



# The Henrietta Barnett School

## GCSE Options Choices 2026-2028



Authenticity - Kindness - Curiosity  
Connection - Endeavour

[www.hbschool.org.uk](http://www.hbschool.org.uk)

# Contents

---

- 3 Introduction
- 5 Core Subjects: English, Mathematics and Science
- 6 English Language and Literature
- 8 Mathematics
- 10 Science (Triple - Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
- 12 Compulsory Humanity : Geography or History or Religious Studies or Classical Civilisation
- 13 Geography
- 15 History
- 17 Religious Studies
- 20 Classical Civilisation
- 22 Language: French or German or Spanish or Latin
- 23 Modern Languages
- 25 Latin
- 27 Creative Subject: Art, Drama, Design & Technology or Music
- 28 Art
- 31 Drama
- 34 Design & Technology
- 36 Music
- 38 Additional Option: Computer Science

# Introduction

---

This booklet is designed to give you, and your parents, information relating to GCSE examination courses. The Key Stage 4 timetable is designed to ensure that you study a broad range of subjects.

Next year some of the subjects which you study will be compulsory, while others can be chosen from a list of options. The compulsory subjects, that lead to 9 GCSEs are:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Science (Triple Certification in Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
- One from French or German or Spanish or Latin
- One from Geography or History or Religious Studies or Classical Civilisation
- One from Art or Design & Technology or Drama or Music

Depending on staffing and numbers we hope to offer, in addition, one further option to be studied to GCSE from the following list, leading to 10 GCSEs in total:

Art	Drama
Classical Civilisation	Geography
Computer Science	History
Design and Technology	Music
French	Spanish
German	
Latin	
Religious Studies	

In summary, the core provides a broad range of GCSEs. In order to ensure that your individual curriculum is a balanced one, we ask you to choose:

- A compulsory humanities subject (Geography, History, Religious Studies or Classical Civilisation)
- A compulsory language (French or German or Spanish or Latin up to a recommended maximum of 2 languages overall)
- A compulsory 'creative' subject (Art, Design & Technology, Drama or Music)
- One other option from the list

PE and PSHE are also taught throughout Key Stage 4, and are non-examination subjects.

Although we shall do our utmost to meet everyone's requirements, it may not be possible to provide all combinations of subjects because of staffing and timetable reasons, but we would then discuss this with you. The school is only able to staff a fixed number of groups, and subjects with very small numbers opting may not be able to run. We ask all students to select a reserve subject which they will be prepared to take should the school not be able to accommodate their higher choices.

Over the coming weeks you will be given guidance from both staff and older students on making subject choices.

The online option form must be completed by no later than **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February**.



The  
Henrietta Barnett  
School

**CORE SUBJECTS:**  
**English, Mathematics and Science**

# English Language and English Literature

---

## Aims of the Course

The course will give you a deeper understanding and appreciation of a range of literature: prose, poetry and drama. You will develop your essay writing skills, so that you can produce accurate and detailed analyses, using the appropriate literary terminology. In addition to reading and writing you will practise and be assessed on your speaking and listening ability.

This demanding course is an excellent preparation for studying literature at A Level. Even those who do not intend to pursue the subject will benefit from the focus on critical and analytical thinking and clarity in speech and writing.

## Course Content

We follow the AQA courses.

Students study two GCSEs: English Language and English Literature. Both of these are entirely assessed by external examinations in Year 11. In our English lessons we foster a collaborative, exploratory atmosphere, encouraging students to participate actively in discussions and to read for pleasure well beyond the syllabus.

### English Literature

Students study: one play by Shakespeare ('Romeo and Juliet'); one nineteenth-century novel ('Jane Eyre' by Charlotte Bronte or 'Frankenstein' by Mary Shelley); a piece of modern prose ('Lord of the Flies' by William Golding); and a Poetry Anthology. They will explore the literary techniques used in these texts, and learn how to apply their analytical skills to unseen poems.

### English Language

Students will learn to engage critically with fiction and non-fiction texts, identifying and exploring the techniques authors use to write effectively. They will also develop their own writing skills, adapting their style to fit different situations and audiences. Their speaking and listening skills will also be assessed, although these will not count towards the main GCSE qualification.

## **Why study the subject**

Students enjoy the variety of different topics and activities as well as the brilliant texts. Strong reading, writing and speaking and listening skills are essential to almost any career you may pursue in the future.

## **Extra Curricular Information**

There is the opportunity for students in KS4 to attend Wednesday lunch time extension sessions. We also attend 'Poetry Live' and arrange theatre visits.

# Mathematics

---

## Aims of the Course

Mathematics is compulsory in Years 7 - 11. During Years 10 and 11 we continue following the National Curriculum programme of study. You will be working mainly from the New GCSE Maths (Edexcel Linear) textbook by B. Speed, K. Gordon etc. and the CGP Homework book that follows the course and has questions all the way up to grade 9. This gives lots of practice in all the different attainment targets. There will be opportunities to revise topics you have already met, consolidate and develop them to a higher level.

## Course Content

Examination Board: Edexcel

We will be studying for the GCSE Linear Maths A Examination (1MA1).

This specification requires students to:

- -Develop knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts including: number, algebra, geometry, measures, statistics, probability.
- -Use their knowledge and understanding to make connections between mathematical concepts.
- -Apply the functional elements of mathematics in everyday and real-life situations.

## Method(s) of Assessment

At the end of Key Stage 4 (end of Year 11) you will sit the GCSE examinations.

The assessment will be by three examinations (2 calculator and 1 non-calculator paper). There is no coursework or mental arithmetic paper. There will be open ended questions in both papers where you will need to apply your knowledge in context.

Paper 1, 2 and 3 worth 33.3% each, will assess all of the content of the course.

We will prepare you for the examinations by studying the theory and practising examination-type questions. We have lots of past paper questions for you to use when you are ready.



## **Why study the subject**

This qualification in Mathematics, encourages students to develop confidence in, and a positive attitude towards, mathematics and to recognise the importance of mathematics in their own lives and to society.

Maths has a considerable number of applications and is a vital asset in many degrees and careers. It trains you to work in the abstract, to think creatively and come up with concrete solutions. It trains you to absorb, condense and logically present a vast amount of information.

## **Extra Curricular Information**

Participation in Intermediate/ Senior Maths Challenge.

# Science (Triple - Biology, Chemistry and Physics)

---

## Aims of the Course

The aims of the Triple Science course are:

- To develop your interest in and enthusiasm for science;
- To develop a critical approach to scientific evidence and methods;
- To acquire and apply skills, knowledge and understanding of how science works and its essential role in society;
- To acquire scientific skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for progression to further learning at A level.

## Course content

You started your GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics courses at the start of Year 9 and they will continue through to the end of Year 11. The courses you are following will build upon the knowledge and skills you acquired during Years 7 and 8.

The specifications for each of the GCSEs can be found and downloaded from the AQA website ([www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)).

AQA GCSE Biology (8461)

AQA GCSE Chemistry (8462)

AQA GCSE Physics (8463)

## Method(s) of assessment

For each science subject there are 2 written examinations (1 hour 45 minutes). There is no controlled assessment. There are a series of required practicals that the pupils will complete in lesson time so that they use specified apparatus and practise particular techniques. The written examinations will include questions that draw on pupils' practical experience.

## Why study the subject

The aim of Triple Science is to develop your ability to understand scientific concepts and apply them to a wide range of situations. There is an ever increasing demand from employers to recruit people who are curious, open-minded and logical.

Through the study of science, we hope you will be able to develop your scientific knowledge, together with a good insight into the contribution that science makes to our society.

The Triple Science course provides an excellent basis for you to continue the study of any of the science subjects at A Level.

### **Extra Curricular Information**

There are clubs that run throughout the year e.g. Physics Society, BioChem Society and Science and Medicine Debating Club, to which KS4 students are most welcome to attend. We currently take a group of students to GCSE Science Live, where students have the chance to see and hear five of Britain's top scientists, all working at the cutting edge of their specialisms. We also take students to the Natural History Museum. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in the Biology and Physics Challenges, which are online national competitions.



The  
Henrietta Barnett  
School

**COMPULSORY HUMANITY:  
Either Geography or History or Religious  
Studies or Classical Civilisation**

# Geography

---

## Aims of the Course

"Geography is the subject which holds the key to our future"  
Michael Palin, President of The Royal Geographical Society

Studying Geography enables you to understand the dynamics of our world. The emphasis of the course is the interaction and spatial relationship between people and places - our environment. Geography helps you to make sense of the world. Geography is not only up-to-date and relevant, it is one of the most exciting, adventurous and valuable subjects to study today. So many of the world's current problems boil down to geography, and need the geographers of the future to help us understand them. The course will give you the chance to get to grips with some of the big questions which affect our world and understand the social, economic and physical forces and processes which shape and change our world.

## Course Content

The department follows the AQA GCSE Course (9-1):

- Natural Hazards - Tectonic Hazards, Weather Hazards and Climate Change
- Ecosystems – Rainforests and Cold Environments
- UK Physical Landscapes - Coastal Landscapes and River Landscapes
- Urban Issues and Challenges
- The Changing Economic World
- The Challenge of Resource Management – Food, Water and Energy

These topics have a range of themes, and offer a good balance between human and physical geography, and you will explore how the physical affects the human world and vice versa. The course looks at different spatial scales (small, local, regional, national, international and global) in different parts of the world and in different types of environment.

## Method(s) of Assessment

The course is examined by exam only at the end of Year 11. There are three papers that you will sit, 2 of which last 1hr 30mins and another which lasts 1hr 15mins. There is no Controlled Assessment or coursework.

We will go on a 3 day fieldwork trip to Suffolk and you will later be examined on the techniques that you have learnt.

During the course there will be regular internal assessments to assess progress.

### **Why study the subject**

Geography gives you an informed view about the factors and dynamics of local, regional and global change. As you study, you will develop the following skills: analysis, discussion, problem solving, evaluation and interpretation of maps and data. So it prepares you for adult life and employment. Geography is the focus within the curriculum for understanding and resolving issues around the environment and sustainable development. As you study Geography, you encounter different societies and cultures, and realise how nations rely on each other. It makes you think about your own place in the world, your values and your rights and responsibilities to other people and the environment. Additionally, past students see it as a 'good subject' because it bridges the Sciences and the Humanities. Thus, in the short term, the geographer's skills will be useful in all aspects of your studies at HBS. However, beyond HBS, a geographer's broader global view, analytical experience and skills are the very qualities that are highly prized by employers.

This course is ideal for any students that have an enthusiasm for understanding the complicated issues of the world around them.

### **Extra-Curricular Information**

The Geography Society is a growing and increasingly enthusiastic group organised by 6<sup>th</sup> Formers. The Geography Society meets regularly and is open to all students. We have a good programme of external speakers who enrich the work undertaken in lessons. There is a Twitter feed for students to keep up-to-date with the latest geographical issues and to advertise activities of the Geography Society.

# History

---

## Aims of the Course

History at GCSE level allows you the opportunity to engage in a challenging and exciting study of the past. The course ranges widely: you will have the opportunity to study British, European and world history; and there is the chance to reflect not just on politics but also culture, ideology, economics and religion. The course challenges you to engage with the complexity of the past. You will analyse events, test explanations and attempt to gain a deep understanding of the ideas of key figures. As you engage in these activities, you will experience the excitement of rigorous historical study.

Studying History at GCSE level will allow you to develop a wide range of abilities. You will become an expert at expressing an argument, both orally and in writing. There will be the chance to develop sophisticated approaches for evaluating the ideas of others. Above all, in the work you do you will be challenged to think deeply and so acquire critical thinking skills.

## Course Content

The department follows the AQA History course. This course allows you to explore a broad range of history. You will study:

- i) Russia, 1894-1951. Beginning with the autocratic rule of Tsar Nicholas II, this unit then explores the transformation of Russia as a result of the 1917 revolution and allows a deep study of the impact of Lenin and Stalin. It enables you to develop a detailed understanding of the effects of Communist government in Russia.
- ii) International relations, 1945-1972. This unit examines international relations in the years of the Cold War. It is a truly international unit, exploring the impact of rivalry between the superpowers in Europe and Asia. It provides an excellent overview of international relations in the post-war years but also allows for detailed study of particular events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- iii) 'Power and People in England, c1170 to the present day'. This thematic study is an exciting feature of the GCSE course. It will allow you to gain a sense of a much longer period of history, and to see change over time. How and why people have challenged authority in Britain all the way through history.

iv) Elizabeth, 1568-1603. Focusing on critical years of Elizabeth's reign, this course combines the artistic developments such as the emergence of Elizabethan theatre and music, with the wider religious challenges and threats of invasion from overseas.

### **Method(s) of Assessment**

The course is assessed by examination at the end of Year 11.

### **Why study the subject**

The course is an extremely exciting and wide-ranging one and allows you the opportunity to enjoy the study of History for its own sake. You will be able to explore key periods of World History, examine connections between past and present and be challenged by the values and actions of the historical individuals you study.

The course is an excellent preparation for future historical study. However, it also develops abilities which are important in pursuing any subject at KS5 and beyond. Studying GCSE History will develop your ability to write well, to debate and to analyse. These are critical skills needed in all the academic work you will undertake in the future. Furthermore, the forensic study of evidence and formulation of well structured, persuasive argument are both hugely sought after in many careers, particularly Law. The recent developments in AI have also seen recruiters demand more critically aware, questioning employees. History is arguably the subject best placed to offer the skills required for these emerging changes to the workplace.



# Religious Studies

---

## Aims of the Course

To study relevant, current and interesting moral and ethical issues from 4 themes.

To explore the beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam.

To increase our knowledge and understanding of the ways in which approaches to moral issues have been adapted and developed over time and increase our understanding of what it means to follow a faith tradition.

To study the ways in which religious and non-religious beliefs may affect the ways human beings approach questions about morality.

To develop important skills including debating and discussion, essay writing, research and presentation, and interpreting various reading materials and other forms of media.

## Course Content

AQA Specification A Components 1A and 2A.

In component 1A students will closely examine Christianity and Islam. These two faiths have been carefully selected for the following reasons: Christianity is a required component of the specification and therefore it is beneficial to learn about it in greater depth; Islam is one of Britain's other widely practiced faiths and both compliments and compares itself well alongside Christianity. Therefore, the two faiths allow for a depth of knowledge of key concepts while still creating great debate through their differences. They will learn about what it means to follow that faith and how it impacts on daily life.

In component 2A students will study 4 out of 6 possible themes dealing with a wide range of ethical issues covering such topics as abortion, euthanasia, afterlife, capital punishment, relationships, the ethics of war and weapons of mass destruction, different forms of discrimination, human rights and animal rights.

## **Method of Assessment**

Students take two written examinations, one on each unit. Each examination lasts 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Component 1A: Students answer 2 questions, one on Christianity and one on Islam.

Component 2A: Students answer 4 questions from the six philosophical and ethical studies themes on offer.

## **Why study the subject?**

Religious Studies is an excellent academic subject to choose for GCSE as it provides a link with a number of other subjects, for example Science, as we look at Medical Ethics; Geography as we study issues such as the impact of war on the environment; Law as we discuss how we should punish and reform people; and Philosophy as we try to assess the ways we as humans behave, and why we make particular decisions. If you are considering careers in areas such as Medicine, Journalism, Teaching or The Law, engaging with the topics we are examining as well as gaining an understanding of how religious belief affects how people behave, will be a useful addition to your specific subject knowledge.

Students who take the GCSE often say that they enjoy the fun element of the lessons. We will have plenty of opportunity to discuss and debate, question and explore our ideas, listen to outside speakers and share our knowledge in a variety of different ways. Learning can include group work, reading of articles, playing educational games, essay writing, peer marking, note taking, presentations and quizzes. Film and documentary is also one of the ways we explore some of the issues we study and during the course of the GCSE students will see films such as Blood Diamond, Hotel Rwanda, Dead Man Walking, Malala, East is East, 4 Weddings & a Funeral, and many more.

The RS Classroom is a space for students to explore essential issues that will affect all of us and to build skills and relationships that will support them through and beyond their education.

## **Extra Curricular Information**

Outside speakers are an important feature of the course and we are very privileged to have some high profile speakers coming in to talk about subjects such as assisted suicide, forgiveness, animal rights and abortion.

There are trips, including visiting places of worship and museums.

# Classical Civilisation

---

## Aims of the Course

The aim of studying Classical Civilisation is to give you an insight into the way the ancient Greeks and Romans lived and thought. You will learn about Greek and Roman mythology, daily life, religion, history, philosophy, archaeology and literature. The course will enable you to step into the shoes of ancient Athenians and Romans and understand how they viewed the world.

## Course Content

The course, examined by OCR, is made up of two modules.

**Myth and Religion:** This is an in-depth study of Greek and Roman gods, heroes, and religious worship. Students learn about a wide range of myths from both cultures, including foundational myths of Athens and Rome, and the cycle of myths to do with Heracles/Hercules. We use ancient literary and visual sources to learn about religious festivals, temples and their architectural sculpture, and Greek and Roman understanding of the Underworld.

**The Homeric World:** In this module, students focus on Homer's epic poem, the *Odyssey*. There is a particular focus on the character of Odysseus and his adventures, and students learn about the significance of these epic poems in Greek culture and beyond. We also consider the archaeological evidence from the Bronze Age to help us understand the culture and society that Homer described, studying the archaeological sites of Mycenae and Tiryns and the material remains which were excavated there.

## Method(s) of Assessment

Both modules are examined by written papers, each worth 50% of the GCSE.

## Why study the subject

Studying Classical Civilisation enables you to gain an insight into two endlessly fascinating cultures. It is rare to find a course which is so wide-ranging and includes elements of many disciplines such as literature, mythology, history, religion and

and philosophy. Similarly, it is very stimulating to be able to analyse such a diverse range of surviving ancient sources, such as epic poetry, Roman letters and Greek tragedy, as well as archaeological remains. Lessons often consist of debate and discussion, and there is a lot of scope for expressing your own personal response to the material. On the course you will be encouraged to think analytically, be critical, and express yourself articulately both verbally and in written work.

There is no language element to this course: all texts are studied in translation. However, for those who also have an interest in ancient languages, Classical Civilisation GCSE would work well alongside Latin or Greek GCSE.

### **Extra Curricular Information**

Year 10 students will visit the British Museum to see the sculptures of the Parthenon Temple and other relevant artefacts. There are also theatre trips to see Greek or Roman plays whenever they are staged in London. Each week the sixth-form prefects run Classics Society, which regularly hosts university lecturers and alumnae, speaking on a range of classical topics, from archaeology and ancient history to literary analysis and linguistics. Students of GCSE Classical Civilisation are also invited to give talks of their own at the society, as well as to submit articles for the school classics magazine, Quercus. Every two years there will be a Classics trip to Greece, or the Bay of Naples, or Sicily, giving students opportunities to see Greco-Roman temples and artefacts first-hand.



The  
Henrietta Barnett  
School

**LANGUAGE:**  
**French or German or Spanish or Latin**

# Modern Languages

---

## Aims of the courses

Broaden your horizons and gain confidence: You only have to watch a televised news report from one of many foreign countries to hear normal people in the street talking to our reporters in good English. With your European counterparts often boasting these additional language skills, if you can speak and understand a European language, you will be welcomed with open arms by residents of the country in question.

By the end of the course you will be very confident in many aspects of grammar, and be in a position to express yourself far more fluently when writing and speaking. Our main aim above all examinations and tests is enjoyment and love of learning to communicate in a modern language.

## Course content

The modern AQA GCSE syllabus has no coursework, and includes elements very suited to students such as you; these include reactions in English to authentic extracts from literature, as well as short translation exercises such as those you already do in lessons. Throughout Years 10 and 11, you will build on the topic work you have already done, be introduced to new areas, and will reach a higher level of expression beyond GCSE. Similar teaching approaches as those you have experienced in Key Stage 3 will be used, with the emphasis on oral communication, pair and group work in the foreign language, and grammatical accuracy. We will also continue the use of foreign language cinema and History in our lessons, and add other authentic cultural aspects such as music, literature and art. Smaller group sizes mean you will become far more confident contributing with increased fluency and range of expression. Enjoyment and cultural depth are our main aims, and we take you beyond GCSE level!

## Methods of Assessment

The four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing will be assessed by final examination in May of Year 11, so no controlled coursework is involved. There is a Listening paper which includes 5 dictation sentences (something we do a lot of at HBS), a Reading paper (comprehension and short translation sentences into English),

a Writing paper (essays and short translation sentences into French, German or Spanish), and finally a 10 minute speaking test much like those you have experienced in Key Stage 3. All the prompts in the papers are in English.

### **Why study languages?**

There are numerous career advantages as a result of language study, which will open up opportunities not available to monolingual English speakers; languages are increasingly very well-regarded in the workplace. The benefits go far beyond the world of work, however. Languages show you have an analytical and disciplined mind, and give you the chance to discover different cultures, peoples and customs. You are able to gain a far deeper understanding of them than is ever possible without knowledge of the language. Travelling and cultural pursuits are made more rewarding, fun and so much more fulfilling than if you speak only English. Most of all, being able to communicate on any level with somebody from a different culture in his or her language is both invaluable and enjoyable.

### **Extra Curricular Information**

The department has a programme of very worthwhile and enjoyable Year 10 foreign residential trips. Each year we organise exchanges with similar schools in Paris and Munich, as well as a Spanish trip to Seville. You will be able to opt for one of these at the end of Year 9.

We also run a variety of extra-curricular French, German and Spanish clubs open to all in Key Stages 4 and 5. New clubs run each year, so do look out for them.



## Aims of the Course

In studying Latin at GCSE level, we learn how to translate Latin passages of increasing linguistic sophistication. You will build on your knowledge of Latin vocabulary and grammar acquired at KS3 and develop a fluency in reading complex passages. The course teaches you to be analytical, logical and solve problems. As your linguistic competence grows, you will be able to identify links between English and Latin, and see how other modern foreign languages are related to Latin. In this way, by studying this ancient language in depth, you will gain a greater insight into the way languages work generally, into Romance languages specifically, and indeed into the English language itself.

From a historical perspective, another aim of the course is for you to develop an understanding of Roman culture. From our reading of the Cambridge Latin Course, we encounter a diverse range of topics, including Roman philosophy, history, and daily life.

Finally, a true highlight of the course is the literature component. We read literature written 2000 years ago by some hugely influential authors. The ability to read works by authors such as the poet Virgil and the historian Tacitus in the original language is not only very impressive but a real privilege. Studying Roman literature in its original Latin is challenging, thought-provoking and enormously rewarding.

## Course Content

In Year 10 we continue with Book IV of the Cambridge Latin Course. You will follow the story of Quintus, Cogidubnus and Salvius from Roman Britain to Rome itself. Will Salvius get his comeuppance? You will find out! Along the way we will learn about diverse aspects of Roman life by looking at topics such as Roman baths, religion, and the army, as well as the city of Rome, the philosophical school of Stoicism, and the Jewish Revolt.

By the end of Year 10 you will have developed a secure understanding of grammar and vocabulary, so that you are able to read complex passages of Latin with real fluency. In Year 11 one lesson is devoted to language, and one to literature. In our literature lessons we will study one prose text and one verse text, and discuss and interpret them as you would in an English literature lesson.

## **Method(s) of Assessment**

The GCSE examination (OCR) takes place at the end of Year 11. There are three modules: a language module, and two literature modules (one prose, one verse). The language paper is worth 50% of the total GCSE, and each literature module is worth 25%.

## **Why study the subject**

You should study Latin if you have an interest in languages, literature and the ancient world. If you want to be challenged intellectually, have interesting discussions, and solve problems, this course is for you. The rigorous and stimulating nature of Latin GCSE is a superb foundation for any A level subjects you would wish to undertake, and it is also an impressive qualification which is well-regarded by universities and employers.

## **Extra Curricular Information**

Year 10 students will visit the British Museum to see the sculptures of the Parthenon Temple and other relevant artefacts. There are also theatre trips to see Greek or Roman plays whenever they are staged in London. Each week the sixth-form prefects run Classics Society, which regularly hosts university lecturers and alumnae, speaking on a range of classical topics, from archaeology and ancient history to literary analysis and linguistics. Students of GCSE Classical Civilisation are also invited to give talks of their own at the society, as well as to submit articles for the school classics magazine, Quercus. Every two years there will be a Classics trip to Greece, or the Bay of Naples, or Sicily, giving students opportunities to see Greco-Roman temples and artefacts first-hand.



The  
Henrietta Barnett  
School

## **CREATIVE SUBJECT:**

**Art, Drama, Design & Technology or Music**

## **Aims of the Course**

We aim to promote creative problem solving and independent learning. Students develop their critical and reflective understanding as well as a wide range of practical skills; from manipulation of photos using Photoshop to making a mould of a face using alginate.

We aim to facilitate and develop your working knowledge of materials, practices and technology of art and design. You will develop the skills to investigate, analyse and experiment using art, craft and design. You will develop your imaginative powers and the skills to express your ideas, feelings and meanings. You will also develop an understanding of the language and conventions of art and design and an understanding of the place of art, craft and design in history and in society.

The specific skills you will develop will vary depending on the area of study you choose – for example graphic design, photography, film, textiles or fine art. However, whether you see yourself as an; architect, painter, fashion designer, filmmaker, illustrator, graphic designer or sculptor, the same basic rules and skills of art, craft and design apply.

## **Course Content**

We follow the AQA course.

The GCSE in Art & Design contains two Units – Unit 1 is Coursework, the Full GCSE Course requires you to complete two units of coursework for submission. Each coursework piece will comprise of a sketchbook or portfolio, which should reflect your experimentation with different media, ideas and a variety of responses to different artists and/or designers leading up to your final outcome(s).

Unit 2 is the Externally Set Assignment. You will be given between 8-12 weeks to prepare ideas for the 10 hour timed test.

As the course develops you will discover your strengths and weaknesses and you will be supported in your effort to build on your strengths and improve those areas, which need more work.

## **Method(s) of Assessment**

Your best examples for each of the assessment criteria are submitted at the end of the course. Sketchbook or portfolio sheets will be assessed as a project develops with written and verbal feedback. Throughout the two years you will be encouraged to develop your critical awareness through analysis and debate.

### **Unit 1 Coursework:**

You will have a series of workshop projects to develop a variety of skills in year 10. As the GCSE years continue you will develop more personal and independent projects. Your best two projects will be submitted towards your final coursework examination mark, which is 60% of your total GCSE grade.

### **Unit 2 External examination:**

In year 11 you will receive your examination topic from AQA in January. After 8- 12 weeks of preparatory work in sketchbooks you will sit a final 10-hour examination, which will be moderated internally. You will be expected to submit preparatory work in the form of a completed sketchbook or portfolio sheets and larger studies or 3D ideas to support the work completed in the timed examination. AQA then chooses a selection of work for exhibition and external moderation in the Art department.

## **Why study the subject**

The skills you will develop doing GCSE Art are varied. Among them you will learn how to think creatively and independently, exercise your problem-solving abilities and fine-tune skills such as hand-eye coordination and communication. You will develop, a working knowledge of materials, practices and technology of Art and Design. You develop the skills to investigate, analyse and research your responses, interest and ideas about the world and your conceptual thinking will be honed to a high standard.

## **Extra-Curricular Information**

You will be expected to visit galleries in your own time and record your responses in a gallery sketchbook. The Art department takes you at least one art gallery trip or art fair trip a year and you are encouraged to partake in our yearly foreign art trip, which is an ideal opportunity to experience first-hand a wide range of different artists,

designers, architects to support ideas for your final examination project. Trips in recent years have included: Paris, Barcelona and Venice.

From the start of the course, you will also be given the opportunity to participate in weekly life drawing classes at school to support observational-drawing techniques in different media. In year 11 you will be offered a weekly after school art focus to get one to one advice and support from your teachers.

# Drama

---

## Aims of the Course

- To encourage exploration and active engagement in a wide range of creative and stimulating activities
- To promote independent learning and critical, reflective enquiry
- To develop a range of practical, creative and performance skills
- To facilitate imaginative and contemporary work in a collaborative context

## Course Content

The AQA GCSE Drama course (8261) offers students the opportunity to explore drama as a practical art form in which ideas and meaning are communicated to an audience through choices of form, style and convention. Students will be introduced to key practitioners, theoretical influences and influential playwrights whilst developing and building their core practical performance skills. The subject content for GCSE Drama is divided into three components:

1. Understanding drama (written examination)
2. Devising drama (practical and coursework portfolio)
3. Texts in practice (practical)

In the practical components students may specialise in performing, lighting, sound, set or costume. Whilst there is a fundamental emphasis on the practical element in this course, the building up of a lively portfolio is also a central part of the course. GCSE Drama allows all students to pursue the course in a way consistent with their preferred creative style.

## Method(s) of Assessment

### Component 1: Written Exam (40%)

Component 1 consists of the written paper – an open book exam of 1¾ hours

Section A: multiple choice questions on knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre (4 marks)

Section B: four questions on a given extract from the set play (chosen from a choice of six) (46 marks)

Section C: one two part question (from a choice) on the work of theatre makers in a single live theatre production (30 marks)

### **Components 2 & 3: Practical Performance Work (60%)**

Component 2 (40%) consists of creating and performing devised drama (students may choose to contribute as performer or designer). Students will analyse and evaluate their own work with the creation and development of a coursework portfolio (devising log).

Component 3 (20%) consists of a performance of two extracts from a play (this text must be a contrast to the play examined in the written exam). Students may choose both the text and also may contribute as performer or designer.

### **Why study the subject**

Drama offers students the opportunity to explore a range of creative and critical thinking skills. They are encouraged to become imaginative and confident performers and designers. The subject enables students to develop key skills applicable to a variety of careers as they learn to present themselves in public with confidence. They also learn to collaborate, communicate and negotiate with others, to think analytically and evaluate effectively. Whatever the future holds, a GCSE Drama student will emerge with a toolkit of transferable skills invaluable for study at University and in the workplace. Drama students have gone on to pursue careers in Medicine, Law, Politics, Media, Events Management, Teaching, as well as in the Entertainment Industry and in the Performing Arts. Ex-HBS students are currently performing professionally in the West End and on television and others are learning their trade working with prestigious companies such as the Cambridge Footlights.

### **Extra Curricular Information**

Students taking GCSE Drama have the opportunity to take part in a range of exciting theatre visits. In recent years, students have also enjoyed excellent practical workshops at the National Theatre, with Frantic Assembly (Movement Directors on the West End's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*) and partnership projects with local schools. Performance Evenings enable the girls to showcase their work to a wider audience and GCSE students are encouraged to develop their leadership skills via the LAMDA Youth Leadership Scheme and Assistant Directors Programme.



The department supports students preparing for National Youth Theatre auditions and a number of recent GCSE Drama graduates have been successful in winning places. GCSE Drama students often audition for roles in School Productions. Recent productions have included Daisy Pulls It Off, Guys and Dolls, Cabaret, Oh What A Lovely War, Our Country's Good, Broadway and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

# Design & Technology

---

## Aims of the Course

Design and Technology helps prepare young people for an increasingly technological world. It is an inspiring, rigorous and practical subject where students are encouraged to develop their creative and technical skills in order to solve real-world problems.

You will extend your design and practical ability using a wide range of modern and emerging processes and materials. You will also be given the opportunity to develop your creative problem solving skills in order to develop design and product work that is innovative, engaging, interactive, unique and commercially viable. While building on the skills and knowledge developed in KS3, we explore wider issues of design in our society. We look at how products are designed and made commercially and consider their human and environmental impact. Your Year 11 Controlled Assessment piece can cover any area of Design and Technology so you can tailor the task to your individual area of interest.

## Course Content

In Year 10, you develop your understanding and ability through a number of short tasks and projects, focusing on various aspects of the curriculum, including robotics (mechanical and programming), designing, 3D CAD work, making, product analysis and environmental impact. Knowledge of the subject and how to apply this knowledge is steadily built up over the year. You will learn about modern materials, manufacture in quantity and the use of computers. Extensive use is made of IT for both designing and manufacture, including production methods involving CAD/CAM technologies such as the laser cutter and 3D printer. You will be able to develop your workshop skills and quality of outcomes through various practical workshop and CAD / CAM projects.

In the third term, you start to explore ideas for your main project that is the controlled assessment task, making your choice of topic from the range offered by the exam board. There is ample scope for personal interpretation and development based on your own experience and interests.

In Year 11, you focus on completing your major design and make task. We also spend time on preparation for the written examination.

## **Method(s) of Assessment**

At HBS we follow the Eduqas GCSE Design and Technology course.

Unit 1 written exam: Design and Technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 50% of qualification  
A mixture of short and long answer questions assessing knowledge and understanding of course content.

Unit 2 coursework: Design and Make non-exam assessment 50% of qualification  
A sustained design and make task that allows students to explore a range of design solutions to their chosen context.

## **Why study the subject**

You will have opportunities to design and make products that are of personal interest and you will be encouraged to think both creatively and methodically, developing a range of problem solving and project management skills. You will also gain a greater understanding of the world we live in. This will be valuable for students interested in design or practical work or who are interested in further study in the fields of design, engineering, architecture, etc. It will also help develop useful and transferable skills to support work in a range of other subjects and future careers.

## **Extra Curricular Information**

Early in the course, we encourage a visit the Design Museum. We also encourage visits to other interesting shows like New Designers and Tent, as well as any relevant exhibitions that occur e.g. Victoria and Albert Museum. The extra-curricular robotics club is also offered to Design & Technology students where there is an opportunity to take part in regional competitions (and beyond to national and international competitions should teams qualify).

There will also be an opportunity to take part in a residential trip so that you can explore design and creative problem solving in a real-world context.

# Music

---

## Aims of the Course

To develop further your passion as performers, as creative musicians and as interested and knowledgeable listeners.

## Course Content

Exam board: Edexcel.

## Performing

Your final submission will comprise 1 solo performance and 1 ensemble performance. The repertoire for this part of the course is entirely your choice, and any style / tradition is welcomed e.g. Western classical, pop, Carnatic etc.

## Composing

Your final submission will consist of 2 compositions, one is a completely free choice and the second is chosen from a range of briefs set by Edexcel. Preliminary work will develop compositional techniques, and you will have a chance to 'try your hand' with fragments of different ways of composing before embarking on 'the real thing'. Your submission will comprise, for each one, a score of some sort (could be notation or can be a graphic style score, or a Logic screen shot) and a recording of some sort (live or computer generated). One of the really exciting aspects of GCSE composition is hearing your own pieces performed live, so we endeavour to build this into the course where possible.

Previous GCSE compositions have included popular songs, string quartets, experimental/technology-based pieces.

## Set works

You will have a series of 8 set works in 4 Areas of Study: Instrumental Music 1700-1820; Vocal Music; Music for Stage and Screen; Fusions. Works included by Purcell, Bach, Beethoven, Stephen Schwartz, John Williams, Queen, Esperanza Spalding, Afro Celt Sound System. You will study the score and/or the recordings of these

closely in class, looking at how composers have put their music together. You will also compare the set works with other similar pieces. All of this will, of course, be an invaluable input into your own composing work!

## **Method(s) of Assessment**

### **Performing**

You will record, and have feedback and marks for several performances, solo and in small ensembles, throughout the 2 years. These are internally marked (ie by your Music teachers) and externally moderated. At the end you will submit your best solo and your best ensemble from Yr 11 only to count towards your GCSE.

### **Composing**

This is internally marked and externally moderated. Once coursework is underway you will receive detailed feedback and advice on how to move forward and improve your work. Usually students complete at least one piece in year 10 and then another in the Autumn term of year 11.

### **Set works**

An examination at the end of the course where you listen to extracts of music and respond to a series of short questions and one longer question (short essay).

### **Why study the subject**

You should study Music if you are passionate about music and are interested in developing the breadth of your musical skills and knowledge in a way that only GCSE can offer you. The course is designed to allow for many different levels of experience.

### **Extra Curricular Information**

GCSE students are expected to (and do, of course) make an enormous contribution to the HBS ensembles and extra-curricular programme. In addition, every year there are various trips for GCSE students, to concerts, workshops and as performers in the community.



The  
Henrietta Barnett  
School

## **ADDITIONAL OPTION: Computer Science**

# Computer Science

---

## Aims of the Course

GCSE Computer Science has many familiar aspects in Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, DTE and Languages as well as the Creative Arts. You develop your skills to solve problems (like Maths), in the contexts of programming a project and answering exam questions. There is a diverse variety of interesting theory to understand and apply to written paper exam questions (like any of the Sciences). When it comes to learning a new language you need to regularly apply yourself to learning it (like with Languages) which you do for programming. This is so you can develop the fluency to create interesting and varied programming projects. You then use an iterative design process (as you would in DTE) to look over programs, debug and rework them to make them more efficient. GCSE Computer Science can furthermore be an intensely creative subject that involves an imaginative perspective (like Creative Arts). Programming often involves digital storytelling to build the structure of your programs as well as problem solving for students to think critically. These skills can be highly valued and sought after in many professions and high-level universities.

The course follows the AQA GCSE Computer Science (8525) specification. The theory not only helps students understand computers and networks, but also aims to look into the wider impact technology has on our lives. This embraces the cultural, political, ethical and environmental side of computing including looking through recent developments in A.I.. The practical side encourages students to become problem solvers and develop those skills in computer programming. Students do not need previous programming or computing experience to take this GCSE. You will learn to program with Python, which is something students have already experienced in year 9. Python is a language that is used for software on numerous smart-phones, tablets and PCs and many big computing companies.

Over the two years, students are given a Cornell Note book and videos, specially made for each sub-topic of the course. They will then be able to study these topics in lessons and relate the knowledge learned, to go through answering exam style questions and how to get top marks. In year 11, students will also be given their own online interactive accounts via Smart Revise, an online course companion for AQA GCSE Computer Science. It can help raise student attainment, through continual practice, going through multiple-choice and longer answer exam questions, crafted by experienced teachers and examiners.

Studying Computer Science gives you a deeper understanding of topics you have already studied in year 9 as well as introducing you to a few new ones. The GCSE Computer Science curriculum intends to give all students the knowledge and skills needed in an ever-growing computing world.

## **Course Content**

Throughout the two-year course, students will work on eight modules, exploring the different fields related to computer science theory and practical programming. The full list includes:

Unit 1 - Algorithms

Unit 2 - Programming

Unit 3 - Data representation

Unit 4 - Computer systems

Unit 5 - Computer networks

Unit 6 - Cyber security

Unit 7 - Databases and structured query language (SQL)

Unit 8 - Ethical, legal and environmental impacts of technology

The main practical programming language taught at GCSE Computer Science will be Python, but students will also learn SQL in unit 7. More information regarding the content of the AQA GCSE course can be found on their official website- <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/computer-science-and-it/gcse/computer-science-8525/specification-at-a-glance>

## **Method(s) of Assessment**

The AQA GCSE Computer Science qualification (8525) is based on two written assessments, both done on paper, at the end of the course in year 11:

- Exam 1 – Computational thinking and problem solving
  - 50% of GCSE qualification - [2 hours] [90 marks]
  - The topics examined in this assessment will be from:
    - Unit 1 - Algorithms
    - Unit 2 - Programming
  - The questions will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer and long answer questions assessing python programming and problem solving skills.



- Exam 2 – Computing Concepts
  - 50% of GCSE qualification - [1 hour 45 minutes] [90 marks]
  - The topics examined in this assessment will be from:
    - Unit 3 - Data representation
    - Unit 4 - Computer systems
    - Unit 5 - Computer networks
    - Unit 6 - Cyber security
    - Unit 7 - Databases and structured query language (SQL)
    - Unit 8 - Ethical, legal and environmental impacts of technology
  - A mix of multiple choice, short answer, longer answer and extended essay style response questions assessing academic knowledge and SQL programming.

## Why study the subject

GCSE Computer Science can lead to a range of careers in computer hardware and software engineering, programming, cyber security, forensics etc. Computer Science can also lead to fields that are more creative. The links below from BBC Teach show how these fields can relate:

- Coding and fashion - <http://tinyurl.com/bbcfashioncode>
- Coding and digital art - <http://tinyurl.com/bbcartcode>
- Coding and music - <http://tinyurl.com/bbcmusiccode>
- Coding and game design - <http://tinyurl.com/bbcgamecode>

## Extra-Curricular Information

Students, who take the course, will take part in both national and international competitions. The competitions also link to the computer science curriculum. These include the Bebras Computing Challenge, the Oxford University Computing Challenge and the European Coding Challenge. GCSE Computer Science students at HBS had recent success placing first place in the European Coding Competition 2022 from over 700 schools in over 20 countries. GCSE Computer Science students also came first, second and third place in the British Computer Society competition in 2023.

There will be opportunities to win certificates, computer science prizes, and prize money for those that come top of the competition. This year, year 10 students participated in the BIMA Digital Day, where they met with industry professionals

giving a unique insight into digital careers. They also had to come up with a digital project, in teams, where students had the opportunity to win £500.

Year 11 students this year, went on a trip to the BETT show, the World's biggest EdTech event which was free for students, meeting industry professionals from the likes of Google and Microsoft.

Finally, students are also provided with the opportunity to take part in free residential courses in the summer that link into the network and cybersecurity module. These are led by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), a part of GCHQ and are usually run at local universities.



The  
Henrietta Barnett  
School