



Cokethorpe

SCHOOL

GCSE Options Guide

2026 – 2028



INTRODUCTION TO THE GCSE OPTIONS GUIDE

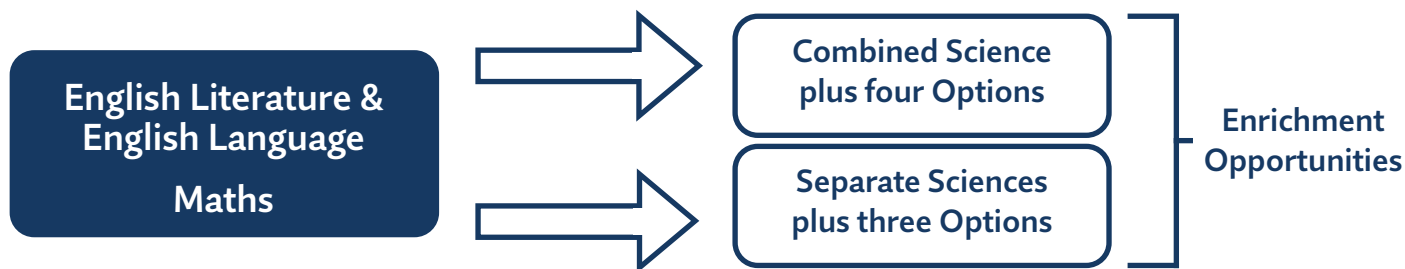
The process of making choices for study at GCSE level is important and should be taken seriously and with care. There are many approaches to take but, at Cokethorpe, our advice is to retain as much breadth as possible. All pupils will study Mathematics (with some having the chance to take an additional Mathematics qualification), English Literature and English Language (two separate GCSEs) and the Sciences. We also strongly recommend that pupils continue with a language – whether that be French, Spanish, Latin or Ancient Greek. When making decisions, it is important to consider the following questions:

- What does a GCSE in this subject involve? How is it assessed? What content is covered? Is it of interest?
- What does the combination of subjects chosen tell an outsider about the interests and strengths of the individual?
- Do the chosen subjects fit into any long-term plans – eg to study Medicine, etc?

The following reasons should not feature in the decision-making process:

- Liking the existing teacher – the School cannot guarantee the allocation of teachers
- Following friends
- Pursuing the easiest route

Routes at GCSE



Frequently Asked Questions

How many GCSE subjects do pupils choose?

This depends on a number of factors. Within the 'normal' curriculum, pupils study Mathematics, English Literature, English Language, and the Sciences, plus either three or four additional subjects, depending upon the Science route. However, a pupil may also want to study Ancient Greek – which is offered as a subject through the AOB programme. No university or employer will discriminate based on the number of GCSEs taken. Quality trumps quantity!

What is the difference between an IGCSE and a GCSE?

The difference is simply in terms of the content, structure and assessment processes rather than anything more profound. Departments will make a judgement call on which programme best supports the development of their subject. The IGCSE is an 'International GCSE'. It is not recognised in performance tables for schools within the UK, but universities and employers do not discriminate.

What is the difference between Separate Sciences and Combined Science?

Combined Science involves pupils studying and being examined in all three sciences, gaining two grades amalgamated from their performance across all three subjects. The Separate Science route involves pupils studying and being examined in all three sciences, gaining three grades – one from each subject. The Combined Science route is rigorous and academically challenging. Going (successfully) down this route does not prevent progression to A Level, neither does it prevent successful passage to the top universities to study science-related degrees. The Separate Science route covers more content, including some material that approaches A Level depth. Exams are longer and will draw on a wider range of content. The Separate Science route is not suitable for children who struggle with the retention of knowledge required for science – please discuss this with a member of the Science team if you are unsure.

What support does the School provide to help pupils make decisions?

Pupils are given a wide range of support in order to help them select sensible options at GCSE. As part of the Futures Programme, all pupils have access to the Unifrog platform which offers a range of information about careers and subject pathways. This helps them to identify areas of strength and weakness, and gives them guidance as to potential career options. Before making their GCSE choices, all Third Form pupils have a one-to-one meeting with the Head of Futures to support them in their decision making.

In addition to the guidance from the Head of Futures, there is a GCSE Options Evening held in the Lent Term - this year on Tuesday 24 February - to which parents and pupils are invited. This provides an opportunity to speak to Heads of Department and find out more about the GCSE process. Just before the deadline for making preferences, there is a Progress Review Evening, providing a good opportunity to speak further with the class Teacher.

How does the School run the options process?

Pupils are given free rein to select the subjects they would like to study; there are no option blocks at the start of the process. They are asked to submit four preferences, plus a 'reserve'. Once these preferences are in, we do our best to make them fit into sensible groups – taking into consideration factors including class size and teacher availability. This may mean that a handful of pupils are not able to get their 'first choice' preferences – but they are given support and guidance to ensure that they are not disadvantaged. Once the option blocks are set, changes can be made but only within the structure that has been established.

How are the GCSEs graded?

All results are now given in number form, with 9 being the best possible outcome.

Is there scope for flexibility to allow Learning Development intervention?

Yes. If a pupil's Learning Development teacher advises that it would be a sensible course of action, it is possible to choose three subjects and Learning Development.

Does the decision not to take a subject at GCSE mean that it cannot be studied at A Level?

This depends upon the subject, the pupil and the reason for not choosing it at GCSE. For all subjects, the knowledge from GCSE is likely to be beneficial – but rarely is it critical. More important is the attitude and approach of the pupil in question, and their interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

Who can I speak to about GCSE Options if I feel more guidance is needed?

Please make contact with the Deputy Head Academic, Mr Uglow, at aeu@cokethorpe.org.



ART

EXAM BOARD

OCR GCSE

Why study Art at GCSE?

Art is an enjoyable subject to study. As well as gaining practical art skills, pupils learn to be observant, organised, analytical and creative. Pupils with an art skill set are highly sought after by employers and not just in the burgeoning creative industries. Pupils develop project management skills, are able to communicate their ideas visually, can refine and self-assess their work and accept constructive criticism. Pupils who study Art have the opportunity to express their views and sentiments through their own art, which helps them to make sense of the world around them.

Who should study Art at GCSE?

The Art GCSE course is perfect for anyone who wants to develop their artistic, creative and analytical skills. Pupils who enjoy drawing and working with a variety of different artistic media will find that this is a GCSE they will pursue eagerly; whilst skills will develop with practice on the course. Organisation from the start is important as this enables you to produce a varied and successful portfolio.



What content does the course cover?

Unit 1: Portfolio

The beginning of the Portfolio unit allows the pupil to build up their skill level to produce a successful body of work to present to the examiner. Starting with the core skills of drawing, painting and sculpture techniques, gaining inspiration from an exhibition visit, pupils produce a series of studies based on a theme. They will cover observational techniques, use of tone, colour, line, form and composition through a series of short workshops. As their course progresses, guided by their teacher, they develop the theme in a personal way to create their portfolio. Pupils work to cover the following objectives: development of ideas, experimenting with media, drawing and recording, and presentation of a final artistic outcome. The Portfolio unit is worth 60% of their GCSE.

Unit 2: Externally Set Task

In January of Fifth Form, pupils are given the Externally Set Task paper which includes five possible starting points from which they choose one to work with. In the following three months, they photograph and draw, experiment with a variety of artistic media, then develop ideas on their chosen theme. They then sit a ten hour controlled test where they use their developed idea to produce an artistic piece. The Externally Set Task is worth 40% of their GCSE.



Trips and other information

The Art Department runs an annual trip to a gallery or museum to inspire pupils for their coursework and Externally Set Task.

BIOLOGY

EXAM BOARD

AQA GCSE

Why study Biology at GCSE?

Biology is the study of living organisms in all sizes and forms. Understanding how Biology fits into everyday life not only allows us to gain important knowledge of how to improve our health and that of the creatures around us, it also provides a foundation to ensure that we create a sustainable environment for future generations.

Who should study Biology at GCSE?

Biology is a key subject for many courses and is studied by all pupils.

What content does the course cover?

Paper 1:

Topics 1-4: Cell Biology; Organisation; Infection and Response; and Bioenergetics.

Cells are the basic unit of all forms of life. In this paper we explore how structural differences between types of cells enables them to perform specific functions within the organism.

We also learn about the human digestive system and the respiratory system. The third section 'Infection and Response' explores how we can avoid diseases by reducing contact with them, as well as how the body uses barriers against pathogens. Finally, in Bioenergetics we will explore how plants harness the sun's energy in photosynthesis in order to make food. This process liberates oxygen which has built up over millions of years in the Earth's atmosphere.

Paper 2:

Topics 5-7: Homeostasis and Response; Inheritance, Variation and Evolution; and Ecology.

In this section we will explore the structure and function of the nervous system and how it can bring about fast responses. We will also explore the hormonal system, which usually brings about much slower changes. Next, we will discover how the number of chromosomes are halved during meiosis and then combined with new genes from the sexual partner to produce unique offspring, before developing an understanding of how processes have allowed scientists to intervene through selective breeding to produce livestock with favoured characteristics. Finally, we will explore how humans are threatening biodiversity as well as the natural systems that support it. We will also consider some actions we need to take to ensure our future health, prosperity and well-being.

Other information

Practical skills are taught throughout the course and pupils must carry out certain required practicals. They are then examined on these skills in the written papers.



Why study Business at GCSE?

As our country seeks to forge new trading relationships around the world, studying Business is as relevant today as it has ever been. Pupils studying Business will investigate both small and large companies in order to learn how to solve problems that people will face in the business world, thinking critically and weighing up both sides of an argument to reach a conclusion. With relevant and current business news only a click away, you will have the opportunity to study Business using up-to-date articles to guide and develop your understanding and reasoning of business issues.

Who should study Business at GCSE?

Pupils with a good grasp of English and an analytical mind will flourish at GCSE Business. You will be excited by exploring solutions within a case study context involving a particular business sector. The skills that you learn will help you become a more critical thinker - developing valuable skills for A Level study, Higher Education and the world of business beyond School.

What content does the course cover?

Unit 1: Investigating Small Business

This unit explores the dynamic nature of business in relation to how and why business ideas come about. Explore the impact of risk and reward of business activity and the role of entrepreneurship; how new and small businesses identify opportunities through understanding customer needs and conducting market research; focus on understanding the competition, making a business idea happen through identifying aims and objectives and concentrating on the financial aspects; explore a range of factors, many of which are outside of the immediate control of the business, such as stakeholders, technology, legislation, and the economy. Explore how businesses respond to these influences.

Unit 2: Building a Business

This unit explores the methods of growth and how and why business aims and objectives change as businesses evolve. The impact of globalisation and the ethical and environmental questions facing businesses are explored as well as how each element of the marketing mix is managed and used to inform and make business decisions in a competitive marketplace. Pupils will learn how businesses meet customer needs through the design, supply, quality and sales decisions a business makes and learn the tools a business has to support financial decision-making, including ratio analysis and the use and limitation of a range of financial information.



Trips and other information

Pupils visit local businesses to find out more about putting theory into practice.

CHEMISTRY

EXAM BOARD

AQA GCSE

Why study Chemistry at GCSE?

Chemistry helps to clothe us, feed us, transport us and keep us alive and well due to medicine. Why wouldn't you want to learn it? In addition, you will learn valuable skills such as how to carry out investigations, teamwork, numeracy, communicating effectively, and how to solve problems.

Chemistry helps to connect other sciences, such as Biology, Physics, Geology and Environmental Science. It is also vital if you wish to study subjects such as Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Biochemistry and Material Sciences.

Who should study Chemistry at GCSE?

Chemistry is a key subject for many courses and is studied by all pupils.

What content does the course cover?

Paper 1: This covers Topics 1–5: Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table; Bonding, Structure, and the Properties of Matter; Quantitative Chemistry; Chemical Changes; Energy Changes.

This module looks at what materials are made of, how they are held together, and how they interact with each other. We also learn about different reactions and the energy changes associated with them, as well as how to determine how much of any given compound can be made in a chemical process, depending on the starting quantities and other limiting factors.

Paper 2: This covers Topics 6–10: The rate and extent of chemical change; Organic Chemistry; Chemical Analysis, Chemistry of the Atmosphere; Using Resources.

This module considers what factors influence how fast a chemical reaction can take place, and how we can find out what is in different formulations and mixtures, using forensic methodology. We also consider how the Earth's atmosphere has evolved from a carbon dioxide rich environment to its current state and how human activities continue to influence it. In Organic Chemistry we learn how crude oil can be converted to life-enhancing compounds and drugs.



Other information

Practical skills are taught throughout the course and pupils must carry out certain required practicals. They are then examined on these skills in the written papers.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

EXAM BOARD

Edexcel GCSE

Why study Computer Science at GCSE?

You only have to observe the world around you, to see the obvious reasons for pursuing Computer Science at GCSE. This is a qualification that offers the opportunity to gain both theoretical and practical mastery within given technological remits, providing pupils with a rounded experience of Computer Science from a real-world perspective. It prepares pupils for a diverse set of potential careers through the varied skills that it develops, such as creative thinking, logical approach to problem solving and technical skills. In particular it develops the ability to look beyond the obvious and search for a range of solutions to different tasks and think about why you would select one over the other.

Who should study Computer Science at GCSE?

To be successful on this course, pupils need to enjoy a challenge and have the motivation to tackle and overcome these challenges. Mistakes will be made, but a Computer Scientist becomes skilled at searching for and solving these.

Those who have not studied Computer Science during Third Form can opt to study this subject at GCSE, however, they will have a number of areas to catch up on, and work will be issued over the Summer. An ability to programme is essential, ideally with experience of Python. Those who have been successful in the subject in Third Form will be in a good position to consider this GCSE.

What content does the course cover?

Paper 1: Principles of Computer Science

Topic 1: Computational thinking – understanding and designing of algorithms.

Topic 2: Data – binary, data representation (including images and sound), storage and compression.

Topic 3: Computers – hardware, software and characteristics of programming languages.

Topic 4: Networks – computer networks and network security.

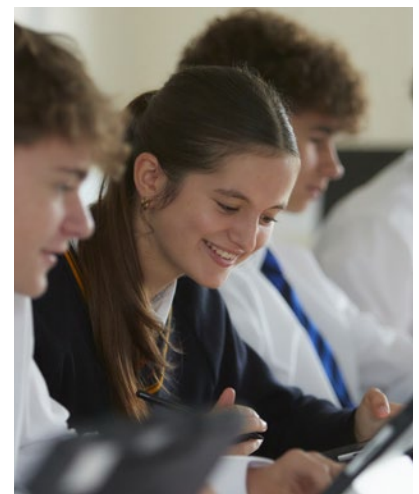
Topic 5: Issues and impact – emerging trends in computing technologies, and the societal impact of computing

Paper 2: Application of Computational Thinking

Topic 6: Development of Code – develop the ability to read, write, analyse, and refine algorithms in the form of flowcharts, pseudocode and program code.

Trips and other information

The development of a strong co-curricular programme to enhance the opportunities of Computer Science pupils at Cokethorpe will be a core objective of the course in coming years.



DRAMA

EXAM BOARD

Edexcel GCSE

Why study Drama at GCSE?

Drama develops vital inter-personal and transferable skills such as self-confidence and effective communication. Through practical workshops, performances and the study of play texts and live theatre, pupils develop their understanding of the world in which they live as well as social, cultural, historical, and political issues. Drama provides opportunities for pupils to develop tolerance and empathy, form their own personal opinions, work creatively in a team, as well as improve skills in performance and written critical analysis.

Who should study Drama at GCSE?

Those wishing to study Drama must demonstrate a keen interest in the subject and the ability to work positively and productively in an ensemble. Pupils should be enthusiastic about performing and/or design as there are also exciting options within theatre design across lighting, costume, set and sound.

What content does the course cover?

Component 1: Devising

Pupils will learn how to devise their own, original piece of theatre from a variety of stimuli to create meaning and impact for a live audience. They will perform their work showcase their designs in front of an invited audience and analyse and evaluate the process and performance through the creation of a portfolio.

Component 2: Performance from Text

Pupils will perform and/or design in two key extracts from a performance text for a live audience and visiting examiner. There is a choice of group, solo or partner-based routes for this assessment.

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice

Pupils will practically explore and study a different performance text and look at how and why theatre makers bring texts to life in order to create meaning and impact. Pupils will experience a variety of live theatre and learn how to form critical judgements about what they see. This knowledge and understanding will be assessed through the end of course written exam.

Trips and other information

The Drama Department runs a number of theatre trips throughout the two years. There are also opportunities to participate in visiting practitioner workshops and extra-curricular productions to support learning.



DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

EXAM BOARD

AQA GCSE

Why study Design and Technology at GCSE?

Design and Technology is a modern, demanding subject that expands pupils' understanding of what lies behind the creation of manufactured objects, from innovation and marketing to addressing climate change through understanding sustainability. The subject is unique in many ways as it promotes, develops and tests creative thinking in real world scenarios. Other subject areas are combined within the design process, through the technology used within the computer lab, and workshop environment.

Who should study Design and Technology at GCSE?

Design and Technology complements numerous subjects whether or not a pupil wishes to pursue one of the many career paths that it facilitates. The study of Design and Technology helps pupils to develop transferable skills which they can take into many careers, including those to which it is directly linked such as; Industrial, Product or Graphic Design, Marketing and Advertising, Engineering, Architecture and Textile Technology or specialist design fields such as Interior or Vehicle Design. It is worthwhile noting that many of our pupils have been inspired to follow these subjects as a career. Design and Technology appeals to pupils with a variety of interests and talents.



What content does the course cover?

Unit 1 representing 50% of the course covers theory content. A wide range of subject knowledge is required including understanding sustainability, properties of materials, the design process and manufacturing techniques. This is assessed via an examination consisting of a combination of multiple choice, short and long answer questions. Some questions require the application of mathematical skills gained as part of the curriculum from First to Third Form.

Unit 2 representing 50% of the course is a Non-Examined Assessment. Pupils are required to complete an individual project over two terms demonstrating the application of their knowledge and understanding of the design and manufacturing process. A user centred approach is taken and pupils are required to identify and find a solution to a real world problem. The exam board set a context in June each year as a starting point for this project.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

EXAM BOARD

Edexcel IGCSE

Why study English Language at GCSE?

English Language is a rigorous and challenging subject which offers the opportunity to develop comprehensive written and spoken communication skills crucial in all areas of the curriculum. Precision, imagination, and fluency are central to this GCSE, as pupils become adept at framing a narrative, analysing text, arguing a point, and exploring the significance of genre, audience, and purpose. Pupils will read and respond to a plethora of texts from different sources and cultures, encouraging empathy and evaluation of unfamiliar perspectives, alongside developing their creative skills.

Who should study English at GCSE?

English is a compulsory subject for all pupils at GCSE.

What content does the course cover?

Unit 1: Non-fiction Texts and Transactional Writing

Pupils will develop skills to analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to convey meaning in a wide array of modern literary non-fiction from a pre-released anthology; they will explore links between writers' ideas and perspectives of the world around them. Pupils also develop accurate and fluent transactional writing skills for a variety of purposes, including letters, articles, and persuasive speeches. This element of the course is assessed by examination.

Unit 2: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing

Pupils will study a range of 19th and 20th Century poetry and a selection of prose fiction from a pre-released anthology. Through this study they will develop further analytical skills as well as exploring imaginative devices to engage the reader. This unit is assessed by two pieces of coursework: one is a piece of creative writing, one is an essay on three studied texts exploring a particular theme such as loss, identity, hope, power, or conflict.



Trips and other information

The English Department runs regular theatre trips as well as organising a range of writing workshops from Slam Poetry to Creative Writing. Pupils also meet authors and poets when they visit the School as part of our annual calendar of events. There are many opportunities to take part in Public Speaking and Recitation competitions as well as writing for one of our in-house newspapers or annual Creative Writing Anthologies or taking part in one of the national reading quizzes.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

EXAM BOARD

Edexcel IGCSE

Why study English Literature at GCSE?

The study of literature involves the study of societies across the world and people through time: it has never been more important to explore themes such as family, social responsibility, the treatment of marginalised communities, and cultural identity than it is now. Pupils will develop the necessary skills to analyse the ways in which authors and poets use literary techniques and create layers of meaning and nuance within a text.

Who should study English Literature at GCSE?

English Literature is a compulsory subject for all pupils at GCSE.

What content does the course cover?

Unit 1: Poetry and Modern Prose

Pupils will develop critical comparative reading skills whilst developing an understanding of the relationship between texts and the contexts in which they were written. These areas will be explored through the detailed study of a modern prose text, with recent examples including *The Whale Rider* by Witi Ihimaera and *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. Poetry is of a wide variety from a pre-released anthology, ranging from classics by Keats and D H Lawrence, to modern pieces by Carol Ann Duffy and Imtiaz Dharker.

Unit 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage

Pupils will develop a critical style through the exploration of language, form and structure, leading to an informed personal engagement both of set texts and wider reading. Pupils will study *Macbeth* as the Shakespeare component of the course, alongside a more modern drama text such as J B Priestley's *An Inspector Calls* or Simon Stephens adaptation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

Trips and other information

Reading widely and often is a crucial part of the study of Literature: the English Department is well resourced with the benefit of a large and copiously stocked library; English teachers and our Library Manager are always happy to make recommendations and wider reading lists are available to support study throughout GCSE, including literary magazine subscriptions. The Department runs regular theatre trips, especially to see set texts wherever possible, as well as organising a range of writing workshops from poetry to creative writing. Pupils also meet authors and poets when they visit as part of our calendar of events.



GEOGRAPHY

EXAM BOARD

OCR B GCSE

Why study Geography at GCSE?

Geography is a modern subject helping pupils to understand many contemporary issues in the news every day. The OCR Geography B course is enquiry-based, which means that if you enjoy debating or have an opinion on the biggest questions, such as climate change or wealth inequality, then Geography is a subject for you. As well as this, Geography is an outstanding subject to fit with almost all subject combinations having both Arts and Science content. Pupils are taught enquiry-based skills, which are easily transferable between many subjects.

Who should study Geography at GCSE?

An interest and enthusiasm for Geography is the most important factor. There is no controlled assessment or fieldwork project; 100% of the mark comes from the three written papers. However, pupils complete a four-day residential field trip to practise and experience data collection and analytical techniques.

What content does the course cover?

The course is divided into three sections addressing the following questions:

Unit 1: Our Natural World

How can weather be hazardous? How have plate tectonics shaped our world? What evidence is there to suggest that climate change is a natural process? How have distinctive landscapes in the UK been shaped? Why should pupils in the UK be interested in tropical rainforests and polar environments?

Unit 2: People and Society

What issues arise from more than half the world's population living in urban areas? Some countries are richer than others – are poor countries likely to stay poor? How is the UK changing in the 21st Century? Do we have enough natural resources to feed nine billion people by 2050?

Unit 3: Geographical Exploration

This paper focuses on the synoptic assessment of material from a range of topics across both Our Natural World (1) and People and Society (2) and will feature a decision-making exercise (DME) to allow pupils to 'think like a geographer'.

Trips and other information

Fieldwork and geographical skills are integrated into all aspects of the subject. Pupils complete a four-day field trip, which provides a wonderful opportunity to put theory into practice, and a visit to Iceland is another highlight to experience.



HISTORY

EXAM BOARD

Edexcel IGCSE

Why study History at GCSE?

History offers the opportunity to learn about some of the most significant events that have shaped the world in which we live today and to develop a wide range of transferable skills. Pupils who study History learn to critically evaluate evidence, making reasoned judgements about the value of different sources. They create arguments, drawing upon a range of factors to explain their point of view and learn to write with clarity and precision. It is a subject that facilitates progress in any number of fields.

Who should study History at GCSE?

The most important ingredient for success is interest and enthusiasm. It is also important not to be put off by the preconception that the subject involves writing reams of essays; in reality, the requirements are varied.

What content does the course cover?

Unit 1: Germany: The Development of Dictatorship, 1918-45

Pupils will learn about the impact that World War I had on Germany, exploring the context in which the ideology of the Nazi regime was formed before then considering the way in which Nazi rule affected the course of Germany during the 1930s and 40s.

Unit 2: Dictatorship and Conflict in the USSR, 1924-53

Pupils will learn about the way in which Stalin gained power in Russia following the death of Lenin, and how he subsequently established himself as an untouchable leader who transformed the Russian landscape.

Unit 3: The USA, 1918-41

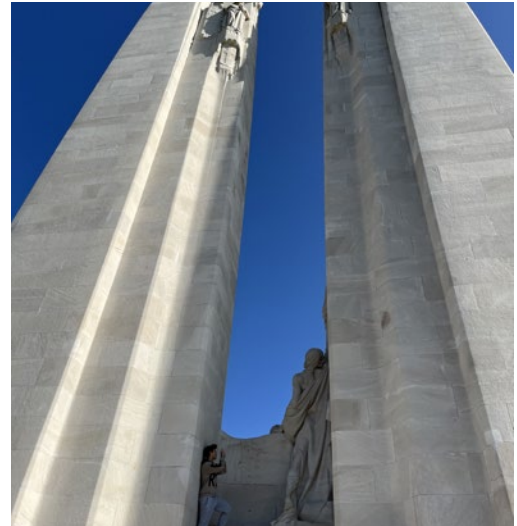
Pupils will study the social and economic history of the USA during the first half of the 20th Century, including the impact of prohibition, the social changes of the 1920s and the cause and effects of the Great Depression.

Unit 4: Changes in medicine, 1848-1948

This unit focuses on the way medicine developed over the mid 19th Century to mid 20th Century. This involves exploring the changes in medical treatment including in surgery and in understanding the cause of illness, improvements in public health provision, the changing role of women in medicine and the impact of war and science and technology on medicine.

Trips and other information

The History Department runs a biennial trip to Germany to support the study of World War II and the realities of the Nazi regime. There will also be the opportunity to take part in trips further afield such as to the United States.



LATIN AND/OR ANCIENT GREEK

EXAM BOARD

OCR GCSE

Why study Latin and/or Ancient Greek at GCSE?

To understand Latin and Ancient Greek is to understand the cornerstones of our own language, culture, and society. Through the study of these languages, pupils develop an acute awareness of how all languages work, regardless of whether they are ancient or modern. The ability to analyse and critique each individual component of a sentence enhances our powers of logic, reasoning, and problem-solving. The translation of Latin is more than just a linguistic game; it is a tool which gives us access to the fascinating culture of the Classical World.

Who should study Latin and/or Ancient Greek at GCSE?

A wide range of pupils choose to study Latin at GCSE for the variety and challenge it offers alongside other subjects. Those who have selected Ancient Greek AOB in the Third Form usually continue their study of the language at GCSE. The Ancient Greek GCSE is taught as an AOB in Fourth and Fifth Forms.

What content does the course cover?

Unit 1: Language

Through the study of a range of linguistic constructions, pupils develop skills in the close analysis of written passages and the transformation of Latin into flowing English prose. The first two terms of the Fourth Form will be devoted to the language in preparation for this paper. Pupils are required to translate Latin into English, to answer comprehension questions about passages of Latin, and choose between two options: constructing some simple sentences into Latin or answering further questions about the grammar featured.

Unit 2: Prose Literature

One of the most fascinating and stimulating aspects of studying Latin at GCSE is the opportunity to read original Latin texts and enjoy first-hand the literature of the Roman world. In this component, pupils study the plot, themes and historical context of an ancient text. Pupils will be guided through these texts in class and invited to comment on how the author brings forth meaning in the style and content of their language. The 2025-27 prose texts include Apuleius' intriguing tale of how the god Cupid falls in love with the beautiful Psyche.

Unit 3: Verse Literature

Pupils will study a selection from Book 4 of Ovid's poem *Metamorphoses*, one of the most influential works in western European literature. The story of Pyramus and Thisbe in the *Metamorphoses* inspired Shakespeare's inclusion of it in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ovid describes how two ill-starred lovers in ancient Babylon, forbidden by their parents to meet, find a way of coming together that ultimately leads to their doom.

The Ancient Greek GCSE comprises the same Language and Literature components as above. Texts studied are the tale of *Arion and the Dolphin* from the Father of History, Herodotus, and an extract from Book 10 of Homer's great epic poem the *Odyssey* describing Odysseus' encounter with the goddess Circe.

Trips and other information

The Classics Department runs trips to give pupils first-hand appreciation of the material culture of the Ancient World. Last academic year we ran a very successful trip to Rome and the Bay of Naples, introducing pupils to the fascinating sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum and the glories of ancient Rome. We plan to run our next trip to Rome in February 2027, including visits to the Vatican Museums, Roman Forum and the Colosseum. In addition, regular trips are run to the British Museum, Bath, the Ashmolean and Warwick University and pupils take part in events run by the Oxfordshire Classical Association.

MATHEMATICS

EXAM BOARD

Edexcel IGCSE

Why study Mathematics at GCSE?

Mathematics equips you with the tools to make logical and well thought-out decisions. The processes and methods you learn to apply help you order your mind, and understand the process required to get a job done. While some of the algebraic skills are abstract, a high level of fluency with numbers is still very highly regarded. High achieving pupils in Mathematics are highly sought after by universities and employers due to their ability to apply a high level of organisation to any task given to them.

Who should study Mathematics at GCSE?

All pupils are required to study Mathematics in the Fourth and Fifth Forms. Mathematics studied in the first three years of Senior School should prepare them well, and we hope they arrive with enthusiasm for the subject. It is likely that all pupils will find some aspect of the course challenging over the two years, so effort, determination and resilience are critical.

What content does the course cover?

There are two tiers of examinations in Mathematics: Higher and Foundation. Tier of entry is determined on an individual basis, and while most pupils sit the Higher Paper, some will find the Foundation Paper more suitable.

While the course does not have units, it is broadly split into three main areas.

Unit 1: Number and Algebra

Covering all aspects of Numeracy and Algebra, from solving simple number problems to harder areas of Algebra such as simultaneous and quadratic equations. Often this is more heavily weighted to the algebraic side in the Higher Paper.

Unit 2: Geometry

Including Trigonometry, Angle Facts and Vectors, this is the diagrammatical representation of Mathematics, so a reasonable grasp of spacial understanding is key.

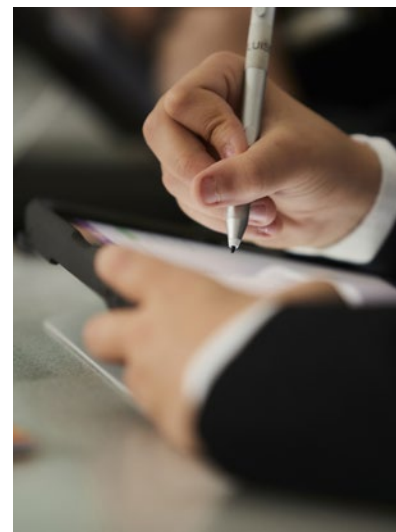
Unit 3: Statistics

Here we focus on the idea of interpreting, understanding and displaying the various forms of data we come across every day.

It is worth noting that questions from any area can arise in either of the examinations at the end of the course.

Trips and other information

Some pupils are invited to take the Additional Maths FSMQ alongside their IGCSE qualification. There is also the opportunity to be selected to participate in various external competitions, trips and the annual UKMT Mathematics Challenge.



Why study Modern Foreign Languages at GCSE?

French and Spanish are timetabled at GCSE. The most appealing aspect of studying a language at this level is the opportunity to become bilingual and establish a strong foundation for learning additional languages in the future. This skill is highly valued on university and job applications as it demonstrates dedication and commitment to learning. Speaking a foreign language also broadens your perspective, fostering empathy and a deeper appreciation of other cultures as well as your own. You will develop many transferable skills, such as enhanced memory, problem-solving, and literacy. Studying a language is stimulating and allows you to share a lot about yourself. The topics covered are tailored to your interests, including sports, activities, friendships, school, holidays, home, the environment and more. Lastly, the speaking and writing components are concise, focusing on quality over quantity, but you have the freedom to be as creative and inventive as you wish.

Who should study Modern Foreign Languages at GCSE?

Absolutely everyone. We support all pupils taking a language and it is not reserved for the most academic pupils. French and Spanish can cater for the mathematicians who enjoy the logical nature of grammar and puzzles with words. It also attracts the more creative people who can express their ideas as freely as they wish.

What content does the course cover?

Unit 1: Home and Abroad

Life in town and countryside, holidays, services, customs, everyday life and traditions.

Unit 2: Education and Employment

School life and routine, rules and pressures, trips and exchanges, work and careers, future plans.

Unit 3: Personal Life and Relationships

House and home, daily routine and house chores, role models, relationships with family and friends, childhood.

Unit 4: The World Around Us

Environmental issues, weather and climate, travel and transport, the media, ICT.

Unit 5: Social Activities, Fitness and Health

Special occasions, hobbies, interests, sports and exercise, shopping and money, accidents, injuries and health issues, food and drink.

Trips and other information

We organise both a French trip and a Spanish trip in Fourth/Fifth Form. These trips enhance your learning and provide unforgettable experiences. During the French trip, you will have the opportunity to discover popular French landmarks and immerse yourself in the culture. You can use the French you have learnt in class during visits to restaurants and shops. The trip is an excellent opportunity to engage with French culture and explore the beautiful Provence region and its wonderful landscapes. The Spanish trip offers a fantastic opportunity to immerse yourself in Spanish culture and visit key landmarks. Each year, the destination may change, providing a fresh and exciting experience. During the trip, you will have numerous opportunities to use the vocabulary learnt in class, whether you're ordering food at a local restaurant, shopping in vibrant markets or interacting with native speakers.

Why study Music at GCSE?

The study of Music at GCSE affords pupils the opportunity to develop a critical understanding of how music is constructed through the study of performance, composition and a wide variety of set works. The Edexcel specification covers a broad range of styles including Instrumental Music, Vocal Music, Music for Stage and Screen, and Fusions. Pupils will study the musical features of these works in relation to the historical context in which they were created and form reasoned judgements on how the elements of music are used.

Who should study Music at GCSE?

Pupils who wish to study Music should have a strong interest in composing and performing music. They should already be learning an instrument and enjoy creating music using Logic and Sibelius Software. Having studied Music Theory is not obligatory but it is necessary that pupils can read basic notation. The GCSE course covers many different musical styles and caters for a wide variety of interests.

What content does the course cover?

Unit 1: Performing

Pupils are required to prepare two performance pieces on their chosen instrument (including voice) which should both be of a Grade Five standard. One of the pieces must be a solo and the second piece, an ensemble. Pupils are free to explore a wide variety of styles within their instrument's repertoire and they should choose a programme that showcases their individual strengths.

Unit 2: Composing

Over the two years, pupils will study various composition styles and techniques. They will learn strategies for creating and developing their ideas and how to compose within the conventions of an assigned style. Pupils are required to complete two compositions for coursework – one free composition and one set brief composition. The set brief composition will relate to one of the four areas of study – Instrumental Music, Vocal Music, Music for Stage and Screen, and Fusions.

Unit 3: Appraising

Through the study of eight set works, pupils will develop their skill in analysis of musical features. They will learn about the period and time in which each piece was composed and discover key features about the style. Pupils will sit a listening examination in the Summer Term of Fifth Form which includes both short-answer questions, aural dictation, and an extended comparative piece of writing.

Trips and other information

The Music Department runs various trips throughout the year which complement the three main components of the course; Performing, Composing and Appraising. This includes regular international tours as well as an annual trip to a West End musical in London. Music and recitals are an integral part of life at Cokethorpe and GCSE musicians will have numerous opportunities to develop their confidence in various settings.





PHYSICAL EDUCATION

EXAM BOARD

Edexcel GCSE

Why study Physical Education at GCSE?

The GCSE in Physical Education is a rewarding and well-established course at Cokethorpe that allows pupils to follow a challenging combination of applying practice and theory with improving personal performance. It also looks at Sport Leadership and Officiating which teaches pupils how to plan, lead and evaluate a personal exercise programme developed around their own interests, whilst developing a confidence and resilience that can be used throughout a variety of fields.

Who should study Physical Education at GCSE?

Someone who enjoys all types of Sport and Physical activities and is a strong performer, competing in at least two sports, ideally one team and one individual sport. A performer who is committed to sports both inside and out of school, with the inquisitive nature of how the body works and the mechanics of how we, as performers and coaches, can improve a performance.

What content does the course cover?

Unit 1: Fitness and Body Systems

The component will cover areas in Applied Anatomy and Physiology, Movement Analysis, Physical Training and the use of data.

Unit 2: Health and Performance

The component will cover Health, Fitness and Wellbeing, Sport Psychology, socio-cultural influences and the use of data.

Unit 3: Practical Performance

Pupils will select three activities for assessment from a wide choice and be assessed in these, paying particular attention to skills, techniques and tactical awareness. The major School sports are included, from football to netball, rugby to badminton, with specialist activities such as equestrianism also included. You will be required to select one team game, one athletic-based activity and a third free-choice activity. Advice will be given on the third choice.

Unit 4: Personal Exercise Programme

This will be a non-examined assessment which is internally marked and externally moderated. Pupils will aim to plan, analyse, monitor and evaluate their own fitness levels throughout a six-week period, the aim being to improve and assist their performance in their major sport.

Trips and other information

The Physical Education Department run a trip to University of Bath looking at how a sports performer prepares for an international competition as well as listening to a variety of professionals deliver expert lectures on topics from rehabilitation to diet. The Department also run many annual sports tours to a variety of countries. Recently, the Senior squads have toured Biarritz and Barbados, playing rugby, cricket, hockey and netball.

PHYSICS

EXAM BOARD

AQA GCSE

Why study Physics at GCSE?

Physics is the study of matter, energy and how they interact. It is an international collaboration trying to understand big questions such as what matter is made of and how the universe started. Physics also discovers knowledge that can be harnessed for future technological advances and drives economic development. Physics is the bridge between Mathematics and Technology. Physics is a useful stepping stone to a range of courses from Accounting to Architecture.

Who should study Physics at GCSE?

Physics is a key subject for many courses and is studied by all pupils.

What content does the course cover?

Topic 1 : Energy

Energy resources, stores and systems, as well as using it efficiently.

Topic 2: Electricity

A variety of different circuits, safety, and transmission across the national grid.

Topic 3: Particle Model of Matter

Predicting the behaviour of solids, liquids and gases, and many applications in everyday life.

Topic 4: Atomic Structure

Radioactivity and particles, this is 'dangerous stuff' but it has its uses both good and bad!

Topic 5: Forces and Motion

Explore the various interactions involving movement in the modern world.

Topic 6 : Waves

The transmission of information using waves in both man-made and natural systems.

Topic 7: Magnetism and Electromagnetism

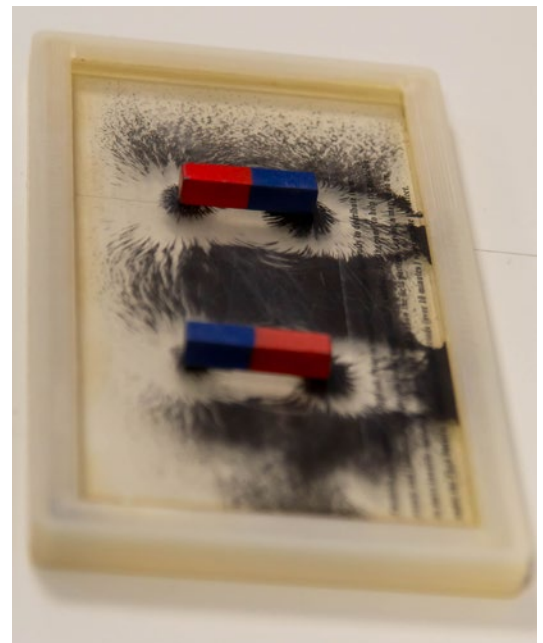
Electromagnetic effects are used in a wide variety of devices vital to modern technology.

Topic 8: Space Physics

Big questions, what is out there, how do we know, and how is it changing?

Other information

Practical skills are taught throughout the course and pupils must carry out certain required practicals. They are then examined on these skills in the written papers.



PSYCHOLOGY

EXAM BOARD

AQA GCSE

Why study Psychology at GCSE?

Psychology has been defined as the scientific study of the mind and behaviour. It is a subject which aims to distinguish between myth and reality through scientific analysis. In the study of Psychology, we endeavour to describe, explain, predict and, where appropriate, change behaviour.

Every aspect of our life is touched by how we think, behave and respond. Through the study of Psychology, you will gain a better understanding of your own behaviour, as well as that of other people. It will equip you with a range of transferable skills, including essay writing, evaluation, analysis, research, and communication.

Who should study Psychology at GCSE?

To study Psychology effectively you need to have an interest in people, a questioning mind, be able to listen to the opinions of others, and be prepared to conduct independent research. You will also be required to draw upon your knowledge and skills from English, Mathematics, and Biology.

What content does the course cover?

Unit 1: Cognition and Behaviour

Topic 1: Memory - how do we remember and why do we forget?

Topic 2: Perception - how do we perceive our surroundings?

Topic 3: Development - how does our brain and corresponding abilities develop in infancy and childhood?

Topic 4: Research Methods - how is psychological research carried out and interpreted?

Unit 2: Social Context and Behaviour

Topic 5: Social influence - why do people conform to group pressures and obey authority?

Topic 6: Language, thought, and communication - how do animals and humans communicate?

Topic 7: Brain and Neuropsychology - do different brain structures have different functions?

Topic 8: Psychological problems - what is depression? How are addictions formed?

Assessment

You will sit two equally weighted exams at the end of your Fifth Form year.

You will be assessed using multiple choice, short-answer, and extended answer questions.



TEXTILES

EXAM BOARD

OCR GCSE

Why study Textiles at GCSE?

Textiles is an enjoyable subject to study. As well as gaining practical skills, pupils learn to be observant, organised, analytical, and creative. Pupils with an art textiles skill set are highly sought after by employers as they have developed project management skills, can assess their own work and accept constructive criticism. They could go on to careers within the interior design, craft, fashion, and art industries. Pupils who study textiles have the opportunity to use their imagination and observations of the world around them to create contemporary textile pieces.

Who should study Textiles at GCSE?

The Textiles GCSE course is perfect for anyone who wants to develop their practical creative skills. Pupils who enjoy working with their hands, and are keen to learn how to use a variety of textile techniques, will enjoy this GCSE. Organisation is important from the outset, as this enables you to produce a varied and successful textile portfolio.

What content does the course cover?

Unit 1: Portfolio

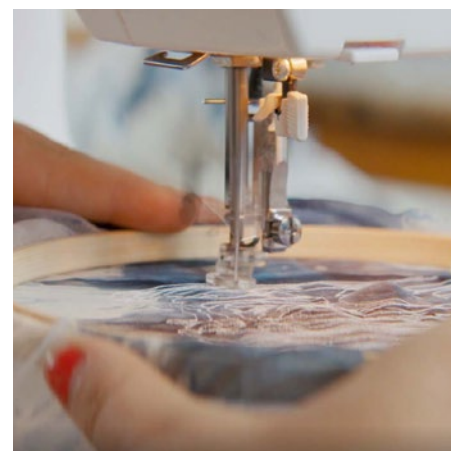
The beginning of the portfolio unit allows the pupil to build up their skill level to produce a successful body of work to present to the examiner. Starting with a variety of textile workshops, gaining inspiration from an exhibition visit, pupils produce a series of samples based on a theme. They will cover observational techniques, hand and machine embroidery, weave, silk painting, wax resist, and the dying of fabrics in a variety of ways. As their course progresses, guided by their teacher, they develop the theme in a personal way to create their portfolio. Pupils work to cover the following objectives: development of ideas, experimenting with textile processes, drawing for design, and presentation of a final artistic outcome. The portfolio unit is worth 60% of their GCSE.

Unit 2: Externally Set Task

In January of Fifth Form, pupils are given the Externally Set Task paper which includes five possible starting points from which they choose one to work with. In the following three months, they photograph and draw, and experiment with a variety of textile media, then develop ideas on their chosen theme. They then sit a ten hour controlled test where they use their developed idea to produce a textile piece. The Externally Set Task is worth 40% of their GCSE.

Trips and other information

The Art Department runs an annual trip to a gallery or museum to inspire students for their coursework and Externally Set Task.



Core Subjects

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Biology
Chemistry
Physics

Optional Subjects

Art
Business Studies
Computer Science
Drama
Design Technology
Geography
History
Latin
MFL French and Spanish
Music
Physical Education
Psychology
Textiles

You will submit four optional subject preferences plus a 'reserve'.



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