



THE NORTON
KNATCHBULL
SCHOOL

The Norton Knatchbull School

GCSE Options Booklet

2026

Things done well make the best memories

SIR NORTON KNATCHBULL - 1637

GCSE Options – Your Questions Answered



What do I need to do?

The Year 9 Options Evening is on 23 April, where you will have the opportunity to speak to subject staff about their GCSE courses.

This will be followed up with the Year 9 Parents' Evening on 30 April.

You then need to finalise your GCSE options.

- Students will be sent a form to their school email account.
- Students must remain logged into their office 365 account to complete their form.

The form will be made available on 23 April

The deadline for the option form to be completed is 5 May.

Will I get my choices?

We aim to satisfy all choices, but it is inevitable that certain combinations will not work for a limited number of students. Therefore, we ask for a *reserve* option should one of your first choices not be possible. Similarly, we aim to run all subjects; however, on occasion the number of students selecting a course can be too small to make running the course viable. If there is a problem with any of your options, we may use your reserve choice. Should issues arise you will be contacted as soon as possible. *If we do not contact you, you can assume we are able to accommodate your option choices.*

Can I change my mind after I have submitted my online options form?

If your parents write to request a change, giving the reason, then we shall do our best to make the change. It is important that they write as soon as possible. You will not be allowed to change to an option group which is already full.

You **will not** be able to change courses once you begin year 10.

What is the over subscription Criteria?

If too many students select a subject we will then use **ATL data from monitoring 2** to decide the students who will be admitted to this subject. Those with the higher ATL will gain a place. There will be additional consideration given to students who are pupil premium, on the SEN register or who are Looked after children.



Your Key Stage 4 Curriculum

Over the next two years you will study and prepare for important public examinations. Most students’ curriculum will consist of:

- **Core** subjects
- Subjects chosen to add **Breadth**
- **Additional Optional** subjects
- Core **non-examined** subjects

Core Subjects

These subjects are compulsory for all students:

English Language and English Literature	GCSE qualifications in: English Language English Literature
Mathematics	GCSE qualification in Mathematics
Science	GCSE study of Biology, Chemistry and Physics

Breadth

The government response to the Francis curriculum and assessment review was published in November 2025. The initial recommendation has been that all students study Maths, English Literature, English Language, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

The proposed model suggests that **students also have 4 'breadth' slots** to accommodate their personal choices, and that these **should include subjects from at least 2 of the following 3 categories:**

- **Humanities** (Geography, History or Religious Studies). At NKS we would also include Classics in this category.
- **Creative subjects** (Art and Design, Music, Drama, and Design and Technology)
- **Languages** (MFL and ancient languages)

At NKS we believe that this model provides students with the best possible basis for KS4 study in that it provides both depth and breadth and equips students well for study at A' level and beyond. **Our expectation is that the very significant majority of students will follow a ‘breadth’ based route – however, this is not compulsory.**

Additional Optional Subjects

The wide range of other subjects available allows all students to personalise their learning and pursue their own strengths, interests and aspirations for the future. Students can also select to study Business, Computer Science, Physical Education and Sociology.

NKS students will also have non examinable core PE and PSHE in their KS4 timetables.

Tips on Choosing Your Options



Read the information in this booklet carefully before making your option choices.

- Consider where your strengths and interests lie. It is important to do well at GCSE Level, so choose subjects you genuinely enjoy and are good at. These are the main examination results that will be available to you when you are applying for entrance to the sixth form, college or an apprenticeship. GCSE results will also be considered when you are applying to universities.
- Research what GCSEs you may need in the future if you have a particular career in mind. For some careers it will be essential that you have an A Level in a subject, and you might need a GCSE in that subject to enter the A Level course. If you do not have a clear career path in mind aim to choose subjects that give you **breadth** and **balance**.
- Find out as much as you can about the different options by talking to students already taking the subjects you are considering and talk to your teachers and Form Tutor.
- Do not choose an option just because your friend has chosen it or because you like the teacher. There is no guarantee that you will end up in the same set as your friend or the one taught by a particular teacher.
- You should also talk to **Mrs Vernon, the Careers Advisor**, if you have any questions about future careers and the subjects that you should take.



Careers Education and GCSE Option Choices

Delivered as part of the Personal Development Curriculum

You will have spent time looking at Careers with a view to considering what options to take. All students have attended dedicated lessons delivered via personal development with support from Mrs Vernon on option choices at GCSE.

As part of these lessons, you have explored routes post-16 and 18 with regard to options selected at GCSE; you will also have completed the Morrisby careers profile which is a careers programme that helps match a person's strengths and interests to various careers that may be suitable. These activities should have started to help you make initial decisions about option choices and possible future career choices. You also have access to *Unifrog* and *Prospects* to explore career paths further.

Links to the attached career-based programmes are below:

[Unifrog - The universal destinations platform.](#)

[Careers Advice & Guidance Online Platform - Morrisby](#)

[Prospects.ac.uk](#)

[GCSE choices: Practical ways to guide students | Undergraduate | UCAS](#)

Throughout KS4 you will receive further support and guidance about future career options. In addition, there will be a range of careers talks that you will be invited to attend delivered by local and national employers and our alumni.

If you have a specific career in mind and would like further information, please ask to see Mrs Vernon. All students are welcome to request a 1-2-1 guidance meeting with further support offered as required.

Help and Support

There are many people in school that can support you if you are having problems with your academic studies or in your personal life. The first point of contact is your Form Tutor. However, there are other members of staff who are ready and willing to help. Below is a reminder of who you can contact:

Head of Year 9:	Mr R Farrell
Student Support Manager Year 9:	Ms S Somerville
Careers Advisor:	Mrs H Vernon
Inclusion Department:	Mr P Uttin

English Language and English Literature



Exam Board

All students will follow the **AQA** specification in both English Language and in English Literature. Though often taught by one teacher, the course leads to the award of **two separate** GCSE qualifications.

Course Content:

In **GCSE English Language**, students will encounter a wide range of texts which will give them a chance to stretch their creative muscles, writing fictional pieces—both narrative and descriptive— and writing non-fiction texts where they can rant, argue and convince. Alongside this, they will read and explore a huge range of texts, with extracts from novels, speeches, letters, diaries, and even more modern media such as blogs. Topics cover everything from ghosts with a hatred of children to apocalyptic societies reduced to ash; from speeches by some of the greatest humans who've ever lived to intimate, personal letters. And don't forget the giant shark...

For those who love to argue, the Spoken Language endorsement gives students a chance to set out an argument about a topic of their choice and then debate it, defending their position and exploring the nuances.

The course aims to enable students to use English effectively in its spoken and written forms. Students should be able to respond to and understand the speech and writing of others in both literary and non-literary forms. They should read, enjoy and respond to literature in a variety of ways: both as a means of emotional and intellectual growth and to develop an appreciation of the writer's craft.

In **GCSE English Literature**, students will explore tales of manipulation, murder and Machiavellianism as they go on a journey to a remote island in *The Tempest* or watch as witches plot, bloodshed unfolds and vengeance is sought at all costs in *Macbeth*.

Next, students will be thrilled and entertained by the supernatural events of *A Christmas Carol* with its renowned hero/anti-hero Scrooge, intrigued by who exactly *Jane Eyre's* future husband is hiding in his attic, or appalled and horrified at the savagery just below the surface in all of us as they read *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

Moving through 15 varied, exciting and emotive poems on the theme of Power and Conflict, you will emerge in the modern world (post 1914). Here, you will join a group of boys on an isolated island after nuclear war and watch in fascination as they descend into barbarism (*Lord of the Flies*) or see a mysterious, ghostly Inspector hold a mirror up to a wealthy family (and indeed the audience) as he exposes the brutal consequences of ignoring the needs of others (*An Inspector Calls*).

Finally, we explore unseen poetry: a range of exciting and engaging poems with a wide variety of themes and ideas.

Exam Format



AQA English Language GCSE

Component	Description	%
Paper 1 exam: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing	1hr 45 min Section A: Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none">one literature fiction text Section B: Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none">descriptive or narrative writing	50%
Paper 2 exam: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives	1hr 45min Section A: Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none">one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text Section B: Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none">writing to present a viewpoint	50%
Speaking & Listening Endorsement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">presentingresponding to questions and feedbackuse of Standard English	Separately endorsed

AQA English Literature GCSE

Component	Description	%
Paper 1 exam	1hr 45 mins - Closed book exam. Shakespeare & the 19th Century Novel 2 sections: one on Shakespeare play studied; the other on the novel studied.	40%
Paper 2 exam	2hr 15mins - Closed book exam. Modern Texts and Poetry 3 sections: 1 essay question on modern prose or drama text; 1 comparative poetry question; 1 unseen poetry question.	60%

Mathematics



Exam Board: Edexcel

Course Content:

The GCSE Mathematics syllabus presents an exciting opportunity for students to develop their maths skills. The aims and objectives of the two-year course are to enable students to:

- Develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts,
- Acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems,
- Reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences, and draw conclusions,
- Comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.

Students are assessed at the end of the two-year course on the following topic headings:

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio, proportion and rates of change
- Geometry and measures
- Probability
- Statistics

The most able students in the cohort will go on to complete an additional mathematics qualification that will develop their algebra skills beyond GCSE. This will prepare them for A level Mathematics and also help with GCSE grade 8 and 9 algebra skills.

Exam Format:

Maths GCSE (9 – 1) is assessed through three examinations with each examination being equally weighted. Each exam has a total of 80 marks. All three exams are 1 hour 30 minutes long and are composed of 1 non-calculator paper and 2 calculator papers.



Exam Board:

AQA Biology (8461); AQA Chemistry (8462); AQA Physics (8463); AQA Combined (8464)

Course Content:

Biology	Chemistry	Physics
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cell biology2. Organisation3. Infection and response4. Bioenergetics5. Homeostasis and response6. Inheritance, variation and evolution7. Ecology	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Atomic structure and the periodic table2. Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter3. Quantitative chemistry4. Chemical changes5. Energy changes6. The rate and extent of chemical change7. Organic chemistry8. Chemical analysis9. Chemistry of the atmosphere10. Using resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Energy2. Electricity3. Particle model of matter4. Atomic structure5. Forces6. Waves7. Magnetism and electromagnetism8. Space physics

Exam Format:

Students will sit six examinations (two for each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics).

Each examination will consist of multiple-choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions. Each paper will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas.

Students carry out 8 core practicals in each subject; these can also be used as the basis for questions in the written papers.

Classical Civilisation



Exam Board: OCR

Course Content:

In all components of the Classical Civilisation GCSE learners will be required to:

- know and understand the surviving literary and material remains of the classical world in their social, historical and cultural contexts
- understand, interpret and analyse a range of evidence from classical sources
- evaluate and use this evidence to form their own judgements and responses, and present these in a clear, concise and logical manner.

Students will undertake TWO units of study.

Myth and Religion

Learners will study myths regarding the role of the gods and heroes in the founding of Athens and Rome and the importance of Heracles/Hercules to both the Greek and Roman world. These are well known stories that learners will enjoy engaging with and studying in increased depth. Myth as a symbol of power will also be explored, as will ever popular myths about the underworld.

Learners will also look at the role of religion in the everyday lives of ancient Greeks and Romans.

The study of temples, sacrifice, festivals, death and beliefs in the afterlife will give a broad overview of religion in the ancient world, and provides opportunity for the study of a wide variety of material remains, including remarkable temples and works of art.

Learners will be required to make informed comparisons between Greek and Roman ideas, including the characteristics of the different societies, and the impact of the different cultural contexts on the theme studied. They will also be expected to use literature and visual/material culture in conjunction with one another in order to inform their judgements, including discussion of why or how the sources may present things differently from each other.

Roman City Life

In this component learners will explore everyday life in Roman cities, with a particular focus on the Imperial period and popular sites and artefacts from Rome, Ostia, Pompeii and Herculaneum.

The culture section of this component comprises a study of a variety of aspects of Roman society. Examining typical Roman housing can be an excellent way to make learning tangible and relatable for learners, as can the study of education and the lives of young people in the Roman world. The Roman social system was notorious for its intrigues and politics and this, coupled with the study of the spectacle provided by Roman entertainment, including gladiator fights, chariot racing and public executions, provides an exciting and enjoyable course for learners.

The Literature topics examine poetry and prose, fiction and non-fiction texts to provide learners with an introduction to a variety of literature, an insight into different literary styles and techniques, as well as into interesting areas of Roman life and society.

Exam Format:

Two 90-minute exams, each worth 50% of the GCSE

Entry Requirements:

An interest in the ancient world.

Geography



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

If you want to continue to study a subject which is successful, interesting, lively, dynamic and wide-ranging and you are interested in the world around you, then this is the option for you!

Both physical and human geography topics are included in the new AQA specification as well as skills. Physical topics include: the natural hazards, water on the land, the coastal zone and the living world. Human topics include population changes and changing urban environments. Opportunities for fieldwork involve an urban study of Canterbury and an ecological investigation at Wildwood, Herne Bay.

Geography is a holistic subject, requiring an inquiring mind and the willingness to work independently to take on challenging and relevant topics and areas of study. You will develop a wide range of skills from data collection, written and verbal analysis and interpretation, as well as exploring real world case studies such as volcanic eruptions, costal management and the growth of towns and cities.

Geography is taught in such a way as to enthuse and encourage you to develop an interest in the subject beyond the classroom. Teaching methods employed include discussion, debates and significant use of ICT to make lessons enjoyable and stimulating.

Geography is a very popular option at The Norton Knatchbull School attracting over three-quarters of the current Year 11 students. It attracts students who are interested in the sciences or those in the arts subjects. The department prides itself in its tradition of excellent examination results at GCSE and A level. Many students go on to study the subject at A level where there is a greater opportunity to develop subject specialism and fieldwork skills.

A qualification in Geography is seen as a valuable asset by employers because of the wide range of skills the subject uses. It requires good levels of numeracy, literacy, the ability to make judgments, interpret, analyse and draw conclusions and have opinions on many current issues. Geography is relevant to many careers. These may be either directly related to geography (e.g. surveyor, meteorologist, urban planner, cartographer and teaching), or in areas such as the media, tourism and the civil service.

Exam Format:

The course is assessed through three written examinations.

Paper 1 and 2 will assess knowledge whilst Paper 3 will assess skills and contain questions based on the fieldwork students have completed.

Entry Requirements:

To study Geography you need an interest in the world around you, an enquiring mind and the ability to use and interpret different types of evidence.

History



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

History is an exciting topic that enables students to understand the world around them. It also develops intellectual skills which can be transferred to a vast number of different topics, sixth form courses and careers. History is a well-respected, high-status, academic subject which remains consistently popular at the school. In History GCSE you will study two modern history topics and two British history topics. These themes are then examined in two papers at the end of Y11.

Paper 1 Understanding the Modern World – 1 hr 45 mins worth 50%

- Germany: 1890-1945
- Conflict & Tension 1896-1918 (Causes of, fighting and winning WWI)

Paper 2 Shaping the Nation (Health and The Normans) – 1 hr 45 mins worth 50%

- Britain: Health & the People
- The Normans 1066-1100

History students at NKS learn knowledge and skills through a lively, investigative approach which offers challenge to all abilities. It requires a curiosity about people in the past and the ability to engage in independent research. History is a subject which uses literacy skills – reading, comprehension and writing. A wide range of methods and techniques is employed, including investigations, presentations, debate, role-play, audio-visual and ICT. Students will learn how to develop their exam technique and study skills. A wide variety of resources will be studied (film, cartoons, photographs, the internet as well as books) and students should be prepared to contribute to class activities. History covers a broad range of topics and includes aspects of political thought, the military, personalities, economics, law, ethics and science.

Many sixth form courses and employers value the skills and conceptual understanding that students develop through the study of History. These skills are, moreover, transferable to the other subjects you study at GCSE. Students will learn to research and evaluate historical evidence, compare different interpretations and argue effectively. History is relevant to many careers. These may be either directly related to history (e.g. working in museums, galleries, heritage sites, record offices, archives and teaching), or in areas such as the law, media, journalism, academia and government. However, the ability to weigh up evidence and make supported judgments is relevant to most professional careers. Results in this academically rigorous topic remain excellent in History at both GCSE and A-level

Exam Format:

Two exams of 2 hours, each worth 50% of the GCSE.

Entry Requirements:

To study History you need an interest in the world around you, a curious mind, the ability to weigh up different evidence or arguments, the ability to read and write at length and, above all, the ability to work hard.

Religious Studies

Exam Board: AQA



Course Content:

With religion and religious issues frequently topping the news agenda, Religious Studies has never been more relevant, engaging and challenging. The Religious Studies course is a popular and exciting subject that looks at the big questions that define humans' questioning nature. We will explore contemporary issues that affect us in our modern society e.g. euthanasia, racism and prejudice, global inequalities and conflict... From ethical debates on current issues to questions of the soul and a possible afterlife, Religious Studies taps into our natural curiosity and enables students to think for themselves with respect to the big questions. We will be looking at many different religious points of views in answer to these, as well as secular (non-religious) views. Learners are required to study two major world religions.

In this component, learners have the opportunity to study key concepts in order to develop their knowledge and understanding of Christian and Buddhist beliefs, teachings and practices. They will acquire knowledge and understanding of sources of authority and wisdom that underpin and connect teachings, beliefs and practices, and be able to refer to them in responses.

Learners will study different philosophical and ethical arguments and their impact and influence in the modern world from the perspective of one of the religions they have studied. In this, learners will approach the study of religion, philosophy and ethics in the modern world through a study of four key themes:

- relationships and families
- the existence of God
- religion and life
- religion, crime and punishment

Religious Studies can lead to further studies in Religion, Ethics and Philosophy, Anthropology, Archaeology, History, English, Art and Music, as well as Medicine and other areas of science. It can prove useful for many careers that involve people and it is generally useful because we now live in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society that faces constant change and development in thought and technology which we must learn to adapt to. Having an understanding of how people's values, morals and beliefs affect their lifestyle is essential in any career.

GCSE Religious Studies also gives you highly valued skills such as the ability to empathise with and evaluate different views from your own and the ability to construct an argument which is useful for law, PR and events management, journalism or sales... It is an academic subject valued highly by both employers and universities.

Exam Format:

There are two written exams of 1 hour 45 minutes each – both weighted at 50% of the GCSE.

Entry Requirements:

To study Religious Studies, you need an interest in the world around you, an inquiring mind and the ability to weigh up different evidence or arguments. You need to be able to empathise with other views and be able to back up your views with examples and evidence.

French



Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Course Content:

With around 396 million speakers worldwide, French is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and an official language of many international organisations. However, choosing French at GCSE is not about becoming perfectly bilingual overnight (although that would be wonderful!) — it is about the **opportunities it opens and the doors it unlocks**.

At NKS, we believe that studying a language equips students with valuable **transferable skills** such as communication, problem-solving, memory, resilience and cultural awareness — all of which are highly valued by universities and employers. In fact, research from the British Council shows that many adults regret not continuing a language at GCSE, often because they later realise how useful it is for travel, careers and understanding the wider world.

Students will already have seen real-life examples of this. During the Year 9 talk by Steve Eadon, they heard first-hand how learning languages created opportunities for him — from travel and work experiences to connecting with people and cultures around the world. His experience highlights how languages can open paths that may not even seem possible yet.

Importantly, nothing in this course will feel unfamiliar — students have been developing these skills since Year 7. GCSE simply builds on this foundation, helping them become more confident and independent users of the language.

Throughout the course, students will study a range of engaging and relevant topics, including:

- **My personal world** (family, relationships, daily life)
- **Lifestyle and wellbeing** (health, food, sport)
- **My neighbourhood** (local area, environment)
- **Media and technology**
- **Studying and my future** (school, careers, ambitions)
- **Travel and tourism**

Exam Format:

The GCSE is assessed through **four papers, each worth 25% of the final grade**.

Paper 1: Speaking

Conducted in school and externally marked

Foundation: 7–9 min | Higher: 10–12 min

Includes: - Reading aloud task

- Role play (real-life situations)
- Photo description and conversation

Paper 2: Listening

Foundation: 45 minutes | Higher: 60 minutes

Includes: - Listening to recordings

- Answering questions in English
- A short dictation in French

Paper 3: Reading

Foundation: 45 minutes | Higher: 60 minutes

Includes: - Understanding written texts

- Answering questions in English
- Translation from French into English

Paper 4: Writing

Foundation: 1 h 15 min | Higher: 1 h 20 min

Includes: - Writing short and extended responses in French

- Translation from English into French

Entry Requirements:

You are required to have studied French at Key Stage 3.

Spanish



Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Course Content:

With around **500 million speakers worldwide**, Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and an official language of many international organisations. However, choosing Spanish at GCSE is not about becoming perfectly bilingual overnight (although that would be wonderful!) — it is about the **opportunities it opens and the doors it unlocks**.

At NKS, we believe that studying a language equips students with valuable **transferable skills** such as communication, problem-solving, memory, resilience and cultural awareness — all of which are highly valued by universities and employers. In fact, research from the British Council shows that many adults regret not continuing a language at GCSE, often because they later realise how useful it is for travel, careers and understanding the wider world.

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- **Media and technology**
- **Studying and my future** (school, careers, ambitions)
- **Travel and tourism**

Exam Format:

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Paper 1: Speaking

Conducted in school and externally marked

Foundation: 7–9 min | Higher: 10–12 min

- Includes: - Reading aloud task
- Role play (real-life situations)
 - Photo description and conversation

Paper 3: Reading

Foundation: 45 minutes | Higher: 60 minutes

- Includes: - Understanding written texts
- Answering questions in English
 - Translation from Spanish into English

Paper 2: Listening

Foundation: 45 minutes | Higher: 60 minutes

- Includes: - Listening to recordings
- Answering questions in English
 - A short dictation in Spanish

Paper 4: Writing

Foundation: 1 h 15 min | Higher: 1 h 20 min

- Includes: - Writing short and extended responses in French
- Translation from English into Spanish

Entry Requirements:

You are required to have studied Spanish at Key Stage 3.

Art and Design: Art, Craft and Design (1AD0) Fine Art (IFA0)



Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Course Content:

The GCSE course encourages students to develop their creativity with an experimental approach, while also raising and awareness of the creative industries. Students are given a theme and encouraged to generate practical work, ideas and research from primary and contextual studies, including gallery and museum visits and artist workshops. Students will experiment with media and processes to develop and refine their ideas towards a final outcome for each project.

The first part of the course will consist of a series of workshops focused on developing students' skills. They then spend time creating their coursework portfolio. At the beginning of term 3 of year 11, students will start work on their exam, creating individual responses to the theme given in the Externally Set Assessment paper (ESA).

Exam Format:

The ESA represents the culmination of the GCSE course, and the paper consists of one theme and visual prompts to support students' research and line of enquiry. Students are then encouraged to independently develop their ideas during a preparatory period lasting twelve weeks and create a final piece during the 10-hour timed examination.

All work is assessed using an Assessment Matrix of the following four assessment objectives:

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

Entry Requirements:

You will need to be prepared to experiment with a wide range of materials and processes and be committed to improving skills in all techniques, including painting and drawing. You should also be someone who is prepared to think creatively and over time, develop your ability to work independently. Lessons can be fast paced, so good time-management skills and the willingness to access additional support during GCSE Art lunchtime clubs are key to success in this course.

Design Technology



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

Product Design is at the forefront of discussion with worldwide industry; the need for innovative, creative design is paramount for our engineering industries to survive into the rapidly changing world.

Product Design is an exciting way to explore the ever-changing world in which we live and provides students with the opportunity to develop skills and create new products for the future.

Students will design and make products with creativity and originality using a range of materials and techniques, such as card, wood, plastics and metals. They will complete design proposals with good quality finished products and include packaging, labelling, instructions and point of sales displays etc. There is a focus on developing commercially viable solutions to meet a range of needs, whilst focusing on the need to develop a sustainable society. Students will be enthused and challenged by the range of practical activities possible, and the use of our CAM equipment which includes laser cutters and 3D printers. Students will become proficient in 2D and 3D design modelling software, such as Techsoft Design, Google SketchUp and Onshape.

The course develops key transferrable skills which will be a good foundation for all subjects and leads well into A Level Product Design. Further study and career opportunities exist in Product Design, Industrial Design, Engineering, Manufacturing, Architecture, Furniture Design and many others.

Exam Format:

Written Paper (50%):

2 hour written exam. The exam includes 3 sections testing students on their core technical principles, specialist technical principles and designing and making principles.

Non-Examined Assessment, 50%

This is based around a pre-release context from AQA. This is completed in school under the supervision of the teacher in 35 guided learning hours across year 11. The student portfolio should include approximately 25 pages of A3 produced using a high standard and variety of graphical skills and ICT, and each student will manufacture a prototype product.

Entry Requirements:

Students should have a mature and sensible manner, and should enjoy the challenge of problem solving, working proactively and within a team.

Drama



Exam Board: Edexcel

Course Content:

If you enjoy acting, directing or stage design then Drama is for you. Many past students have also found that Drama has really developed their self-confidence at communicating with others, which has helped with everything from doing better at interviews to presenting cases in court. It is also a lot of fun as a subject, giving you room to express yourself creatively.

Law, Medicine, Public Relations, Education and Advertising are examples of professions students have gone onto after a Drama qualification, as well as those who choose to work in the Performing Arts industry.

Component 1: Devising - Through practical workshops we will explore how to make meaning from Drama using different forms and techniques. You will use this knowledge to devise a piece of theatre from scratch.

Component 2: Performance from Text - From examining different plays in performance; we will study how to get a play from the page to the stage.

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice - For the first part of this written paper, you will learn how to recognise different types of plays and understand a wide range of Drama vocabulary dealing with theatre design and acting. For the second part of this paper, we will visit the theatre to see a number of live productions in the local area and London to help you with the evaluation you have to write.

Exam Format:

Component 1: Devising - 40% of the qualification (60 marks)

1) You will create a portfolio covering the how you put your play together and evaluating how successful it was (45 marks)

2) You will give a performance/design realisation and this will be filmed (15 marks)

Component 2: Performance from Text - 20% of the qualification (48 marks)

You will perform 2 extracts from a play to an external examiner and they will mark you on your acting or design.

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice - Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes 40% of the qualification (60 marks)

Section A: Bringing Texts to Life (45 marks)

This section consists of one question broken into five parts (short and extended responses) based on an unseen extract from a performance text chosen by the teacher.

Section B: Live Theatre Evaluation (15 marks)

This section consists of two questions requiring you to analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance you have seen. You are allowed to bring in the theatre evaluation notes of up to a maximum of 500 words.

Entry Requirements:

No specific entry requirements.

Music



Exam Board: Eduqas

Course Content:

The Eduqas GCSE Music course contains four main elements, delivered through four broad areas of study.

The aims of this course are to encourage students to:

- Develop their understanding and appreciation of a range of different kinds of music, extending their own interests and increasing their ability to make judgements about musical quality.
- Acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to:
 - Make music individually and in groups.
 - Develop a life-long interest in music.
- Progress to further study e.g. A Level and beyond.
- Develop broader life-skills and attributes, including critical and creative thinking, aesthetic sensitivity, emotional and cultural development.

Students are encouraged to use music-related ICT and are expected to be involved in the many extra-curricular activities of the School. Individual instrumental teachers provide a valuable input to the performing sections of the course.

Exam Format:

The three elements of the course are:

Listening to and Appraising Music (40% of total marks)

A 1 hour 15-minute listening and writing paper drawing on music from set works from the four Areas of Study.

Composing Music (30% of total marks)

Two individual composition and /or arrangements linked to two of the areas of Study. Both score and recording are assessed.

Performing Music (30% of total marks)

One solo (with accompaniment if appropriate) and one ensemble performance, or two ensemble performers.

Entry Requirements:

It is NOT necessary to take or have taken grade exams; ideally students will have been playing for between a year and eighteen months and be confident playing such pieces as 'Helter Skelter' by the Beatles on guitar, 'Maggie May' by Rod Stewart on Drums or 'The Pink Panther' by Henry Mancini on piano.

All students need to be willing to engage in group performance work and class singing.

Business Studies



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

Business Studies helps students to understand the world around them and their potential place in it. An important feature of our GCSE course is its focus on enabling our students to learn about, appreciate and access opportunities in the business community in our local area. We do this through case studies and resources, research projects and visits into and from the school to actively engage students in their business environment. This is of course in addition to considering national and global business issues and contexts.

Students will consider the practical application of business concepts. The units provide opportunities to explore theories and concepts in the most relevant way, through the context of events in the business and economic world. The subject content is divided into six sections:

1. Business in the real world
2. Influences on business
3. Business operations
4. Human resources
5. Marketing
6. Finance

Themes 3-6 are the main functional areas of business activity, ensuring that the curriculum provides a strong basis for further study, including additional content to prepare those who may wish to study Economics. We encourage students to think in an entrepreneurial way, to investigate businesses reflecting their own interests and in the process to develop vocational interests, employability and transferable skills.

Exam Format:

Two examinations of 105 minutes each, at the end of Year 11. Each is a mixture of multiple choice, short answer and extended responses, which are based on case study extracts. *Business in the real world* and *Influences on business* are synoptic themes and are tested in both. The topic split is:

Paper 1:	Influence of operations and HRM on business activity
Content:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business in the real world• Influences on business• Business operations• Human resource management
Paper 2:	Influence of marketing and finance on business activity
Content:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business in the real world• Influences on business• Marketing• Finance

Entry Requirements:

There are no specific entry requirements as the subject is accessible to all students, regardless of their prior attainment in other subjects. However, students should start the course knowing that they will be required to immerse themselves fully in Business as an academic subject.

Computer Science

Exam Board: OCR



Course Content:

Computer Science prepares learners for work in all areas of the modern economy in the 21st Century. GCSE Computer Science students will be ready to play a key role in all areas of modern business, communications and technology. It is useful for any future career path.

Students learn and develop background knowledge in computer systems which support their programming. In particular, students develop knowledge in:

- Systems Architecture
- Memory, storage and Data Representation
- Wired and Wireless Networks
- Network topologies, protocols and layers
- System security and system software
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental issues

Students develop their programming experience from KS3 using Visual Basic, Scratch and JavaScript, and develop Computational skills focusing on :

- Algorithms and programming techniques
- Producing robust programs
- Computational Logic
- Translators and facilities of languages
- Data representation

Students will also complete an assessment covering programming techniques, which are likely to form part of the two written examination papers, or a third written paper, covering :

- Algorithms and programming techniques
- Producing robust programs
- Computational Logic
- Translators and facilities of languages
- Data representation

Lessons are active, practical and encourage students to discover and investigate topics. Feedback is provided via assignments and regular practise-tests.

Course materials and exam-preparation platforms are provided. Students create their work and keep their notes online using OneNote as a virtual classroom, and we explore our programming techniques using Visual Basic, Exam Reference Language, Python or other languages using Visual Studio for writing and debugging code.

Exam Format: Examinations (100%)
Two written examination papers – 90 minutes (worth 50%) each

Entry Requirements:

Students will need Key Stage 3 level experience of a written programming language such as Visual Basic or Python, general knowledge of using computer systems and an enthusiasm for understanding technology.

Physical Education



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

GCSE PE is an excellent choice for anyone who wishes to further their understanding and skill level in sport. It involves studying how the body works, the application of psychology and socio-cultural issues, all in a sporting context.

As part of the course, students will have the opportunity to be involved in a variety of sports. As a result it is important that students are able to participate in sporting activity as and when required.

It would also be advisable for students to be regularly participating in competitive sport outside of school as well as representing our school teams. You will be assessed practically in three different physical activities (see non-exam assessment below).

Exam Format:

The assessment is as follows;

Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity & sport

- Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes
- 78 marks
- 30% of GCSE

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity & sport

- Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes
- 78 marks
- 30% of GCSE

Non-exam assessment: Practical performance in 3 different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity)

- Assessed by teachers
- Moderated by AQA
- 100 marks
- 40% of GCSE

Entry Requirements:

It would be advisable for students to be regularly participating in competitive sport, at a minimum of school level.

Sociology



Exam Board: AQA

Course Content:

Sociology encourages students to draw on information and evidence from different sources and demonstrate the ability to understand them. Critical analysis of research methods used in sociological investigations will be employed to consider the appropriateness of their use. We encourage and expect students to analyse and evaluate information and evidence presented in different written, visual and numerical forms and link to the different topic areas then use sociological theories and evidence to compare and contrast social issues, construct reasoned arguments and debates, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions. The ability to make connections between the different topic areas and apply their understanding to explore and debate the current sociological issues outlined in each of the topic areas is a skill which will be developed.

Areas of study include: The Sociological Approach, Social Structures, Processes and Issues, Families, Education Crime & Deviance, Social Stratification and Sociological research methods.

Exam Format:

Paper 1: The Sociology of Families & Education. 1hour 45 minutes, 100 Marks, 50% of GCSE

What's assessed

- The sociology of families
- The sociology of education
- Relevant areas of social theory and methodology

Paper 2: The Sociology of Crime & Deviance and Social Stratification. 1hour 45 minutes, 100 Marks, 50% of GCSE

What's assessed

- The sociology of crime and deviance
- The sociology of social stratification
- Relevant areas of social theory and methodology

Entry Requirements:

To study Sociology you need an interest in the world around you, be able to write at length, a can-do attitude, a curious mind, the ability to holistically consider different evidence or arguments, and a drive to succeed.

Non-examined Core Subjects



Personal Development

Course Content:

Personal Development helps students to lead confident, healthy and responsible lives as individuals and members of society. It aims to:

- Develop self-confidence and a sense of responsibility
- Enable informed life choices
- Develop positive relationships in and out of school
- Develop healthier and safer lifestyles
- Encourage respect for differences in people

Students will embark on Citizenship and Careers Education which:

- Gives students knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in society
- Helps students to become more informed, thoughtful and responsible citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities
- Encourages students to play a helpful part in the life of the school, community and wider world
- Teaches about the economy and democratic institutions and their values
- Explores local, national and international issues, problems and events of current interest
- Explores views from different religions to understand their view on big world issues and philosophies

Core Physical Education

Course Content:

Games in Years 10 and 11 differ from Years 7 – 9 in that a wider choice of activities is offered. Students are given the opportunity to develop their coaching and officiating skills and understanding.

In both PE and Games, we encourage students to use more advanced skills and strategies; they learn how to apply them in increasingly more demanding situations in a variety of sports including football, rugby, cricket, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, fitness and badminton.

Enrichment



Trips and Visits

At NKS, we are proud to offer a diverse range of trips and visits which supplement our Key Stage 4 Curriculum. Some of these trips are more locally based, others involve students embarking on extravagant trips to different continents. Regardless of the destination, the skills, and benefits that our students develop whilst experiencing these visits are truly invaluable. Many of our trips help to improve on confidence, self-esteem, and motivation in and out of school, while also giving them opportunities to visit destinations they might not otherwise be able to.

Super Curricular

Students are encouraged to explore their interests in a variety of fields. As their aspirations develop, they are supported to reach their chosen destinations through a varied programme of support. A range of visitors and external speakers offer inspiration to students across a broad spectrum of topics, including working as a paramedic and the ergonomic design of tanks. With the aim to directly inspire and motivate students in their career ambitions. Students have also been able to participate in medicine experience days facilitated by Meducators, and online discussions through 'I'm a Scientist, Get me Out of Here' with scientists from a range of fields such as psychology, genetics and space.

Support for these interests beyond the curriculum increases as students move up through the school with the super-curricular club at Key Stage 4, which builds on the foundations laid by the Knatchbull Baccalaureate: Academic, Extra-Curricular, Community and Excel and Extend. This encourages students to broaden and deepen their interests through personal study and develop their research and presentation skills. This culminates in a celebration of their work, shared with parents. Students may choose to develop their interest further in the Sixth Form by undertaking an Extended Project Qualification.