



IPSWICH SCHOOL

GCSE INFORMATION BOOKLET
2026

GCSEs at Ipswich School



To Year 9 pupils

This booklet is designed to help you make a sensible choice of GCSE subjects.

It tells you which subjects are compulsory and which choices you can make, and it gives an outline of what is involved in each subject.

To parents of Year 9 pupils

Pupils now in Year 9 will spend a further two years in the Middle School, leading to GCSE examinations in the Summer Term 2028.

At present these pupils are studying a larger number of subjects than they will take at GCSE. During the Lent Term 2026, parents are asked which subjects their children will continue to GCSE, and the purpose of this booklet is to explain the choices offered.

A detailed description of the GCSE course in each individual subject is included.

Making your choices

In making your choices, you should bear in mind:

- Your interests in the different subjects. However, do not choose subjects only because you like them. Other subjects may be more important in keeping a wide range of careers open.
- Your abilities as they relate to these subjects. 3
- Any doors which may be opened or closed as far as A Level studies or careers are concerned.
- Remember that if you drop a subject from your GCSE option choices, it does not follow that you have to drop it forever. There is often a chance to pick up subjects again later, although this does depend upon the subject in question.
- Even if you feel sure now about the career you want to go into, you could well change your mind by the time you are 16 or 18. Never guess what subjects are needed for particular careers. Always check with up to date information available through the Careers Department (Mrs Hayes or Mr Calver), or by using the internet.
- You should discuss your choices now with a wide range of people: certainly your teachers, Heads of Departments, parents, Tutor and Head of House. Please show this booklet to your parents, who are very welcome to contact individual members of staff if they need further information or advice.

Deadlines for choices

Choices will be collected later this term, after the Year 9 Parents' Evening on Wednesday 11 February 2026.

All pupils will be sent a link to the Google form to complete.

On the basis of these choices, the 2026 - 2027 timetable for Year 10 will be constructed. Any changes of pupil choice after this time will only be possible if setting arrangements and class sizes permit. Although such occurrences are rare, it might be the case that certain combinations of subjects prove impossible to satisfy.

Please think carefully about your choices, but do not become over-worried. Experience shows that the vast majority of Year 9 pupils make sensible decisions about their GCSEs and gain results which offer a firm foundation for A Levels.

About GCSEs

GCSE examinations are designed to concentrate on candidates' positive achievements: what they have learned, what they have understood and the skills they have acquired.

In some subjects a proportion of a candidate's final mark will be awarded for work done during the course. This may be specific projects, practical exercises, oral tests or a more general form of continuous and controlled assessment.

Coursework assessment is carried out by the school but the marks are moderated (subjected to scrutiny and possible amendment) by the examination board.

Nine grades of achievement (9 down to 1) are currently available at GCSE, with Grade 9 being the highest. Grade 7 is equivalent to the old Grade A and Grade 4 to the old Grade C. However, whereas a C grade was previously classified by the government as a 'good pass', that has now risen to a Grade 5 under the new system, as the government seeks to raise standards.

Structure of the curriculum - Years 10 and 11

Compulsory for all pupils

- English (both Language and Literature)
- Maths
- A modern foreign language (French or Spanish or German), or possibly two
- Science, either:
 1. Three separate sciences - Biology, Chemistry and Physics, or
 2. Two separate sciences, or
 3. Combined Science, which is a combination of Biology, Chemistry and Physics but with a reduced content from the individual science GCSEs. Combined Science counts as two GCSEs and occupies three option slots on the timetable.
- Life Skills (not examined). This includes Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) as well as covering areas such as careers, citizenship, first aid and personal finance.

Optional Subjects

The following optional subjects are available:

- Art and Design (Fine Art)
- Art Photography
- Art Textiles

Students may only take one of these Art options above

- Classical Civilisation
- Computer Science
- Design Technology
- Drama
- Geography
- History
- Latin
- A second modern foreign language (French, Spanish, German)
- Music
- PRE (Philosophy, Religion and Ethics)

How many GCSEs will I study in total?

You will study for ten GCSEs in total, or nine if you follow the Combined Science route.

You will need to choose three subjects from the optional subjects listed above or four if you select just 2 single sciences.

Thinking Skills (AS Level)

For several years, Ipswich School has offered Critical Thinking (now called Thinking Skills) at AS Level to a small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11. This will enable pupils to take the AS Level at the end of Year 11, after two years of study, in addition to their ten GCSEs.

The course is taught after school for one evening per week. There are further details of this very demanding, but stimulating course later in this booklet.



Compulsory Subjects

English Language and English Literature

Head of Department: Ms Carter

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

In English Language, pupils are assessed at the end of the course via two examination papers. Both papers test pupils' ability to read a wide variety of texts fluently and with good understanding.

Pupils are tested on a range of skills:

- To be able to read critically and use knowledge gained to influence their own writing
- Make comparisons between texts
- Analyse the ways in which writers achieve their effects through their construct to convey meaning in written language, matching style to audience and purpose
- Write effectively and coherently, utilising a wide vocabulary and understanding of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading and writing
- Use grammar correctly, punctuating and spelling accurately

The aim of the English Language IGCSE is to encourage students to be discerning readers and to be able to replicate skills in their writing. In each paper, the writing question carries the same marks as all the reading tasks. The course uses an anthology of non-fiction, poetry and prose texts, as well as testing students' ability to respond to an unseen extract in the exam.

Exams

Paper 1 - Non-Fiction texts and transactional writing
2 hours 15 mins, 60% of final grade

Section A – Reading: A mixture of short- and long-answer questions related to a non-fiction text from Part 1 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology and one previously unseen extract. Total of 45 marks.

Students will be provided with the anthology text in the examination.

Section B — Transactional Writing: One 45-mark writing task, from a choice of two involving a given audience, form or purpose.

Paper 2 - Poetry and Prose texts and Imaginative writing
1 hour 30 mins, 40% of final grade

Section A — Reading: The 30-mark essay question on a poetry or prose text from Part 2 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology.

Students will be provided with the anthology text in the examination.

Section B — Imaginative Writing: One 30-mark imaginative writing task from a choice of three.

Exam board: Pearson IGCSE

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Pupils sit two papers in English Literature at the end of Year 11.

The design of this International GCSE aims to extend learners' knowledge and understanding by broadening and deepening skills; for example, learners develop the ability to:

- engage with and develop the ability to read and respond to a wide range of literary texts from around the world
- develop an appreciation of the ways in which writers use literary effects and develop the skills needed for literary study
- explore the writer's use of language to create effects and find enjoyment in reading literature.

Exams

Paper 1 - Poetry and Modern Prose

2 hours, 60% of final grade

Section A — Unseen Poetry: one 20-mark essay question exploring the meaning and effects created in an unseen poem. The poem will be reproduced in the question paper.

Section B — Anthology Poetry: one 30-mark essay question from a choice of two, comparing two poems from Part 3 of the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology. Students will be provided with the anthology poems in the examination.

Section C — Modern Prose: one 40-mark essay question from a choice of two on each of the set texts.

This is a closed book examination: texts are not allowed in the examination.

Possible text choices for Section C are:

To Kill a Mockingbird - Harper Lee
Of Mice and Men - John Steinbeck
The Whale Rider - Witi Ihimaera
The Joy Luck Club - Amy Tan
Things Fall Apart - Chinua Achebe
Klara and the Sun - Kazuo Ishiguro
Western Lane - Chetna Maroo

Paper 2 - Modern Drama and Literary Heritage

1 hour 30 mins, 40% of final grade

Section A — Modern Drama: one 30-mark essay question from a choice of two on each of the set texts.

Section B - Literary Heritage Texts: one 30-mark essay question from a choice of two on each of the set texts.

This is an open book examination: prescribed editions of set texts are allowed in the examination and must be completely unmarked.

Possible text choices for Section A are:

A View from the Bridge - Arthur Miller

An Inspector Calls - J B Priestley

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time - Mark Haddon (adapted by Simon Stephens)

Kindertransport - Diane Samuels

Death and the King's Horseman - Wole Soyinka

Possible text choices for Section B are:

Romeo and Juliet - William Shakespeare

Macbeth - William Shakespeare

The Merchant of Venice - William Shakespeare

Pride and Prejudice - Jane Austen

Great Expectations - Charles Dickens

The Scarlet Letter - Nathaniel Hawthorne

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

For English Language, it will be important for students to understand about cultural affairs in the world - read online newspapers and watch the news. It will also help to read a variety of genres so that you can see different styles of writing with different voices.

For English Literature, make sure you are doing some wider reading for enjoyment, as well as reading the text you are set for PSE.

For both subjects, regular practice of the skills taught to you in short activities and practice papers will be helpful. Finally, try keeping a diary each to improve the accuracy of your writing.



Mathematics

Head of Department: Mr Rands

Pupils start the GCSE course in Year 9 and, for standard sets, this will be completed towards the latter part of the Lent term in Year 11 thus providing ample time for revision and practice before the examination. It is hoped that all pupils will enjoy studying mathematics and the teaching is geared towards achieving this goal; use of sophisticated computer software, investigational activities and practical applications all help to bring the subject to life. As well as developing an appreciation of the subject, the Maths Department will aim to ensure that pupils learn mathematics in such a way that:

- their mathematical ability is developed to the full as far as possible,
- they feel confident in the subject and in applying it in different contexts,
- they are properly prepared for external examinations, and
- they are prepared, should they wish, to continue studying mathematics after Year 11, at a higher level, including reading mathematics at Oxbridge.

In teaching this course, we aim to develop in the student:

- an understanding of and respect for mathematics,
- an appreciation of the place of mathematics in society,
- a high degree of skill in routine mathematical manipulation,
- the capacity to engage in problem solving with confidence, and
- the capacity to apply mathematics to real-life situations.

Topics covered include:

- Numbers and the number system,
- Equations, formulae and identities,
- Sequences, functions and graphs,
- Geometry and trigonometry,
- Vectors and transformation geometry, and
- Statistics and probability.

Exam board: Edexcel

Exams

All papers are 1 hour 30mins and have 80 marks available. All topics may be covered in each paper.

Students will be entered for Foundation Tier (grades 5-1) or Higher Tier (grades 9-4) according to their abilities.

Paper 1 is a non-calculator paper. For papers 2 and 3, students are allowed calculators.

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

All pupils, no matter what their ability, can enjoy success in maths. Thinking carefully and logically about the subject is important, as is a determined mindset. Practising the subject regularly is vital, of course, even for the most able.

Additional Maths - Set 1 pupils

Set 1 pupils will complete the GCSE course in Year 10, although they will take their GCSE exams in Year 11 with the rest of the year group.

In Year 11 they will have the opportunity to study OCR's 'Additional Maths' course (the so-called 'Free Standing Maths Qualification').

Assessment is based on a single exam in the summer where grades A to E are available (unlike GCSE but similar to A Level, all of these grades are considered to be passes).



Modern Foreign Languages — French, Spanish, German

Head of MFL and French: Mrs Halford-Thompson

Head of Spanish: Ms Cascon-Soriano

Head of German: Dr Luiselli

A Modern Foreign Language, one of those they are currently studying from French, Spanish, or German, is a compulsory subject for all in Years 10 and 11. Considerable numbers of pupils opt to continue learning both languages that they have been studying in Year 9.

In all languages, pupils build on the basis of knowledge and skills developed in earlier years. All topics studied up to Year 9 are essential for GCSE, and pupils learn how to talk about them in greater depth, as well as learning about new topics.

Progress is still focused upon the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, as well as the development of a greater understanding of the grammar, so that more complex and interesting ideas can be expressed and understood.

While the emphasis is on the communication of a range of ideas using a broad vocabulary, it is also important to be able to do so accurately and with grammatical precision.

For example, across all topics, such as Personal Identity, School Life, or Future Aspirations, pupils need to differentiate between past, present and future time frames, between positive and negative expressions, and interpret expressions of mood or opinion.

All languages use new and lively textbooks to guide progress, as well as interactive ICT activities. Lessons are also supported by authentic materials drawn from the press, television, and language websites.

One of our aims is for pupils to gain some understanding of, and interest in, the culture of the country alongside their linguistic skills. Trips to France, Spain and Germany for Middle School continue to be very popular and successful. GCSE results in Modern Foreign Languages continue to be strong, and every year a healthy number of pupils choose to continue their language studies into the Sixth Form and then on to further study at university.

Exam board: Edexcel

Exams

All assessment happens at the end of Year 11, in the form of external examination in each of the four skills - Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, covering the themes and topics covered during the course.

Paper 1: Listening - 60 mins, 25% of total

Students are assessed on their understanding of the standard spoken foreign language by speakers in a range of different settings. This is a written exam with multiple choice, short answer questions and dictation.

Paper 2: Speaking - approx. 10 mins plus 15 mins preparation time, 25% of total

Students are assessed on their ability to communicate and interact effectively through speaking the foreign language for different purposes and in different settings. Tasks include a role play, a read aloud task, a picture description and a conversation.

Paper 3: Reading - 1 hour, 25% of the total

Students are assessed on their understanding of written language across a range of different types of texts, including advertisements, emails, letters and articles. There are multiple choice and short answer questions, plus a translation piece from the foreign language into English.

Paper 4: Writing - 1 hour 20 mins, 25% of the total

Students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively through writing for different purposes and audiences, expressing ideas and opinions in the foreign language. There are different lengths of writing required and a translation into the foreign language. Students need to use present, past, and future time frames.

What do I need to be successful in this subject?

You need to be able to absorb a broad range of vocabulary across the whole range of topics. You also need to be able to spot patterns in language, and apply grammar rules to your sentence structure. It is also important to be willing to practise speaking the language regularly, and in depth, to develop your fluency.

Science — Biology, Chemistry, Physics

Head of Science & Chemistry: Mr Halford-Thompson

Head of Biology: Mrs Duncombe-Jones

Head of Physics: Mr Espley-Jones

Exam board: AQA

At Ipswich School, all pupils in Years 10 and 11 are required to continue to study the sciences. You will have the choice of one of the following options:

1. Combined Science Trilogy, which is a combination of Biology, Chemistry and Physics but with fewer higher demand topics than separate science GCSEs. Combined Science Trilogy counts as two GCSEs and so pupils who study Combined Science will typically end up with nine GCSEs. The advantage of this route compared to separate sciences is that with less time pressure to get through the course, there is more time for consolidation and so final outcomes have historically been very favourable.
2. Three separate sciences: Biology, Chemistry and Physics, resulting in three GCSEs. This option is probably best for pupils who have done very well in science assessments and certainly if they are intending to take science subjects for A Levels or beyond.
3. Two separate sciences, resulting in two GCSEs. This option enables pupils to choose an additional subject from the option blocks, but pupils should be aware that the level of demand of the content, particularly in Year 11, is high. Dropping a single science subject might affect future A Level choices as, for example, studying Biology for A Level requires significant Chemistry knowledge.

Specialist subject teachers will teach each science subject. At the end of the GCSE courses, all pupils will have a good foundation in science.

Students should speak to their science teachers as to which of the above three options might suit them best. We have a great deal of experience in assessing, for example, whether a student is best suited to Combined Science or separate sciences.

Topics covered in each science subject include:

- Biology - cell biology, infection and response, bioenergetics, homeostasis and response, inheritance, variation and evolution, and ecology.
- Chemistry - atomic structure and the periodic table, bonding, structure, and the properties of matter, chemical changes, organic chemistry, and chemical analysis.
- Physics - energy, electricity, atomic structure, forces, waves, and magnetism and electromagnetism.

Exams

COMBINED SCIENCE TRILOGY ASSESSMENTS

There are six papers: two biology, two chemistry and two physics. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas.

Each paper is 1 hour 15mins long and counts for 16.7% of the GCSE. There will be a range of different question types.

SEPARATE SUBJECTS

BIOLOGY

Two papers, with a range of different questions including multiple choice, short answer and open response. Each paper is 1 hour and 45 mins long, and counts for 50% of the GCSE.

- Paper one covers topics 1–4: cell biology; organisation; infection and response; and bioenergetics.
- Paper two covers topics 5–7: homeostasis and response; inheritance, variation and evolution; and ecology.

CHEMISTRY

Two papers, with a range of different questions including multiple choice, short answer and open response. Each paper is 1 hour and 45 mins long, and counts for 50% of the GCSE.

- Paper one covers topics 1–5: atomic structure and the periodic table; bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; quantitative chemistry; chemical changes; and energy changes.
- Paper two covers topics 6–10: the rate and extent of chemical change; organic chemistry; chemical analysis, chemistry of the atmosphere; and using resources.

PHYSICS

Two papers, with a range of different questions including multiple choice, short answer and open response. Each paper is 1 hour and 45 mins long, and counts for 50% of the GCSE.

- Paper one covers Topics 1-4: energy; electricity; particle model of matter; and atomic structure.
- Paper two covers Topics 5-8: forces; waves; magnetism and electromagnetism; and space physics. There may also be some reference to information in the energy and electricity topics.

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

For your science subjects, there are numerous topics to cover, many of which are only encountered once; therefore, it is essential to try to master each topic as it is taught. A combination of dedication, effective study strategies, and a good understanding of the subject matter is needed. Here are some top tips that can help you ace your exams:

1. Understand the basics: Make sure you have a solid foundation in the core concepts, as the fundamentals will be essential for understanding more complex topics later on.
2. Pay attention in class: Attend all your classes and actively participate in discussions. Take good notes and ask questions if you don't understand something. Your teacher is there to help you, so don't be afraid to ask for clarification.
3. Do your PSC: Completing your PSC assignments will help you to solidify your understanding of the material and identify any areas where you need more practice. Don't just copy the answers; make sure you understand how to get them yourself.
4. Practise, practise, practise: The more you practise, the more confident you will become in your abilities. There are many resources available to help, such as past papers and online quizzes.

Also, don't forget the importance of the methods and techniques required for the Standard Practical tasks.





Optional Subjects

Art and Design — Fine Art, Textiles Design, Photography

Head of Department: Ms Shevchenko

Exam board: Edexcel

The GCSE Art and Design course encourages an adventurous, enquiring approach through personal expression, imagination, and conceptual thinking. By balancing expressive practice with theoretical study, pupils develop a sophisticated visual perception and a fuller understanding of the arts.

Central to the course is the work journal, where students record their creative process—from initial observations to the final development of ideas. This involves making informed decisions, creating original artefacts, and forming judgements based on their own investigations. Following the Pearson (Edexcel) syllabus, the course structure mirrors our A Level program to ensure a smooth progression to higher-level study. Over the two-year course, students will complete approximately 125 guided learning hours.

GCSE ART (FINE ART)

In GCSE Art, pupils embark on a journey of self-expression, exploring everything from traditional painting and sculpture to modern printmaking and digital media. The course is designed to build a diverse toolkit of skills, encouraging students to experiment boldly with a wide variety of materials. As they progress into Year 11, pupils take the lead in their creative development. Whether they choose to specialize in a specific discipline or continue working across multiple media, they will learn to translate their personal ideas into powerful, finished artworks.

GCSE ART (TEXTILES)

In Textile Design, pupils transform raw materials into tactile art, learning to manipulate fibres, yarns, and fabrics with precision and flair. The course is a hands-on exploration of diverse processes—including construction, dyeing, and print—allowing students to redefine the boundaries of fashion and textile art. As they move into Year 11, students gain the creative freedom to specialize. Whether their passion lies in avant-garde fashion or intricate surface design, they will develop a sophisticated portfolio that reflects their unique aesthetic and technical skill.

GCSE ART (PHOTOGRAPHY)

In GCSE Photography, pupils develop a unique visual voice by exploring the world through a lens. Beyond mastering the DSLR camera, students engage in a creative journey—learning to tell stories and capture emotions by studying influential artists. The course encourages bold experimentation, blending digital Photoshop skills with hands-on artistic techniques. By Year 11, students take creative control of their portfolios, specializing in a personal area of photography that sparks their passion and showcases their individual style.

Exams

The GCSE course consists of both a personal portfolio and an externally set assignment—a practical project culminating in a final piece created under exam conditions. At the end of Year 11, pupils celebrate their progress by exhibiting a curated selection of work from both units. Throughout the course, students maintain a sketchbook to document their creative journey, featuring annotated ideas and contextual analysis of influential artists.

Personal Portfolio in Art and Design - 60% of the GCSE

The course is broad and flexible, encouraging students to appreciate the creative process through practical exploration. Using a variety of 2D, 3D, and digital media, students respond to set themes by producing a body of work that includes both supporting studies and personal responses.

Externally set assignment - 40% of the GCSE

In January of Year 11, pupils receive a theme set by the exam board. During a preparatory period of approximately ten weeks, they research and develop their ideas. The project concludes with a 10-hour practical exam, held under supervised conditions, where students create their final outcome.

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

If you are studying Fine Art, it is beneficial to maintain a personal drawing practice and explore various creative media. A curiosity for visiting galleries and exhibitions is essential to gain inspiration from the work of practicing artists.

Photography students are encouraged to carry their cameras as often as possible. Frequent shooting is the best way to build confidence with manual DSLR settings and develop a unique photographic eye. For Textile Design, you should have a natural interest in fashion, interiors, or tactile surfaces, alongside an enthusiasm for experimenting with fabric-based media.

Across all Art and Design pathways, students must be organized and possess strong time-management skills to meet portfolio deadlines. Success in these subjects requires a willingness to work independently, a commitment to consistent effort, and the courage to take creative risks.

Computer Science

Head of Department: Mr Dove

Computers and digital technology are all around us, shaping how we communicate, work, learn, and entertain ourselves. Being confident with technology and understanding how it works has never been more important.

GCSE Computer Science gives pupils the chance to explore what happens behind the screen. They discover how computer systems operate and how software is designed to solve real-world problems. The course develops logical thinking, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, which are essential for success in today's workplace. Pupils gain hands-on experience in programming, designing algorithms, and creating practical solutions using Python with professional development tools.

The course encourages curiosity, creativity, and resilience. Pupils become confident computational thinkers ready for A Level study and future careers in technology, engineering, science, and any field where analytical and problem-solving skills are valued.

Course Content and Assessment

GCSE Computer Science is assessed through two written exams at the end of the course. There is no coursework.

Paper 1: Computer Systems

This paper explores how computer systems operate and how they are used in everyday life. Pupils learn about the key components of a computer, including systems architecture, memory, and storage, and how these work together to process information efficiently. They also study computer networks, how devices communicate, and the importance of cybersecurity in protecting data. The paper covers systems software, such as operating systems and utility programs, and examines the wider impact of technology, including ethical, legal, cultural, and environmental considerations. Pupils gain an understanding of how technology shapes our world and the responsibilities that come with using it.

Exam: 1 hour 30 minutes, 80 marks, 50% of GCSE

Exam board: OCR

Paper 2: Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming

This paper focuses on developing problem-solving and programming skills. Pupils learn how to analyse problems, break them down into manageable steps, and design effective solutions using algorithms. They explore Boolean logic and how it is used to make decisions in computer programs. Pupils gain hands-on experience writing, testing, and refining robust programs, primarily using Python, and learn to use professional development environments to create practical, real-world solutions. This paper helps pupils develop logical, structured thinking and practical skills that are essential for both further study and the modern workplace.

Exam: 1 hour 30 minutes, 80 marks, 50% of GCSE

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

A strong foundation in mathematics is helpful, as many concepts in computer science rely on logical reasoning and numerical understanding. Pupils who enjoy thinking logically, solving problems, and approaching challenges creatively will thrive in this course.

Success also comes from curiosity and a willingness to explore how things work. Pupils should be prepared to experiment, make mistakes, and learn from them, as this is a key part of developing programming and problem-solving skills.

The course also rewards perseverance and resilience. Some problems can be challenging at first, but working through them helps pupils develop confidence and independence. By learning to break down complex tasks, analyse problems, and design effective solutions, pupils develop critical thinking skills that are highly valued by employers and universities.

Design Technology

Head of Department: Mr Molenaar

Design Technology at Ipswich School provides an exciting and creative environment, where pupils are encouraged to work on their strengths and make the most of their natural ability. The philosophy of the department is to appeal to all areas of design, whether it is biased towards the technical nature of engineering and architecture or the creative elements of aesthetic styling in product design.

The department enjoys considerable success at GCSE level, with the large majority of committed pupils achieving a grade 8 or 9.

If you are considering a future in any design and/or engineering related course, please ensure you fully appreciate the opportunities that the study of design technology can provide you with. If further information is required, please approach any member of the DT teaching staff.

Pupils taking this subject will be given the opportunity to discover many of the aspects of the design world. You will combine your design and making skills with knowledge and understanding of materials, manufacturing and design issues. Through two and three-dimensional projects, time is divided between the design studios and workshop environments, where skills in graphics, presentation, communication, CAD/CAM, materials and processes are experienced.

Year 10

A number of foundation projects will be completed during Year 10 using a range of materials such as wood, metal and plastics and covering topics such as CAD CAM and the principles of design technology theory. These projects will build on each pupils' DT knowledge and allow them to make informed decisions in the use of a wide range of materials, tools, machines and presentation skills including CAD.

In the summer term pupils will select a theme set by the exam board and start their Iterative Design Challenge.

Year 11

In Year 11, we concentrate on the design challenge coursework. There is also a theory exam in the summer exam period.

Exam board: OCR

Exams

Principles of Design and Technology exam
50% of total GCSE / 100 marks / 2 hour written paper

This component brings together the pupils core and in-depth knowledge and understanding.

Core knowledge of design and technology principles demonstrates pupils' broad understanding across the subject. In-depth knowledge allows pupils to focus more directly on at least one main material category.

The question paper is split into two sections and a minimum of 15% of the paper will assess the pupil's mathematical skills as applied within a design and technology context.

Coursework: Iterative Design Challenge
50% of total GCSE / 100 marks / Non-exam assessment

Throughout Year 11 pupils will work on their chosen Iterative Design Challenge. This exam component gives pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of and skills in design.

They will

- Explore the interrelated nature of the processes used to identify needs and requirements
- Create solutions to meet those needs
- Evaluate whether the needs have been met

As an outcome of their challenge, pupils will produce an e-portfolio of their work and a final prototype.

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

All of the design work undertaken enables pupils to develop their own creativity and flair, whilst encouraging the self-motivation, time management and initiative which are essential, given the coursework element of Design Technology.

Drama

Head of Department: Miss Stoll

You will enjoy this course if you want to study a subject that is both practical and creative. You will learn about many areas of the drama process including, acting, stage design, costumes, makeup, sound and lighting.

As well as gaining knowledge and understanding of the creating and performing process, you will acquire a set of transferable skills essential for A Levels and university/the working world. These include:

- working with others,
- problem solving,
- communication,
- presentation,
- critical thinking, and
- practical application of a theoretical concept.

You will find that Drama can help you feel more self-confident and prepare you to deal with a range of different situations and people.

Exams

This GCSE has coursework, an examined performance and a written exam.

Component 1 - Devised performance - 40% of GCSE

Pupils will be in groups of 3 to 6 to create their own performance from a stimulus provided by the department. This stimulus could be something such as a poem, music, a photograph or painting, prose, an historical event, newspaper article or artefact.

Through practical work, students then create a piece of devised drama based on the issues surrounding the stimulus. Pupils also complete a written portfolio of evidence completed during the devising process.

Assessment is completed in school and moderated externally, and includes both the performance and the portfolio.

Component 2 - Practical performance from text - 20% of GCSE

Pupils are taught theatrical skills and then assessed on what they have learnt through a performance to an examiner. They explore and present two extracts from a text. They may choose to present one monologue and one group piece; there is also an option to be

Exam board: Edexcel

assessed on technical and design skills. Pupils have to develop, apply and practise their skills in acting or design to interpret the playwright's intention, leading them to communicate the extracts in a way that will engage the audience.

Assessment is solely on performance to an audience as part of a showcase, along with the completion of a concept pro forma to describe their research on the text and their artistic intention for the performance or design. It is marked by a visiting examiner.

Example texts are *Adult Child/Dead Child* (Claire Dowie), *Girls Like That* (Evan Placey), and *The Bacchae* (Euripides).

Component 3 - written exam - theatre makers in practice - 40% of GCSE. Exam is 1hr and 45mins

Pupils will learn about the world of theatre and are expected to show their understanding of the processes involved in producing productions.

Students will study one set text during the course, for example *The Government Inspector* by Nikolai Gogol, and then answer questions in the exam, from the perspective of an actor, director or designer, unpicking elements of theatre.

They will also answer questions in response to live theatre about a show which students will have seen during the course. These shows may be at a local theatre or in London.

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

Students should be passionate and bold about performance, and enjoy watching performance as well as taking part themselves. If you are interested in costume or set design, there may be areas you could explore - please discuss this with Miss Stoll.

Organisation skills are important as there's lots of different elements to juggle and deadlines to meet. You will also take part in group work, so you will need to listen to the views of others and work together on your performances.

Geography

Head of Department: Mrs Steele

GCSE Geography studies a varied group of topics that we feel are both challenging and interesting. There is an important fieldwork element to be taught outside the classroom covering two different areas of the specification.

The range of topics we teach provides an exciting balance between human and physical geography and builds on students' previous knowledge.

The skills element of the course is taught through an exam which has an issue-based element as well as questions which test the more familiar skills of map work, data presentation and data analysis through basic statistics.

Students will travel the world from their classroom, exploring case studies in the UK, Higher Income Countries (HICs), Newly Emerging Economies (NEEs) and Lower Income Countries (LICs). Topics of study include a range of physical environments, natural hazards and their management, climate change, poverty, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use.

Each exam paper will have skills questions, and longer questions where students to use conceptual knowledge and specific case studies to evaluate broader geographical ideas.

Paper 1: Living with the Physical Environment 1 hour 30 mins - 85 marks, plus three marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) – 35% of GCSE

There are three sections to this element of the course and exam.

Section A: The challenge of natural hazards

- Tectonic hazards - Earthquakes, volcanoes
- Weather hazards - Tropical storms, extreme weather in the UK, climate change

Section B: The Living World

- Ecosystems
- Tropical rainforests
- Cold environments

Section C: Physical landscapes in the UK

- Coastal landscapes
- River landscapes

Exam board: AQA

*Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment
1 hour 30 mins - 85 marks, plus three SPAG marks – 35% of GCSE*

There are three sections to this element of the course and exam.

Section A: Urban issues and challenges

- Urbanisation and urban development
- Urban change in UK cities
- Urban sustainability

Section B: The changing economic world

- Global variations in quality of life
- The development gap
- Economic futures in the UK

Section C: The challenge of resource management

- Resource management
- Energy

Paper 3: Geographical applications

1 hour 30 mins - 70 marks, plus six SPAG marks – 30% of GCSE

Section A: Issue evaluation

Materials are released 12 weeks prior to the exam. An extended case study is explored in lessons prior to study leave using all skills developed during the course.

Section B: Fieldwork

The skills for this are developed during two field trips. One physical and one human investigation in the local area based on the six stages of enquiry.

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

Students need to be intrigued by the world around us, the physical landscape and the interaction of humans within it. With increasing global populations and pressure on the natural world, the complexities of achieving a balance in the future inspires many of the topics. With a large range of different concepts and topics, pupils will need to recall terms and case studies confidently and be open to developing evaluation and data interpretation skills.

History

Head of Department: Miss John

Those students who take History in Years 10 and 11 follow the Edexcel iGCSE syllabus in History. This is a broad, stimulating course which focuses on major developments in the Twentieth Century.

During the course all pupils study four subject areas, making links between them and building up wide-ranging general knowledge of the last century.

In Year 10, pupils study the early years of the Cold War (1943-1972) and the struggle for Civil Rights in the USA between 1945-1974. Most of this unit examines the African-American campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s but other protest movements such as women, student and anti-Vietnam are also studied.

In Year 11, pupils study the Russian Revolution (1905-24) and the Middle East (1917-2012). The last topic is not studied in many schools but we feel that it is vital for an understanding of current affairs.

Students will gain knowledge and understanding of the key features of these historical periods, and develop the skills they need to analyse and evaluate historical interpretations of events.

As well as learning about interesting events, the course teaches students skills of analysis and communication. By the end of the course you should be able to write with fluency and coherence and you should be able to construct convincing arguments.

These are critical skills for nearly every area of employment. All employers recognise that these are delivered by qualifications in History, whilst competitive universities look favourably on qualifications in the subject.

Exam board: Edexcel (iGCSE)

Exams

There is no coursework for this subject; students will take two written exams in the summer of Year 11.

Paper 1: Depth Studies

*Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes
60 marks - 50% of the GCSE*

This covers the two topics studied in Year 10:

- A world divided: superpower relations, 1943–72
- A divided union: civil rights in the USA, 1945–74

Students answer two questions, one on each of these areas they have studied.

Paper 2: Investigation and Breadth Studies

*Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes
60 marks - 50% of the GCSE*

Students answer two questions. One question will be on their historical investigation - Russia and the Soviet Union, 1905–24. One question will be on their breadth study in change, which is The Middle East: conflict, crisis and change, 1917–2012.

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

Most of the skills needed to succeed at this level have already been introduced to pupils in Years 7 to 9.

However, to truly succeed, students will need to genuinely engage with people in the past and be curious as to how that past has shaped our current world.



Latin and Classical Civilisation

Head of Department: Miss Hutton

LATIN

The course gives students the chance to further develop their linguistic skills which will help both in the study and application of English and other languages. The study of ancient literature and sources helps give learners an insight into the life and culture of the ancient world. It will also highlight the importance of Latin and of ancient literature and civilisation to our understanding of our own modern world of diverse cultures. It encourages students to help develop and apply critical analytical skills which will help them in their future study of not only Latin but any other A Level subjects.

This course follows the OCR J282 specification. Students are required to study a compulsory language component together with two literature components.

In the language component the students will further develop their knowledge of Latin vocabulary and linguistic structures through reading and studying texts and stories in Latin. The students will be able to translate a passage of Latin, answer comprehension questions and answer questions on syntax and accidence within the context of a narrative passage. The books from the Cambridge Latin Course remain the main textbooks together with the department's own resources.

In the literature component the students will develop their knowledge and understanding of ancient literature through the study of set texts. Students will be able to analyse, evaluate and respond to the ancient literature they have studied. The set texts will be either from Oxford Latin Anthology or Cambridge Latin Anthology or The Aeneid.

Exam board: OCR

Exams

Paper 1 - Language

1 hour 30 mins - 100 marks - 50% of GCSE

In this paper, pupils will translate a passage of Latin, answer comprehension questions and either answer questions on syntax and accidence within the context of a narrative passage or translate short English sentences into Latin.

Paper 2 - Prose and Verse Literature

1 hour - 50 marks - 50% of GCSE

Pupils will study Latin set texts and answer questions in English on aspects of content and analyse, evaluate and respond to the ancient literature they have studied. There are two sections to this exam; each is worth 25% of the final grade.

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

High grades are perfectly attainable by those who derive enjoyment from the subject and are prepared to work conscientiously. Latin is altogether an intellectually challenging GCSE academic option.

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

Classical Civilisation follows the OCR GCSE (9-1) J199 specification. This is made up of two components. The first component is a comparative study of 'Myth and Religion' in ancient Greece and Rome which draws on both literary and material sources. This comparison will include the study of topics that are firm favourites with students such as the gods, mythology, heroes and foundation stories. There is usually a visit to the Museum of Classical Archaeology to allow close up study of the art and architecture studied.

The second component, entitled 'Roman City Life', will allow students to become familiar with important archaeological discoveries at the Roman sites of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Ostia and Rome, and it is the intention of the department to offer students the opportunity to experience some of these sites first-hand. This component will also enable students to develop and hone their skills of literary criticism and analysis while studying the ancient literature related to this theme.

All the material in this course is presented in English and there is no requirement for any knowledge of either Greek, Latin or previous study of Classical Civilisation.

Students who choose Classical Civilisation as a GCSE option will engage with material that is as fascinating as it is diverse. Our lessons will span a wide range of disciplines. The subjects we explore include art, economics, history, literature, politics, religion and philosophy to name but a few. Such an interdisciplinary subject develops transferrable and highly desirable skills including literary analysis, source analysis and the ability to write convincing and well-supported arguments; it will enhance any set of GCSE choices.

Exams

Paper 1: Myth and Religion

1 hour 30 mins - 90 marks - 50% of GCSE

This includes study of ancient Greece and Rome. There are three sections to the paper, each worth 30 marks. There will be short answer and extended response questions, and students will need to respond to different sources, including some unseen and some from the course materials.

Paper 2: Roman City Life (Literature and Culture)

1 hour 30 mins - 90 marks - 50% of GCSE

There are two sections to the paper, one focusing on the culture topics and sources, the other on the literature. Each section is worth 45 marks. The question paper will consist of both short answer and extended response questions. For the culture section, learners will be required to respond to sources, some of which will be unseen and some from the prescribed material. Sources for the literature section will be from the prescribed material only.

Music

Head of Department: Mrs Steensma

Music GCSE will appeal to those who enjoy playing instruments or singing, creating their own compositions and studying music in a variety of styles. Performances and compositions may be in a classical or popular idiom. Different styles of music are covered in the listening paper.

There are three elements to the GCSE music exam:

- Performing *24*
- Composition
- Listening and Appraising

There are both coursework and examination elements.

Exams

Paper 1: Performing (30% of the GCSE)

This is coursework which is completed before the final exam. It is internally marked and externally moderated.

- Solo Performance - students will perform one piece.
- Ensemble Performance - students will perform an undoubled part in a small ensemble.

The combined duration of both performances must be a minimum of 4 minutes.

Paper 2: Composing (30% of the GCSE)

This is coursework which is completed before the final exam. It is internally marked and externally moderated.

- One free composition.
- One composition to one of four briefs set by the exam board.

Students will also need to write programme notes to support their composition. The combined duration of both compositions must be a minimum of 4 minutes.

Exam board: Edexcel

Paper 3: Listening and Appraising (40% of the GCSE)

Written exam - 1 hour 45 mins

This exam is based on four areas of study covered during the GCSE course.

You will be required to answer listening based questions about set works and an unfamiliar piece. The paper will also include musical dictation. The extended answer question will place one of the set works in context by asking for comparison with an unfamiliar piece.

The four areas of study are:

- Instrumental Music 1700-1820
- Vocal Music
- Music for Stage and Screen
- Fusions

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

By May of Year 11 all potential GCSE musicians should have reached a standard of performance equivalent to a minimum of Grade 4 of a recognised exam board. Pupils playing at Grade 5 level and above by Year 11 achieve a 'scaled-up' mark, but Grade 4 is the expected standard.

Pupils should be having individual instrumental or singing lessons, in order to prepare for the performance aspect of the exam. We also recommend that all GCSE students attend our music theory club.

There will be elements of the course which require you to spend some time outside lessons preparing performances or compositions. The Music Department provide regular clinics to support the composition element of the exam.

Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE)

Head of Department: Mrs Beasant

Exam board: AQA

This GCSE combines elements of philosophy and the study of ultimate questions with a consideration of religious beliefs, teachings, practices and attitudes to contemporary moral issues.

There are two elements of the course which are tested in written exams at the end of the course:

- Paper 1: Study of Religion: Christianity and Islam
- Paper 2: Thematic Studies: Philosophy of Religion and Religious Ethics

These divide into six sections which cover:

Paper 1 (Year 10)

- Christianity: beliefs, teachings and practice
- Islam: beliefs, teachings and practice

Paper 2 (Year 11)

- Religious attitudes to matters of life and death (medical ethics, environmental ethics)
- Religious attitudes to sex, relationships and the family
- Religious attitudes to human rights and social justice (discrimination, inequality)
- Religious attitudes to crime and punishment including consideration of the death penalty

The key skills developed during the course include: reasoning and articulating ideas clearly, writing well structured responses, assessing strengths and weaknesses of points of view, empathy, the interpretation of abstract concepts and understanding religion by exploring the significance and impact of beliefs on life in contemporary society.

Why take Philosophy, Religion & Ethics?

The course involves pupils in an exploration of questions of faith and philosophy as well as current social, moral, ethical issues to which there are no standard answers.

Pupils are encouraged to consider different perspectives and to develop their own point of view with justification. It is therefore a subject which requires the ability to examine important questions

with an open mind, to determine and weigh up the strengths and weaknesses of the main arguments and to reach a reasoned conclusion.

These key skills are relevant to life as a whole and are particularly valued in the many careers that require an understanding of others and an ability to relate to people of different backgrounds, for example law, medicine, journalism, politics, international relations, and business management.

Exams

Paper 1:

Study of Religion: Christianity and Islam

1 hour 45 mins, 50% of GCSE

Paper 2:

Thematic Studies: Philosophy of Religion and Religious Ethics

1 hour 45 mins, 50% of GCSE

There is **NO** coursework.

Each paper has four sections, and each of these sections has four short answers and one extended answer to complete.

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

Students who do well in this subject will have an enquiring mind and the ability to make a balanced argument. You should have a curiosity to explore the subjects and a willingness to process new material. You will also need a willingness to engage in class discussions.

Thinking Skills (AS Level)

Head of Department: Miss Manson

Thinking Skills is offered as an additional subject in Years 10 and 11. It is taught after school and leads to an AS Level qualification, the exams for which are sat in the summer of Year 11.

It has very little in PSC requirements as most of the content is delivered and practised in lessons. There would be some requirement for additional practise and revision in preparation for the units but this would not be a great demand as it is chiefly a skills based, rather than content based, subject.

Students who are interested in taking this subject will be asked to take an aptitude test in the summer term of Year 9.

Thinking Skills develops a specific set of highly desirable intellectual skills. It is therefore independent of subject knowledge and focuses on developing a person's ability to understand, analyse and resolve problems. This is of great benefit in preparing for further study and potential career choices. Thinking Skills helps students to demonstrate a more mature and sophisticated way of thinking.

Exams

The course is divided into two papers, both of which will be sat at the end of Year 11.

Paper 1 - 'Problem Solving' - 1 hour 30mins, 50% of AS Level

Students will be asked to extract and process data, search for solutions by finding procedures that will help to solve problems.

Students will be asked to interpret numerical and statistical data. They will be asked to draw conclusions from information. No prior knowledge is expected and students do not need to have any qualifications in Maths beyond GCSE level.

The emphasis in this paper is on being able to interpret and analyse information.

Exam board: CIE

Paper 2 - "Critical Thinking" - 1 hour 45mins, 50% of AS Level

This focuses on analytical thinking. Students will analyse arguments, recognising where there is an argument, rather than opinion or explanation.

Students will be able to recognise the importance of reasons in supporting conclusions and will be asked to evaluate their strength. Students will learn to recognise other parts of arguments, such as evidence, counter-assertions, sign-posting language, assumptions and flaws or weaknesses in arguments.

Critical Thinking essentially encourages students firstly to identify an argument, evaluate its strength and then to construct their own arguments.

What will I need to be successful in this subject?

In order to be successful in your application to study Thinking Skills you will need to have an interest in how arguments are constructed and what makes one argument more convincing than another.

You will need to be practised in writing a main argument and a counter-argument and an ability to think logically and analytically about how arguments are constructed and presented.

You will also need to be willing to engage with numerical and statistical data and have an aptitude and interest in working out problems.

Moving on to the Sixth Form



Entry into Ipswich School Sixth Form

In the Michaelmas Term of Year 11, you will be invited to our Sixth Form Information Evening, which will provide information about the Sixth Form options at Ipswich School.

When you are choosing your GCSE options, you may want to consider the following information about Sixth Form entry requirements:

- To enter our Sixth Form and be successful, we like to see grade 7s in the GCSE subjects which you want to take at A Level or in relevant subjects (grade 8s for Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Maths and Computer Science), with at least six grade 6s overall.
- We also know that to be successful in certain A Level subjects which you haven't studied before, you will need to have a solid foundation in a relevant subject at GCSE. For example, A Level Psychology and A Level PE with GCSE Biology, and A Level Economics with GCSE Maths.
- Students may also choose to study for a BTEC Sport and Exercise Science plus one A Level. For this option you would need at least six grade 5s at GCSE overall, along with a grade 7 in a relevant subject for the A Level.



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