

The Alice Smith School

GCSE Information Booklet 2009-2011

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Key Dates: 12th November 2008 – 25th August 2011

Subject by subject guide to GCSE

Explanation of acronyms used in this document:

Forms

- Provisional GCSE choices form
- Request to change option choices (before 1st September 2009)
- Request to change option choices (after 1st September 2009)

Introduction to GCSEs

This is an exciting time in your son/daughter's education. Students are soon to begin courses that will lead to their first major external assessment and they are, for the first time, being allowed to make real choices in the subjects they will be studying. To make these choices it is important that both you, as parents, and they are well informed. This information booklet and the information evening will provide you with much of that information. You will have the opportunity to put further questions to teachers, at the GCSE information evening and at the Year 9 PTSC (parents evening). However, should you find that you still have unanswered questions, do not hesitate to contact the Head of Department, for subject specific enquiries, or Mr. Chris Draper, the Assistant Principal for Years 9 -11 and for more general questions. If you are familiar with the GCSE system in England you may wish to turn straight to page 4 to find out about the GCSEs offered at Alice Smith.

The English Exam System Year 10 – 13

During Year 10 and 11 students follow a two year course, studying a broad range of subjects leading to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). All students follow a compulsory English National Curriculum core of English, maths and science followed by a number of choices. It is usual for students to study about 9 or 10 subjects during Years 10 & 11.

At the end of Year 11 students take their GCSE exams. The results of these are used to inform subject choices in Year 12 and will also be considered, alongside A level grades, by university admissions departments. It is worth noting that a separate grade is awarded for each subject. There is no overall GCSE grade awarded. GCSEs replaced the two tier O level and CSE exams that many parents may be more familiar with, in 1987. Schools will typically set minimum GCSE requirements for entry into Year 12. At the Alice Smith School, the requirement is an average GCSE grade of grade C or better.

In Year 12 and Year 13 students study a narrower range of subjects leading to the A level qualification. Since 2001 the A level has itself split into two levels, the AS exam, covering the first half of the subject content and the A2 which covers the second half of the content. The final A2 mark comprises the AS papers (50%) and the A2 papers (50%). Typically students take 4 AS exams at the end of Year 12 and 3 A2 exams at the end of Year 13; although by this stage of a student's education many other permutations may be found.

GCSE – The General Certificate of Secondary Education

These are two year courses followed by virtually all students in England. They are graded from A* - G, with grade C being the commonly accepted grade for a good pass: the grade required for further study in the subject. One of the key performance indicators used for English schools is the percentage of Year 11 students who pass 5 GCSEs (including English and maths) at grade C or better.

IGCSE – The International GCSE

The IGCSE is also a two year course and the result has exactly the same value as the GCSE. The IGCSE tends to put greater emphasis on the final examination and questions may be set in a more international context. At the Alice Smith School, Heads of Department decide whether to offer the GCSE or the IGCSE.

What are awarding bodies?

In England, school leaving exams are not set by the government, but by one of three private organisations, known as Awarding Bodies. These awarding bodies are still often referred to as exam boards and are regulated through the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) which is part of the UK government.

The three awarding bodies are known by their initials:

- Edexcel – based in Southern England and incorporating the old London University Board
- OCR – based in Central England and incorporating the old Oxford and Cambridge Universities Board. CIE (Cambridge International Exams) is the international section of OCR
- AQA – based in the North of England and incorporating the old Northern Exam Board

Students may take exams from any of the Awarding Bodies regardless of their geographical location in England and indeed it is common for schools to offer exams from all three of the Awarding Bodies. At the Alice Smith School, students may sit for a GCSE with Edexcel or AQA or for an IGCSE with Edexcel or CIE.

The Year 10/11 Curriculum at the Alice Smith School

Overview

All students entering Year 10 at Alice Smith will study for GCSEs in mathematics, English language, English literature and two sciences GCSE (Double Science). In addition they must make five further subjects choices from a choice of 21 other options that we are hoping to offer.

- One of these five choices must be a Modern Foreign Language.
- One choice may be the non- examined subject, Learning to Learn

Accelerated Courses

- Two of the six science sets will follow an accelerated course leading to three GCSEs in the separate science (biology, chemistry and physics). The time allocation for this will be the same as that for Double Award Science.
- Students who have taken GCSE in Malay or Mandarin in Year 9 and choose to follow these subjects in Year 10 & 11 will follow accelerated courses leading towards AS level Mandarin and a post GCSE language and culture course in Malay

The standard GCSE offer for an Alice Smith student is therefore 10 GCSEs; however by following the Learning to Learn course this may be reduced to 9 or by following the accelerated course in science could be increased to 11.

Summary of subjects offered

The compulsory core

- Mathematics
- English Language
- English Literature
- Science (Double Award) or Separate Science (Accelerated Course)
- PE (non-examined)
- PSHE (non-examined)

The options choices:

- Art and Design
- Business Studies
- Design Technology (Graphics)
- Design Technology (Resistant Materials)
- Design Technology (Textiles)

- Drama
- Geography
- History
- ICT
- Learning to Learn (non-examined)
- Media Studies
- MFL Bahasa Malay
- MFL Extension Malay (you should already have a GCSE in Malay to follow this course)
- MFL French
- MFL German
- MFL Mandarin
- MFL Extension Mandarin (you should already have a GCSE in Mandarin to follow this course)
- MFL Spanish
- Music
- Physical Education
- Psychology

Please refer to the subject by subject guide to find out more information on each of these subject choices.

A broad and balanced curriculum

The compulsory core of English, maths , science and at least one modern foreign language is designed to ensure that all GCSE pupils at the Alice Smith School follow a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 10 and 11. We would advise that students look to maintain breadth, by choosing a wide variety of subjects when making the final four selections. There are however no further restrictions in their choices at this stage and students should make their selection based on their interests, ability and, if they already have a clear career plan, their future study and career.

The process of choosing

Provisional Choices

Following the information evening your son/daughter should fill in the provisional options form at the back of this information booklet. They should select the five subjects they wish to choose (remembering at least one must be an MFL) and list three reserve choices. All eight choices should be listed in order of importance to your son/daughter (i.e. the GCSE that they most wish to study should be listed at number 1 etc). One of the reserve choices may be another DT option, even if one of the preferred five is a DT option.

Please note that these provisional choices do not guarantee that school will be able to offer these five choices to your son/daughter next year. We will use this information to inform staff recruitment and timetabling next year. Later in the year, students will be asked to select one subject and one reserve subject from each of five timetable blocks. These blocks will be designed, using the information from these provisional choices, to maximize the number of students who would be able to select the five top choices they make in November.

Why might I not be able to study my top 5 provisional choices?

- Some subjects on the provisional choices may not be offered if the uptake is very low. If you are interested in a subject make sure you chose as one of your provisional choices to maximise the chance of it being offered next year.
- Two subjects you wish to study may be offered in the same option block. In this case you would need to select a subject from your reserve list.

Confirmed choices

As soon as we have your provisional choices we will start using the information to finalise the five option blocks for 2009-2011. Students will be asked to make a first choice and a reserve choice in each option block. We would expect to be able to match the vast majority of first choices indicated at this stage, but it may be necessary to use the reserve choice if the teaching set has already been filled. It is important that the deadline is observed since we will allocate students to teaching groups as soon as the deadline is passed. The school will write to parents by the end of May, confirming the GCSE subjects offer that the school is able to make to your son/daughter.

What if I change my mind?

- Between the provisional choice deadline and the confirmed option deadline
 - There is no need to inform the school. Provisional choices are only being used to inform school planning for next year and do not commit you to any course. You will have the opportunity to make your confirmed choices later.

- Between the confirmed choice deadline and the start of Year 10
 - Please use form 2 at the end of this booklet to inform the school. You will be able to make the switch subject to places being still available in the teaching group you wish to change into.

- After the courses have started but before the October half-term in Year 10
 - Occasionally students feel that they have made a mistake, once the course has started. In this case you should use form 3 in this booklet to inform the school of that decision. It can be difficult to start a course after the beginning of term, so the school requests that any student requesting a change should speak to both their subject teacher of the subject they wish to drop and the Head of Department of the subject they wish to take up before submitting form 3 to the Assistant Principal responsible for Years 9-11. The student will be required to meet the Assistant Principal, who will make the final authorisation to change. Such authorisation will only be given if there are places still available in the teaching group that you wish to change into and on being satisfied that it is in the student's best interest to make this change.

- After the October half-term in Year 10
 - Any request to change must have been authorised before the October half term. After this deadline has passed we would regard it as too late to start a new course. At this stage we expect all students to remain committed to the full two year GCSE courses that they have chosen.

Key Dates 2008 -2011

- 23rd November 2008 Provisional Option Choices form to be returned to school
- 15th March 2009 Confirmed Option Choices form sent home to parents
- 24th March 2009 Year 9 PTSC (parents evening)
- 30th March 2009 Confirmed Options Choices returned to school
- 31st May 2009 Confirmation of GCSE courses letter sent to parents
- 1st September 2009 Start GCSE courses
- October 2009* Year 10 PTSC
- February 2010* Year 10 full reports
- June 2010* Year 10 exams
- July 2010* Year 10 PTSC
- December 2010* Year 11 full reports
- January 2011* Year 11 mock exams
- February 2011* Year 11 PTSC
- May/June 2011* GCSE exams
- 25th August 2011* GCSE results issued

* Provisional Dates – to be confirmed

English – language and literature

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel
Link to specification on worldwide web

Specification code 1204B / 1213
www.edexcel.com

Topics covered at GCSE level in English

Students will follow the Edexcel GCSE English 1204B and Literature 1213 taught as a unified course. The course will cover a wide range of activities that further develop skills in speaking and listening; reading and writing.

Assessment overview

EXAMS

At the end of Year 11 students will take 3 papers, which will contribute 60% to the final English language mark and 70% to the final literature mark.

Language Paper 1 **The Craft of the Writer 2 hours**

This paper will respond to an anthology of material that students have studied throughout the course. They will be able to take this anthology into the exam. They will be asked to answer one question on modern poetry, one question on the collection of short stories and to do one of two writing tasks to inform, explain, describe.

Language Paper 2 **Non-Fiction 2 hours**

This paper will assess response to non-fiction texts that students have not seen before the exam. One question will test the ability to read the text effectively. There will also be two writing tasks: one to argue, persuade, advise; the other to analyse, review and comment. There is a choice of question for both tasks.

Literature **2 hours 15 minutes**

Students will answer three questions (one on each of the post 1914 texts they have studied). Texts are allowed into the exam though these cannot be annotated in any way.

COURSEWORK

Written coursework

At the end of Year 11 students will submit their coursework folder which will contain five units – personal and imaginative writing; response to media texts such as newspapers, adverts or film; work based on a play by Shakespeare; work based on pre-1914 prose; and work based on a collection of pre-1914 poetry. This folder will contribute 20% to the language final mark and 30% to the final literature mark

Speaking and listening coursework

During the course students will take part in a variety of activities (drama focused, group and individual) which will be teacher assessed. This assessment will contribute 20% to the final language mark.

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith

The study of English at A Level will require a minimum of a Grade C at GCSE. Many of the skills developed in English will be beneficial to other subjects – for example expressing ideas fluently and accurately in History and Geography

Mathematics

IGCSE

Exam board: Edexcel
Link to specification

Specification code 4400
<http://www.edexcel-international.org/quals/igcse/4400>

Topics covered at GCSE level in Mathematics

The course continues the study of Number, Algebra, Geometry and Statistics from previous years, as prescribed in the National Curriculum. In this course the spread of the topics is as follows; Number and Algebra, 55%, Shape, Space and Measures, 25% and Handling Data, 20%. The depth of the concepts studied within these branches of mathematics will depend on each individual pupil's ability. The normal length of the course is two years and at the end of this time the majority of the pupils will be entered for the Higher level papers. A second tier of entry (Foundation) is also available for those pupils who find mathematics demanding.

Assessment overview

Assessment is by two end-of-course examination papers of 2 hours duration, each weighted at 50%. Both papers require the use of a calculator. There is no coursework element to the IGCSE Mathematics course. Each paper covers all topics and marks are awarded equally at each grade available.

TIER	COMPONENTS		GRADES AVAILABLE
Higher	Paper 3	Paper 4	A*, A, B, C, D
Foundation	Paper 1	Paper 2	C, D, E, F, G

I should chose this subject if...

Although not an optional subject, mathematics is best approached with an open mind and with a preparedness to learn new topics, build on old, and to develop from previous mistakes. You will also be challenged regardless of level of entry.

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith

Not an optional subject

Double Award Science

Exam board: Edexcel

IGCSE

Specification code 4SCO

Link to specification on worldwide web:

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/igcse/igcse09/science/Pages/default.aspx>

Topics covered at IGCSE level in Double Award Science

The Edexcel International General Certificate on Secondary Education (IGCSE) in Science (Double Award) is designed as a two-year course of study. It takes approximately two-thirds of the subject content of each of the Edexcel IGCSE separate sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), and combines them into an IGCSE in Science (Double Award) specification worth two IGCSEs. It is designed to be an interesting and inspiring modern specification. The course offers opportunity for students to experience science within the context of their general education.

Biology

Overview of content:

The nature and variety of living organisms; Structures and functions in living organisms (human and plant biology); Reproduction and inheritance; Ecology and the environment; Use of biological resources (uses of organisms in food production/medicine)

Chemistry

Overview of content:

Principles of chemistry; Chemistry of the elements; Organic chemistry; Physical chemistry; Chemistry in society

Physics

Overview of content:

Forces and motion; Electricity; Waves; Energy resources and energy transfer; Solids, liquids and gases; Magnetism and electromagnetism; Radioactivity and particles

Assessment overview

Double Award Science is examined at the end of Y11. Typically the exams take place at the end of May and run into June. There are 3 papers, one for each discipline within science, with each paper lasting 2 hours. As of 2011, the papers are un-tiered, meaning that students no longer have to make the choice between the foundation and higher papers. The grades run from A*A* to GG.

I should chose this subject if...

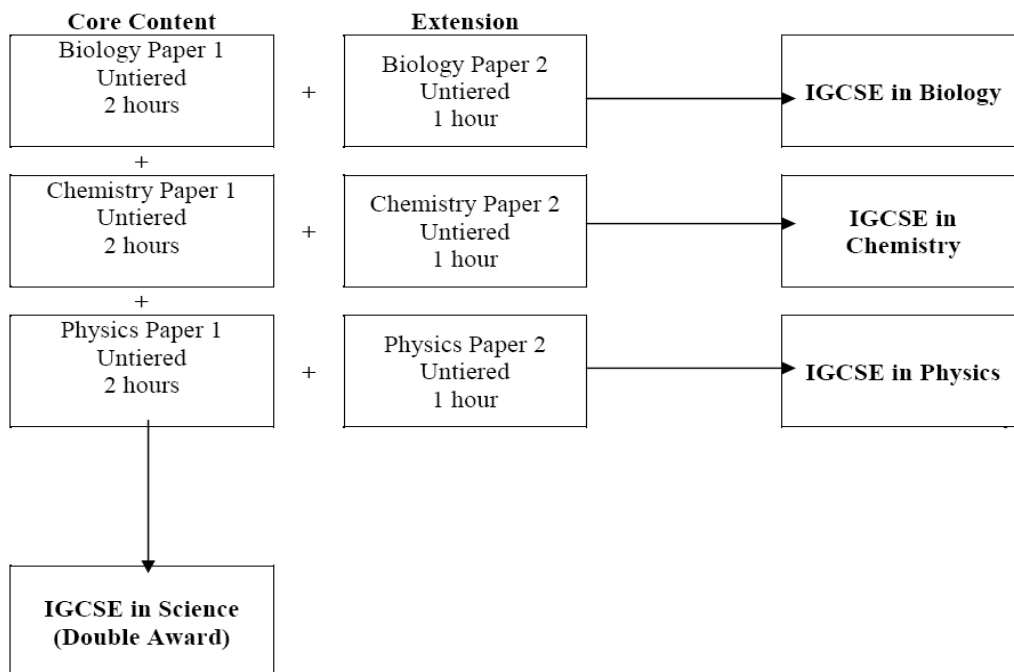
Studying science to some degree at IGCSE is compulsory. However, students do have the option of choosing whether to study for Double or Separate Sciences. It is worth noting that the IGCSE course is very different to the UK GCSE course. It is NOT compulsory for students wishing to enter UK independent schools to study all 3 sciences separately, as the IGCSE course is seen as more academic and rigorous in terms of its content. Students should choose Double Award if they are already studying many GCSE subjects or if they are happy to study a broad and balanced subject. It may also be beneficial to those that have a weakness in an area of science as the grades achieved are an average of all three sciences.

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith?

Yes. To take any of the science subjects at A level you should have studied either the subject at GCSE or double award science.

How does the Double Award compare to Separate Sciences?

The relationship of assessment to the qualifications available is shown below.



Should I choose Double Award or Separate Sciences?

Advantages of separate sciences

- Separate grade awarded in each subject showing strengths.
- Double Award in the UK is becoming less popular with many schools switching to Separate Sciences, which may held in higher regard in years to come.
- Exam commitment is not too high for an additional GCSE qualification.
- Students may find the extra material stimulating and interesting, and those already thinking of a science based career should consider this option.
- A few UK schools expect all their students wishing to do A-level to have completed Separate Sciences and start teaching based on this assumption.

Disadvantages of separate sciences

- Extra material means less time to revise - this may lead to a drop in grades. Often an AA student in Double Award achieves lower in the triple science option, for example AAB or ABB.
- There is no requirement to study extra work for A-level science courses - these are based on the Double Award as a starting point. The IGCSE Double Award course currently being studied is harder than the new home GCSE course, and provides an excellent rigorous foundation for all students. It is fast becoming a popular option for private schools in the UK.
- The extra exam time and study time required may have an adverse effect on performance in other GCSE's, with many students already taking 9 or 10 subjects.

Separate Sciences

– Biology, Chemistry and Physics

IGCSE

Exam board: Edexcel Specification code 4BI0, 4CH0. 4PH0

Link to specifications on worldwide web:

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/igcse/igcse09/biology/biology/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/igcse/igcse09/chemistry/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/igcse/igcse09/physics/Pages/default.aspx>

Topics covered at IGCSE level in Biology/Chemistry/Physics

The Edexcel International General Certificate in Secondary Education (IGCSE) in Biology/Chemistry/Physics is designed for use in schools and colleges. It is part of a suite of the IGCSE suite of science qualifications offered by Edexcel. The course offers opportunity for students to experience biology, chemistry and physics within the context of their general education. In terms of progression, the design of the course provides a basis of progression to further study in GCE Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level Biology, Chemistry and/or Physics.

Overview of content – Biology

The nature and variety of living organisms; Structures and functions in living organisms; Reproduction and inheritance; Ecology and the environment; Use of biological resources

Overview of content – Chemistry

Principles of chemistry; Chemistry of the elements; Organic chemistry; Physical chemistry; Chemistry in society.

Overview of content - Physics

Forces and motion; Electricity; Waves; Energy resources and energy transfer; Solids, liquids and gases; Magnetism and electromagnetism; Radioactivity and particles

Please note: The content is very similar to what is covered in Double Award Science. The main difference is that extension/ additional material is incorporated throughout.

Assessment overview

IGCSE separate sciences are examined at the end of Y11. Typically the exams take place at the end of May and run into June. There are 2 papers for each science. Paper 1 for each science is exactly the same as the Double Award papers and lasts for 2 hours (66%). There is also an “extension” paper that covers the additional material that has been studied (33%). This paper lasts for one hour. As of 2011, the papers are un-tiered, meaning that students no longer have to make the choice between the foundation and higher papers. The grades run from A* to G.

I should chose this subject if...

Studying science to some degree at IGCSE is compulsory. However, students do have the option of choosing whether to study for Double Award or Separate Sciences. It is worth noting that the IGCSE course is very different to the UK GCSE course. It is NOT compulsory for students wishing to enter UK independent schools to study all 3 sciences separately, as the IGCSE course is seen as more academic and rigorous in terms of its content. Students should choose Separate Sciences if they have a flair for all three sciences and have a strong interest in the sciences. As a Faculty we are looking for all students on the separate science course to have achieved a Level 7 at KS3 and in Year 10/11 they must work consistently at a minimum of a grade B in all tests/exams. This reflects the increased demands of the course itself.

Is IGCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith?

Yes. To take any of the science subjects at A level you should have studied either the subject at GCSE or double award science.

Art & Design

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel

Specification code

2AD01

Link to specification on worldwide web <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/Art/Pages/default.aspx>

Topics covered at GCSE level in Art & Design

The GCSE in Art and Design is primarily a practical course with most lessons concerned with the production of the student's own artwork. The GCSE Subject Criteria for Art & Design requires not only the development of practical artistic skills and abilities but it also encourages students to explore and understand art and its various contexts, social, historical and cultural. Successful students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of past and contemporary art and design practice and be able to produce a personal response that embraces a range of ideas, concepts, media and processes. The course embraces the belief that the study of art and the exploration of imagination and creativity form an essential part of a broad and balanced education. Students are both practitioners and critics and are encouraged to develop an ability to plan, utilize time effectively and work independently under the guidance of their teacher.

This course develops a student's:

- creative and imaginative learning through the development of practical skills for communicating and expressing ideas, feelings and meanings in art, craft and design.
- investigative, analytical, experimental and interpretative practical, technical, and expressive capabilities skills including aesthetic understanding and critical thinking skills through enquiring minds.
- understanding of codes and conventions of art, craft and design and awareness of the contexts in which they operate including understanding the role and function of Art & Design within society.
- knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design in contemporary societies and in other times and cultures.
- personal attributes including self-confidence, resilience, perseverance, self-discipline and commitment.

The disciplines associated with the unendorsed Art and Design GCSE are painting and drawing, printmaking, sculpture, alternative media, ceramic design, interior, product or environmental design, jewellery, textiles, fashion, photography, film and video, interactive media, advertising, illustration, new media and technologies. Students will be required to work in two or more of the disciplines in their portfolio and demonstrate competence in using a variety of materials within their work.

You can find out more about Art & Design by talking to your teachers and/or other Art & Design Students or by accessing the BBC Bitesize Art & Design Website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/art/>

Assessment overview

The course consists of two units of work. Each project follows a process of development in the form of a journey of exploration.

Work is guided by four Assessment Objectives:

- Develop their ideas through investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and cultural understanding
- Refine their ideas through experimenting and selecting appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes

- Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to their intentions in visual and/or other forms
- Present a personal, informed and meaningful response demonstrating analytical and critical understanding, realising intentions and, where appropriate, making connections between visual, written, oral or other elements

The final marks are awarded by assessing the units as follows:

Unit 1: Personal Portfolio in Art & Design – Comprises of two sub-units. Unit 1 September until June of Year 10. Unit 2 July of Year 10 until January of Year 11

Internally set and marked. Assessed through controlled assignment.

60% of the final marks

Unit 2: Externally Set Assignment in Art & Design – Exam paper handed to students in February of Year 11 and the final practical is sat in May of Year 11

Externally set, internally marked and externally moderated

40% of the final marks

I should chose this subject if...

Students require strong observational and visual skills. National Curriculum End of Key Stage 3 Level 5 or above. Students who have not studied a formal art course at KS3 or equivalent may present a portfolio of work to demonstrate their artistic ability for the subject. An ability to; take risks; experiment with ideas, materials, tools and techniques; be open to new approaches; and extend existing skills. Lastly and perhaps more importantly a commitment to and love for the subject of Art & Design.

Students will find that the development of visual perception, aesthetics, critical thinking and problem solving skills will enrich and complement other subjects. They may well form the basis of a fulfilling life long creative enrichment.

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith

The skills learnt during the GCSE course form a strong foundation to the subject at the AS/A level and students without GCSE tend to struggle and attain lower AS/A Level grades due to underdeveloped artistic skills.

Students should consider the university entry requirements for subjects that may require Art & Design e.g. Architecture and design-based courses.

Some university subjects value the creative, expressive and imaginative practical and intellectual skills developed by Art & Design and may give credit for such thinking.

Business Studies

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel

Specification code

2BS01

[Link to specification on worldwide web](#)

Topics covered at GCSE level in Business Studies

Studying Business Studies enables students to understand the decisions and motives of entrepreneurs and business managers. Students will learn the steps and procedures involved in setting up and running a small business. They will develop and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to contemporary issues in a range of local, national and global contexts. After studying the course, students should appreciate the range of perspectives of different stakeholders in relation to business and economic activities and consider the extent to which business and economic activity can be ethical and sustainable.

Assessment overview

Unit 1: Introduction to small business

Externally assessed 25% of entire GCSE.

Written examination: 45 minutes.

Multiple-choice and objective test questions with a total of 40 marks.

Unit 2: Investigating a small business

This unit is internally assessed under controlled conditions. 25% of entire GCSE. Students complete one Edexcel-set task with a total of 40 marks. Research/investigation – approximately two weeks of curriculum time (a maximum of six hours). Analysis/evaluation of task (final write up) – approximately one week of curriculum time (a maximum of three hours).

The task is internally marked by teachers and moderated by Edexcel.

Unit 3: Building a business

Externally assessed. 50% of entire GCSE

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes.

Questions will comprise of a combination of multiple-choice, short- and extended-answer, data response and scenario-based questions with a total of 90 marks.

I should chose this subject if...

Students studying this course should have an interest in learning about the world around them and their place in it. The course will require students to solve problems and investigate businesses from a range of different perspectives. They will subject to certain exam questions that will require students to articulate business principles through long responses. A reasonable grounding in Mathematics will be useful for some of the financial elements of the course.

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith

This GCSE is not required for entry into A-Level Business Studies or Economics

Design and Technology:

GCSE

- Resistant Materials
- Graphic Products
- Textiles

Exam board: Edexcel
Link to specification on worldwide web

Specification codes 2RM01/ 2GR01/2TT01
www.edexcel.com

Topics covered at GCSE level in Resistant Materials Technology

In this course students will be designing and making their ideas with resistant materials such as: woods, manufactured boards, metals and plastics.

The emphasis is on designing and solving needs through design drawings, mock-ups, and prototypes, concluding in a functional product. The student will then choose a particular area to develop further in the second year. This direction will be chosen from a variety of areas given by Edexcel, e.g. design and make: a push-a-long toy, a coffee table, a DVD rack, a storage device such as a jewellery box or even a metal based multi-gadget tool.

ICT work is encouraged at all stages of the design process and a particular emphasis is made on the use of CAD/CAM in the development and manufacture of a final idea.

Topics covered at GCSE level in Graphic Products Technology

In this course students will be designing and modelling their ideas with compliant materials such as: card, sheet materials, foam board, styrofoam, and graphical equipment. The emphasis is on designing and solving needs through; the communication of information and constructional drawing techniques leading to a two dimensional presentation as well as a three dimensional model. The first year will follow a series of projects to expose students to all areas that come under the term graphics. In the second year a student is to follow a final project which should follow one of two clearly defined pathways, either conceptual or the built environment e.g: design and make a chocolate bar and wrapper; design and make a new perfume bottle and presentation box; design and model a pool area for a resort or even an interior of a room or a theatre set for a production.

Topics covered at GCSE level in Textiles Technology (new course)

In this new and exciting course students will be designing and modelling their ideas with traditional and/or modern textiles materials. The emphasis is on designing and solving needs through design drawings, patterns, mock-ups, and prototypes culminating in the completion of one or more largely textiles based product(s). The projects covered throughout the course will cover a variety of medium and form. The student will then choose a particular area to develop further in the second year. This direction will be chosen from a variety of areas given by Edexcel, e.g. design and make: a costume or a series of costumes for a theatre production, a sports kit for a school event, a pair of shoes / boots or even a hat for a specified outfit or event. A more traditional route could be taken by designing and making fabric which will be used in a gallery or a batik fabric to be used in the mass production of a line of clothing for a cultural event.

Assessment overview

The courses are spread over two years. Only the marks gained in the second year count towards the final GCSE assessment grade. This is split into two units:

Unit 1 is a coursework based assignment which is 60% of the final grade. This element should be a reflection of 40 hours school based work and should include evidence of a design folio and a manufactured product. This major project will start at the beginning of the second year and should finish in the following March.

Unit 2 takes the form of a 90 minute examination and makes up a further 40% of the final grade. During this element a student will build up a foundation of theory knowledge over the two years. The examinations for all three courses will take place in the June series of the second year.

I should choose this subject if...

I have an interest in designing and making products.

I have an interest in the work of designers and the influence they have on individuals and cultures.

I enjoy expressing opinions on design issues.

I enjoy studying a subject that is central to the man-made world in which we all live.

I am organised and self-motivated with a willingness to experiment, research and inquire.

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith

Completing and passing any of the courses above will allow you to gain access to an 'A' level Design and Technology course.

Note: The school's ability to offer these three courses is dependent on the numbers of students who would like to follow them. The school will consult with the student in the event of a course not running.

Drama

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel

Specification code

2DR01

Link to specification on
worldwide web

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/drama/Pages/default.aspx>

Topics covered at GCSE level in Drama

The Edexcel GCSE in Drama encourages students to:

- develop a personal interest in why drama matters and be inspired, moved and changed by studying a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study
- work imaginatively and creatively in collaborative contexts, generating, developing and communicating ideas
- consider and explore the impact of social, historical and cultural influences on drama texts and activities
- reflect on and evaluate their own work and the work of others
- develop and demonstrate competence in a range of practical, creative and performance skills
- develop a basis for their future role as active citizens in employment and society in general, as well as for the possible further study of drama
- actively engage in the process of dramatic study in order to develop as effective and independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds.

Assessment overview

Unit 1: Drama Exploration (30%)

Exploration of creative and structural aspects of drama: forms of stimuli, explorative strategies, drama medium, elements of drama.

Controlled assessment: six-hour practical exploration.

Documentary evidence – maximum 2000 words

Unit 2: Exploring Play Texts (30%)

Exploration of a play text chosen by the centre involving:

exploration of character, interpretation of the play, design implications of the play.

Visit to a live theatre performance

Controlled assessment: six-hour practical exploration based on a play text.

Documentary response – maximum 1000 words

Written response to live theatre – maximum 2000 words.

Unit 3: Drama Performance (40%)

A devised or scripted play performed to an audience. Students may offer: acting skills, or performance support and design skills.

Controlled assessment: performance of a play, devised or scripted.

I should chose this subject if...

you enjoy:

Expressing yourself in an active and exciting way

Working in a group

Exploring ideas by putting yourself in other people's shoes

Playing many parts in different imaginary situations

Creating your own drama work

Looking at plays written by other people

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith

No, it's not a requirement but you should choose to do A Level Drama & Theatre Studies for the same reasons you are thinking of choosing GCSE Drama.

Geography

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel
Link to specification on worldwide web

Specification code A (2GA01)
www.edexcel.com/gcse2009

Topics covered at GCSE level in Geography

Climate change and sustainable development; Tectonic Landscapes; Economic change; A Tourist's World; A fieldwork investigation.

An overview of the subject content at GCSE

The course is structured into 4 units.

Unit 1: Geographical Skills and Challenges.

This unit has two sections:

Section A – Geographical Skills: This covers cartographic, graphical, geographical enquiry, ICT and GIS skills.

Section B: Challenges for the Planet: This covers issues that have arisen from climate change and sustainable development.

Unit 2: The Natural Environment.

This unit has two sections:

Section A – Tectonic landscapes

Section B – A Wasteful World or A Watery World.

Unit 3: The Human Environment.

This unit has two sections:

Section A - Economic Change

Section B – A Tourist's World

Unit 4: Investigating Geography

For this unit, students need to complete a fieldwork investigation and report. They must complete one of the tasks provided by Edexcel, on one of the following themes: Coasts; Countryside; Environmental; Rivers; Tourism, Transport; Urban Areas.

Assessment Overview

	Mode of Assessment	Weighting	Length
Unit 1	Written tiered exam containing a mixture of question styles	50 marks	1 hour
Unit 2	Written tiered exam containing a mixture of question styles	50 marks	1 hour
Unit 3	Written tiered exam containing a mixture of question styles	50 marks	1 hour
Unit 4	This unit is internally assessed. Students complete one of the fieldwork tasks from the list provided by Edexcel. They must write up the fieldwork task under controlled conditions.	50 marks	Approx 2000 words

Key characteristics for choosing Geography at GCSE

- Interest – you enjoyed Geography at KS3 and are interested in the topics outlined above.
- Aptitude – your teacher has encouraged you to take the subject because you have the potential to achieve a high standard at GCSE
- Commitment – you are willing to work hard and meet deadlines.
- Independence – you should desire to draft and re-draft coursework so you can get the best possible mark.

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith?

Students wishing to take Geography at A level should have studied the subject at GCSE. A good pass grade is preferred.

History

IGCSE

Exam board: CIE
Link to specification on worldwide web

Specification code 0470
<http://www.cie.org.uk/>

Topics covered at IGCSE level in History

All students will study the 20th century Core Content and at least one of the Depth Studies offered by Cambridge International Examinations.

CORE CONTENT: Option B: The 20th century, International Relations since 1919

- 1 Were the Peace Treaties of 1919-23 fair?
- 2 To what extent was the League of Nations a success?
- 3 Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?
- 4 Who was to blame for the Cold War?

DEPTH STUDY: Option (c): The USA, 1919-41

- 1 How far did the US economy boom in the 1920s?
- 2 How far did US society change in the 1920s?
- 3 What were the causes and consequences of the Wall Street Crash?
- 4 How successful was the New Deal?

The PRESCRIBED CONTENT for paper 2 will be issued by the examination board at a later date, but will be based on one of the existing Depth Study topics.

Assessment overview

Candidates will be expected to:

1. recall, select, organise and deploy knowledge of the syllabus content;
2. demonstrate an understanding of:
 - (a) change and continuity, cause and consequence, similarity and difference;
 - (b) the motives, emotions, intentions and beliefs of people in the past;
3. comprehend, interpret, evaluate and use a range of sources as evidence in their historical context.

Scheme of assessment

Candidates will be entered for the following papers:

(i) Paper 1; (2 hours) will consist of two sections.

Section A (Core Content) Candidates must answer two questions.

Section B (Depth Studies) Candidates must answer one question.

All questions on Paper 1 will be structured into three parts and will be based on stimulus material.

(ii) Paper 2; (2 hours). Prescribed 20th-century topic. The topics will be prescribed each year and will be taken from the Core Content. Each option will include a collection of source material relating to the prescribed topic, and a series of questions based on the material. For the examination in 2012 the topics will be issued by the examination board at a later date:

(iii) Paper 4; (1 hour). On each of the Depth Studies one question will be set. It will be source-based and will be structured into several parts. It will test all the Assessment Objectives. Candidates must answer one question.

I should chose this subject if...

- I am interested in and enthusiastic about the past;
- I wish to acquire knowledge and understanding of human activity in the past;
- I want to understand the nature and use of historical evidence;

- I wish to understand the nature of cause and consequence, continuity and change,
- similarity and difference;
- I am interested to encourage international understanding;
- I want to development linguistic and communication skills.

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith

The study of History at I/GCSE level is preferred for entry to the A level History offered at Alice Smith School within the Humanities Faculty.

Information Communication Technology

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel
Link to specification on worldwide web

Specification code 1185/3185
<http://www.edexcel.org.uk/VirtualContent/17261.pdf>

Topics covered at GCSE level in ICT

This specification recognises the practical nature of the subject; as such students will experience a range of practical activities from which a body of skills and knowledge is developed. Students will carry out all their assignments within the context of a systems analysis process designed to:

- encourage candidates to gather, store, process and present information through activities in a range of contexts
- encourage candidates to solve problems through the use of information systems and associated principles and techniques
- develop a broad and balanced view of the range of applications of information systems including modeling, data logging and control
- give candidates opportunities to design, implement and document information technology systems
- develop understanding of the wider applications and effects of information technology;
- foster an awareness of what characterizes information, information processing and computer systems
- develop an awareness of ethical, social, economic and political consequence of the use of computers for individuals, organizations and society through the study of meaningful applications

Coursework is both a key part of the assessment process and a means of teaching much of the subject content. Ideas are provided for individual pieces of coursework along with further guidelines for interpreting the coursework marking scheme.

Assessment overview

There are two components to this specification. The coursework component amplifies the practical nature of the subject. A total of four projects are developed over the period of the course and this is worth 60% of the total mark. The theory component culminates with a two hour examination and is worth 40% of the final mark.

I should chose this subject if...

Have a keen interest in ICT in general, enjoy problem solving, have an analytical approach and a lot of patience.

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith

A good pass at GCSE in ICT would be preferred for acceptance to the Applied ICT GCE A level course.

Learning to Learn – a non-examined option for Years 10 and 11

Why “accelerated learning”?

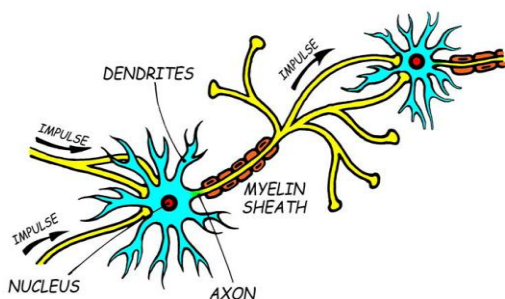
The futurist Alvin Toffler said that the illiterates of the 21st century wouldn't be those who don't know how to read and write, but those who don't know how to learn, unlearn and relearn. For years we've taught students subjects without teaching them explicitly how to get better at learning. Our students will have to be learners all their lives, so at The Alice Smith School, we offer a course in accelerated learning as a non-examined option for the Year 10 students of 2009-10.

We are in the fortunate position of being able to offer a large number of GCSE courses to students. With the five or six compulsory core subjects in English Language, English literature, mathematics and the sciences, and up to five further options, students will be well prepared for post-16 education with 8, 9, 10 or 11 GCSE subjects. Then is space, then, for some students to take one of their optional courses as a non-examined subject.

Students who are interested in this two year programme will need to indicate this on their option form. We will then counsel students and parents individually about which of the five optional subjects it is to replace. In this first phase of introducing the course, we cannot guarantee that the course will be available in combination with all other options, but will endeavour to meet the needs of as many students as possible.

What is the course about?

During the course, students are introduced to the concept of learning to learn and are asked to consider questions such as, “What does good learning look like? Does everybody learn in the same way? How do I learn best?” They use an on-line learning profiler which helps them to consider when, where and how they learn best and who they learn best with. They use this information to set themselves learning goals.



Students learn about the human brain – the organ for learning. They learn about the basic parts of the brain and their relationship to learning as well as the importance of nutrition and exercise in maintaining a healthy and active brain. They consider how the brain stores information in long term memory and are introduced to strategies and tools for remembering and thinking.

Students also consider the characteristics of highly effective teams. Students are introduced to the concept of effective group work and form “Home Teams”. They discuss and agree a set of criteria for effective group work and have the opportunity to put these into practice in practical challenges.

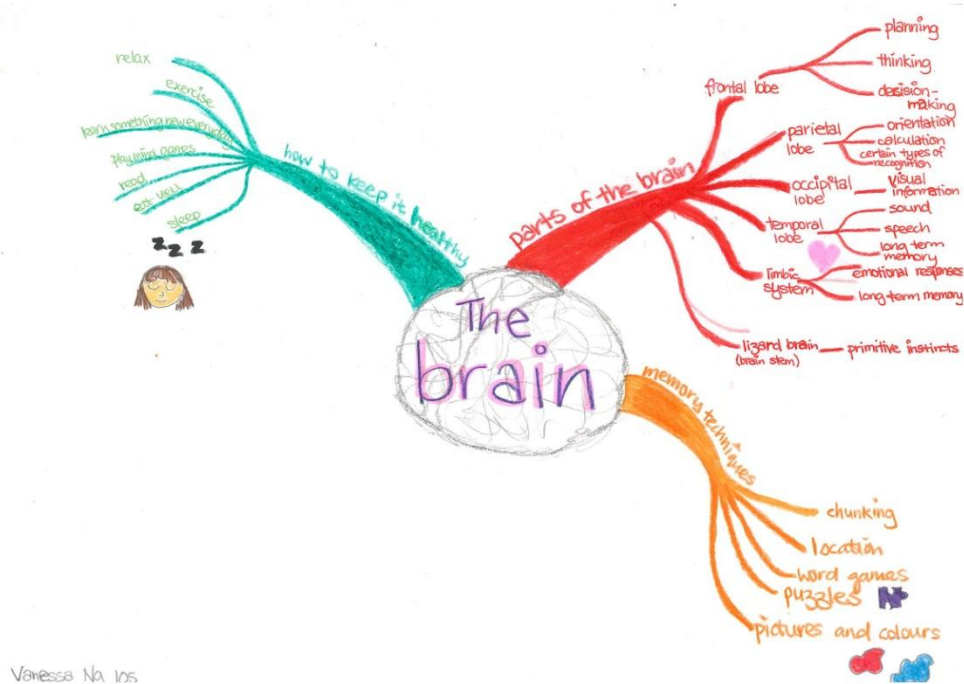
Students go on to look at characteristics of highly successful people as a vehicle for introducing the 5 R’s. We believe that successful learners are *Resilient, Reflective, Resourceful, Reasoned and Responsible*. Students study some successful individuals and analyse personal characteristics that helped them accomplish extraordinary things.

Students develop specific memorisation and learning skills, such as the Roman room method and the Buzan memory mapping techniques. They apply these skills to the work that they are engaged in across their school subjects, thus supporting examination and coursework performance in other subjects.

As the course continues, students develop further team learning, coaching and problem solving skills and go on to refine their approach to finding, using and communicating information in the 21st century. They learn about effective team-work, their own preferred team roles and the stages of team development. Problem-solving and thinking tools from sources such as Edward de Bono are introduced and applied. A range of ICT applications are an integral part of the course and their use is encouraged to assist learning, research and communication.

During the later stages of the course, an increasing amount of time is given to applying the skills and tools to the work being undertaken in other areas of the curriculum.

“In times of change the learners will inherit the earth, while the learned will find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.” Eric Hoffer



Media

GCSE (single award)

Exam board: AQA
Link to specification on worldwide web

Specification code 3571
<http://www.aqa.org.uk/qual/newgcse/pdf/AQA-4810-W-SP-10.PDF>

Topics covered at GCSE level in Media

This course will:

- foster a critical understanding of a range of media texts and the ways in which they are read and understood by different audiences;
- develop a critical awareness of media representations of individuals, groups and issues;
- develop an understanding of the relationship between media industries/institutions/technologies (including ICT), products and audiences;
- encourage an awareness of the debates surrounding the role of the media, and its industries, in contemporary society;
- enable candidates to explore and represent their own ideas and experiences by developing practical production skills in one or more media.

Assessment overview

Coursework - 60 % of final mark

- *Introductory assignment* - Magazine Covers: handed in March 2010
- *Cross-media assignment* - Promotion of Music: handed in June 2010
- *Practical Production and Evaluation* - Moving Image: handed in December 2010

Final exam- 40% of final mark – 1 ½ hours

- 4 tasks on a prescribed topic area (released four weeks prior to the examination).

I should chose this subject if...

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith

A Media GCSE is preferred for entry onto the A-Level Media course.

MFL Bahasa Malay

MFL Extension Malay

MFL French

MFL German

MFL Mandarin

MFL Extension Mandarin

MFL Spanish

For further information about languages at Alice Smith please contact: Edith Forget, Head of MFL or Dorothy Nice, Assistant Head of MFL

Music

For further information about music at the Alice Smith School please contact: Alistair Hamilton, Head of Music

Physical Education

GCSE

Exam board: Edexcel

Specification code 2PE01

Link to specification on worldwide web

<http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/GCSE%20New%20GCSE/Edexcel-GCSE-PE-Spec.pdf>

Topics covered at GCSE level in Physical Education

GCSE PE is split into two areas.

Unit 1 covers theoretical aspects including; anatomy and physiology, sports psychology, energy systems and issues relating to health and fitness.

Unit 2 is predominantly a practical element. In this unit pupils will be assessed in 4 sports. They will be able to be assessed as either performers, coaches or officials.

Assessment overview

Pupils would be assessed over two units.

Unit 1 will be assessed through a 1 ½ hour written exam, unit two is coursework to be internally assessed.

Unit 1 contributes 40% and unit 2 contributes 60% of the overall grade.

I should chose this subject if...

Pupils should have an interest in increasing their knowledge of sports related issues as well as being a keen participant. This course will improve pupils understanding of sport from a wide range of perspectives. Pupils will have a deeper understanding of tactics and terminology as well as the psychological and physiological aspects of sport.

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith

It is preferable that pupils take GCSE PE before embarking upon the A-level, but not mandatory.

Psychology

GCSE

Examboard:

Edexcel

Specification code

2PS01

Link to specification on worldwide web:

www.edexcel.com

Topics covered at GCSE level in Psychology

Psychology is defined as the 'science of mind and behaviour'. As an initial introduction to the discipline the GCSE course focuses on five key areas. These are social, cognitive, individual differences, biological and developmental psychology. There are relevant links to contemporary issues, career opportunities and the applications of psychology. To further engage the students GCSE psychology is seated within a context based approach and proposes five questions of interest:

- 1 How do we see our world?
- 2 Is dreaming meaningful?
- 3 Do TV and video games affect young people's behaviour?
- 4 Why do we have phobias?
- 5 Are criminals born or made?

GCSE psychology is about people both as individuals and as members of society and therefore includes biological and environmental effects on the individual. The subject also looks at animal behaviour in itself and in order to study humans. The methodology is seated within scientific principles. Furthermore the course has been developed in consultation with students in order to focus on areas they find interesting, including genes, reasons for dreaming, characteristics of defendants that affect a jury and how offender profiling works.

Assessment overview

There are two exams that include some multiple choice questions, some short-answer questions and some extended writing. For example there will be case studies with questions that necessitate explanation of what happened in the study and potential problems with it. Students will also be asked to use their understanding of psychology, such as comparing two different explanations of aggression. There is no coursework element.

Unit 1: 40% (marks 60) Time available 1 hour 15 minutes

Unit 2: 60% (marks 90) Time available 1 hour 45 minutes

I should chose this subject if...

Students should be interested in people and what makes them tick. GCSE psychology is for those that have an enquiring mind and enjoy the challenges presented by new concepts and theories. Students will need to actively participate in discussions where they may be assessing the merits of one study or theory in comparison to others. The confidence to engage in group work and the independence to conduct experiments and give presentations of findings are other integral components of this course.

Is GCSE study in this subject a requirement for the entry onto any A level course offered at Alice Smith

GCSE psychology is preferred for study at A level.

Appendix 1

Acronyms used in this booklet

A level	Advanced level. Common term used to describe the course followed by students in Year 12 and 13.
A2	Advanced Level part 2. The qualifications commonly obtained by students at the end of Year 13
AQA	An English Awarding Body (exam board). They award GCSE exams
AS	Advanced subsidiary level. The qualifications commonly obtained by students at the end of Year 12
CIE	Cambridge International Examination. The part of the OCR Awarding Body that awards IGCSEs
CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education. The predecessor of the GCSE, aimed at less academically able students. These exams no longer exist.
DT	Design Technology
Edexcel	An English Awarding Body (exam board). They award GCSE exams.
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education. The qualifications commonly obtained by students at the end of Year 11
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IGCSE	International GCSE
KS4	Key Stage 4 of the English National Curriculum. School years 10 and 11
MFL	Modern Foreign Language
O level	Ordinary Level. The predecessor of the GCSE. These exams no longer exist.
OCR	An English Awarding Body (exam board). They award GCSE exams.
PE	Physical Education
PSHE	Personal Social Health and Economic Education
PTSC	Parent-Teacher-Student-Conference. Perhaps better known as Parents' Evenings
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority – the organisation that regulates the Awarding Body (exam board) on behalf of the UK government.

Appendix 2

Form 1: Provisional Choices

Name		Form	
------	--	------	--

My Provisional GCSE Choices: (At least one option must be a language)

Option 1	
Option 2	
Option 3	
Option 4	
Option 5	
Reserve 1	
Reserve 2	
Reserve 3	

My GCSE Science preference: (Please tick your preferred choice)

Please note that Science Triple Award is an accelerated course taught in the same curriculum time as Science Double Award and only recommended for students who are capable of studying science at a faster pace. Students and parents are advised to discuss this option with their science teacher.

Science Double Award (2 GCSEs in Science)	
Science Triple Award (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) GCSE	

I understand that these are provisional choices only, that it may not be possible to study all my five most preferred options and that confirmed choices will be made in March 2009.

Signed..... (Student)..... (Parent)

Appendix 3

Form 2: Change of option request To be used between 31st March 2009 and 1st September 2009

You should complete this form and then hand it into to the Assistant Principal responsible for Year 10

Name		Form	
------	--	------	--

I would like to make the following changes to my GCSE options. (Please complete for the option block where you wish to make a change)

	Subject to delete	Subject to add
Option block 1		
Option block 2		
Option block 3		
Option block 4		
Option block 5		

I understand that it will only be possible to make this change if places are still available in the teaching group that I wish to change into.

Signed..... (Student)..... (Parent)

Date.....

To be completed by school

I authorise this change

I am not able to authorise this change because.....

.....

Signed.....(Assistant Principal) Date.....

Appendix 4

Form 3: Change of option request To be used between 1st September 2009 and half term

You should complete this form and then hand it into to the Assistant Principal responsible for Year 10

Name		Form	
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I would like to make the following change to my GCSE options.

Subject to drop	Reason for dropping
Head of Department signature	Head of department comment
Subject to take up	Reason for taking up this subject
Head of Department signature	Head of department comment

I understand that it will only be possible to make this change if places are still available in the teaching group that I wish to change into and subject to the agreement of both Heads of Department. By making this request I agree to catch up with any missed work as requested by the new Head of Department.

Signed..... (Student)..... (Parent)

Date.....

To be completed by school

I authorise this change

I am not able to authorise this change because.....

.....

Signed.....(Assistant Principal) Date.....