THE NEWCASTLE SCHOOL

THE NEWCASTLE SCHOOL

GCSE CURRICULUM SUMMARIES 2026-2028

newcastleschool.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

The aims of the GCSE programme are to:

- build on students' prior knowledge, skills and understanding
- maximise individual attainment and outcomes across all subjects
- prepare students effectively for Sixth Form study and future pathways beyond school

All students study a core curriculum comprising English Language, Mathematics and Science. Science is taken either as three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, or as Combined Science, which leads to two GCSEs. Most students will also study English Literature as part of the core.

In addition to this core curriculum, students typically study four optional GCSE subjects, chosen from the following list:

- Art and Design
- Business Studies
- Computer Science
- Design Technology
- French
- Geography
- History
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish

GCSE courses are linear, meaning they are studied over two years and assessed through final examinations at the end of Year 11. Throughout the course, students complete an internal programme of assessments and mock examinations which allow progress to be tracked against target grades and provide regular opportunities for feedback and reflection.

INTRODUCTION

This booklet contains detailed information about each GCSE course, including the examination board and specification code, as well as the member of staff responsible for leading the subject, who can be contacted for further guidance.

GCSEs are graded using the 9–1 numerical grading system, where a grade 9 represents exceptional performance and a grade 4 is considered a standard pass (broadly equivalent to the former grade C). This grading system applies to all GCSE courses offered.

Assessment methods vary by subject but typically consist of a series of externally set examinations assessing both subject knowledge and skills. While most controlled assessments have been phased out, some subjects retain non-examined or practical components which form a compulsory part of the course.

Curriculum Time and Independent Study

The current fortnightly lesson allocation (50-minute lessons) is as follows:

- English Language / English Literature – 7
- Mathematics – 7
- Biology – 4
- Chemistry – 4
- Physics - 4
- Science rotation – 2
- Games / PE – 4
- PSHE – 2
- Option Subjects (x4) – 6

INTRODUCTION

Students are expected to complete two 40-minute homework tasks per subject per week, equating to a recommended minimum of two hours of independent study each school day. The School works carefully to balance workload demands, while encouraging students to take increasing responsibility for managing their time effectively. Any concerns should be raised promptly with a Form Tutor or subject teacher.

Lessons, homework and practical work are planned with students' learning needs in mind, with the aim of supporting progress, developing independence and maximising examination outcomes.
The School provides additional support and guidance through the Support for Learning team where required, while also ensuring that students who are ready for greater challenge are stretched towards the highest possible levels of attainment.

Success at GCSE is influenced by a range of factors, with effort playing a crucial role. There is a strong correlation between students' effort, organisation and engagement, and their final outcomes. Managing the demands of multiple GCSE subjects requires resilience, commitment and effective study habits, all of which are actively supported and reinforced throughout the programme.

While meeting deadlines is important, it is not always possible to publish all assessment dates across the two-year course with absolute certainty. Teaching groups may progress at different rates, and deadlines may be adjusted where this is educationally appropriate. Where changes are necessary, the School will endeavour to keep students and parents informed with as much notice as possible.

A Black (Assistant Head)

CURRICULUM SUMMARIES

ART AND DESIGN

Subject Leader: Mr Wells - gwells@newcastleschool.co.uk
Edexcel Art and Design (1FA0)

Why Art and Design?
Art and Design pervades our daily lives through the media and surrounding environment. The study of Art at GCSE increases our awareness and understanding of some of the principal forms of creation and communication. The basic core skills are fundamental to a wide range of vocations. They can develop qualities and abilities that have very practical applications in areas such as graphics, architecture, fashion, illustration and textiles.

There are also the opportunities Art can provide for future recreation, giving different perspective and challenges away from the pre-occupations of the everyday business, industrial and domestic worlds. Art gives ability for students to express themselves in precise terms. It gives the opportunity for individuals to produce work that is unique to them as there will never be anything like it anywhere else.

Course Outline
The Art and Design Department currently follows the Edexcel specification for Art and Design.

- This qualification consists of two internally assessed and externally moderated components.
- Component 1: Personal Portfolio (internally set)
- Component 2: Externally Set Assignment.
- Pupils receive 2 (80) minute lessons per week.

Overview
Art and Design is a broad course of study, requiring students to develop an appreciation of the creative process through a practical response, using a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional media, materials, techniques and processes.

ART AND DESIGN

Pupils will be working in two disciplines:

Students are encouraged to develop their work in their own way. As the pupils work on their individual ideas, there is plenty of scope to stretch each pupil's potential and suggest various ways forward.

They can choose to work with a wide variety of materials including drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking and mixed media.

Students are also introduced to visual ways of conveying information, ideas and emotions, using a range of, processes, techniques, graphic media and elements such as line, tone, colour, collage, icons, images, typography and photographs.

Course Content and Objectives
The course should encourage students to:

- actively engage in the creative process of art and design in order to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds
- develop creative, imaginative and intuitive capabilities when exploring and making images and artefacts
- become confident in taking risks and learn from experience when exploring and experimenting with ideas, processes, media, materials and techniques
- develop critical understanding through investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills
- develop and refine ideas and proposals, personal outcomes or solutions with increasing independence
- acquire and develop technical skills through working with a broad range of media, materials, techniques, processes and technologies with purpose and intent
- develop knowledge and understanding of art and design in historical and contemporary contexts, societies and cultures

Personal Portfolio - Throughout Years 10 and 11 pupils will undertake two projects. Each project will consist of several pieces of work, e.g. sketches, drawings, photographs, paintings as a starting point for a finished piece, or pieces, in any material(s). There will also be opportunity for educational visits to various exhibitions.

ART AND DESIGN

Externally Set Assignment - The pupils have 10 hours to complete the externally set Controlled Test. This paper gives one broad based theme as a starting point and is given to the Year 11 pupils in January. They have several weeks to prepare research work before undertaking the 10 hour controlled test independently.

Pupils exhibit their Coursework and their Controlled Test work at the end of the course.

Course Assessment

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all GCSE Art and Design specifications and all exam boards. The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives:

- AO1: Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources. (25% of total marks)
- AO2: Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes. (25% of total marks)
- AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses. (25% of total marks)
- AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language. (25% of total marks)

Components

Component 1 – Personal Portfolio (60 % of overall mark)	Component 2 – Externally Set Assignment (40 % of overall mark)

Awarding Grades

The qualification will be graded on a nine-point scale: 1–9 – where 9 is the highest grade.

BIOLOGY

Subject Leader: C Merrifield – cmerrifield@newcastleschool.co.uk

AQA Biology (8461)

Why Biology?
GCSE Biology helps students gain an excellent understanding of the world of living things, from how a basic cell functions to the complexities of whole ecosystems. The syllabus covers a whole range of current biological topics, from how new medicines are developed to how animals can be cloned.

Course Outline
Places on the Biology GCSE course are limited. The cohort will be selected based on merit, taking into consideration all assessment data. The majority of students will follow the GCSE Combined Science pathway, rather than taking Biology as a separate GCSE.

- The Biology Department currently follows the updated AQA specification.
- This qualification is linear- students will sit all their exams at the end of Year 11.
- Higher and foundation options are available in the examinations.

Course Content
The course requires knowledge of a wide range of Biology topics, underpinned by an understanding of the process of scientific investigation called "Working Scientifically". Working scientifically is the sum of all the activities that scientists do: Investigating, observing, experimenting and testing out ideas.

This course should encourage students to:

• develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding of Biology
• develop understanding of the nature, processes and methods of Biology
• develop and learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills, both in the laboratory, in the field and in other learning environments
• develop their ability to evaluate claims based on biology through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence and conclusions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

BIOLOGY

The course content is divided into seven sections. These are:

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

Outside the classroom, pupils will have the opportunity to broaden their interest in Science by participating in a number of competitions.

Course Assessment

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all GCSE Biology specifications and all exam boards. The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives:

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: scientific ideas; scientific techniques and procedures. (40% of total marks)
- AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of: scientific ideas; scientific enquiry, techniques and procedures. (40% of total marks)
- AO3: Analyse information and ideas to: interpret and evaluate; make judgments and draw conclusions; develop and improve experimental procedures. (20% of total marks)

Examinations

All examinations have a similar format. The papers include a variety of different styles of questions, including multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Biology 1 – 1 hour 45 minutes 100 marks (50 % of overall mark) Examines topics 1-4	Biology 2 – 1 hour 45 minutes 100 marks (50% of overall mark) Examines topics 5-7

Awarding Grades

The qualification will be graded on a nine-point scale: 9-1 – where 9 is the highest grade. A student taking Foundation Tier assessments will be awarded a grade within the range of 1 to 5. A student taking Higher Tier assessments will be awarded a grade within the range of 4 to 9. A student sitting the Higher Tier who just fails to achieve grade 4 will be awarded an allowed grade 3.

BUSINESS

Subject Leader: Mr D Paterson – dpaterson@newcastleschool.co.uk

OCR / Business / J204

Why Business?

This course is designed to provide you with an introduction to the world of business. It will introduce you to issues concerning the setting up and operation of a business. It explores the activities of a business, the reasons for success or failure, the different functional areas of a business and the ways that businesses can grow.

Successful completion of this course will provide you with the opportunity to progress onto one of a range of business-related courses in sixth form including A Level or equivalent course in Economics and Business, as well as preparing you for any future employment. You will work in a variety of ways including in groups, independently, using real life business case studies, internet research, visits or activities relating to real businesses. You will develop a variety of skills including presentation skills, writing business documents such as reports, plans and financial statements and teamwork.

Course outline

Whilst studying these units you will learn about the following aspects of business activity:

- Business Activity – Business Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, Planning, Ownership, Aims and Objectives, Stakeholders and Business Growth.
- Marketing – The Role of Marketing as part of the Wider Business, Market Research, Market Segmentation and The Marketing Mix.
- People – The Role of People as part of the Wider Business, Organisational Structures, Communication, Recruitment, Motivation, Training and Employment Law.
- Operations – The Role of Operations as part of the Wider Business, Production Processes, Quality, Sales and Customer Service, Consumer Law, Location and Working with Suppliers.
- Finance – The Role of Finance as part of the Wider Business, Sources of Finance, Revenue, Costs, Profit and Loss, Break-even, Cash and Cash Flow.

BUSINESS

- Influences on Business – This covers the external factors that a business would encounter including Ethical and Environmental Issues, The Economic Climate and Globalisation.
- The Interdependent Nature of Business – This is the synoptic element of the assessment where students need to use their knowledge and understanding of the whole content to make decisions based on the information provided and an assessment of the impact that the decisions will have on different sections of the business (functional areas).

Assessment

This GCSE will be graded 9-1 and there is only one tier of assessment. There is no Coursework or Controlled Assessment element. The course will be assessed in two exams at the end of Year 11 using a mixture of multiple choice, short response and longer response questions:

Business 1 - Examination (1 hour 30 minutes) 80 marks / 50% of the GCSE Grade

- This exam covers the Business Activity, Marketing and People sections of the course.

Business 2 - Examination (1 hour 30 minutes) 80 marks / 50% of the GCSE Grade

- This exam covers the Operations, Finance, Influences on Business and Interdependent Nature of Business sections of the course.

CHEMISTRY

Subject Leader: Dr S Holmes - sholmes@newcastleschool.co.uk

AQA Chemistry (8462)

Why Chemistry?
GCSE Chemistry provides students with a better understanding of the material world around them. Many everyday objects that they use, wear or interact with utilise technology that is underpinned by chemical science. Whether it be a pen, a football shirt or a much-prized smart phone, an object's unique properties are linked to its Chemistry and the interactions between the electrons of the elements it contains. A prerequisite for entry onto this course will be a good grade in the end of Year 9 examinations.

Course Outline
Places on the Chemistry GCSE course are limited. The cohort will be selected based on merit, taking into consideration all assessment data. The majority of students will follow the GCSE Combined Science pathway rather than taking Chemistry as a separate GCSE.

- The NSB Chemistry Department follows the AQA specification.
- This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course in Year 11.
- The GCSE Chemistry specification builds on topics covered at KS3.
- Higher and foundation options are available in the examinations.

Course Content
The course requires knowledge of a wide range of Chemistry topics, underpinned by an understanding of the process of scientific investigation called "Working Scientifically". Working scientifically is the sum of all the activities that scientists do: Investigating, observing, experimenting, or testing out ideas and thinking about them. It will involve talking about, reading, and writing about science plus the actual doing, as well as representing science in its many forms both mathematically and visually through models.

This course should encourage students to:

- develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding of chemistry
- develop understanding of the nature, processes, and methods of chemistry

CHEMISTRY

- develop and learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry, and problem-solving skills, both in the laboratory, in the field and in other learning environments
- develop their ability to evaluate claims based on chemistry through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence, and conclusions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Outside the classroom, pupils will have the opportunity to broaden their interest in Chemistry by participating in a number of competitions. There will also be opportunity for educational visits to various venues.

Course Assessment
Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all GCSE Chemistry specifications and all exam boards.
The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: scientific ideas; scientific techniques and procedures. (40% of total marks)
- AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of: scientific ideas; scientific enquiry, techniques and procedures. (40% of total marks)
- AO3: Analyse information and ideas to: interpret and evaluate; make judgments and draw conclusions; develop and improve experimental procedures. (20% of total marks)

Examinations
All examinations have a similar format. The papers include a variety of different styles of questions, including multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Chemistry 1 – 1h 45 min 100 Marks (50%) Foundation and Higher tier	Chemistry 2 – 1h 45 min 100 Marks (50%) Foundation and Higher tier

CHEMISTRY

Chemistry topics 1-5: • Atomic structure and the periodic table; • Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; • Quantitative chemistry; • Chemical changes • Energy changes.	Chemistry topics 6-10: • The rate and extent of chemical change; • Organic chemistry; • Chemical analysis; • Chemistry of the atmosphere • Using resources

Awarding Grades

- The qualification will be graded on a nine-point scale: 1–9 – where 9 is the best grade.
- A student taking Foundation Tier assessments will be awarded a grade within the range of 1 to 5.
- Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade 1 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.
- A student taking Higher Tier assessments will be awarded a grade within the range of 4 to 9. A student sitting the Higher Tier who just fails to achieve grade 4 will be awarded an allowed grade 3.
- Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for the allowed grade 3 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

COMBINED SCIENCE

Subject Co-ordinator: Mr S Thompson

- sthompson@newcastleschool.co.uk

AQA Combined Science: Trilogy (8464)

Why Combined Science?

Following the Combined Science course gives a good grounding in all three sciences. It will enable pupils to be scientifically literate in an increasingly technical world. They will learn to interpret data critically and evaluate statements for their scientific validity. For those that achieve highly, the course also facilitates the study of A Level sciences.

Course Outline

It is expected that the majority of students will follow this GCSE Combined Science pathway. Students will be assigned to either GCSE Separate Sciences (triple award) or to GCSE Combined Science course based on merit. This decision will not be made until the end of Year 10.

- The Science Department currently follows the AQA Combined Science: Trilogy specification.
- This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course in Year 11.
- The GCSE Combined Science specification builds on topics covered at KS3.
- Higher and foundation tier options are available in the examinations.
- At the end of the course students will receive a combined award worth 2 GCSEs
- The pupils receive 9 lessons of science per week, three for each science discipline

Course Content

The course requires knowledge of a wide range of science topics, underpinned by an understanding of the process of scientific investigation. Working scientifically is the sum of all scientific exploration: investigating, observing, experimenting, or testing ideas and theorising. It will involve talking about, reading, and writing about science plus the actual doing, as well as representing science in its many forms both mathematically and visually through models.

COMBINED SCIENCE

Course Assessment
Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy specifications.
The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas; scientific techniques and procedures. (40% of total marks)
- AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas; scientific enquiry, techniques and procedures. (40% of total marks)
- AO3: Analyse information and ideas to interpret and evaluate; make judgments and draw conclusions; develop and improve experimental procedures. (20% of total marks)

Examinations
All examinations have a similar format. The papers include a variety of different styles of questions including multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Biology 1 – 1h 15 min 70 Marks (16.7%) Foundation and Higher tier	Biology 2 – 1h 15 min 70 Marks (16.7%) Foundation and Higher tier

Biology topics 1–4: • Cell Biology; • Organisation; • Infection and response; • Bioenergetics.	Biology topics 5–7: • Homeostasis and response; • Inheritance, variation and evolution • Ecology.

Chemistry 1 – 1h 15 min 70 Marks (16.7%) Foundation and Higher tier	Chemistry 2 – 1h 15 min 70 Marks (16.7%) Foundation and Higher tier

COMBINED SCIENCE

Chemistry topics 1–5: • Atomic structure and the periodic table; • Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; • Quantitative chemistry; • Chemical changes • Energy changes.	Chemistry topics 6-10: • The rate and extent of chemical change; • Organic chemistry; • Chemical analysis; • Chemistry of the atmosphere • Using resources

Physics 1 – 1h 15 min 70 Marks (16.7%) Foundation and Higher tier	Physics 2 – 1h 15 min 70 Marks (16.7%) Foundation and Higher tier

Physics topics 1–4: • Energy, • Electricity, • Particle model of matter, • Atomic structure	Physics topics 5-7: • Forces, • Waves, • Magnetism and electromagnetism

Awarding Grades

The qualification will be graded on a 17-point scale: 1–1 to 9–9 – where 9–9 is the best grade. A student taking Foundation Tier assessments will be awarded a grade within the range of 1–1 to 5–5. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade 1–1 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. A student taking Higher Tier assessments will be awarded a grade within the range of 4–4 to 9–9.

A student sitting the Higher Tier who just fails to achieve grade 4–4 will be awarded an allowed grade 4–3. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for the allowed grade 4–3 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. It is not possible to take a combination of Foundation and Higher tier papers.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Subject Leader: Mrs S Given - sgiven@newcastleschool.co.uk

OCR Computer Science (J277)

Why Computer Science?

We live in a digitised, computerised, programmable world and to make sense of it we need computing. By studying this course, students can become innovators of new technology not just users. Computer Science has a huge impact on modern life. The subject itself is rigorous, exciting, and varied. There are excellent job prospects - the demand for IT professionals is estimated to be up 15% in the next 8 years.

Course outline

The IT Department will follow the OCR GCSE in Computer Science qualification. This GCSE should encourage students to be inspired, moved and challenged by following a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study. GCSE in Computer science will enable students to:

- develop their understanding of current and emerging technologies, understanding of how they work and apply this knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts.
- acquire and apply knowledge, some technical skills, and an understanding of the use of algorithms in computer programs to solve problems using programming.
- use their knowledge and understanding of computer technology to become independent and discerning users of IT, able to make informed decisions about the use and be aware of the implications of different technologies.
- acquire and apply creative and technical skills, knowledge and understanding of IT in a range of contexts.
- develop computer programs to solve problems.
- develop the skills to work collaboratively
- evaluate the effectiveness of computer programs/solutions and the impact of, and issues related to, the use of computer technology in society.

Course Content

The course is made up of three units.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Unit 1 - Computer systems (50% of total GCSE)
This is a theoretical based unit. Students will be expected to study and understand the following topics:

- Systems Architecture
- Memory
- Storage
- Wired and wireless networks
- Network topologies, protocols and layers
- System security
- System software
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns

Unit 2 - Computational thinking, algorithms, and programming (50% of total GCSE)
Component 02 is a written exam, focused on computational thinking and algorithms. Students will study the following:

- Algorithms
- Programming techniques
- Producing robust programs
- Computational logic
- Translators and facilities of languages
- Data representation

Unit 3 - Programming techniques
This is a non-exam requirement where students are required to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned to complete a programming challenge. This will be completed during lesson time and pupils will be given a number of hours to complete the task.

Pupils will be expected to focus on the following when completing their task:

- Analysis
- Design
- Development
- Testing and evaluation and conclusions

COMPUTER SCIENCE

This is a theoretical based unit. Students will be expected to study and understand the following topics:

- Systems Architecture
- Memory
- Storage
- Wired and wireless networks
- Network topologies, protocols and layers
- System security
- System software
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns

Unit 2 - Computational thinking, algorithms, and programming (50% of total GCSE)
Component 02 is a written exam, focused on computational thinking and algorithms. Students will study the following:

- Algorithms
- Programming techniques
- Producing robust programs
- Computational logic
- Translators and facilities of languages
- Data representation

Unit 3 - Programming techniques
This is a non-exam requirement where students are required to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned to complete a programming challenge. This will be completed during lesson time and pupils will be given a number of hours to complete the task.

Pupils will be expected to focus on the following when completing their task:

- Analysis
- Design
- Development
- Testing and evaluation and conclusions

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Assessment

The specification is split into three components:

J277/01 Component 01 – Computer Systems
Component 01 focuses on Computer Systems. It is a written examined unit and makes up 50% of the assessment total.

J277/02 Component 02 – Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming
Students are assessed as to their ability to write, correct, and improve algorithms. It is a written examined unit which makes up 50% of the assessment total.

J277/03 Component 03 – Programming Project (non-exam assessment)
This is compulsory but does not contribute marks towards the final grade.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Subject Leader: Mr A Bannister – abannister@newcastleschool.co.uk

AQA Design Technology 8552

Why Design Technology?

"We work in the spirit of enquiry, challenging preconceptions and testing conventions. The process of 'reinvention' distinguishes all of our work - past and present - and rests on a duty to design well and to design responsibly - whether that is at the scale of an airport or a door handle." - Sir Norman Foster.

Design Technology is a fantastic subject that gives pupils the opportunity to design, build and create objects of their own, using a wide range of materials and skills. The course is designed to enable pupils to develop their ability to analyse products and manufacturing processes. The pupils are encouraged to engage in strategies for developing ideas, planning, and producing products. Pupils are expected to recognise the moral, cultural and environmental issues inherent in design technology. The development and use of ICT within the 'design process' is an integral part of the course. It is hoped that the communication, manufacturing, lateral thinking and planning skills that are developed will have a significant and positive impact on all subsequent work.

Pupils who choose GCSE Design Technology together with Mathematics and Physics may, after completing an A level, progress onto Higher Education courses in some form of engineering or product design. It can also be a useful contributor to further study or work in other related disciplines such as mechanical and automotive engineering, materials science, industrial design, interior design and architecture. Past students have reported back that they have found the skills and disciplines covered by the GCSE course of great benefit.

Course Content

Unit 1: Written paper (maximum marks 100)

Section A – Core technical principles (20 marks)
A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions assessing a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding.

Section B – Specialist technical principles (30 marks)
Several short answer questions (2–5 marks) and one extended response to assess a more in-depth knowledge of technical principles.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Section C – Designing and making principles (50 marks)
A mixture of short answer and extended response questions.

Unit 2: Non-exam assessment: Maximum Mark (100)

Task(s)
• Substantial design and make task
• Assessment criteria:
• Identifying and investigating design possibilities
• Producing a design brief and specification
• Generating design ideas
• Developing design ideas
• Realising design ideas
• Analysing & evaluating
• Contextual challenges to be released annually by AQA on 1 June in the year prior to the submission of the NEA

Assessment
The scheme of assessment comprises of two components.

The first assessment is a two-hour terminal examination paper which has a weighting of 50% of the total marks. Questions will test the application of knowledge and understanding of materials, components, processes, technologies and the evaluation of commercial practices and products.

The second assessment component is the "non-exam assessment (NEA)". This has a weighting of 50% of the total marks. Pupils are required to select a design and making task from a list provided by the awarding body, AQA, and submit a model/product and a concise design folder. Experience has shown that candidates are often highly motivated when they design something they are interested in.

Throughout the project, pupils should address the industrial and commercial practices, and the moral, social, cultural and environmental issues, arising from their work. The controlled assessment model and design folder is submitted on the first school day back after the Spring half term in Year 11. Pupils have four 50 minute lessons each week and an opportunity to attend two further after-school workshop sessions a week. Awarding body guidelines suggest no more than 35 hours should be devoted to the completion of the controlled assessment work.

ENGLISH

Subject Leader: Mrs C Mack – cmack@newcastleschool.co.uk

AQA English Language / 8700
Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Literature / 4ET1

Why English?
English underpins all subjects by fostering analytical and communication skills and enabling students to apply these skills in decoding non-fiction media, spoken language use as well as the English Literary Canon. English is the window through which we access the rest of the world.

The AQA GCSE English Language specification provides access for all pupils through:

- An accredited, stable and recognised route into post-16 and higher education.
- Assessments designed to inspire and motivate students, providing appropriate stretch and challenge whilst ensuring, as far as possible, that the assessment and texts are accessible to the full range of students.
- Enabling students of all abilities to develop the skills they need to read, understand and analyse a wide range of different texts covering the 19th, 20th and 21st century time periods as well as to write clearly, coherently and accurately using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures.

Course outline – AQA English Language

Paper 1 Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing	Paper 2: writers' viewpoints and perspectives
1 hour 45 minutes 80 marks (50%) Section A: Reading – one literature fiction text • 1 short form question • 3 longer form questions • 1 extended question Section B: Writing – descriptive or narrative task • 1 extended writing question	1 hour 45 minutes 80 marks (50%) Section A: Reading – one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text (linked) • 1 short form question • 3 longer form questions • 1 extended question Section B: Writing – writing to present a viewpoint • 1 extended writing question

ENGLISH

Non-examination assessment: Spoken Language:
- Presenting
- Responding to questions
- Use of Standard English

All texts in the examination will be unseen

Content
The course offers the attraction of two equally-balanced papers, relating reading sources to the topic and theme of writing tasks. The reading sources act as stimulus for writing tasks, providing students with a clear route through each paper.

Each paper has a distinct identity to better support high quality provision and engaging teaching and learning. Paper 1, Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing, looks at how writers use narrative and descriptive techniques to engage the interest of readers. Paper 2, Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives, looks at how different writers present a similar topic over time.

English Language lessons will have four key focuses:
- Textual interpretation and analysis
- Developing written responses
- Exam technique and writing under timed conditions.
- Responding creatively to texts

Progress will be monitored by means of a half-termly exam task.

Course outline – Pearson Edexcel IGCSE English Literature

Paper 1: Poetry and Modern Prose	Coursework Component: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Text
What's assessed • Essay question on 'Of Mice and Men'. • Essay question on the anthology poems. • Essay question on unseen poetry.	What's assessed • Essay question on 'An Inspector Calls' • Essay question on either 'Macbeth' or 'Romeo and Juliet'

ENGLISH

Non-examination assessment: Spoken Language:
- Presenting
- Responding to questions
- Use of Standard English

All texts in the examination will be unseen

Content

The course offers the attraction of two equally-balanced papers, relating reading sources to the topic and theme of writing tasks. The reading sources act as stimulus for writing tasks, providing students with a clear route through each paper.

Each paper has a distinct identity to better support high quality provision and engaging teaching and learning. Paper 1, Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing, looks at how writers use narrative and descriptive techniques to engage the interest of readers. Paper 2, Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives, looks at how different writers present a similar topic over time.

English Language lessons will have four key focuses:
- Textual interpretation and analysis
- Developing written responses
- Exam technique and writing under timed conditions.
- Responding creatively to texts

Progress will be monitored by means of a half-termly exam task.

Course outline – Pearson Edexcel IGCSE English Literature

Paper 1: Poetry and Modern Prose	Coursework Component: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Text
What's assessed • Essay question on 'Of Mice and Men'. • Essay question on the anthology poems. • Essay question on unseen poetry.	What's assessed • Essay question on 'An Inspector Calls' • Essay question on either 'Macbeth' or 'Romeo and Juliet'

ENGLISH

How it's assessed • written exam at the end of Year 11: 1 hour and 20 minutes • 90 marks • 60% of GCSE	How it's assessed • Two coursework essays in Year 10 • 60 marks (30 per essay) • 40% of GCSE

Assessment

The marking scale for English will be from 9-1, with 9 being the highest mark. The specific criteria have yet to be finalised by Ofqual.

GEOGRAPHY

Subject Leader: Miss A Colley – acolley@newcastleschool.co.uk

Pearson Edexcel GCSE Geography A (1GAO)

Why Geography?

Geography is an important and dynamic academic subject. GCSE Geography involves studying the earth from the creation of the continents to the present day. We will study the earth from its core up to its atmosphere. GCSE Geography looks at the changes that take place in the earth and on it, both human and physical and interactions between them. GCSE Geography is an engaging qualification that enables students to explore the world, the challenges that it faces and their own place in it. Geographers have a highly desirable set of skills which are invaluable for university, further qualifications and careers. Edexcel GCSE Geography A supports progression to A Level Geography.

Course outline

- The Geography department will follow the new Edexcel Geography A qualification.
- This is a linear course with all pupils sitting all of the exams at the end of Year 11.
- The course covers an engaging real-world focus.
- The Geography A course develops a holistic understanding of Geography.
- There will be physical and human field work.
- All boys sit the same examination paper. There are no split-level papers.
- Edexcel GCSE Geography A supports progression to A Level Geography.

Course content

Component 1: The Physical Environment

Section A: The changing landscapes of the UK: Coastal landscapes and River landscapes

Section B: Weather hazards and climate change

Section C: Ecosystems, biodiversity, and management.

Component 2: The Human Environment

Topics include: Changing cities, Global development and Resource development (water or energy).

Component 3: Geographical Investigations: physical, human and UK.

GEOGRAPHY

Assessment
Paper 1: Physical Environment, exam of 1 hour 30 minutes. This paper is worth 37.5% of the overall qualification.

Paper 2: Human Environment, exam of 1 hour 30 minutes. This paper is worth 37.5% of the overall qualification.

Paper 3: Geographical Investigations, exam of 1 hour 30 minutes. This paper is worth 25% of the overall qualification.

Homework is varied and can include past exam questions, research, presentations and revision. Homework is issued to extend and consolidate learning in Geography.

HISTORY

Subject Leader: Mrs R Black – rblack@newcastleschool.co.uk

Edexcel GCSE History 9-1 (1HI0)

Why study GCSE History?

History is an academic and important subject. Historians understand the complexity of the past, they can make reasoned arguments and judgements. In a complex and ever-changing world, it is crucial that young people know how the world used to be, so they have a nuanced appreciation of the present and the future. Historians can analyse, evaluate and make judgements using evidence, these skills are invaluable for university and a professional career.

Course outline:

- In Year 10, pupils will study Crime and Punishment Through Time (c.1000 to present) which is combined with a study of Whitechapel: Crime, policing and the inner-city c.1870-1900, and Henry VIII and His Ministers (1509-1540).
- In Year 11, pupils will study Weimar and Nazi Germany (1918-1939) and the Cold War (1941-1991).
- This qualification is linear. This means that students will sit all of their exams at the end of the course in Year 11.
- The course involves a study of Medieval, Early Modern, Modern British and Modern European History. The qualification has a straightforward structure with four elements, assessed through three externally examined papers.

The course should encourage students to:

- Develop and extend their knowledge and understanding of specified key events, periods and societies in British and wider world history; and the diversity of human experience.
- Engage in historical enquiry to develop independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers.
- Develop the ability to ask relevant questions about the past, to investigate issues critically and to make valid historical claims by using a range of sources in their historical context.
- Develop an awareness of why people and events have been accorded historical significance and how and why different interpretations have been constructed about them.
- Organise and communicate their historical knowledge and understanding in different ways and reach substantiated conclusions.

HISTORY

Assessment

- The Paper 1 examination will be on Crime and Punishment, c.1000-present (thematic study) and Whitechapel: Crime, policing and the inner-city c.1870-1900 (historic environment study).
- Paper 1 lasts 1 hour 15 minutes and is worth 30% of the GCSE qualification.
- The Paper 2 examination will be on Henry VIII and his ministers, 1509-40 (British depth study) and Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941-91 (period study).
- Paper 2 lasts 1 hour 45 minutes and is worth 40% (20% on the period study and 20% on the British depth study) of the GCSE qualification. The pupils will be given individual papers for each of the units, but they will be sat back-to-back without a break in the given time.
- The Paper 3 examination will be on Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939 (modern depth study).
- Paper 3 lasts 1 hour 20 minutes and is worth 30% of the qualification.
- Each examination will examine a variety of skills through source questions, analysis of interpretations and essay questions.
- There is no controlled assessment or coursework for this GCSE course.

Awarding Grades

The GCSE will be graded and certified on a nine-grade scale from 9 to 1 using the total subject mark, where 9 is the highest grade. Individual papers are not graded.

The GCSE History specification builds on topics covered at KS3. All students do the same paper, there are no foundation or higher papers. Homework will include tasks such as research, revision for tests, past paper questions, essays and source questions.

MATHEMATICS (IGCSE)

Subject Leader: Mr A Black - ablack@newcastleschool.co.uk

Edexcel International GCSE in Mathematics (Specification A) (4MA1)

Why Mathematics?
Mathematics is an essential skill for life.

The course should enable students to:

- Develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and techniques
- Acquire a foundation of mathematical skills for further study in the subject or related areas.
- Enjoy using and applying mathematical techniques and concepts, and become confident to use mathematics to solve problems
- Appreciate the importance of mathematics in society, employment, and study.

Course outline

- The Mathematics Department will follow the Edexcel International qualification.
- This is a linear examined course covering Statistics, Number, Algebra and Geometry.
- This specification level leads a student from Key Stage 3 to a standard from which AS Level may be taken.
- The study of the GCSE course begins at the start of Year 9.
- There are currently higher (grades 9-4) and foundation (grades 5-1) options available.

Course Content
The Edexcel International GCSE (iGCSE) in Mathematics requires students to demonstrate application and understanding of the following.

Number

- Use numerical skills in a purely mathematical way and in real-life situations.

Algebra

- Use letters as equivalent to numbers and as variables.
- Understand the distinction between expressions, equations, and formulae.
- Use algebra to set up and solve problems.
- Demonstrate manipulative skills.
- Construct and use graphs.

MATHEMATICS (IGCSE)

Geometry

- Use properties of angles.
- Understand a range of transformations.
- Work within the metric system.
- Understand ideas of space and shape.
- Use ruler, compasses, and protractor appropriately.

Statistics

- Understand basic ideas of statistical averages.
- Use a range of statistical techniques.
- Use basic ideas of probability.

Assessment

The qualification is comprised of two externally assessed papers.
Each paper is worth 50% of the total marks.
Each paper will assess the full range of targeted grades at either Foundation or Higher Tier.
Each paper will be a two-hour examination.
The qualification will be assessed in the June examination session of Year 11.
There will be internal mock examinations in June of Year 10 and February of Year 11.
Calculators are allowed for all examinations.

Homework is marked and graded according to iGCSE standards, allowing the boys to be fully aware of their current level of attainment and to inform progress.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Subject Leader: Mrs H Melvin - hmelvin@newcastleschool.co.uk

Edexcel (2024) French 1FR1 / Edexcel (2024) Spanish 1SP1

Why Modern Foreign Languages?

- To improve communication skills – this is essential both in your personal and professional life. It will give you new ways of thinking and allow you to express yourself better in a foreign language and English
- To gain cultural awareness – this promotes tolerance, sharing ideas and builds a sense of community with those you might not have otherwise been able to
- To boost your confidence – learning another language is a huge achievement and will help your emotional and intellectual development
- To improve problem-solving skills – learning a language requires a lot of concentration and multi-tasking. This helps enhance your critical and creative thinking skills which are applicable to a variety of contexts
- To improve your memory – it has been proven that learning another language improves your long and short-term memory.
- For future study or work – speaking a second language is one of the top skills requested by employers across lots of sectors. It is a skill linked with greater opportunities and higher salary. Also, it gives you the opportunity to work or study abroad.
- To see the world – languages open doors to lots of different countries and cultures. Being able to speak, even at a conversational level, will allow you to communicate more easily when abroad, potentially making life-long friendships

Course Outline

- To equip students with the knowledge to communicate in a variety of contexts with confidence.
- To build on the KS3 study and prepare students for further study.
- Students will follow the Edexcel 2024 specification
- There are currently higher (grades 9-4) and foundation (grades 5-1) options available.

Content

There are 8 content modules which provide the grammatical and vocabulary knowledge pupils will need to attain GCSE. Pupils will be assessed on all topics over the 4 different papers.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- Free time and technology
- Family, relationships and role models
- School
- Healthy lifestyles and well-being
- Holidays
- The environment
- Where I live
- Future plans

Assessment
GCSE Spanish & French have a Foundation Tier (grades 1–5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4–9). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier at the end of Year 11.

Paper 1 – Speaking – 25% - 50 marks
This paper consists of three parts
Task 1 - read aloud (12 marks)
Task 2 - role play (10 marks)
Task 3 - picture task (12 marks) with follow on conversation (16 marks)
Foundation: 7-9 minutes with 15 minutes preparation time
Higher: 10-12 minutes with 15 minutes preparation time

Paper 2 – Listening – 25% - 50 marks
This paper consists of 2 sections
Section A – listening comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English (40 marks)
Section B – dictation where students transcribe spoken French/Spanish into written French/Spanish (10 marks)
Foundation: 45 minutes
Higher: 60 minutes

Paper 3 – Reading – 25% - 50 marks
This paper consists of 2 sections
Section A – Reading and Understanding where all questions are set in English and responses are in English (40 marks)
Section B – Translation from French/Spanish to English (10 marks)
Foundation: 45 minutes
Higher: 60 minutes

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Paper 4 – Writing – 25% - 50 marks
This paper looks different depending on if you study for Foundation or Higher

Questions Foundation Tier: 1 hour 15 minutes

Question 1 – picture-based task (8 marks)
Question 2 – 40-50 word question where pupils will have a choice of 2 questions (14 marks)
Question 3 – 80-90 word question where pupils will have a choice of 2 questions (18 marks)
Question 4 – translation from English to French/Spanish

Questions Higher Tier: 1 hour 20 minutes

Question 1 – 80-90 word question where pupils will have a choice of 2 questions (18 marks)
Question 2 – 130-150 word question where pupils will have a choice of 2 questions (22 marks)
Question 3 - translation from English to French/Spanish

MUSIC

Subject Leader: Mr J Hopkinson – jhopkinson@newcastleschool.co.uk

Edexcel / Music / Specification Issue 1 / 1MUO

Why Music?

Music is an expressive art form encompassing a wide range of transferable skills that can be applied to many areas of life. Music is also a serious academic subject that not only gives students the opportunity to perform and compose, but also to develop their ability to analyse and write about a series of set works, covering a wide range of musical genres.

Music can be enjoyed by everyone, and studying it at GCSE level helps to develop a deeper understanding of the sonic world all around us and the part that Music has to play in our world. GCSE Music is not simply a course about Music, it looks at important Historical events and the Musical reactions to them, it explores the ideas and traditions of other cultures around the world, and it strikes a perfect balance between the discipline of becoming a committed musician, with the freedom and emotional expressiveness of creating and composing original material.

The GCSE Music course is full of exciting tasks and projects and is sure to ignite a passion, appreciation and most of all a curiosity of Music that will last for a lifetime.

Course Outline

The GCSE Music course builds on work that pupils have done in KS3 by continuing to focus on the three main elements of performing, composing and listening to a wide variety of musical styles including popular music, jazz, world music and classical genres. Pupils will look at topics similar to those covered in KS3 but at a greater level and with greater opportunity to individualise work by focusing on their own strengths. There are also opportunities for pupils to use music technology in their coursework. (The course also prepares boys directly for A-Level music so they can continue to build on the three main elements plus even more in-depth analysis of musical styles and genres.)

The two-year GCSE course is split into three units:

Unit 1: Performing Music (30%)

Pupils will present two performances that must have a combined length of 4 minutes. This will include a solo performance (15%) as well as taking part in an ensemble performance with at least one other pupil (15%).

MUSIC

Each piece must be over 1 minute long. These performances will take place in school and will be recorded for moderation purposes. Although some preparation will take place during lessons, it is vital that pupils undertake regular and sustained practise on their chosen instrument throughout the GCSE course. At least 4 hours per week individual practise is strongly recommended. Pupils will be given the opportunity to perform at School events in order to try out pieces which they may later use in this area of the course. Appropriate pieces will be chosen by the boys in consultation with their teacher and instrumental tutor. (Pupils will also have to submit a score, recording or written commentary of their piece for realisation by the examiner.)

Unit 2: Composing Music (30%)
Throughout the course, pupils will be introduced to various compositional techniques and learn how to manipulate ideas into completed pieces of music. The final composition task is to submit two compositions totalling a minimum of 3 minutes:

1. Composing to a brief set by the exam board (15%) – Students have to choose from four briefs set by Edexcel. Their composition must be at least 1 minute in total. This composition briefs will be in the style of the flour areas of study covered at GCSE so that students already have some knowledge of the genre outlined in the brief. Composition can be worked on outside of school but the final items for submission must be completed under supervision in school.

1. Free composition (15%) – Students can compose for any ensemble and in any style. The piece must be at least 1 minute long. This is a great opportunity to be creative! Composition can be worked on outside of school but the final items for submission must be completed under supervision in school.

Unit 3: Listening and Appraising (40%)
Paper Three: There is a single examination in the summer of Year 11. The 'listening paper' lasts for 1 hour and 45 minutes and is split into two sections:

1. Section A: Listening. This involves answering six compulsory questions in response to extracts from the set works that will be studied throughout the course. The seventh question will be a musical dictation question where students have to notate a rhythm and melody from listening. Question eight is a set of questions on an unfamiliar piece of music.

1. Section B: Essay. Students have to complete an essay comparing a familiar and unfamiliar piece of music. The question will be based on one of the musical elements that the student should focus on.

MUSIC

Each piece must be over 1 minute long. These performances will take place in school and will be recorded for moderation purposes. Although some preparation will take place during lessons, it is vital that pupils undertake regular and sustained practise on their chosen instrument throughout the GCSE course. At least 4 hours per week individual practise is strongly recommended. Pupils will be given the opportunity to perform at School events in order to try out pieces which they may later use in this area of the course. Appropriate pieces will be chosen by the boys in consultation with their teacher and instrumental tutor. (Pupils will also have to submit a score, recording or written commentary of their piece for realisation by the examiner.)

Unit 2: Composing Music (30%)
Throughout the course, pupils will be introduced to various compositional techniques and learn how to manipulate ideas into completed pieces of music. The final composition task is to submit two compositions totalling a minimum of 3 minutes:

1. Composing to a brief set by the exam board (15%) – Students have to choose from four briefs set by Edexcel. Their composition must be at least 1 minute in total. This composition briefs will be in the style of the flour areas of study covered at GCSE so that students already have some knowledge of the genre outlined in the brief. Composition can be worked on outside of school but the final items for submission must be completed under supervision in school.
2. Free composition (15%) – Students can compose for any ensemble and in any style. The piece must be at least 1 minute long. This is a great opportunity to be creative! Composition can be worked on outside of school but the final items for submission must be completed under supervision in school.

Unit 3: Listening and Appraising (40%)
Paper Three: There is a single examination in the summer of Year 11. The 'listening paper' lasts for 1 hour and 45 minutes and is split into two sections:

1. Section A: Listening. This involves answering six compulsory questions in response to extracts from the set works that will be studied throughout the course. The seventh question will be a musical dictation question where students have to notate a rhythm and melody from listening. Question eight is a set of questions on an unfamiliar piece of music.
2. Section B: Essay. Students have to complete an essay comparing a familiar and unfamiliar piece of music. The question will be based on one of the musical elements that the student should focus on.

MUSIC

They will also be required to answer questions on the musical elements of the pieces they have studied, e.g., pitch, rhythm, tempo, timbre, texture and structure. To help prepare them for this paper, pupils will undertake listening exercises in class and during school examinations. It will also be important that pupils undertake regular homework assignments designed to improve their knowledge of the areas of study as well as their musical vocabulary. Pupils will be issued with an Anthology of the set works and an accompanying book to help them in their study.

Assessment

There are three units which are all examined at the end of Year 11. Units 1 and 2 are controlled assessments and make up 60% of the GCSE and Unit 3 is a listening exam and makes up 40% the GCSE. More details of the assessments are outlined above in the Course Content section. The GCSE grading system of 9-1 is now in place.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Subject Leader: Mr J Macmillan - jmacmillan@newcastleschool.co.uk

AQA Physical Education (1PE0)

Why Physical Education?

This course allows students to engage with key issues that reflect sport in today's global world. It allows the genuine all-rounder to flourish as they enjoy both physical performance and academic challenge. It allows students to develop a range of transferable skills that will support their progression to the next level of study and beyond. The introduction to key sports and social topics means students are well prepared to access a range of current university courses and sport related careers.

Course Outline

- The Physical Education Department currently follows the updated AQA specification.
- This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course in Year 11.
- The GCSE Physical Education specification builds on topics covered in P.E and Games lessons throughout KS3.
- All boys will sit the same examinations, there are no foundation or higher papers
- At the end of the course students will receive one GCSE
- The pupils receive 2 lessons of GCSE per week. Their Games lessons and attendance at co-curricular clubs will also contribute significantly to their success in this course.

Course Content

The course aims to develop theoretical knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin physical activity and sport. Students then use this knowledge to develop their own performance in sport. They will gain an understanding of how physical activity and sport benefit health, fitness and wellbeing. Students will also understand how their physiological and psychological state affects their performance. Students will also investigate the key socio-cultural influences that affect people's participation. They will be asked to perform effectively in 3 physical activities by developing skills and techniques whilst implementing appropriate tactics and strategies. Furthermore, students will be asked to analyse their own performance and evaluate it by suggesting strategies to improve.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Outside of the classroom, pupils will have the opportunity to attend a range of sporting co-curricular clubs and activities to enable them to maximise the quality of their practical performances.

Course Assessment
Component 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport
Written Examination: 1 hour and 15 minutes (30% of the qualification)

- Applied anatomy and physiology.
- Movement analysis
- Physical training
- Use of data

Component 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport
Written Examination: 1 hour and 15 minutes (30% of the qualification)

- Health, fitness, and wellbeing
- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Use of data

Component 3: Practical Performance
Internal controlled assessment with external moderation (30% of the qualification)

- Performance skills in 3 activities
- One must be a team activity, one must be an individual activity, the final one is a free choice.

Component 4: Analysis and Evaluation of Performance
Internal controlled assessment with external moderation (10% of the qualification)

- Students will be assessed on their analysis (15 marks) and evaluation (10 marks) of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.

The new GCSE grading system of 9 -1 will replace A*-G. Grade 9 will be the highest with Grade 4 similar to a current C Grade. The aim of the new system is to show greater differentiation between students.

PHYSICS

Subject Leader: Mr S Thompson – sthompson@newcastleschool.co.uk

AQA Physics (8463)

Why Physics?

GCSE Physics encourages students to gain knowledge and practical experience about the underlying principles of how things work – from electrical circuits via X-ray machines to fairground rides. The course deals with everyday things like heating buildings and the big questions about the universe in a way that it is easy to see and understand the practical applications of the subject. The course provides a combination of traditional learning and hands on work and experiments students do or watch as that helps them see the evidence for themselves and remember better.

Course Outline

Places on the Physics GCSE course are limited. The cohort will be selected based on merit, taking into consideration all assessment data. The majority of students will follow the GCSE Combined Science pathway rather than taking Physics as a separate GCSE.

- The NSB Physics Department currently follows the AQA specification.
- This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course in Year 11.
- The GCSE Physics specification builds on topics covered at KS3.
- Higher and foundation options are available in the examinations.

Course Content

The course requires knowledge of a wide range of physics topics, underpinned by an understanding of the process of scientific investigation called “Working Scientifically”. Working scientifically is the sum of all the activities that scientists do: Investigating, observing, experimenting or testing out ideas and thinking about them. It will involve talking about, reading and writing about science plus the actual doing, as well as representing science in its many forms both mathematically and visually through models.

This course should encourage students to:

- develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding of physics
- develop understanding of the nature, processes and methods of physics

PHYSICS

• develop and learn to apply observational, practical, modelling, enquiry and problem-solving skills, both in the laboratory, in the field and in other learning environments
• develop their ability to evaluate claims based on physics through critical analysis of the methodology, evidence and conclusions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Outside the classroom, pupils will have the opportunity to broaden their interest in physics by participating in a number of competitions. There will also be opportunity for educational visits to various venues.

Course Assessment
Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all GCSE Physics specifications and all exam boards.
The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

• AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: scientific ideas; scientific techniques and procedures. (40% of total marks)
• AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of: scientific ideas; scientific enquiry, techniques and procedures. (40% of total marks)
• AO3: Analyse information and ideas to: interpret and evaluate; make judgments and draw conclusions; develop and improve experimental procedures. (20% of total marks)

Examinations
All examinations have a similar format. The papers include a variety of different styles of questions, including multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

Physics 1 – 1h 45 min 100 Marks (50%) Foundation and Higher tier	**Physics 2 – 1h 45 min** 100 Marks (50%) Foundation and Higher tier
Physics topics 1-4: • Energy • Electricity • Particle model of matter • Atomic structure	Physics topics 5-8: • Forces • Waves • Magnetism and electromagnetism • Space physics

PHYSICS

Awarding Grades

The qualification will be graded on a nine-point scale: 1–9 – where 9 is the best grade.
A student taking Foundation Tier assessments will be awarded a grade within the range of 1 to 5.
Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade 1 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.
A student taking Higher Tier assessments will be awarded a grade within the range of 4 to 9. A student sitting the Higher Tier who just fails to achieve grade 4 will be awarded an allowed grade 3.
Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for the allowed grade 3 will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Subject Leader: Mrs T Innes – tinnes@newcastleschool.co.uk

Eduqas Religious Studies A – Religion, Philosophy and Ethics.

Why Religious Studies?

Religious Studies is a lively and stimulating GCSE subject which provides a great opportunity for young people to engage with current issues, developing social, cultural, political and historical awareness. It encourages philosophical thought and decision-making skills, enabling students to discuss and analyse topics they encounter in society and through the media.

Religion plays an important role in our society and can influence what people think, feel, and believe. Religious Studies helps students to develop an understanding of their own values and beliefs, gaining a greater sense of their own identity, learning how to respect the rights and responsibilities of others.

Religious Studies also helps students develop marketable skills and aptitudes including:

- analytical and strategic thinking;
- research skills;
- critical judgement;
- the ability to work with abstract, conceptual ideas;
- an ability to 'understand both sides' and negotiate and resolve conflict;
- problem-solving skills;
- leadership skills;
- understanding of the impact of conflicting ideologies; and
- An appreciation of human diversity, belief systems, cultural and spiritual experiences.

These skills are particularly useful for future careers in law, education, social work, politics, medicine, administration or the media.

Course Outline

This GCSE will examine Religious and Ethical issues from the perspectives of Islam and Christianity, it also allows the students to gain a greater understanding of the key beliefs and practices of each of these religions and how they have impacted on, and continue to impact on, our society today.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The GCSE course is split into three sections:

Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World. Students will study Issues of Relationships, Issues of Life and Death, Issues of Human Rights and Issues of Good and Evil. Within Issues of Relationships students are encouraged to consider the complexities around issues such as contraception, sexual relationships and divorce. Within Life and Death topical issues around abortion, euthanasia and life after death are discussed and taught. This unit also requires students to study the secular perspective of these issues. Within Human Rights students will consider the issues of equality, the laws of the country, censorship and discrimination, alongside ethical considerations about the acquisition and use of wealth. Good and Evil allows students to discuss issues of crime and punishment, including capital punishment, and beliefs about forgiveness and suffering.

Study of Christianity. This area of study comprises a detailed study of Christianity; the development and meaning of its beliefs. We study the key beliefs of Christianity, including the Trinity and the impact of the life of Jesus, in addition to how these beliefs are expressed in practice, including religious ceremonies, pilgrimage and charity. Students will also discuss how beliefs and practices differ between denominations of Christianity.

Study of Islam. This area of study comprises a detailed study of Islam and its beliefs and teachings. We examine in depth the formation of the religion of Islam, and how religious teachings influence the practices, including religious celebrations and pilgrimage. This area of study also includes diverging practices within Islam and for Muslims living in the UK.

Assessment

The course is assessed through 100% examination in May at the end of Year 11. There are three examinations, the two religions papers are 1 hour long, and the ethics paper is 2 hours long. Each religion examination is worth 25% and the ethics examination is worth 50%.

Lessons will vary and include debates, lecture style lessons, essay practice, discussions, activities, mini tests and thinking. Students will begin practicing examination questions from the first lesson. Homework will be set twice a week and predominantly includes knowledge retrieval practice, writing up notes and reading. Work is marked and graded according to GCSE standards, allowing the students to be aware of their current level of attainment.