Gresham's education, but it is balanced by opportunities for creativity, investigation and discovery. Our aim is not simply to help pupils gain qualifications, but to cultivate the intellectual independence that underpins lifelong learning.

Pupils are encouraged to choose subjects that genuinely interest them, knowing that enthusiasm and curiosity are often the strongest foundations for achievement. Throughout their courses, they will be challenged to question, analyse and explore ideas in depth, making connections across disciplines and developing the confidence to think independently.

Most pupils at Gresham's study up to ten GCSE subjects, with English Language and English Literature awarded as separate qualifications. In exceptional circumstances, and following consultation with parents and the Deputy Head (Academic), pupils receiving Learning Support may study a reduced number of GCSE subjects.

At Gresham's, we offer a combination of GCSE and International GCSE (IGCSE) courses. Departments carefully select the qualification that they believe provides the most accessible, engaging and academically rewarding experience for their pupils, as well as the best preparation for Sixth Form study and beyond. Throughout this booklet, both qualifications are referred to collectively as GCSEs.

**The choices made now are the beginning of an exciting journey. We encourage pupils to explore their interests, embrace new challenges and select a pathway that will inspire them to achieve their very best.**

**The core GCSE subjects at Gresham's are:**

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- All three Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
- A Modern Foreign Language (French or Spanish)

Beyond that, pupils have a free choice of options subjects. It is recommended that pupils play to their strengths while looking to keep a broad range of subjects.

The core subjects are usually set by ability; the options subjects are mixed ability.

Depending on whether pupils take three single Sciences or the Combined Science GCSE, they will have six or seven subjects in the core.

**OPTION SUBJECTS**

- Computer Science
- Drama
- English as a Second Language (for non-native English speakers only)
- Fine Art
- French (if not chosen as the core language)
- Geography
- Graphic Communication
- History
- Latin (Ancient Greek as an enrichment may be offered by agreement)
- Music
- Religious Studies
- Physical Education
- Spanish (if not chosen as the core language)
- 3D Design

All pupils will make the choice of **four subjects in preference order**. Depending on the Sciences route, these will be three choices and a reserve, or four choices.

**Notes:**

- We aim to give pupils a complete choice of option subjects. However, low demand and timetable constraints may mean that subjects are not available or certain combinations of options are not possible. Pupils must therefore ensure that they indicate a 'reserve' subject choice on their options form.
- Due to their similarity, we do not allow pupils to choose Fine Art, 3D Design and Graphic Communication. Two of these three are permissible.

## **THE NUMBER OF OPTIONS SUBJECTS TAKEN – THE IMPACT OF SCIENCE**

Because it is a Core subject, all pupils must study all three Sciences, however there is a choice as to how this is achieved. The School offers GCSE Combined Science which amounts to two GCSEs (a double award GCSE in Combined Science), or three individual Science GCSEs (in Biology, Chemistry and Physics).

We would envisage that those wanting to go onto a Sixth Form programme involving a Science subject (if they are planning to study any one Science subject at A level or IB) would take separate Sciences. Those who want to study none, or who may still be unsure, may follow the Combined Science route.

Taking Combined Science does not preclude any pupil from continuing in any Science through to A level, the IB Diploma Programme or degree level, assuming a sufficiently high grade is achieved.

The judgement as to which route is most appropriate can be guided by the Science Department who can recommend the appropriate route for pupils if needed.

## **LEARNING SUPPORT**

Learning Support lessons are scheduled around the GCSE timetable. Pupils can take ten GCSEs or, through discussion, take a reduced number of subjects in light of their individual needs. Pupils can attend LS Prep Monday-Friday 5.30pm-6.30pm for additional support.

## GRADING AT GCSE

Since 2017, the 'letters' GCSE grading has been replaced by number grades, with 9 the highest, as indicated here. For those who are more familiar with A\* - E, this is a conversation table:

**Ofqual**

**New GCSE grading structure**

| New grading structure | Current grading structure |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 9                     | A*                        |
| 8                     | A                         |
| 7                     | A                         |
| 6                     | B                         |
| 5                     | B                         |
| 4                     | C                         |
| 3                     | D                         |
| 2                     | E                         |
| 1                     | F                         |
| 1                     | G                         |
| U                     | U                         |

**GOOD PASS (DfE)**  
5 and above = top of C and above

**AWARDING**  
4 and above = bottom of C and above

The chief differences are that the top grade 9 is awarded to only the very highest achievers, and a pass – grade 4 – will be aligned with the bottom of grade C. A '5' is considered a "good pass".

## **THE STEPS TO MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES**

We hope this booklet helps pupils to consider carefully what choices to make. Tutors will also discuss options so that pupils and parents should not feel these choices are being made in isolation. Therefore, please do not hesitate to contact your son's or daughter's Tutor or teachers to discuss options. These conversations can start at any time but the Parents' Evening on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2027 will provide an opportunity to speak to teachers briefly about the suitability of choices, and the GCSE Information Evening on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2027 gives pupils and parents a chance to explore all of the options available.

Pupils will be asked to submit their Options Choices form in the second part of the Lent Term. The choices indicated will not be set in stone but it would be beneficial if these are as thoughtful as possible as pupils will begin to be introduced to GCSE content in the second half of the Summer Term.

**Please note the cut-off date for any possible changes to options is the first Home Weekend of the Michaelmas Term. No option changes will be allowed after this date so it is imperative that pupils choose their options wisely.**

Please do contact me if you would like any further help with the process.



Darrell Chart-Boyles  
Deputy Head (Academic)  
[dchartboyles@greshams.com](mailto:dchartboyles@greshams.com)

## **THE CORE**

### **ENGLISH**

Head of English: Mr F Hardy ([fhardy@greshams.com](mailto:fhardy@greshams.com))

Board: Edexcel

We follow the Edexcel IGCSE specification for English Language and English Literature. Pupils are set by ability established by their performance throughout Year 9.

#### **English Language (4EA1)**

The language course is assessed through one examination (60% of the total score) and two pieces of coursework (40%).

Examination: Non-fiction texts and transactional writing

Section A: a mixture of short and long-answer questions on one of the ten non-fiction anthology pieces and a previous unseen extract.

Section B: one writing task from a choice of two involving a given audience and style.

Coursework: Imaginative Writing, and Poetry and Prose essays. Both are worth 30 marks.

#### **English Literature (4ET1)**

The literature course is assessed through one examination (60%) and two pieces of coursework (40%).

Examination: Poetry and Modern Prose.

There are three sections in this exam covering unseen poetry, poetry from Part 3 of the anthology and the chosen Modern Prose text.

Coursework: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts. Both are worth 30 marks.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Head of Mathematics: Mr J Thomson ([jthomson@greshams.com](mailto:jthomson@greshams.com))

Board: Edexcel for IGCSE, AQA Further Mathematics GCSE.

Most pupils will follow the Higher level IGCSE course; some pupils will be entered for the Foundation level paper. Higher level papers are designed for grades 9 to 4 and the Foundation level paper for grades 5 and below. Roughly 14 of the 25 questions appear in both the Higher and Foundation examination papers. On the exam certificate there is no mention of the tier; only the grade achieved is stated.

The IGCSE specification is an academically challenging course and is assessed by two written exam papers.

Pupils who show outstanding ability in Mathematics will be placed in Set 1. This set will cover the IGCSE syllabus by the end of Year 10 and will take the Further Mathematics examination at the end of Year 11 as well as the normal IGCSE.

Coursework: Nil.

## **SCIENCE**

Head of Science: Mr T Philpott ([tphilpott@greshams.com](mailto:tphilpott@greshams.com))

Head of Biology: Miss A Mitchell ([amitchell@greshams.com](mailto:amitchell@greshams.com))

Head of Chemistry: Mr C Oates ([coates@greshams.com](mailto:coates@greshams.com))

Head of Physics: Mr D Saker ([dsaker@greshams.com](mailto:dsaker@greshams.com))

It is compulsory to study all 3 sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) at GCSE. There are two routes you can take:

Opt to study all 3 as **separate** GCSE subjects (gaining an Edexcel GCSE in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics).

Or

As part of the **Combined Science** GCSE programme (gaining a double GCSE award in Edexcel Combined Science).

The separate award course will suit those who enjoy and are reasonably able in the sciences. There is no coursework element to the separate award course and there are two examinations papers in each science taken at the end of Year 11 (each paper is 1 hour and 45 minutes).

The Combined Science programme has no coursework components. There are two science papers in Biology, Physics and Chemistry, making 6 papers for the Combined Science award. All papers will be taken at the end of Year 11 (each paper is 1 hour and 10 minutes).

Staff meet as a faculty to discuss potential advice for each pupil regarding the choice of separate or Combined Science GCSE. This factors in their enthusiasm for the subject, attainment in each science, whether they are considering pursuing a Science subject beyond GCSE and whether they would benefit more by having an extra option choice for GCSE subjects (which combined science would provide). Teachers will talk to pupils about their recommendations and share these with parents at consultation meetings, however the final decision rests with the pupil and parent. There is much more flexibility in changing from separate science to Combined Science during the course as the separate science course covers the entire Combined Science course. It is not recommended to change from Combined Science to the separate science award.

Both courses develop the necessary academic and thinking skills for further scientific education. The study of science requires good basic mathematics and the ability to comprehend and express ideas with effective use of technical language; obviously these skills are in greater need for the separate award course.

Both courses will be taught with a variety of activities, including plenty of experimental work. Some aspects of the GCSE course have already been taught in Year 9, and Year 10 will build upon this material. Both separate science and Combined Science allow access to science courses in the Sixth Form, but we recommend anyone who knows they want/need to study a Science at A level/IB Higher Level to take the separate science option.

## **BIOLOGY**

Head of Biology: Miss A. Mitchell ([amitchell@greshams.com](mailto:amitchell@greshams.com))

Board: Edexcel GCSE (9–1) Biology / Edexcel Combined Science

Biology is the study of life, and both courses develop a thorough understanding of food production, health matters, environmental issues, biology in industry and all the fundamental principles that underlie these areas. In addition, it provides the basis for understanding of the human body, including overview of key organ systems and how they work.

Nine topic areas are covered in the Edexcel Combined Science and Edexcel GCSE (9–1) separate Biology courses, studied at varying levels of detail:

1. Key concepts in biology (including cells, enzymes and transport of molecules)
2. Cells and control (including cell division, stem cells and the nervous system)
3. Genetics (including DNA and inheritance of genes)
4. Natural selection and genetic modification (including modern techniques such as cloning and genetic engineering)
5. Health, disease and the development of medicines
6. Plant structures and their functions (including photosynthesis and plant growth)
7. Animal Coordination, control and homeostasis
8. Exchange and transport in animals (including the respiratory and circulatory systems)
9. Ecosystems and material cycles

The GCSE course covers a range of different areas of Biology, enabling pupils to experience a broad curriculum that prepares them fully for A level or IB Biology. It is a critical subject for pupils considering a career in medicine or in medical sciences.

## **CHEMISTRY**

Head of Chemistry: Mr C Oates ([coates@greshams.com](mailto:coates@greshams.com))

Board: Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Chemistry / Edexcel Combined Science

Chemistry is an experimental science that combines academic study with the acquisition of practical and investigative skills. It is a remarkably broad subject and is vital to the understanding of everything from the composition of asteroids to the physical principles governing the materials we take for granted, the environment we live in and biological systems including ourselves. Studying the subject involves a journey from the basic building blocks of the atom to the industrial chemistry which has built the world we live in and underpins billions of pounds worth of trade every year.

The Chemistry course starts in Year 9 leaving plenty of time for exploration of the core material and other areas of interest. The full, separate science, syllabus is split into 9 broad topic areas:

1. Key concepts in chemistry
2. States of matter and mixtures
3. Chemical changes
4. Extracting metals
5. Separate Chemistry 1 (not studied by the combined scientists)
6. Groups in the periodic table
7. Rates of reaction
8. Fuels and Earth science
9. Separate Chemistry 2 (not studied by the combined scientists)

Those studying either separate Chemistry or Combined Science will be ready for advanced study at the end of the course. The analytical and problem-solving skills taught in Chemistry are applicable across the GCSE curriculum and beyond.

Apart from being a subject worthy of study in its own right, Chemistry is a prerequisite for many other courses in higher education, such as medicine, biological science, materials science and environmental science.

## **PHYSICS**

Head of Physics: Mr D Saker ([dsaker@greshams.com](mailto:dsaker@greshams.com))

Exam Board. Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Physics / Edexcel Combined Science

Physics studies the way the world works and the process of scientifically describing the universe in which we live. If you are to make informed choices later in life you will need some knowledge of Physics. Physics covers the principles behind the workings of the nucleus of an atom to the motion of galaxies in the universe, along with everything in between.

The hardest part of Physics for many pupils is applying these principles clearly and logically to solve problems in unfamiliar situations. Consequently, Physics is a highly desirable subject to study due to its practical content and the training it provides in problem solving.

The GCSE course follows the Edexcel exam board qualification and there are two routes. Combined Science or Separate Science.

The topics you will encounter for each course are below.

Combined Science (2 Periods of Physics each week)

1. Key concepts in Physics
2. Motion and Forces
3. Conservation of Energy
4. Waves
5. Light and the EMS
6. Radioactivity
7. Energy and Work
8. Forces and their Effect
9. Electrical circuits
10. Magnetism
11. Electromagnetic Induction
12. Particle Models
13. Forces and Matters

Separate Science (3 Periods of Physics each week)

1. Key concepts in Physics
2. Motion and Forces
3. Conservation of Energy
4. Waves
5. Light and the EMS
6. Radioactivity
7. Astronomy
8. Energy and Work
9. Forces and their Effect
10. Electrical Circuits
11. Static Electricity
12. Magnetism
13. Electromagnetic Induction
14. Particle Models
15. Forces and Matter

## **FRENCH**

Head of French: Mrs A Brighton-Watt ([awatt@greshams.com](mailto:awatt@greshams.com))

Board: AQA GCSE (Higher or Foundation)

If you study French, you will enhance your ability to understand and communicate in the only language spoken on all five continents and gain some excellent transferable skills. In many cases, you will already have seen the main structures covered at Prep School and in Year 9, so it is simply a case of furthering understanding and enjoyment as we continue the GCSE course.

At the end of the course, not only will it be possible for you to go to France or a French-speaking country and converse confidently, you will also gain an insight and appreciation of French culture whilst expanding your own individual interests. You learn key soft skills through study of a language; you are taught to think on your feet, communicate/respond to feedback, and to react positively to critique, all of which enable pupils to develop an entrepreneurial mindset.

The ability to speak and understand French is an advantage in the international job market and it is the international language of cooking, fashion, theatre, the visual arts, dance and architecture, as well as being the official language of diplomacy and the International Olympic Committee. It is the third most widely used language in international business after English and German internationally, but it is also an analytical language which develops critical thinking.

The department ensures that pupils have the opportunity to excel in their French learning and Universities look closely at whether you have a language GCSE, regardless of what subject you plan to study there. We also offer a foundation course for pupils who are less confident with the language. This course is very accessible, and it also enables pupils to further understand their own language, improving their ability to write with more awareness across all their academic subjects.

Languages are a “facilitating” subject, meaning that they will help you whatever career path you take, and in the job market it is now widely accepted that they give you an added advantage in all fields of work, especially in terms of giving you confidence to operate in a multi-lingual, business workplace.

Exam= 25% speaking; 25% listening skills; 25% reading skills and 25% writing skills.

The AQA course is divided into three themes, and the following topics are covered:

### **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 – Communications and the world around us**

- Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Media and technology
- The environment and where people live

## **SPANISH**

Head of Spanish Miss J Challis ([jchallis@greshams.com](mailto:jchallis@greshams.com))

Board: AQA GCSE (Higher and Foundation Tier)

The Spanish Department at Gresham's is composed of a team of experienced teachers who are genuinely enthusiastic about the formation and complex nuances of the Spanish language.

We study the details of how the language is formed and spoken, in addition to putting this information into a relevant context through learning about both Spain and the Spanish Speaking World.

We strive to provide a challenging and stimulating atmosphere in the classroom where each individual can achieve their potential, and as well as aiming for academic success, we endeavour to ensure that pupils enjoy their study of Spanish and that they are highly motivated.

GCSE Spanish is an ideal option for those pupils who have studied the language in Year 9 and who feel confident enough to perform well at GCSE standard.

It is suitable for both those who began studying Spanish in Year 9 who have undergone a fast-track course and those who started prior to joining in Year 9.

We also ensure that pupils are entered for the correct level to enable them to achieve their potential and there is an option to sit the exam at foundation level for pupils who are less confident with the language. This course is very accessible, and it also enables pupils to further understand their own language, improving their ability to write with more awareness across all their academic subjects.

The course aims to develop practical communication skills in the four components of speaking, listening, reading and writing, with the overall goal of improving fluency and understanding in the language and promoting an awareness of Spanish and Latin American Culture and Customs. There is also an emphasis on translation from Spanish to English and vice versa as well as dictation and reading aloud now incorporated, which will enhance pupils' overall literacy which has a very positive impact on other curriculum areas too.

Languages are a "facilitating" subject, meaning that they will help you whatever career path you take, and in the job market it is now widely accepted that they give you an added advantage in all fields of work, especially in terms of giving you confidence to operate in a multi-lingual, business workplace.

The AQA course is divided into three themes and the following topics are covered:

**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 – Communications and the world around us**

- Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Media and technology
- The environment and where people live

Exam = 25% speaking; 25% listening skills; 25% reading skills and 25% writing skills.

## **THE OPTIONS**

### **ART AND DESIGN**

**Pupils may choose two of the three courses offered here for options. Three-Dimensional design replaces DT as a GCSE in the School's curriculum.**

### **FINE ART**

Head of Art: Miss S Pink ([spink@greshams.com](mailto:spink@greshams.com))

Board: Edexcel

GCSE Fine Art provides pupils with the opportunity to explore a range of techniques, processes and materials. Recording through observational drawing and photography is central to the course. Pupils contextualise and inform their own art-making practice by studying work by both historical and contemporary Artists.

Pupils will learn to:

- Apply a creative approach to problem solving.
- Consider and develop original ideas from initiation to realisation.
- Analyse critically their own work and the work of others.
- Express individual thought and choices confidently.
- Take risks, experiment and refine their work.

There is an expectation for pupils to attend the extra Art sessions each week to develop their work and access the facilities.

The course is an excellent preparation for Fine Art or Photography A Level and IB Visual Arts.

The Edexcel Fine Art GCSE consists of two internally assessed and externally moderated components.

- Component 1: Personal Portfolio (internally set) worth 60% of the qualification.
- Component 2: Externally Set Assignment worth 40% of the qualification, with a ten hour exam over two days.

### **DESIGN**

Head of Design: Mr A Gray ([agray@greshams.com](mailto:agray@greshams.com))

Board: OCR

### **GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION**

The course introduces pupils to a visual way of conveying information, ideas and emotions, using a range of graphic media, processes, techniques and elements such

as colour, icons, images, typography and photographs. Pupils should conduct primary and secondary investigations during their design development, and explore traditional and/or new technologies. The course will be built upon an ethos of risk taking and experimentation which is driven by an understanding of contemporary practice.

### THREE-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN

This course is concerned with the designing, prototyping, modelling or making of functional and aesthetic consumer products, interiors and architecture. Pupils should engage with appropriate processes, materials and construction techniques, using maquettes, models and working drawings to help take their initial ideas through to realisation. The course will be built upon an ethos of risk taking and experimentation which is driven by an understanding of contemporary practice.

Controlled assessment portfolio: 60%

Externally set assignment: 40%

## **COMPUTER SCIENCE**

Head of Computer Science: Mr A Davies ([adavies@greshams.com](mailto:adavies@greshams.com))  
Board: Edexcel

### What Students Learn

The course goes beyond basic IT skills to explore how computers actually work. A major part of the curriculum is dedicated to problem solving with programming, where students learn to design, write, and debug programs using Python. This is a language widely used in the real world by major companies and universities. Alongside coding, students explore the fundamentals of technology, including how data like sound and images are stored, and the network protocols that keep the internet running. There is also a strong focus on the modern world, covering cybersecurity threats like hacking and malware, as well as the ethical questions surrounding emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and robotics.

### How It Is Assessed

Unlike subjects that rely on coursework, Computer Science is assessed entirely through two exams at the end of the course, each worth half of the final grade. The first is a written exam lasting 1 hour and 30 minutes that covers the theory and principles of the subject. The second is a unique 2-hour practical exam taken on a computer. In this session, students are provided with coding files and must write and refine their own Python code to solve specific problems, allowing them to demonstrate their practical skills in a realistic environment rather than just on paper.

### Why This Course Is Valuable

This qualification is designed to build the kind of computational thinking that is highly valued for the future. The critical thinking and analysis skills developed here are transferable to many other subjects and careers, from engineering and science to financial services. By mastering the fundamentals of Python and understanding the systems that underpin our digital society, students gain a powerful toolkit that prepares them for further study at A Level or university and helps them thrive in a fast-changing technological world.

## **DRAMA**

Head of Drama: Mr B Hopkins ([bhopkins@greshams.com](mailto:bhopkins@greshams.com))

Board: AQA

GCSE Drama is a lively and creative course designed to balance the practical and academic study of Drama. Pupils work together to understand and experience for themselves the roles and responsibilities of a theatre company. Working as part of a creative team of actors, directors, designers and technicians, pupils build confidence and develop skills in communication, cooperation and performance. The course enables pupils to work imaginatively, developing their understanding of how to create thought-provoking and well-made theatre, and performing play texts to a live audience. In addition to acting and directing, pupils will be encouraged to consider a range of design and technical skills including stage lighting, sound design, set design, stage management, make-up, costume and puppet design.

The course is an excellent preparation for BTEC Performing Arts and provides an excellent foundation in creative, practical performance and production skills. With the focus on working imaginatively, collaborating creatively and communicating effectively, GCSE Drama provides a solid foundation for further studies in Drama and Theatre with a skills set that opens up many vocational opportunities.

The course is divided into three components, which includes the study of a set text, audience experience of live theatre, devising original work and scripted performance.

### **Component 1: Understanding Drama Written Exam, 1 hour 45 minutes, 40%**

The written exam is a response to:

Set Text Study - exploring a set play text as actor, director, designer and technician. This requires pupils to understand the challenges of, and communicate their own ideas for, staging a play as a member of a production company.

Live Theatre - pupils watch and respond to the work of others, writing analytical responses to live theatre as a member of the audience.

### **Component 2: Devising Drama Devising Log & Devised Performance, 40%**

Pupils explore a range of theatre skills including acting, set and costume, lighting and sound design. Working in small groups they specialise to produce an original piece of theatre from a given starting point, recording the process in a Devising Log.

### **Component 3: Texts in Practice. Performance (2 extracts) to examiner, 20%**

In Year 11, pupils work on a play text of their choice and specialise as: an actor, set, costume, lighting or sound designer to present a polished performance to an external examiner.

## **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)**

Head of ESL: Ms M Masters ([mmasters@greshams.com](mailto:mmasters@greshams.com))

Board: Edexcel IGCSE

IGCSE English as a Second Language is studied by many overseas pupils in conjunction with English as a First Language. It can be chosen as an optional subject or may be recommended to pupils working below B2 on entry to Gresham's. This course is topic-based and aims to expose pupils to a significant amount of English to help them achieve well across the curriculum.

Examinations are taken in the summer of Year 11 and comprise reading, writing, listening and speaking papers. Texts are culturally-neutral and are suited to pupils who are new to living in the UK.

### **Topics studied:**

- 1. Myself and Others**
- 2. Travel & Tourism**
- 3. Education**
- 4. Employment**
- 5. Global Issues**

This IGCSE qualification is split into four papers:

### **Paper 1: Reading is worth 25% of the total. Externally assessed.**

Typical tasks include:

- Reading a range of text types e.g. factual texts, invitations, instructions and opinion pieces
- Identifying key information
- Understanding a wide range of grammatical forms and structures
- Reading for different purposes

### **Paper 2: Listening is worth 25% of the total. Externally assessed.**

Typical tasks include:

- Listening to and understanding spoken English Language extracts and identifying key information
- Listening to and understanding informational broadcasts e.g. extracts from podcasts which may involve more than one speaker
- Listening to and understanding conversations which may be casual or in the form of interviews
- Identifying facts and viewpoints

**Paper 3: Writing is worth 25% of the total. Externally assessed.**

Typical tasks include:

**Writing:**

- Conveying information in writing on a range of topics, using context-specific vocabulary
- Writing in a variety of styles, informally and semi-informally e.g. emails and articles
- Summary writing
- Writing fluently, coherently, and accurately

**Paper 4: Speaking is worth 25% of the total. Externally assessed.**

Typical tasks include:

- Role play
- Topic talk
- Picture-based conversation

The IGCSE English as a Second Language qualification is accepted by some British universities as satisfying under-graduate English language requirements.

In addition and either upon recommendation or request, 1-1 English language lessons can be provided at cost.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

Head of Geography: Ms E Churchill ([echurchill@greshams.com](mailto:echurchill@greshams.com))

Board: AQA

The GCSE final grade is based on three exams and there is no coursework. In addition, pupils have to attend two fieldwork days.

**Paper 1 exam: (1 hour 30 minutes, 35% of GCSE)** This is concerned with the dynamic nature of physical processes and systems, and human interaction with them in a variety of places and at a range of scales. An understanding of the tectonic, geomorphological, biological and meteorological processes and features in different environments, and the need for management strategies governed by sustainability and consideration of the direct and indirect effects of human interaction with the Earth and the atmosphere. **Topics** – Tectonic and weather hazards, and climate change. Ecosystems, rainforests and hot deserts. UK physical landscapes, coastal and glacial landscapes in the UK.

**Paper 2 exam: (1 hour 30 minutes, 35% of GCSE)** This is concerned with human processes, systems and outcomes and how these change both spatially and temporally. They are studied in a variety of places and at a range of scales and must include places in various states of development, such as higher income countries (HICs), lower income countries (LICs) and newly emerging economies (NEEs). Pupils develop an understanding of the factors that produce a diverse variety of human environments; the dynamic nature of these environments that change over time and place; the need for sustainable management; and the areas of current and future challenge and opportunity for these environments. **Topics** – Urban issues and challenges, the changing economic world, resource management, either food/water/energy resources.

**Paper 3 exam: (1 hour 30 minutes, 30% of GCSE)** Section A is a critical thinking and problem-solving assessment. Pupils have the opportunity to demonstrate geographical skills and applied knowledge and understanding by looking at a particular issue(s) derived from the specification using secondary sources. A resource booklet will be available twelve weeks before the date of the exam so that pupils have the opportunity to work through the resources, enabling them to become familiar with the material. Sources could include maps at different scales, diagrams, graphs, statistics, photographs, satellite images, sketches, extracts from published materials, and quotes from different interest groups. Assessment will consist of a series of questions related to a contemporary geographical issue(s), leading to a more extended piece of writing, which will involve an evaluative judgement.

Section B consists of two geographical enquiries, each of which must include the use of primary data, collected as part of a fieldwork exercise. The two enquiries must be carried out in contrasting environments and show an understanding of both physical and human geography. In at least one of the enquiries, pupils are expected to show an understanding about the interaction between physical and human geography.

## **HISTORY**

Head of History: Mr S Kinder ([skinder@greshams.com](mailto:skinder@greshams.com))

Board: Edexcel

The GCSE History course we offer is the Edexcel specification. The course focuses on the development of Medicine in Britain from c. 1250 to the Present Day and Anglo-Saxon and Norman England. It also looks at the development of Communism in Russia 1917-1941 and the impact this had upon American-Soviet Relations during the Cold War after 1945. In this respect it marries the best of the previous SHP curriculum with the exciting and dramatic events of the Twentieth Century. This is a truly exciting specification which allows a focus on breadth and depth!

All classes study the following topics:

### **Superpower Relations and the Cold War: 1941-1991**

The course focuses on a substantial and coherent medium timespan of at least 50 years and requires pupils to understand the unfolding narrative of substantial developments and issues associated with the Cold War period. This involves focusing on the origins of East-West rivalry, Berlin in 1961, Cuba in 1962, Czechoslovakia in 1968, détente, the 'New Cold War' and the dramatic events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in 1989-1991.

### **Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c. 1060 - 1088**

This depth study focuses upon late Anglo-Saxon England, the subsequent Norman invasion and the immediate repercussions in terms of social, economic, political, religious and military impact. It requires pupils to study the origins of the Conquest and then the consolidation of Norman rule. Resistance to Norman rule, such as that of Hereward the Wake, is also covered.

### **Medicine in Britain, c1250-Present Day**

The Medicine thematic study requires pupils to understand change and continuity across a broad sweep of history, including the most significant characteristics of different ages from the medieval to modern periods. Pupils will examine when and why ideas concerning the origins of disease and the methods of treatment changed over time.

### **Russia and the Soviet Union, 1917-1941**

This unit focuses on the collapse of the Russian Monarchy and the reasons for the Bolshevik seizure of power in the second of two revolutions in 1917. The nature of Bolshevik rule under Lenin and the subsequent Civil War is then covered in depth. In

addition, pupils will examine the reasons for Stalin's rise to power and the nature of his rule up to the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.

Pupils will face three examinations at the end of the course.

- Paper One (Medicine in Britain) carries a weighting of 30% of the final GCSE Grade and involves the analysis of contemporary sources.
- Paper Two comprises of two units (Anglo-Saxon and Norman England and Superpower Relations and the Cold War) and carries a weighting of 40% of the final grade.
- Paper Three (Russia and the Soviet Union) is worth the remaining 30% of the GCSE grade and involves analysis of contemporary sources and historical interpretations.

These four topics are fascinating in themselves but in the process of studying them pupils will acquire important skills of analysis. These include the ability to explain cause and consequence, assess change, structure arguments, and to present and justify judgements. Pupils will also acquire the ability to synthesise, cross-reference and critically evaluate historical sources and representations.

## **LATIN**

Head of Latin: Mr J Brettell ([jbrettell@greshams.com](mailto:jbrettell@greshams.com))

Board: OCR

Latin GCSE is open to all pupils who have studied the language up to the end of Year 9. Pupils tend to have at least two years' experience of Latin and are working at an appropriate level to make the transition to GCSE a fairly obvious one. It is a challenging subject, which is part of its appeal to pupils and future employers alike. Yet it is also readily accessed by pupils who have felt comfortable with the level of Latin taught in Year 9 at Gresham's. Please talk to the Head of Latin if you are unsure about whether it would be the right choice for you.

The course has three parts, each of which is examined at the end of Year 11.

1. Language (50%) – The course focuses on developing a strong grasp of grammar, vocabulary, and translation. The exam paper consists of unseen comprehension, grammatical and translation exercises.
2. Verse Literature (25%) – The course focuses on understanding, translating and analysing the prescribed Roman poem(s). Skills developed are similar to those needed in English literature. The exam paper consists of translation and commentary on passages from the prescribed poem(s). The prescription will be from Virgil's *Aeneid*.
3. Prose Literature (25%) – The course focuses on understanding, translating and analysing the prescribed Roman prose text(s). Skills developed are similar to those needed in English literature. The exam paper consists of translation and commentary on passages from the prescribed text(s). The selections are usually from various authors and explore a theme.

*Or (in certain circumstances),*

4. Literature and Culture (25%) – The course focuses on developing an understanding of the Roman world through contemporary sources in translation. It also develops the ability to be critical of those sources. There is no Latin in this section of the course.

N.B. The usual combination for the GCSE course at Gresham's is to sit the Language and two Literature papers. However, in certain circumstances, the Head of Latin may decide at the end of the Year 10 course that a group would achieve more highly by sitting the Literature and Culture paper instead of the Prose Literature paper. This will depend on the relative strengths of the set and therefore may differ from year to year.

When a former chief executive of BP was asked why he recruited so many Classics graduates, he answered simply, "We find they sell more oil". The critical skills you will learn in Latin GCSE will serve you well in the future, in whatever field, and make you highly marketable to universities and employers. Through studying ancient literature and culture, you will also develop a deep appreciation of language and the influence of the Roman world on our own.

## **MUSIC**

Director of Music: Mrs M Wolfe ([mwolfe@greshams.com](mailto:mwolfe@greshams.com))

Exam Board: Edexcel GCSE

GCSE Music is a fantastic way for pupils to further develop their love of music, using their existing practical skills to appreciate and understand a wide variety of musical styles, create their own music, and perform regularly, as a soloist and in groups.

Pupils are required to have experience of playing an instrument or singing – ideally to Grade 4 standard - so that they can demonstrate an existing interest in music and musical understanding.

Grade 3 Music Theory knowledge is advantageous, and for those pupils aiming for top marks, Grade 5 Music Theory is strongly recommended. These courses are available to study throughout the duration of the course.

The GCSE qualification is split into three sections:

### **Performance - 30%**

Pupils will perform and record and submit two pieces of music, one as a soloist and another as part of a group. These pieces should be at a minimum of Grade 4, ideally Grade 5 standard.

### **Composition – 30%**

Pupils will create two pieces of music. One to an examination brief and another completely free choice. These can be in any genre or style and the use of music notation software or music technology is permitted.

### **Listening & Appraising – Final written examination 40%**

Pupils study eight set works, in detail, demonstrating their understanding of context, musical elements and the impact of the music. This also broadens out to many different genres and styles.

Areas of study include:

- Western Classical Music – Bach & Beethoven
- Vocal Music – Purcell & Queen
- Music for Stage & Screen – Star Wars & Wicked: The Musical
- Fusion Music – Afro Celt Sound System & Esperanza Spalding

A final 1 hour 45 minute listening examination is held, with a variety of multiple choice and short answer questions linked to set works and unfamiliar music. Pupils also write an extended essay to compare and contrast a piece they have studied with another which is new.

Music GCSE offers academic rigor with the creative and expressive aspects you would expect from an arts GCSE.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

Head of PE: Mrs S Knightbridge([sknightbridge@greshams.com](mailto:sknightbridge@greshams.com))

Board: OCR

Studying GCSE Physical Education will open your eyes to the amazing world of Sports Science alongside high level performance. Not only will you have the chance to perform in three different sports through the non-exam assessment component, you will also develop wide ranging knowledge into the how and why of physical activity and sport.

The combination of physical performance and academic challenge provides an exciting opportunity for pupils. You can perform and then, through the academic study, learn how to improve your performance through the application of theory.

You will study human biology, why some people outperform others, mentally and physically. You will also delve into topics like commercialisation, the ethical considerations behind the use of drugs, and gain an understanding of the consequences of inactivity and poor diet. There is also a small element of biomechanics.

Pupils would benefit from participation in three sports/activities. Please email Mrs Knightbridge if you have any queries with regards to this.

### **Key features**

- Simple, straight forward assessment structure.
- Opportunity to perform in three different sports from a list of team and individual activities. This can be achieved through your participation in the School's Games programme as well as taking part outside school at a higher level potentially.
- Study topics such as anatomy and physiology, biomechanics, psychology and sociology.
- Provides an excellent introduction to future scientific study in this and many other areas.

### **Assessment**

- 40% Non-Exam Assessment (NEA). Three practical performances and one performance analysis task (coursework).
- 60% Exam. Two examination papers (2 x 1 hour) taken at the end of the two year course.
- A wide range of question types including: multiple choice, single mark, short answer and extended response.
- The opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the theory and performance skills in both NEA and through the examinations.

## **RELIGIOUS STUDIES (Philosophy & Ethics)**

Head of RS: Mr S Gates ([sgates@greshams.com](mailto:sgates@greshams.com))

Board: AQA

The GCSE Religious Studies course provides an opportunity to study one of the most fascinating and relevant subjects in the modern curriculum. It also prepares pupils to engage with, evaluate and respond effectively to the personal, national and global issues encountered every day in the media and their personal experience. Pupils are given the chance to examine and explore a wide range of philosophical ideas and ethical controversies, thereby developing their own understanding of life in its fullness.

The course considers the philosophical ideas that form the foundation of human society, a selection of major ethical issues and the significance of religious beliefs in everyday life. Pupils explore different understandings of God, miracles, worship, good and evil and the afterlife. They also analyse various religious, humanist and secular responses to moral problems in the areas of crime & punishment, medical ethics, equality, human relationships and conflict.

Pupils are encouraged to evaluate a range of religious and non-religious perspectives, with a specific focus on Christianity & Buddhism, as well as reflect on their own ideas about life. They also have the opportunity to debate some of the most fascinating questions raised by humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and develop their understanding through a range of educational activities including visits and encounters with visiting speakers.

The subject naturally complements a wide range of subjects and develops the skills of analysis, reasoned argument and thoughtful reflection that are highly valued by Universities and modern employers.

Assessment is by means of two exams of 1hr 45mins each.

There is no coursework.