

Whitburn Church of England Academy

An Academy with Specialist Status in Maths and Computing



Spring 2026 KS4 Options Booklet



Maths & Computing

National Teaching School
designated by



National College for
Teaching & Leadership



Options 2026 Timeline - Key Dates

JANUARY 2026							FEBRUARY 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31							

Wednesday 7th January

Assembly to launch Options Process.

Monday 19th January

Mr Moore to start to visit all Y9 form classes

Thursday 29th January

Options Booklet on Website

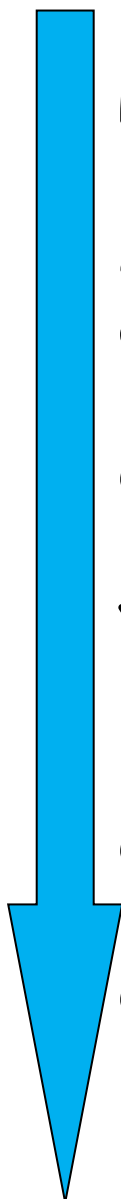
Thursday 19th February

Year 9 Student Consultation Evening

End of summer term

Option Form submission date

Option allocations complete



You are approaching a significant time in your education at Whitburn Church of England Academy; shortly before February half term you will have considered and chosen the courses you would like to take in Years 10 and 11.

During the next few weeks you should discuss your ideas with your parents / carers to help clarify your thoughts about which options to choose. We hope that you will seek help and advice about your GCSEs. Your Pastoral Lead and Mrs Owen, KS3 Progress Lead, will be very pleased to discuss any issues with you.

The GCSE Options Process

As you prepare for Year 10, there are certain choices to make. Some of your subjects for next year are compulsory, as the National Curriculum states that you must study them. These Core Subjects will provide you with many of the skills you will need as you continue your education. This booklet contains a lot of information which will help you to make decisions about your GCSE option choices. Please read all the information carefully because the subjects you choose will be taken for the next two years and you will not be able to change them. This is an opportunity for you to personalise your curriculum and select subjects which you really enjoy and want to study in greater depth. There are some subjects you must take and all of this is explained in detail later in the booklet. You will also receive a lot of advice and guidance from experienced staff about choices that may be suitable for you. Please listen carefully to all the advice you are given before making your choices.

You will be asked to select **five** subjects. **You will be allocated three of your choices so it is really important that the subjects you choose are all ones that you would want to do.** It may not be possible to guarantee your first three choices so when you complete your online option form we will ask you to rank your subject choices 1 to 5, where 1 indicates that this is your preferred choice.

How should you choose?

As students in Year 9, it is quite natural that you may be undecided about your future plans and many of you will, without doubt, change your minds over the next two years.

You should therefore consider the following points:

- Keep your career options open by choosing **as broad a range of subjects as possible**.
- Within the bounds of the option choices available, choose subjects that you **enjoy** or in which you are **successful** (preferably both).
- **Listen** to the advice of subject teachers, especially where new subjects are involved. Subjects have different amounts of marks awarded for examinations and for non-examined assessments. Do think carefully about **how you work best** when making your selection of subjects.
- If you do have definite career/job plans at this stage find out if there are certain subjects that would be **helpful** to you to study.
- Don't take or drop subjects for the wrong reasons, and don't pay too much attention to the 'advice' given by friends: **what suits them may well not suit you**. You also may not end up in the same class.
- Do **talk** to students you know who are in Year 10 or 11 about a specific subject you might wish to study.
- Do get all the information you can from this booklet and by **asking questions** before deciding on your subjects. If you have any doubts or need any help, **ask a teacher**.
- Try not to choose a subject just because you **like** (or dislike) the teacher. You may have different teachers next year.
- Do think about your **skills** and how you work and try to match these with the different demands of the different subjects.

Things to think about when choosing options

Making a Balanced Choice

It is important that you continue to study a variety of courses. Not only will this contribute to your general education, it will also mean that doors to a wide number of careers and further study will remain open to you.

A limited number of universities have indicated that continuing with a language subject at GCSE is of benefit for application for a wide range of courses. Students should take this into account when making their selection of subjects.

The Government believes that all schools should offer students a broad range of academic subjects that keep your options open for further study and future careers.

At Whitburn, to ensure a balanced curriculum, you will be able to study the following subjects:

- GCSE English Language and English Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSEs in 2 Sciences - either GCSE Combined Science, Computer Science or Separate Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
- GCSE in Geography or GCSE History
- GCSE French or GCSE in Spanish

Any choice of options should be made on the basis of taking a balanced range of GCSE courses, considering possible future study, career options and, of course, subjects that you enjoy and have an aptitude for.

For a **BALANCED** range of subjects, we ask that you opt for **at least one** of the following: **History, Geography, Spanish or French**. Opting for at least one of the above will provide you with a wide range of opportunities for future studies and career decisions.



Every effort is made to enable students to study the subjects that they choose, but it should be noted that if any option is undersubscribed it will not run.

We build our Key Stage 4 timetable around the students' choices made just after these are submitted. ***Changes to choices after the deadline date cannot be accommodated so it is important that students are confident about their choices.*** Provisional option blocks are outlined on the last page of this booklet based on historic patterns. We ask that you look at this when considering option combinations.

The vast majority of students in Year 9 are currently following the **Combined Science-Trilogy** course (two GCSEs). As the Separate Science courses are very challenging, only a small number of students will be eligible to follow this route. Students following the separate science courses will cover more content in each subject than those who follow the combined course. This means that they will cover the content at a much faster pace and will be expected to consolidate their understanding through extra home learning and independent revision. This accelerated course is only suitable for the most able and motivated students and, at a later date that we will inform you about, we will select the small number we believe can be successful following this more demanding route. These courses will lead to **three GCSEs in Science**: Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The examining board is AQA.

Computer Science is available as an option for those students whose academic performance in Year 9 suggests they can cope with this course. Due to the challenging nature of this qualification, students should currently be at least '**secure**' in their understanding of Computing in order to be considered for this course.

Looking Ahead

In two years time you will be making another vital decision about your future. Listed below are the types of courses which at present can be taken after GCSE:

A Level

To be able to study A Levels, you would usually be expected to achieve 5 GCSEs or more at grade 6 or above. Due to the changes to the qualifications, with the exception of those studying Further Maths, students will choose 3 subjects to study at A Level. These normally require two years study and will be assessed during the summer of Year 13. Some may also choose to study Core Maths or an EPQ (Extended Project Qualification). Sixth Forms and post 16 providers have specific requirements for each particular course they offer: our current prospectus provides further details on the Academy website www.whitburncofeacademy.org.

A Levels are the traditional route to Higher Education and students wishing to go to University should study 3 A Levels. Choices made at GCSE can affect what you go on to study later on, so you need to give it careful thought. Usually, if you think you might like to take a subject at A level, you should also choose to study that subject at GCSE. There are also several subjects available at A Level that can be taken without any previous study; these include Sociology, Psychology and Economics. Those students targeting a future place at one of the 'Russell Group' Universities (the 24 leading Universities in the UK) should check specific courses for entry requirements as a minority can require a language and/or humanities subject at GCSE.

Vocational Courses

These can be studied over one or two years and are more practical based; these are delivered by both Colleges and school Sixth Forms.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships give you the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification and develop professional skills, while earning a salary. Mr Moore, our Careers Co-ordinator, provides impartial careers guidance advice and has further information about apprenticeships available at Level 2 and Level 3.

Who can help you choose?

Help is available in a variety of ways. We hope that the talks you have already had in school have been helpful. In addition, several people are able and willing to help:

- Subject teachers, who know your strengths and weaknesses in their subjects.
- Mrs Owen, KS3 Progress Lead, who has an overall picture of your progress.
- Your Form Tutor and Pastoral Lead.
- Our Careers Co-ordinator, Mr Moore, who can provide specialist information and links to websites such as Unifrog.
- Mr Craggs, our Head of Sixth Form
- Parents/carers and other relatives.

It's not easy to make decisions about your future - this is why help is available and important. Don't feel that you have to 'get on with it' by yourself - you don't!

GCSE Courses

In Year 9 you will commence your GCSE courses in Combined Sciences, English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Religious Studies. For your GCSEs all assessment continues to be **linear** in structure, so that examinations are taken at the **end** of the course. Additional marks will be awarded for technical accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar for GCSEs in English Literature, Geography, History and Religious Studies. GCSEs are graded from 9 (highest) to 1.

Technical Awards

To ensure a broad and balanced curriculum for all students, we offer a number of Technical Award subjects. Technical Awards are the high quality KS4 vocational awards, which have full parity with GCSEs. However they suit the learning needs of many students more effectively as they only have one exam paper and offer more opportunities for continuous assessment. Technical Awards are graded from Distinction* to Pass at level 1 (grades 1-3) and 2 (grades 4-9 grades). The subjects we offer are ICT, Child Development, Creative Media and Sport Studies.

Non-exam assessment

The term 'non-exam assessment' covers a range of different forms of assessment. Non-exam assessments are not necessarily 'internally' or teacher-marked nor undertaken over an extended period of time. A performance may, for example, be undertaken under timed conditions and marked by a visiting exam board assessor, but because not all students will be assessed simultaneously, it does not fall within the definition of 'assessment by exam'. The assessment breakdown is shown below:

Subject	Assessment through Examination (%)	Assessment through Non -examined work (%)
Art	0	100 (40% externally set)
Business Studies	100	0
Child Development	40	60
Computer Science	100	0
Creative Media	0	100
English Language	100	0
English Literature	100	0
Food Preparation and Nutrition	50	50
French	100	0
Geography	100	0
History	100	0
IT	40	60
Mathematics	100	0
Music	40	60
PE	60	40
RE	100	0
Science - Combined or Separate	100	0
Spanish	100	0
Sport Studies	40	60
Sociology	100	0
Textiles	0	100 (40% externally set)

Year 10 and 11 Curriculum

Everyone will study these **compulsory** subjects:

English Language

English Literature

Mathematics

Science

Religious Studies

Physical Education

Personal, Social and Health Education / RSE



Tiers of Entry

Please note that for the current *GCSE* specifications, there are only tiers of entry (higher or foundation tier) in Maths, Modern Foreign Languages (*French and Spanish*) and the Sciences.

In the core subjects, new sets are created as we move into Year 10. Most students will remain in the same set throughout Years 10 and 11, although a small number may be moved when progress is reviewed.

We also shuffle students from P band to Q band and vice versa. This happens every year and, as sets are changed at the start of Year 10 too, students quickly settle into their new classes.

Option Choices

You need to select to study **three option subjects** and **2 reserve choices** from the following list:

- Art
- Business Studies
- Child Development
- Computer Science (*at least 'secure' on your Y9 report to be eligible*)
- Creative Media Production
- Food Preparation and Nutrition
- French
- Geography
- History
- Information Technology
- Music
- Physical Education
- Spanish
- Sport Studies
- Sociology
- Textiles

*You cannot opt for both **GCSE PE** and **Sport Studies** qualifications.*

*You cannot opt for both **Art** and **Textiles** qualifications.*

*You cannot opt for both **IT** and **Computer Science** qualifications.*

*You cannot opt for both **Spanish** and **French** qualifications.*

Remember, although we offer the EBacc combination this is not compulsory. For a **balanced** range of subjects, we ask that you opt for **at least one** of the following: **Spanish, French, History or Geography.**

Key Stage 4 Subjects

Art - AQA

Fine Art GCSE is a fun and rewarding course aimed at students who have an interest in being creative. Students have the opportunity to develop knowledge of illustration, image transfer, PhotoShop, collage, photography, textiles, printing, drawing, mixed media, painting, clay, 3D casting and a huge range of other materials and techniques. Good ideas, organisational skills and dedication are desirable.

By studying this course, you will:

- learn how to **research** a theme (of your choice) and how to improve your artistic skills.
- study any **artists, crafts people or designers** you choose.
- learn how to **develop ideas** through experimenting with a variety of materials.
- learn how to **create** a large piece of work based on your research and ideas.



This course has two components:

- **Portfolio (60%)** consists of a skills-based series of hand drawn artwork (September - October Year 10) and one full project based on your chosen theme (November Year 10 - December Year 11).
- **Externally Set Assignment (40%)** is set by AQA and issued to you in January of Year 11. You will have approximately 12 weeks to create a project then 10 hours to make a 'Final Piece'.

Post 16 Progression can include A Level Art, Graphics, Photography and Textiles or BTEC Diplomas in Fashion, Art & Design, Fashion Marketing, Illustration, Graphic Design and Photography. Career opportunities are many and varied such as fashion buyer, prop designer, concept artist and web design, set designer, theatrical make-up, animation, architecture and advertising to name a few.



Contact: *Mrs Dembry*

Business Studies - Edexcel

The Business Studies GCSE course is divided into two themes:

- **Theme 1:** Investigating a small business
- **Theme 2:** Building a business



By studying this subject you will:

- Learn how small businesses are started, discover how businesses promote themselves and keep their customers happy.
- Discover how businesses grow and investigate the factors that affect them in local, national and global contexts.
- Learn how businesses manage both their finances and the people who work for them.
- Look at real life business situations and understand why they are happening.
- Understand the economy (interest rates/mortgages/exchange rates) and impact this has on businesses and customers

Assessment

Theme 1: Written examination paper consisting of calculations, multiple-choice, short-answer and extended-writing questions. (50% of the final grade).

Theme 2: Written examination paper consisting of calculations, multiple-choice, short-answer and extended-writing questions. (50% of the final grade).

Post 16 Progression This can include studying A-levels in Business or Economics. Apprenticeships are often available in accountancy firms, retail businesses, insurance, banking and other financial areas. Business Studies and Economics can be studied to degree level, allowing you to specialise in areas such as international business, marketing and global finance.

Contact: *Ms Thirlwell*

Child Development - OCR

This technical award qualification is for students who wish to develop applied knowledge and practical skills in child development. It will prepare students for further qualifications in Child Care, Health and Social Care, Psychology, Sociology and Biology.



Assessment

R057: Health and well-being for child development (Written paper - 40%)

You will learn about topics such as:

- Pre-conception health and reproduction
- Antenatal care and preparation for birth
- Postnatal checks, postnatal care and the conditions for development
- Childhood illnesses and a child safe environment

R058: Create a safe environment and understand the nutritional needs of children from birth to five years (Centre Assessed Unit - 30%)

You will learn about topics such as:

- Creating a safe environment in a childcare setting
- Choosing suitable equipment for a childcare setting
- Nutritional needs of children from birth to five years

R059: Understand the development of a child from one to five years (Centre Assessed Unit - 30%)

You will learn about topics such as:

- Physical, intellectual and social developmental norms from one to five years
- Stages and types of play and how play benefits development
- The development of a child aged one to five years
- How to plan and evaluate play activities for a child aged one to five years for a chosen area of development.

Post 16 Progression: The knowledge and skills you develop will help you to progress onto further study in the care sector. You may want to go on to further study such as A levels, Technical Awards or a mixture of both.

Contact: *Mrs Tennet*

Computer Science - AQA

This rewarding AQA course is aimed at students who are ambitious for a career in computing, engineering or science. **Students need to have a keen interest in problem solving and programming.** Computer Science is an academically demanding course. Students should currently be **at least secure (S)** in their understanding of **Computing** in order to be considered for this course.



By studying this course, you will:

- develop an understanding of current and emerging technologies;
- learn how to write computer programs using Python programming language;
- explore how computer systems process instructions and data by studying the role of the CPU and other hardware.
- learn about Cyber Security and the issues involved in keeping data and computer systems secure.

Assessment

This course has two components:

- 'Computational Thinking and Programming Skills' assessed through a written paper. (50% of the GCSE grade).
- 'Computing Concepts' assessed through a written paper. (50% of the GCSE grade).

Post 16 Progression: This course will allow progression to courses such as A-level Computer Science. This in turn can lead to a range of careers such as games developer, artificial intelligence or cyber security specialist.

Contact: *Mr Mulford*

Creative Media Production - Edexcel

This highly enjoyable qualification gives you the chance to develop practical Media skills and techniques, learn how to respond to a brief, and explore potential careers in the industry. You will have access to industry standard resources such as Adobe Creative Cloud for photo and video editing, as well have lots of opportunities to develop your cinematography and photography skills.

As Creative Media Production is a practical introduction to life and work in the industry, you can explore the sector while:

- developing skills in the medium/ format you enjoy
- producing your creative response to a brief
- reviewing and reflecting on your work



The course has three components:

Component 1: Exploring Media Products - 30% - Coursework Unit

Learn about the Media sector and investigate products you enjoy from across the following sectors:

- audio/moving image (TV programmes, films, video shorts and animations)
- publishing (newspapers, magazines, books, e-magazines, comics)
- interactive (websites, mobile applications, mobile games, video games).

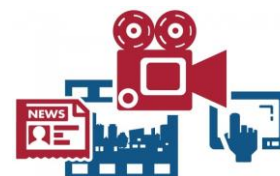
Component 2: Developing Digital Media Production Skills - 30% - Coursework Unit

Work through the pre-production, production and post-production phases to create your own print, moving image or interactive piece.

Component 3: Create a Media product in response to a brief - 40% - Externally Assessed

- Apply the skills you have learnt in a timed response scenario as you respond to a brief.

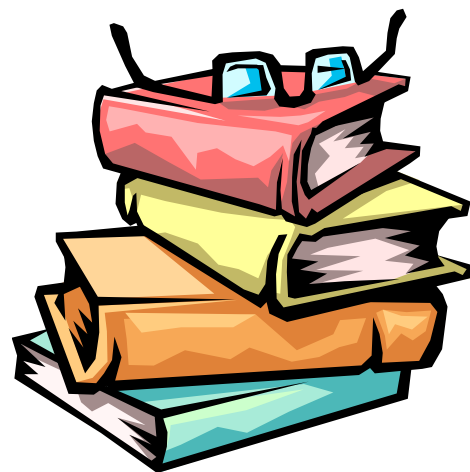
Post 16 Progression: This course leads to further vocational and academic study at level 3, such as Media Studies or Film A-level, as well as apprenticeships and traineeships.



Contact: *Mr Thompson*

English Literature and English Language - AQA - Compulsory

You will study an integrated course - AQA GCSE English Language / English Literature. This will generate two separate GCSE qualifications. The syllabus contains reading and writing elements as well as a spoken language assessment. All students will be entered for both Language and Literature examinations. Both English Language and English Literature are linear, non-tiered courses culminating in examinations worth 100% of the overall grade.



There will be two written examination papers for Language and two for Literature. Additional marks will be awarded for technical accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) throughout.

Post 16 Progression English is a requirement for the vast majority of Post-16 courses and employers look for it too. Having a GCSE in English will help you in all career paths in the future. These subjects can also help you towards a career in the legal profession, broadcasting, publishing, journalism, marketing, editorial work, copywriting, library work, acting, translating and teaching, to name a few.

If you fail to secure a grade 4 or above at GCSE, you have to continue with this subject at Sixth Form or College. This also applies even if you are completing an apprenticeship or other work-related training.

Contact: *Mrs Adamson*



Food Preparation and Nutrition - Eduqas (WJEC)

This is an exciting and creative course which focuses on nurturing practical cooking skills to ensure students develop a thorough understanding of nutrition. It equips students with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. Over the course students will develop a wide range of practical skills, in preparation for a three hour practical assessment. Students will generate a portfolio of skills as they complete the course.



How GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition is assessed

Food Preparation and Nutrition Written Examination

(50%) - Students will develop their knowledge and understanding of the six areas of content through theory and practical based tasks and activities. These areas are (1) Food commodities, (2) Principles of nutrition, (3) Diet and good health, (4) The science of food (5), Where food comes from and (6) Cooking and Food Preparation.



Food Preparation and Nutrition in Action (50%)

This component consists of two pieces of non-examination assessment; (i) a scientific food investigation which will assess knowledge and understanding in relation to scientific principles and (ii) a food preparation assessment where students will need to prepare, cook and present a menu of 3 dishes and supporting written evidence.



Students will be expected to provide their own ingredients for Food Preparation and Nutrition GCSE lessons, though financial assistance may be available.

Post 16 Progression: Food Technology career possibilities include those in food marketing management, food product design, nutrition, catering, public health and hospitality business management.

Contact: *Mrs Dembry*

The final examinations test four skill areas:

Paper 1: Listening (25% of the overall GCSE)

- Section A: listening comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally
- Section B: dictation where students transcribe short sentences, including a small number of words from outside the prescribed vocabulary list

Paper 2: Speaking (25% of the overall GCSE)

- Speaking using clear and comprehensible language to undertake a role-play
- Carrying out a 'reading aloud' task
- Talking about visual stimuli

Paper 3: Reading (25% of the overall GCSE)

- Section A: reading comprehension questions in English to be answered in English or non-verbally
- Section B: translation from French into English; minimum of 35 words at Foundation tier and 50 words at Higher tier

Paper 4: Writing (25% of the overall GCSE)

This will involve

- producing five short sentences in response to a photo
- producing a short piece of writing in response to five compulsory bullet points
- completing five short grammar tasks
- translating sentences from English into French
- producing a piece of writing in response to three compulsory bullet points
- an open-ended writing task (*Higher tier only*).



Post 16 Progression Languages can be studied to A-level and to degree level. There is a wide range of careers available to linguists, such as interpreting, translating or teaching. However, as many jobs now require people to speak more than one language, being able to do so will dramatically increase your employability.

Contact: **Mrs Watson**

Geography - AQA

GCSE Geography will build on much of the work that you have done in class at KS3. Geography is the study of places and the relationships between people and their environments. Geographers explore both the physical properties of the Earth's surface and the human societies spread across it. Geography is a fascinating course that will be a great addition to your CV and will help you shape and understand the world in which we live. This GCSE course is divided into three units:

Unit 1: Living with the physical environment

In this section you will explore '**The challenge of natural hazards**' such as earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, climate change and our own changing climate here in the UK. As a Geographer, you'll look at what is causing these natural hazards, the effects they have on people, and how we can better manage them. Could you be the one to solve global climate change in the future?



You'll also explore our '**Living World**'; investigating ecosystems including tropical rainforests and hot deserts, understanding ecosystems on a small scale along with global biomes. By understanding their unique characteristics we can see how they are being affected and how we can protect them and use them sustainably in the future.

We also come closer to home, exploring the UK's **river and coastal landscapes**. We will try to understand how they develop and change, and how they can affect those that live nearby. Geographers work to develop management techniques so we can live more harmoniously in these landscapes.

Unit 2: Challenges in the human environment

You will examine various '**Urban Issues and Challenges**' related to how the world is rapidly growing, by investigating a major city in a low-income country or newly emerging economy (Mumbai). You can look into the issues they have, the problems caused and the solutions they have developed. You could be the next person to develop better living conditions for people who are living in poverty.



You will also look closer to home at one of our major cities (**London**). You will explore a range of sustainable urban living strategies such as recycling, renewable energies and sustainable transport schemes. You'll also investigate how the world is changing economically, how we can measure this and how people in LICs can develop strategies to help reduce the development gap. We'll also look at the development of **Nigeria** to understand the steps that they have taken to improve quality of life and standard of living. You'll also look at the **changing economy of the UK**, including the role of Science Parks and environmental issues in industry. Resources are fundamental to our way of life: you will examine **food, water and energy**, the pressures on them and their sustainable development for the future. Could you be the one to solve world hunger?



Unit 3: Geographical applications

This involves issue evaluation, where we explore an issue selected by the exam board.

Fieldwork skills are an important part of GCSE Geography, with two local field trips exploring human and physical issues, which are then asked about in your paper 3 exam.



Assessment

You will sit three examination papers (one each for Units 1, 2 & 3). Paper 1 and 2 are each worth 35%, so comprise 70% of the total marks. The other 30% of the marks are gained from Paper 3.

Enrichment

GCSE Geographers have the opportunity to participate in an exciting trip to Iceland, where our physical geography studies come to life as we witness the natural beauty of this country.

Post 16 Progression. GCSE Geography is loved by employers because Geographers have a well-rounded understanding and appreciation of the world. Geography also develops a huge range of skills that employers look for. It is also an important stepping stone to a vast range of courses at post-16 level. Associated future careers include environmental and transport consultancy, surveying, cartography and architecture. In addition many geographers move into finance, law, accountancy and marketing.

Contact: *Mrs Matterson*

History - Edexcel

History at Whitburn is a fantastic opportunity for students to study about the past in order to understand the present whilst preparing for the future. Studying History helps with vital skills such as literacy and communication skills, questioning and listening skills, enquiry and empathy, co-operation and teamwork, sharing opinions, retaining information and understanding the world around us.

"We are not makers of history. We are made by history".

Martin Luther King Jr.
American Civil Rights
Activist 1929-1968.

The GCSE course is completed by studying three units of work, each assessed by an exam at the end of Year 11.

Unit 1 - **Crime and Punishment in Britain, c.1000-present and Whitechapel, c1870-c.1900: crime, policing and the inner city**

Assessed by written exam (1 hour 20 minutes, worth 30%)

This unit covers the fascinating development of crime throughout history, including key events such as; The Gunpowder Plotters 1605, The Witch Craze 1645-47, Robert Peel and the Police Force, The Derek Bentley Case and the Death Penalty. In addition, you will also study the Jack the Ripper murders in London in 1888.



Unit 2A - **Early Elizabethan England, 1558-88**

Assessed by written exam (1 hour 50 minutes, worth 20%)



Unit 2 has two aspects, the first with the study of Queen Elizabeth I. You will study the reign of a very important monarch who was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Explore the challenges she faced throughout her reign and how she fought to overcome them, such as her infamous defeat of the Spanish Armada.

Unit 2B - Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941-91

Assessed by written exam (1 hour 50 minutes, worth 20%)

In addition, the study of the relationship between the world's superpowers is also included in **Unit 2**. This unit explores the aftermath of World War Two and the build-up of nuclear power. Key events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Berlin Wall show how close the world came to a full scale nuclear war.



N.B The Cold War and Early Elizabethan England are assessed on the same exam

Unit 3 - Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-39

Assessed by written exam (1 hour 30 minutes, worth 30%)



Unit 3 focuses on Hitler's rise to power during the Weimar period in Germany. It covers the increase in popularity of the Nazis and the build up to World War Two. Find out how Hitler was able to gain huge support from the German people and prepare for a war that would change the world from then onwards.

Contact: *Mrs Jordan*

OCR Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in IT

This high quality technical award qualification is aimed at students who would like the opportunity to develop IT knowledge and skills in a practical learning environment. It can complement GCSE courses such as Business Studies and Media Studies. It requires students to apply their knowledge and skills in practical ways, through engaging projects that will enable them to develop their ideas.

By studying this course, you will:

- Use different applications and tools to design, create and evaluate IT solutions and products.
- Select the best tools and techniques to solve a problem.
- Solve problems by exploring different software application tools and techniques.
- Create IT solutions and digital products.
- Use planning techniques to complete tasks in an organised and timely way.
- Find imaginative ways to solve IT problems.



Assessment

The course is assessed over three units.

- **IT in the Digital World (40% external assessed examination).** You will learn about design and testing concepts for creating an IT solution using a variety of design tools and testing strategies. You will study cyber-security, digital communications and the Internet of Everything (IoE).
- **Data Manipulation using Spreadsheets (30% internally assessed NEA).** You will plan, design, create, test and evaluate a spreadsheet to meet a client's requirements.
- **Using Augmented Reality to Present Information (30% internally assessed NEA).** You will design, create, test and review an Augmented Reality model prototype.

Post-16 progression includes T Levels or A Levels, as preparation for entry to higher education in a range of subjects or an apprenticeship in the IT sector. This award can support most career choices as employer's value digital skills in a world where digital technology is transforming all aspects of the economy and society.

Contact: *Mrs Thompson*

Mathematics - Compulsory - Edexcel

Mathematics is an essential skill in daily life as it is required to manage personal finances and assist in problem solving.



Students will be following a linear course which will be examined at the end of two years. The advantage of following a linear course is that the content can be taught in any order to help students make connections across the different topic areas of mathematics and also there is a much lower burden of assessment throughout the course. This means that students are generally more focused and mature by the time they come to sit their Mathematics exam.

Maths is for everyone. It will develop your problem-solving and reasoning skills, as well as your ability to use and apply standard techniques. The course also encourages you to develop confidence in, and a positive attitude towards mathematics and to recognise the importance of mathematics in your own life and to society.

Assessment is by three written examination papers at the end of the course; two calculator papers and one non-calculator. The topic areas are Number, Algebra, Geometry and Measures, Ratio, Proportion and Rates of Change, Statistics and Probability. There are two tiers of entry.

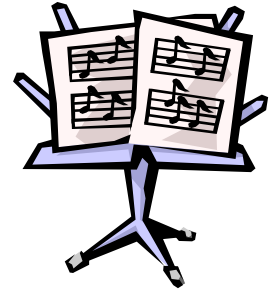
Post 16 Progression It has been proven that studying mathematics helps to increase your chances of future employment as most jobs require a basic level of mathematical competency. Furthermore *GCSE Mathematics* is an essential entry requirement for many Post-16 courses. **If you fail to secure a grade 4 or above at GCSE, you now have to continue with this subject at Sixth Form or College. This also applies even if you are completing an apprenticeship or other work related training.**

It prepares you for A-level Mathematics and Science courses, as well as other subjects which involve statistics and numeracy, i.e. Economics, PE and Geography. Mathematics can also be studied to degree level, either as a stand-alone subject or as part of a course such as electronics, engineering and computer science.

Contact: *Mrs Bartch*

Music - Edexcel

You will learn how to improve your performing skills and, through work in composing, gain an insight into how music is constructed from initial ideas through to the finished product. You will also be expected to analyse music in a variety of styles through generic listening questions and detailed study of eight set works; two works for each of the following areas of study: Instrumental Music 1700 - 1820, Vocal Music, Music for Stage and Screen and Fusions.



There are 3 units:

Unit 1: Performing Music (30%) - You will produce both a solo and an ensemble performance which will be recorded and assessed in the academic year in which you will be awarded the qualification. The performances must last a minimum of four minutes in total and may be on any instrument, including voice, and in any style. The standard level of performance is around ABRSM (or equivalent examination board) grade 4 and continual practice throughout the course is required. Controlled assessment conditions will apply to this unit.

Unit 2: Composing Music (30%) - You will produce two compositions; one to a set brief from the examination board and one of your own choice. You can write for any instrument(s) and in any style. The combined length of the two pieces will be a minimum of three minutes. Controlled assessment conditions will apply to this unit.

Unit 3: Music - Listening and Appraising (40%) - This is one externally marked examination covering; the four areas of study, aural and theory skills.

Post 16 Progression: Music is a good preparation and solid foundation for further study in Music and Music Technology, as well as being recognised by 'Russell Group' Universities. It can lead to careers in the music industry, publishing, teaching and entertainment, or any job that involves communication and expressive skills. Your listening skills will enhance the aural perception needed in language examinations. Performing skills will give you confidence in playing to an audience; useful if you intend to pursue a career in Performing Arts, Business or Law.

Contact: *Miss Cresswell*

Personal Development (PSHE/RSE) - Compulsory

This is not a GCSE course. Throughout the programme you are taught by your Form Tutors and specialist speakers where appropriate. Elements in this course will include Health Education, Careers Education, Personal Development, RSE and Citizenship. RSE lessons will focus on healthy relationships, which include relationships with friends, family and partners and online.

You will be encouraged to develop your confidence, independent learning skills and to take on responsibility. You will also be encouraged to engage in group and class discussions, developing good relationships and to respect diversity between people. You will also be taught how to develop a healthy, safe lifestyle and economic and financial awareness.



Careers Education is an important part of this course and you will prepare to complete a work experience placement in Year 10.

You will use the Unifrog program to research careers and create a detailed CV and personal statement to support you in your post-16 choices. This will provide useful evidence to show future employers.

The PSHE /RSE programme will run alongside your registration activities and assembly topics, therefore you will be able to create a greater understanding of the topics covered and develop your learning and self-reflection skills.

You will develop enterprising skills and attitudes to prepare you for work and later life. You will also be empowered to take responsibility towards achieving your goals.

Contact: *Mr Matterson*



Physical Education - Compulsory

All students will be involved in a range of activities that develops personal fitness and promotes an active, healthy lifestyle. Students will opt to follow a 'performance' or 'participation' pathway which will both aim to develop their technique and improve performance in their chosen activities. GCSE PE students will be encouraged to take part in the activities that will best support their practical assessment.

Physical Education - AQA

The GCSE course is made up of two exams (60%) and practical assessments (40%). Both exams are written papers lasting 1 hour 15 minutes. Questions are multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer and extended answers.

Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport (30%)

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Movement analysis
- Physical training



Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport (30%)

- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Health, fitness and well-being



Non-exam assessment: Practical performance in physical activity (40%)

This is a controlled assessment worth 40% of the total marks. Practical performance will be assessed across three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in a team or individual activity). In school you will complete at least six assessments as a performer across a range of team and individual sports.

You may be assessed in practical activities that you complete outside of school (such as golf, skiing, canoeing, equestrian etc.) that are not delivered on-site. Where an assessed activity has been performed outside of school, an audio-visual recording is required. Each sport/activity is worth 25 marks. You will also be assessed in your ability to analyse and evaluate your performance in your main sport carried out by a written piece of coursework. This is also worth 25 marks.

Examples of sports that can be assessed;

Team	Individual
Football, Rugby, Netball, Basketball, Handball, Hockey, Cricket, Badminton (Doubles), Dance, Tennis (Doubles), Volleyball	Table Tennis, Badminton, Tennis, Trampolining, Athletics, Climbing, Dance, Swimming, Boxing, Cycling, Gymnastics, Squash, Golf, Sailing, Skiing, Equestrian

This course is suitable for students who take part in three sports/activities to a good standard. Due to the substantial amount of physiology theory contained in this course, students must have a keen interest in the theoretical side of Physical Education/Sport.

Post 16 Progression This course provides an excellent foundation for pursuing a range of Post-16 courses such as A level Physical Education and allows for progression to related vocational qualification such as BTEC Nationals in Sport or Sport and Exercise Science. With further training, it can lead to a wide variety of employment opportunities in sports science, teaching, recreational management, coaching, officiating, the fitness industry and the armed forces.

Contact: *Mr Leggett*



Religious Studies - AQA - Compulsory

You will follow the **GCSE Full Course**. This GCSE course commenced in Year 9 and lasts for three years.

The GCSE course is designed to allow you to make a thematic study of religion and religious responses to fundamental questions of life, with a particular focus on ethical and philosophical issues. Topics include:

Component 1

Christianity

Islam

Component 2

Religion and life

Religion, peace and conflict

Religion, crime and punishment

'Relationships and families' or 'The existence of God and revelation'



There is one written paper for each component and each contributes 50% of the total marks.

Post 16 Progression Religious Studies is a valuable entry qualification to Post-16 education. This course develops your ability to listen, share and express views. It also develops your ability to acknowledge and respect others' opinions on a range of moral and ethical issues and questions of belief. Some go on to study Religious Studies, which explores the philosophy of religion and ethical theory at A level.

Contact: *Dr Henderson*

Science - AQA - Compulsory

All students in Year 9 have already started to follow the **Combined Science** course (two GCSEs).



Science - GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy

The majority of students will sit the **AQA GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy**. This is a **double award**, so equivalent to two GCSEs in Science and offers a good grounding in all 3 scientific disciplines. It is taught as three separate sciences, but assessed and awarded as a combined science.

Topics covered will include areas of Biology, Chemistry and Physics - focusing on 'How Science Works'. These will be assessed by external assessments in Year 11. These papers contribute 100% of the final marks. There is also a 'required' practical element to the GCSE, where you will be assessed on your practical skills.

Separate Sciences

As the Separate Science courses are very challenging, only a small number of students will be eligible to follow this course. Students following the separate science courses will cover more content in each subject than those who follow the combined course. This means that they will cover the content at a faster pace and will be expected to consolidate their understanding through extra home learning and independent revision. This accelerated course is only suitable for the most able students and, at a later date, we will select the small number of students we believe can be successful following this more demanding route. These courses will lead to **three GCSEs in Science**: Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The examining board is AQA.

Post 16 Progression Both the combined course and separate sciences will give you a firm foundation for a wide range of further qualifications including A-levels in Biology, Chemistry or Physics. Future careers include medicine and veterinary care.

Contact: *Mrs Pollard, Dr Holder and Mrs Mackenow*

Spanish - AQA

You will follow the **AQA Specification GCSE in Spanish**. This will build upon the language learnt in KS3.

GCSE Spanish has a Foundation Tier (grades 1-5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4-9). The course is entirely assessed by final examinations; there is no coursework. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing examinations will be taken at the end of year 11.

You will take all four papers at the same tier.

The course is set in the context of these three themes.

Theme 1: People and lifestyle

Theme 1 covers the following three topics:

- Topic 1: Identity and relationships with others
- Topic 2: Healthy living and lifestyle
- Topic 3: Education and work



Theme 2: Popular culture

Theme 2 covers the following three topics:

- Topic 1: Free-time activities
- Topic 2: Customs, festivals and celebrations
- Topic 3: Celebrity culture (including sports stars and influencers)

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

Theme 3 covers the following three topics:

- Topic 1: Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Topic 2: Media and technology
- Topic 3: The environment and where people live

The final examinations test four skill areas:

Paper 1: Listening (25% of the overall GCSE)

- Section A: listening comprehension questions in English, to be answered in English or non-verbally
- Section B: dictation where students transcribe short sentences, including a small number of words from outside the prescribed vocabulary list

Paper 2: Speaking (25% of the overall GCSE)

- Speaking using clear and comprehensible language to undertake a role-play
- Carrying out a 'reading aloud' task
- Talking about visual stimuli

Paper 3: Reading (25% of the overall GCSE)

- Section A: reading comprehension questions in English to be answered in English or non-verbally
- Section B: translation from Spanish into English; minimum of 35 words at Foundation tier and 50 words at Higher tier

Paper 4: Writing (25% of the overall GCSE)

This will involve



- producing five short sentences in response to a photo
- producing a short piece of writing in response to five compulsory bullet points
- completing five short grammar tasks
- translating sentences from English into Spanish
- producing a piece of writing in response to three compulsory bullet points
- an open-ended writing task (*Higher tier only*).

Post 16 Progression Languages can be studied to A-level and to degree level. There is a wide range of careers available to linguists, such as interpreting, translating or teaching. However, as many jobs now require people to speak more than one language, being able to do so will dramatically increase your employability.

Contact: **Mrs Watson**

Sport Studies - OCR



This qualification introduces students to the world of sport. Students have the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge about different types of sport and physical activity, skills development and sports leadership to their own practical performance. They will learn about contemporary issues in sport such as funding, participation, ethics and role models, and outdoor activities. Students will develop an appreciation of the importance of sport locally and nationally, different ways of being involved in sport and of how this shapes the sports industry. This course is suitable for students who enjoy taking part in sport, are interested in coaching/leadership and outdoor activities.

The course consists of three units. With the exception of Unit 1, these are assessed through coursework only. Unit 1 is assessed externally through a written exam. Each piece of coursework ranges from experimental reports, interviews, investigative research, practical assessments and presentations. **Unit 1 is worth 40%, whereas Unit 2 and 3 are worth 30% each.** Students will be assessed in two practical sports for unit 2 and will also plan, lead and review a coaching session to a group of year 7 students. Students will complete at least one outdoor adventurous activity for unit 3.

Units	How assessed?
<i>R184: Contemporary issues in sport</i>	Written paper 1 hour and 15 minutes - 70 marks (40%)
<i>R185: Performance and leadership in sports activities</i>	Centre assessed tasks, OCR moderated - 80 marks. (30%)
<i>R187: Increasing awareness of Outdoor and Adventurous Activities</i>	Centre assessed tasks, OCR moderated -40 marks (30%)

Post 16 Progression: It provides students with the opportunity to enter employment in the sport and active leisure sector or to progress to other vocational qualifications such BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Sport or on to A level Physical Education. It also provides students the opportunity to develop a range of skills, techniques, personal skills and attributes essential for successful performance in working life. This course is a starting point for a route to employment into many diverse areas of sport, including junior level roles in the sport and active leisure sector, such as recreation assistant or sports leader.

Contact: Mr Leggett

Sociology - AQA

Sociology is the study of society. This GCSE course is divided into two parts:

Part 1: The sociology of families and education.

Social theory and methodology. (How sociologists carry out their research into society).

Part 2: The sociology of crime and deviance.

Social stratification. (Social class and power in society).

Topics will include:

- Family forms and the changing nature of the family including divorce rates.
- The roles and functions of education and factors that affect student achievement.
- Why crime exists and explanations of why there are differences between male and female rates of crime.
- Factors affecting people's life chances and poverty as a social issue.



Assessment

You will sit 2 exam papers, each of which make up 50% of the GCSE.

Post 16 Progression

This course will provide an excellent base for studying A-level Sociology. However, this course is for anyone who wants to learn more about the society in which we live and has an interest in the world around them. It is useful for any career which will involve working with people from a range of backgrounds.

Contact: *Miss Boswell*

Textiles - AQA

Art and Design Textiles is a perfect platform for anyone interested in fashion and being creative. The course-work portfolio is made up of several projects, allowing you to develop your creative sewing skills, learn about garment construction and fashion drawing. You will be taught a variety of textile techniques such as reverse applique, free machine embroidery, quilting, fabric melting, digital printing and dyeing. You will also attend a printing workshop to explore printing techniques.



By studying this course, you will

- learn how to **research** a theme (of your choice) and how to improve your textile skills.
- study any **fashion designers and textile artists** you choose.
- learn how to **develop ideas** through experimenting with a variety of materials.
- learn how to **create** a fabric-based product based on your research and ideas.



This course has two components:

- **Portfolio (60%)** consists of two mini projects based on a 'Growth and Decay' and 'Fabric Manipulation' which allow you to explore creative textiles and build up a portfolio of skills. In the latter part of year 10 you will begin your personal study which will run through until December of Year 11.
- **Externally Set Assignment (40%)** is set by AQA and issued to you in January of Year 11. You will have approximately 14 weeks to create a project then 10 hours to make a 'Final Product'.

Post 16 Progression can include A Level Textiles, Art and Photography or BTEC Diplomas in Fashion Textiles, Fashion Marketing & Promotion and Fashion and Textiles Maker. Students who specialise in art and design textiles can enter a wide range of careers within the fashion and textile industry, including fashion marketing, design and promotion. Good ideas, organisational skills and dedication are desirable.

Contact: Mrs Dembry



Choosing your Options

You will be sent an online Options Form.

This should be completed by **8pm on Thursday 19th February 2026**.

Please note that we **cannot guarantee** that everyone will follow their first three choices; we must consider student suitability, class sizes, staff numbers and the availability of specialist rooms. You must also choose your option choices carefully as you will **not** be able to change your choices after your form has been submitted.

To complete the online Options Form:

- Please rank your 5 choices you have made in order of preference

Remember:

- You cannot opt for **both GCSE PE and Sport Studies qualifications**.
- You cannot opt for **both Art and Textiles qualifications**.
- You cannot opt for **both IT and Computer Science qualifications**.
- You cannot opt for **both Spanish and French qualifications**.

- Check you have chosen at least **one** of the following as a choice: **Geography, History, French or Spanish**.

- Please look at the provisional option blockings on the next page when making your choices

Please note that all the information contained in this options booklet is current at the time of issue. However, we reserve the right to make specification changes in the best interest of students or as a consequence of legislation.



Provisional Option Blocks 2026-2028

Option Block X	Option Block Y	Option Block Z
Creative Media	Art	Art
Food Technology	Business Studies	Business Studies
Geography	Business Studies	Computing Science
History	Child Development	Food Technology
Physical Education	ICT	Geography
Physical Education	French	History
Sport Studies	Geography	Music *
Spanish	History	Sociology
	Spanish	Textiles

- You cannot opt for **both GCSE PE and Sport Studies** qualifications.
- You cannot opt for **both Art and Textiles** qualifications.
- You cannot opt for **both IT and Computer Science** qualifications.
- You cannot opt for **both Spanish and French** qualifications.
- Check you have chosen at least **one** of the following as a choice: **Geography, History, French or Spanish.**
- **The block above are only provisional. Music can move blocks if needed to accommodate student choices.**