



DENSTONE
COLLEGE

GCSE Options Booklet

FOR SEPTEMBER 2025



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Dear Third Form,

Middle School Curriculum 2025/26

I am very pleased to present this curriculum document to you. It contains information on the Middle School courses on offer at Denstone College commencing September 2025.

There is a lot of information in this document that should help you in deciding upon your most appropriate options. In the coming weeks you will all have the opportunity to discuss your choices with relevant staff at school. Take some time to read this booklet carefully and seek available advice; your GCSE options are an important decision!

All GCSE and IGCSE examinations are sat at the end of the course (i.e. the summer term of the Fifth Form), while non-exam assessment (NEA) tasks also take place in some subjects at different times throughout the Fourth and Fifth Forms. There is a noticeable step up in the skills and complexity involved in all subjects at this stage of your education. A number of changes have been made in recent years to the curriculum for Middle School pupils to reflect recent government reforms and changing specifications and grading with a view to helping you achieve an appropriate balance of subjects and workload over the next two years. As such, it is important that you take time to read and discuss this information carefully so you make the best decisions for your own requirements in terms of subjects to study.

Remember to return your options form to Mr Bell (Deputy Head Academic) via your house tutor no later than **Friday 7th March**. There is no benefit to returning this information early; we would rather you spent time giving your options sufficient thought. The Third Form Parents' Evening on **Thursday 13th February** will give you an opportunity to discuss options and current academic progress with your teachers. There will be further opportunities in the summer term to reflect on the courses you have chosen and to make changes to these choices, where possible, before the start of your Fourth Form studies in September.

Yours sincerely,

T J Bell
Deputy Head Academic

DENSTONE COLLEGE MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The term 'Middle School' at Denstone College refers to the Fourth and Fifth Forms (years 10 and 11).

The Middle School curriculum is composed of a mixture of compulsory and optional courses making a normal total of between 8 and 10 GCSE/IGCSEs. These years are an important period of transition as you move towards preparing for Sixth Form and then university, or the world of work, and you begin to specialise after the broad curriculum you have been following until now.

The purpose of providing this document is to help you in deciding upon a suitable collection of courses to study. There is a lot of information to consider. Think carefully about it and discuss things fully with your parents/guardians, tutor, Head of House and subject teachers before making any final decisions. You may also find it useful to speak to Mr Lightfoot (Head of Careers) or Mrs Watson (Head of Higher Education), especially if you already have specific careers or university courses in mind, and want to know the best GCSEs to follow with this in mind.

The 'core' GCSE curriculum

Four subjects are compulsory in Middle School for most students, consisting of a possible total of six or seven GCSEs. They are:

1. **English** (GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature, for higher sets)
2. **Mathematics** (IGCSE)
3. **Science** (Two or Three GCSEs)
4. **Modern Foreign Language** (French or Spanish, with Supervised Study an option for a few pupils not taking a language GCSE)

In English, Mathematics and Science pupils will be taught in sets based on past and ongoing performance. All Fourth Form pupils will be set in Science according to relevant assessment data and teacher feedback, with approximately half the year group undertaking the 'triple science' course, which leads to three separate awards in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, and others studying the 'Combined Science' course, which leads to two GCSE awards in Science (see details contained in this booklet). Studying the 'Combined Science' course will provide students with more study time during the working week and still provides the opportunity for 'A' Level science study (dependent on the final grades achieved).

Each member of the Middle School can also pick up to three optional subjects to study at GCSE. Some pupils may benefit from more time to concentrate on fewer GCSEs. In this case, there exists a **Supervised Study** option in place of studying a Modern Foreign Language, whereby the pupil will have four periods of supervised study each week to commit to the other GCSE subjects they are studying. Supervised Study can also be selected as an optional subject, allowing pupils time to engage with a range of academic enrichment, support and extension activities in place of a third optional GCSE subject. In this way, it is possible for pupils to have flexibility over the number of GCSE courses they will be studying, with some opting for a slightly narrower range of courses. **When choosing subjects the onus should very much be on 'quality rather than quantity,' with higher grades in a narrower range of GCSE subjects generally preferable to lower grades across more subjects.**

Please note that, once courses commence in September, pupils will only be permitted to drop a GCSE subject in exceptional circumstances; we expect pupils to be fully committed to the subjects they choose.

Optional Courses

Optional GCSE subjects available from September are:

- Art
- Business
- Computer Science
- Design and Technology (DT)
- Drama
- Spanish (for pupils who wish to study both Spanish and French)
- Geography
- History
- Music
- Physical Education (PE)
- Religious Studies (RS)

In addition, pupils may choose Supervised Study as an option. This course will provide additional time and support to support and consolidate academic progress in other subjects or to engage in specific academic extension tasks. Supervised Study is not a GCSE course so should only be taken by pupils wishing to study one less subject at GCSE.

Please note that pupils opting for Supervised Study (instead of a modern foreign language) should not also opt for Supervised Study instead of an optional GCSE subject.

Which options should be chosen?

The selection decision should be seen as an opportunity to create a personal curriculum of your choice. The decision about options is a significant one and a number of important questions should be borne in mind:

How good are you at a particular subject; do you have an aptitude for it?

Are you genuinely interested in these subjects?

What are the implications for A levels, higher education and career choices of one subject rather than another?

Are you able to successfully study for 9 or 10 (1) GCSEs, or would you benefit from spending more time on fewer subjects?

It is often desirable to keep some breadth in your chosen programme. As such, many pupils will opt for at least one humanities subject (such as Geography, History or Religious Studies) alongside at least one creative subject (such as Art, DT, Drama or Music), although there is no compulsion to do so. **It is our recommendation that pupils should follow a balanced curriculum and not become over-specialised too early in their academic careers.** For this reason we anticipate that the vast majority of pupils will opt to study at least one modern foreign language at GCSE level. The number of pupils leaving school with a foreign language GCSE is in decline nationally; taking Spanish or French (or both) can therefore be a real selling point for a pupil moving forward to university and the world of work.

Please remember that GCSE choices can have an influence on the subsequent selection of A Level subjects. It is perfectly possible, however, to commence some of our sixth form courses without having done the subject at GCSE. For example, the A Level course in Business and our sixth form vocational courses (BTEC Sport and CTEC ICT) require no previous study of these subjects.

Please select three optional subjects from the previous list. We will then endeavour to produce a set of option blocks that will allow us to accommodate as many choices as possible. After this time, you will still be able to change your option choices so long as they are within the settled blocks.

Choose French as the compulsory language and then pick Spanish from the list of options if you wish to study both languages at GCSE.

Please bear in mind that it may not be possible to timetable all the combinations of subjects that are chosen, and you may have to choose an alternative option, but we will assist you if this is the case. For this reason, please give some thought to the subject you wish to nominate as your reserve (4th) option choice.

The Middle School Tutorial Programme

The personal development of our pupils is taking place every moment they are with us. The House Tutor will provide individual care, support and guidance and will monitor academic progress. Our Middle School tutorial programme aims to help equip our pupils with the skills they need to be balanced, emotionally resilient and responsible individuals. Tutors play a pivotal role in delivering this programme and thereby managing the overall development of their tutees.

Themes covered during the Middle School years are constantly reviewed and updated. Recent examples include...

- Getting into good habits
- How we learn
- Strategies for dealing with stress
- Communication
- At what age can I?
- Consent
- Manners
- Revision techniques
- Personal Health Check – Sleep
- Alcohol
- Revision timetables
- Personal Finance
- Growth Mindset

Our tutorial programme compliments our academic and co-curricular programmes, being delivered each week by House Tutors. Further queries about this programme can be directed to Mr Farman (Head of Wellbeing) or Mr Mace (Head of Middle School).

Denstone College GCSE Option Choices: 2025

Name:

House:

Tutor:

1. Modern Foreign Language option: **FRENCH** **SPANISH** **EAL** **SUPERVISED STUDY**

(Please circle your preferred language)

2. The next stage is to indicate your three preferred subject options. There is **no need to list English (Language and Literature), Mathematics or Science.**

My option choices for GCSE are:

1.

2.

3.

[4th reserve choice =

(if any of the above are not available)]

Please return this form to Mr T Bell, Deputy Head Academic, at Denstone College as soon as possible but **no later than Friday 7th March, 2025.**

It is very important that the information you supply is as accurate as possible because our planning for the GCSE courses commencing in September will be carried out on the basis of this evidence. Failure to meet the above deadline means that your preferences will not be taken into account when option blocks are created.

Optional subjects available:

Art
Business
Computer Science
Drama
Design & Technology (DT)
French (for dual linguists)

Geography
History
Music
Physical Education (PE)
Religious Studies (RS)
Supervised Study (not a GCSE)

Contact Details

| Subject | Contact | Email address |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Art | Mrs Mackay | kmackay@denstonecollege.net |
| Biology | Mrs Rylance | krylance@denstonecollege.net |
| Business | Mrs Davis | jdavis@denstonecollege.net |
| Chemistry | Mr Tomlinson | itomlinson@denstonecollege.net |
| Computer Science | Mrs Butler | gbutler@denstonecollege.net |
| Drama and Theatre | Mrs Abson | rabson@denstonecollege.net |
| DT | Miss Plewes | jplewes@denstonecollege.net |
| English (Lit. and Lang.) | Mr Watson | mwatson@denstonecollege.net |
| French | Mr Gregoire | mgregoire@denstonecollege.net |
| Geography | Mrs Stanley | lstanley@denstonecollege.net |
| History | Miss McDowell | smcdowell@denstonecollege.net |
| Maths | Mrs Hawksworth | xhawksworth@denstonecollege.net |
| Music | Mr Wynell-Mayow | lwynell-mayow@denstonecollege.net |
| PE | Mrs Graham | kgraham@denstonecollege.net |
| Physics | Mr Lightfoot | rlightfoot@denstonecollege.net |
| RS (Philosophy and Ethics) | Mrs Chadfield | schadfield@denstonecollege.net |
| Spanish | Mrs Jones | ajones@denstonecollege.net |

| Other useful contacts | Contact | Email address |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Deputy Head (Academic) | Mr Bell | tbell@denstonecollege.net |
| Careers | Mr Lightfoot | rlightfoot@denstonecollege.net |
| Higher Education | Mrs Watson | kwatson@denstonecollege.net |
| Head of Middle School | Mr Mace | rmace@denstonecollege.net |
| Head of South House (Boys' boarding) | Mrs Davis | jdavis@denstonecollege.net |
| Head of Moss Moor (Girls' boarding) | Miss Furnival | cfurnival@denstonecollege.net |

Art and Design

AQA

Have you ever considered what you use every day that hasn't been created and designed by someone?

From operating theatres to outer space, artists and designers have had to solve problems, design and make objects that enhance other people's lives.

Art is an excellent subject for those whose interests are diverse, whose mind is engaged with the world around them, and who enjoy the challenges of thinking of the new; stage set design, fashion design, surface pattern, and new eco-textiles are just a few possibilities art allows you to access.

The GCSE course provides each individual pupil creativity, the ability to investigate ideas and develop skills such as research and investigation. The final 'externally set assignment' is a continuous project, avoiding exam pressure of revision as it and the coursework projects are completed early in May before exam leave.

The syllabus encourages a structured approach which allows candidates to develop a sound grounding in a number of skills whilst still exploring the subject creatively in depth. There is greater emphasis and focus at GCSE level; investigating research and ideas, the ability to experiment with materials and media to a high skill level, the exploration of ideas as part of their journey and culminating in an outcome (or series of outcomes) as the realisation of intentions.

Opportunities to experiment with ceramics, textiles, photography, painting and drawing, as well as printmaking, all lead to exciting prospects beyond your GCSE.

Art is a popular and highly successful optional GCSE subject at Denstone College, with typically two teaching groups studying the subject each year. Success demands an organised and disciplined approach from pupils, who are encouraged to make use of the many opportunities that exist to use the art facilities beyond lesson time.

Assessment



The same four areas for assessment apply for both coursework and the externally set assignment.

Component 1 is a personal portfolio of work based on themes and projects carried out within the department. The projects are produced throughout Fourth Form and part-way through Fifth Form. This portfolio contributes 60% of the overall marks available for the qualification.

Component 2 is based on an externally set assignment, issued in January of Fifth Form, where preparatory work is carried out in class, leading towards a final outcome(s) produced under exam conditions over a 10-hour period, spread across two days in May. Work submitted for this unit has a 40% mark weighting overall.

For further details about this course please contact Mrs K Mackay, Head of Art.

Business

Edexcel

Do you enjoy:

- Communicating and explaining your ideas?
- Thinking creatively and making decisions?
- Working with numbers to solve business problems?
- Learning about the world of business through real and relevant local and international brands?

If so, GCSE Business could be right for you.

What will I learn?

In GCSE Business you will learn about how the world of business works and its relevance to almost every aspect of modern society. Amongst other topics, you will learn about planning, finance, marketing and economics, and discover some of the methods and techniques used to analyse an organisation's performance. You might have an interest in business, and want to start your own business one day. You may have an enquiring mind and be interested in learning about the world around you, how businesses are set up, and what it is that makes someone a great entrepreneur.

How will I learn?

You will experience various teaching methods including case studies, role-play and ICT alongside more traditional methods. You will be expected to immerse yourselves in a business-like mindset and to pay attention to the world around them. You'll start by exploring the world of small business through the lens of an entrepreneur. How and why do business ideas come about? What makes a successful business? You will understand how to make a business effective, manage money and see how the world around us impacts small businesses and all the people involved.

Then you'll move on to investigating business growth. How does a business develop beyond the start-up phase? You'll learn about key business concepts and issues and decisions you need to make when growing a business and working in a global business. You'll learn about meeting customer needs, making marketing, operational, financial and human resourcing decisions and you'll explore how the wider world impacts the business as it grows.

Pupils who opt for this new subject should be prepared to develop an interest in global current affairs through the internet, TV news, newspapers etc. A natural curiosity about global issues and the world of business is a definite advantage! There are some numerical aspects to the course which pupils should be comfortable with, such as basic data handling skills and the ability to perform basic calculations, and it is important to be able to follow a logical argument through and apply it to the world around us.

This course is a useful introduction to the subject for those interested in pursuing it at A Level, although it certainly isn't essential for this purpose.

Assessment



Theme 1 and Theme 2 are assessed by a 1 hour and 45 minute exam on each theme. The papers consist of calculations, multiple-choice, short-answer and extended-writing questions. They are equally weighted.

The key units in the course are as follows:

Paper 1 – Theme 1 –
Investigating Small
Business

Paper 2 – Theme 2 –
Building a Business

For further details about this course please contact
Mrs. J Davis, Head of
Business & Economics.

Computer Science

Edexcel

Computer technology continues to advance rapidly and the growth in the use of mobile devices and web-related technologies has exploded. Businesses today require an ever-increasing number of technologically-aware individuals. The ability to program computers is a valuable skill. This is even more so in the gaming, mobile and web related industries and GCSE Computer Science has been developed with this in mind.

Pupils studying this course will gain an understanding of the fundamental concepts around creating software applications, empowering them to be creators rather than passive consumers. Pupils will have the opportunity to do some fascinating in-depth research, take apart and rebuild computers from their core components and learn practical programming skills in languages such as Python.

Subject content:

- Computational thinking
- Data
- Computers
- Networks
- Issues and impact
- Programming

Computer Science at GCSE supports further study in Computer Science A-Level. Students can then progress to courses at university such as systems engineering, software engineering, cyber security and artificial intelligence. Career prospects in the computing industry are wide ranging. Computing skills are essential in a wide range of professions not just IT related jobs. Study of the subject supports progress in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The study of Computer Science develops transferable skills, particularly problem solving and logical thinking.

There are no defined prerequisites for this course; however, pupils interested in this course will need to demonstrate sound mathematical skills and an interest in computer programming.

Assessment



Paper 1: Written exam worth 50% of the course. Paper 1 is 1hr 30min consisting of five compulsory questions on computational thinking, data, computers, networks, issues and impacts.

Paper 2: Practical onscreen exam worth 50% of the course. Paper 2 is 2 hours and consists of practical programming tasks in Python 3.

For more information contact Mrs G Butler, Head of Computing & ICT.

Drama

AQA

Our GCSE Drama course aims to engender a lifelong love of the arts and the stage. This is a very popular and highly successful optional subject, involving the practical exploration of different genres of theatre. This exciting and academic course teaches evaluation, interpretation and analysis by encouraging participating students to practically explore and actively engage in a wide range of creative and stimulating activities. It builds presentation skills, confidence and communication. It teaches you to work in a team, but lessons also aim to develop independent learning skills and they encourage pupils to become more critical and reflective.

Drama encourages you to think in alternative ways, providing students with problem solving abilities and empathy, and it helps you to face challenges and improvise confidently. Drama also aids literacy skills and helps with wider reading and through the various texts and periods studied, an understanding of politics and society is also heightened. Drama is a fun addition to your day and opportunities exist to attend live productions and engage in workshop activities.

The course comprises of three components:

Component 1: Understanding drama

This component tests the knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre. Candidates study *The Crucible* as a classic set text, with a view to how it may be brought to life on stage.

Candidates study a number of live theatre productions, analysing and evaluating their success.

Consideration will be given to setting, production ideas and acting techniques. Style, genre, theme, character and context are also important.

Component 2: Devising practical drama

This component assesses the creation and performance of devised drama. It includes the final presentation of a group piece alongside the analysis and evaluation of the work produced.

Component 3: Texts in practice

Students perform two extracts from one play. (The chosen play must contrast with the set text used for component 1)

As 60% of the marks are gained before the written examination, the emphasis is on consistent hard work building up to strong practical performances.

Pupils who enjoy working practically and creatively, being part of a team and performing should consider this subject.

Assessment



Component 1 is assessed by a written exam (1 hour 45 minutes) involving multiple choice questions and longer written responses. This accounts for 40% of the overall marks for the course.

Component 2 is assessed internally via a devising log and performance (externally moderated). This accounts for 40% of the overall marks for the course.

Component 3 is assessed by an external examiner. This accounts for 20% of the overall marks for the course.

For further details about this course please contact Mrs. R Abson, Head of Drama.

Design and Technology

AQA

Design and Technology is a popular and successful option subject at GCSE. It prepares students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design & Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors. Students will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making, and apply technical and practical expertise.

Pupils follow a programme of study based on the AQA specification. The course is designed to encourage candidates to be able to design and make products with creativity and originality, using a range of materials and techniques. Pupils are generally enthused and challenged by the range of practical activities possible. The Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) task will be set late in fourth form (year 10) and from this point, students will devote time to the task both in and outside of lesson time. Quality coursework does require a good deal of time and dedication.

Whilst the subject clearly builds on the practical skills that have been developed in previous years, pupils should be aware that the course and final examination also require a substantial understanding of theory-related topics. 15% of examined questions will also test the pupil's mathematical skills so secure knowledge from KS3 is beneficial.

Many Denstonians that have studied A Level Design & Technology move onto degrees and careers in product design, industrial design, architecture, engineering, interior design, automotive design and other related courses. The GCSE course is an excellent foundation for this. Whether you want to study something on the creative/technical spectrum or not, you could find the GCSE highly rewarding.

Assessment



Component 1 is assessed by a 2 hour final written examination (50% of overall course marks), sat by all pupils at the end of the fifth form.

15% of questions will be testing mathematical skills.

Component 2 is a Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) and is worth 50% of the course. This will involve a single design and make activity selected from a range of tasks set by the examination board. The project must result in a three dimensional outcome.

For further details about this course please contact Miss J Plewes, Head of Design and Technology.

English

AQA

English provides the skills that are the cornerstone of a first-rate education and a successful, fulfilling life: creativity, clarity of thought, and effective communication. At the heart of our work is a passionate belief in the power of language, the adventure of literature and the joy of self-expression.

Students will learn how to adapt their writing for different purposes and audiences, as well as how to appreciate features of a writer's craft. All students will read widely and nurture their creative and analytical skills.

All students are entered for GCSE English Language, an essential qualification, and most are also entered for English Literature. The subjects are 'taught together' but lead to two separate GCSEs. English Language ensures that students are critical readers and effective writers, whilst English Literature continues the study, appreciation and analysis of a wide range of classic literary texts. In addition to the compulsory written elements of the English Language course, all students are entered for the additional Spoken Language Endorsement which is graded separately.

All students will begin the two-year course studying both strands of English as the study of literature helps to support the study of Language. The decision as to whether the continuation of Literature is a viable option or not will be carefully considered during the first year of study, and will only be agreed following an open discussion between parents, students and staff. It is hoped that a majority of students will complete both courses but provision will be made for those for whom it is considered that a solid focus on Language would be more beneficial.

Assessment



The course is taught simply as "English" but results (for most students) in two separate qualifications: AQA GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature.

English Language is 100% examination, plus a separately graded Spoken Language Endorsement.

English Literature is 100% examination. Set texts include novels, plays, and a collection of classic and contemporary poems.

For further details about this course, please contact Mr M Watson, Head of English.

French

AQA

Pupils at the college are advised to opt for at least one modern foreign language in the Fourth Form, with some pupils opting to study two. With GCSE entries in MFL subjects in decline nationally, and the growing competitive nature of certain university subjects, it can be a distinct advantage for students to be able to demonstrate their ability in at least one foreign language up to GCSE level.

French is a key global language. Did you know that, besides English, French is the only language spoken on all continents? In fact, a recent study by the investment bank, Natixis, states that French is set to become the most commonly spoken language by 2050. Moreover, the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) recently named French as the most desired language for UK business.

In addition, and more importantly perhaps, learning about and understanding French culture is source of great fun!

French follows the AQA GCSE course, which aims to develop a desire and ability to communicate with and understand speakers of the language, as well as developing a cultural awareness of the many countries and communities where the French is spoken.

There are three themes in the newly reformed GCSE course:

- People and lifestyle
- Popular culture
- Communication and the world around us

GCSE French has a Foundation tier (where students can gain up to a grade 5) and a Higher tier (where grades 4 to 9 can be achieved). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier.

The GCSE qualification is linear, meaning that all students will sit their exams at the end of the course.

The assessed skills in the course are:

- Listening (25%)
- Speaking (25%)
- Reading (25%)
- Writing (25%)

Opportunities to apply French skills are offered through a range of extracurricular schemes, including a popular trip to Nice in the Fifth Form.

Assessment



Paper 1: Listening (25% of the course) is examined by a series of tasks based on pre-recorded material

Section A – listening comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally
Section B – Dictation where students transcribe short sentences.

Paper 2: Speaking (25%) is assessed by a role play, a reading aloud tasks and photo card discussion.

Paper 3: Reading (25%) is examined based on a number of questions in English
Section A – reading comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally
Section B – translation from French into English.

Paper 4: Writing (25%) requires candidates to complete a series of tasks including describing a picture, translating from English into French and producing two paragraphs of various lengths including a longer structured task at higher level.

For more details, please contact: Mr M. Grégoire, Head of French.

Geography

AQA

Geography is a subject at the heart of our collective future. Take the global issues facing this generation and the next: climate change, mass migration, food insecurity, flooding etc. Many will be addressed by those who have studied Geography.

Geographers are very much in demand. As a subject, it is extremely well respected by employers and universities alike because it prepares pupils for both the great world of work and further academic studies by developing a range of useful, transferable skills.

Geography is a unique subject because it looks at both the physical structure of the planet *and* the social structure. With geography it is possible to understand the social, economic and physical forces which shape our world. The course emphasises the relationship between people and their environment and adopts a problem-solving approach to a range of issues. Students develop a wide range of skills including report writing, graphical, cartographical, statistical and analytical skills.

Students will get the opportunity to engage in fieldwork and 15% of all marks are awarded in relation to these skills. In line with exam board requirements, we spend 3 days in Wales to support this aspect, at a cost of approximately £190 for full board accommodation, transport and teaching.

Paper 1 focuses on physical elements for example natural hazards, coasts, extreme weather and climate change. While Paper 2 covers human topics such as urban challenges (slums, crime, regeneration), economic issues (development, aid, tourism) and resource management. The two halves combine for Paper 3 where issue evaluation and fieldwork are the focus.

Pupils choosing geography will need to demonstrate adequate literacy, numeracy and spatial skills alongside a genuine enthusiasm for the subject. A positive attitude to understanding cultures from all over the world is also assumed.

Assessment



Unit 1 - Living with the Physical Environment.

Assessed in paper 1.
Answer questions from 3 sections.

1hr 30mins

35% of GCSE

Unit 2 – Challenges in the Human Environment.

Assessed in paper 2.
Answer questions from 3 sections.

1hr 30mins

35% of GCSE

Unit 3 – Geographical Applications.

Assessed in paper 3.
Answer questions from 2 sections.

1hr 15mins

30% of GCSE

For further details about this course please contact Mrs L. Stanley, Head of Geography.

History

Edexcel

History is the study of the world around us and how it came to be what it is today. We deal with huge ideas and issues such as power, war, conflict, racism, change, reform and revolution, exploring different societies and ideas from 1000AD right up to the 1990s.

History is also one of the most useful subjects to study to prepare you for future courses and careers. If you were to Google the most respected subjects among top universities, you will find that History is always held up as one of the very best – try it yourself and see!

Although university may seem like a long way off at this point, the benefit of studying History at GCSE is that it teaches key qualities that will help you in later life. You will develop really useful skills like research, debate and analysis. It's no surprise that History graduates can be found at the top of a wide range of professions, including making up a proportionally huge 10% of all directors of top businesses. History is therefore one of the most useful subjects to study, as well as being one of the most interesting.

The key units in this course are as follows:

Unit 1 (1HI0 /10-12) – Medicine in Britain, c1250–present

and The British Sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches

Unit 2 (1HI0/20-29) - Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88 **and** Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91

Unit 3 (1HI0/30-33) Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39

From the roots of British greatness under Elizabeth I, through the development of modern medicine, to dictatorship, war and conflict in the twentieth century, this course offers something for everyone. To study GCSE History, you will need an interest in the past and a willingness to work hard so that your teachers can support you in being successful in this exciting and varied course.

Assessment



Unit 1 combines a long-view thematic study with a focus on a particular historic environment. Assessed by a 1hr 15 exam, it includes long, short and source-based answers. Worth 30%.

Unit 2 covers a British depth study together with a period of international history. Assessed by a 1hr 45 exam, it includes long and short answers. Worth 40%.

Unit 3 is a modern world depth study. Assessed by a 1hr 20 exam, it includes source work. Worth 30%.

For further details about this course please contact Miss S McDowell, Head of History.

Mathematics (IGCSE)

Edexcel

At Denstone College pupils study the Edexcel IGCSE Mathematics course. This course provides excellent learning opportunities beyond the standard GCSE courses available, giving pupils the skills that will support progression to further study of Mathematics and a wide range of other subjects. Pupils are able to develop their problem solving and reasoning skills while studying a wide variety of topics. There are opportunities for extension and enrichment for our most able pupils, whilst those aiming for a grade 4, 5 or 6 are provided with the best chance of success.

This qualification enables 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 in using mathematics to solve problems
- appreciate the importance of mathematics in society, employment and study

The IGCSE course places a particularly strong emphasis on algebra alongside aspects of number, geometry and statistics. These are key skills that underpin all Mathematics and provide students with strong foundations upon which they can build if taking mathematically related courses in the future.

We subscribe to the MyMaths, MathsWatch and Dr Frost Maths websites, all of which offer online videos and examples to support students' learning and supplement the support and guidance that exists within the department. Pupils are able to access these in their own time as well as in lessons as part of the course, promoting independent learning and a proactive, problem-solving approach to the subject.

We believe it is very important that pupils are stretched during their time at Denstone and the IGCSE course helps us achieve this aim. In addition to IGCSE, further enrichment is available through the UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenges organised by the department, in which pupils have the opportunity to compete against other mathematicians nationally. Top set mathematicians will also study the AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Mathematics alongside their IGCSE.

Assessment



Pupils will sit 2 equally weighted exams at the end of the course, each lasting 2 hours.

Pupils are allowed to use a calculator in both exams, although questions are worded so that pupils must display their understanding of the methods required.

For further details about this course, please contact Mrs X Hawksworth, Head of Mathematics.

Music

Edexcel

The GCSE Music course provides a blend of practical and academic skills, and is a well-rounded, engaging introduction to academic musical qualifications. The course develops the key aspects of musicianship - performing, composing, listening and appraising – through four separate Areas of Study: *Instrumental Music from 1700-1820*, *Vocal Music*, *Music for Stage and Screen*, and *Fusions*. As part of the course, students will learn about a range of different styles of music, including in depth study of specific set works that exemplify the Areas of Study. These are wide ranging, and include traditional composers such as Bach and Beethoven, alongside more contemporary artists such as Queen, and John Williams.

Assessment is a mixture of examined and non-examined components.

UNIT 1 – Performing – 30% of the final mark

In addition to performing regularly throughout the course, students perform both as a soloist, and as part of an ensemble. Performances can take place on any instrument, including voice and contemporary instruments such as electric guitar. The ideal minimum standard at the time of the final performance is equivalent to Grade 5 (ABRSM, Rockschoo or similar) on a student's main instrument or voice.

UNIT 2 – Composing – 30% of the final mark

Students compose two compositions based on different Areas of Study, one in a 'free style' and the other to a brief set by the exam board. Composition is a taught skill throughout the course, and students will have many opportunities to explore ideas and concepts before completing their final portfolios.

UNIT 3 – Listening and Appraising – 40% of the final mark

This unit is a written exam, in which students answer a variety of questions based on the Areas of Study and the Set Works. This is a listening exam, and pupils will have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in identifying, describing and explaining musical features.

Course requirements

There are no prerequisites in order to start GCSE Music, and students are not required to have taken any practical exams on an instrument, or in music theory. However, we recommend that a prospective GCSE Music student is performing at around Grade 3 level on their main instrument, and has a basic understanding of reading musical notation.

There will be ample opportunity to develop these skills during the course, and so we encourage anyone who is unsure of their current level to arrange a discussion with the Director of Music, who will be able to advise on the suitability of the course.

Assessment



The GCSE course is assessed in three units.

Unit 1 (Performing Music) is internally assessed and externally moderated; pupils perform one solo piece and one ensemble piece – both recorded (30% of overall marks).

Unit 2 (Composing Music) is internally assessed and externally moderated; pupils produce two compositions based on different areas of study, with a notated score or written commentary and a recording also provided (30% of overall mark).

Unit 3 is a 1 hour 45 minutes written paper (Listening and appraising) where pupils answer questions based on the set works they have studied. (40% of overall mark)

For further details about this course please contact Mr L Wynell-Mayow, Director of Music.

Physical Education

OCR

The GCSE Physical Education course is a very popular option, with typically two sets studying the subject in each year group. The course is both challenging and stimulating, meaning that pupils who are enthusiastic and hard-working are invariably rewarded with excellent grades.

GCSE Physical Education is a mixture of theoretical study combined with practical performance.

An element of the final grade is based on assessed practical performance across three different sports from a wide ranging list of options, including both team and individual sports (30%).

In addition, pupils will have to complete a written coursework project where they apply knowledge of the theoretical elements of the course to analyse and evaluate how performance can be improved (10%).

Students opting to study PE at GCSE select three activities from a broad list. They are encouraged to commit to their selected three sports throughout the two year course, which can be performed during school sport or outside school.

Throughout the course, there will be a mixture of theory lessons and practical lessons.

There are two examinations at the end of the course where the theoretical content of the course is assessed:

Paper 1: Physical Factors Affecting Performance including applied anatomy and physiology - cardiovascular, respiratory and musculoskeletal health; and physical training.

Paper 2: Socio-cultural and Sports Psychology including health, fitness and well-being.

Assessment



Unit 1 (theory, 60% of the final grade).

Paper 1 and Paper 2 are both written exams.

Unit 2 (performance, 40% of the final grade). This unit involves assessment in 3 sports in line with the OCR assessment criteria as well as a coursework element.

For further details about this course please contact Mrs K Graham, Head of PE.

Religious Studies

OCR

Religious Studies gives the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the core beliefs held by a range of human beings, some familiar and some strikingly unfamiliar. Key philosophical questions are encountered throughout the course, and are given particular attention within the Philosophy and Ethics component. In developing our response to such questions, with exploration of the arguments laid down by others, we gain a firmer grip on what we know and what we may come to know, including the nature of this knowledge, its meaning and significance. All themes are examined critically, the pursuit of truth within margins of uncertainty lying at the heart of the subject. Students therefore develop an ability to think critically and argue effectively and responsibly, both verbally and on paper.

The perspectives of Christianity and Buddhism are studied. Students will cover the key beliefs and practices of these two religions and critically investigate the position taken by Christianity in relation to the following philosophical and ethical themes:

- Relationships and families
- The existence of God and ultimate reality
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes

A GCSE in Religious Studies is valued by universities and employers, who are looking for culturally-aware, big and clear thinkers, who can form visions and overcome limitation in thought, as well as analyse, articulate and criticise arguments effectively, having a good understanding of the underlying principles within arguments and the extent to which they facilitate persuasion.

If you are interested in exploring different ways to view the reality we face, the belief-systems (including modern humanism and secularism) which have shaped and continue to shape our societies and lives; if you are prepared to think critically about your own beliefs and those of others, and if you are interested in digging down through philosophy to explore how strong our surface-understandings and ethical convictions are, this is the subject for you.

Assessment



The course is broken into two components (worth 50% each).

Component one is assessed by two one-hour examinations. Component two is assessed by one two-hour examination. All examinations take place at the end of the course.

For further details about this course please contact Mrs S Chadfield, Head of Religious Studies.

Sciences

AQA

All Fourth Form pupils are taught in Science sets determined by relevant assessment data and teacher feedback, with approximately half the year group undertaking the 'triple science' course, which leads to three separate awards in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, and others studying the 'Combined Science' course, which leads to two GCSE awards in Science (see details contained in this booklet). Studying the 'Combined Science' course will provide students with more study time during the working week and still provides the opportunity for 'A' Level science study (dependent on the final grades achieved).

(1) AQA GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy (AQA 8464)

(2) AQA Triple Science: Biology (8461), Chemistry (8462), Physics (8463)

The Combined Science route shares all content and most practical experiments with the triple science courses but, with less overall content to be covered, allows more time for consolidation and final exam preparation, making it a more suitable route for many students.

On completion of Combined Science, pupils will achieve two numerical grades (9-1) from the three science subjects e.g. 67 (one grade 6 and one grade 7) or 88 (two grade 8s) etc. The Triple Science courses lead to three separate GCSE numerical grades 9-1 for Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Pupils entered for this more demanding route should have a genuine interest in each of the pure sciences and consider themselves all-rounders. It is expected Triple Science students are seeking to extend their knowledge of science beyond GCSE with a strong desire to study at least one of the science subjects in depth to A level and possibly beyond. With good performance it is also perfectly possible for Combined Science candidates to progress to A level study.

Mathematical content has increased considerably on both the Triple and Combined Science courses with some topics requiring a high degree of numerical ability, particularly in the triple science areas.

Further details on the content and assessment of these reformed specifications can be found on the AQA website:

www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/new-science-gcse-specifications

You could also learn more about GCSE science courses at Denstone College by speaking with the relevant Head of Department: Mr Tomlinson (Head of Science and Chemistry), Mrs Rylance (Head of Biology), Mr Lightfoot (Head of Physics).

Assessment



Each separate science subject is assessed by two terminal examinations at the end of the fifth form, with papers longer in duration for those taking Trilogy Science.

Practical science is integral to both courses, taking place throughout the two years of study and assessed within the terminal examinations for each science subject.

There is no non-examination assessment (NEA) for these reformed GCSE courses.

For further details about this course please contact Mr J Tomlinson, Head of Science.

Spanish

AQA

Studying a language is increasingly important in the modern world and will open many doors to new experiences. Many universities and employers now ask for applicants to have a GCSE in a language as a basic requirement, and it is a definite advantage, not just for travelling but in the world of work too. Pupils at the college are strongly advised to opt for at least one modern foreign language in the Fourth form, with some pupils opting to study two.

GCSE Spanish will enable you to develop your language skills in a variety of contexts and broaden your understanding of the culture of countries and communities where Spanish is spoken. It encourages the enjoyment of language learning and gives the recognition that language skills enable you to take your place in a multi-lingual global society.

There are three themes, which apply to all four assessed units of the GCSE course. These are:

People and Lifestyle: (Identity and relationship with others, Healthy living and lifestyle, Education and work)

Popular Culture: (Free-time activities, Customs, festivals and celebrations, Celebrity culture)

Communication and the world around us: (Travel and tourism, Media and technology, and The environment and where people live)

Course assessment concentrates on the four skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing. There is no coursework option and there is a significant emphasis on phonics and grammar development, with dictation, reading aloud and writing and translation skills tested without prior knowledge of the question topics in the final exam. GCSE Spanish has a Foundation tier (grades 1–5) and a Higher tier (grades 4–9). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier. Teaching of the new GCSE specification will start in summer term of the 3rd form.

In an attempt to give every pupil the best opportunity to get a GCSE in a Modern Foreign Language, it is recommended that pupils who have started Spanish as a second language in the third form should firstly opt for French if they have studied this language for longer.

Opportunities to develop Spanish skills are offered through a range of extracurricular activities, including the annual department trip to Valencia in October of the Fourth Form.

Assessment



Assessments are based on the DofE prescribed Vocabulary list that contains between 1200-1500 words.

Unit 1: Listening (25% of the course) - a series of tasks based on pre-recorded material to be answered in English or non-verbally, followed by a dictation where students transcribe short sentences.

Unit 2: Speaking (25%) - a role play, a reading aloud task, talking about a photo card, and a general conversation, none of which the candidate will have knowledge of before the exam (7-12min).

Unit 3: Reading (25%) - questions in English based on Spanish texts, and a translation of a passage from Spanish to English.

Unit 4: Writing (25%) - a series of tasks including writing sentences in response to a photo, writing 50- and 90-words texts, an open-ended writing task in higher tier (150 words) and a translation of sentences from English to Spanish.

For more details, please contact:
Mrs A Jones
Head of Spanish.

Future Sixth Form Entry

Sixth Form entry will feel a long way off for our Third Form students, with two years of intensive GCSE studying more immediately ahead of them. Considering possible future routes through our Sixth Form can be helpful in informing suitable GCSE subject combinations, however.

The list below is taken from this year's Sixth Form curriculum booklet. Qualifications offered and entry requirements for course may change in the coming years so the information below cannot be relied upon at this stage, but does provide some guidance on likely requirements for different combinations of subjects in two years' time when students make these choices.

Minimum course requirements for Sixth Form entry (September 2024):

| Subject | Entry requirements |
|---|---|
| Art | Grade 6 or better in GCSE Art required |
| Biology | Grade 6 or better required in GCSE Biology required (or a grade 77 in Combined Science) |
| Business | Grade 6 or better preferred in GCSE English Language and GCSE/IGCSE Maths, GCSE Business not required |
| Chemistry | Grade 7 or better preferred in GCSE Chemistry (or a grade 77 in Combined Science) |
| Computer Science | Grade 6 or better preferred in GCSE Computing (if taken) and a grade 6 or better required in GCSE/IGCSE Maths |
| Design & Technology (DT) | A grade 6 or better required in GCSE DT |
| Drama (Theatre Studies) | A grade 6 or better preferred in GCSE Drama |
| Economics | A grade 6 or better preferred in both GCSE/IGCSE Maths and GCSE English Language |
| English Language | A grade 6 or better preferred in GCSE English Language |
| English Literature | A grade 6 or better required in GCSE English Literature |
| French | A grade 6 or better required in GCSE French |
| Further Mathematics | A grade 8 or better preferred in GCSE/IGCSE Maths |
| Geography | A grade 6 or better required in GCSE Geography |
| History | A grade 6 or better required in GCSE History |
| Information Technology (CTEC) | No minimum entry requirements |
| Mathematics | A grade 6 or better required for IGCSE/GCSE Maths (grade 7 or better strongly preferred) |
| Music | A grade 6 or better preferred for GCSE Music alongside grade 6 or better in an instrument or voice |
| Physical Education | A grade 7 or better required for GCSE PE alongside grade 6 or better in science/combined science GCSEs |
| Physics | Grade 7 or better preferred in GCSE Physics (or a grade 77 in Combined Science) |
| Politics | A grade 6 or better preferred in GCSE English Language |
| Psychology | A grade 6 or better preferred in both GCSE/IGCSE Maths and GCSE English Language |
| Religious Studies (Philosophy Ethics Theology) | A grade 6 or better required in GCSE RS (if taken) and GCSE English Language |
| Spanish | A grade 6 or better required in GCSE Spanish |
| Sport (BTEC) | No minimum entry requirements |

Relevant Heads of Department will be able to discuss Sixth Form requirements in specific subject areas in more detail.