

Parkside Community School

Options

2026 - 2028



Choosing the right path

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Welcome

Dear student,

Moving into Key Stage 4 is an exciting and important moment in your school journey. Over the next two years, you will begin to specialise in subjects that interest you, develop new skills, and lay strong foundations for your future education and career. This term marks the start of the options process, where you will explore the subjects available to you and make informed decisions about your KS4 pathway.

To support you, we have planned a full programme of guidance, including year group assemblies, an Options Evening for students and families, and individual interviews with members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). These opportunities will help you understand each subject in more depth and consider which route best suits your strengths, ambitions and learning style.

Some subjects are compulsory for all students, forming the core of your KS4 curriculum. Alongside these, you will be able to select from a range of subjects, designed to broaden your learning and keep future opportunities open. In addition, you will have the chance to choose from both academic pathways and vocational pathways, allowing you to personalise your timetable in a way that supports your goals—whether you are preparing for A-Levels at Post-16, an apprenticeship or college course.

We will work hard to make sure everyone gets the choices they have made, but running any course does depend on having sufficient numbers of students interested and your choices fitting our timetable.

We encourage you to take the time to reflect, ask questions, and use all the support available. Your KS4 choices are an exciting step forward, and we look forward to helping you make decisions that inspire and motivate you for the years ahead.

Mrs L Asher
Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum, Teaching and Achievement)

Terminology

Core	These are the compulsory subjects: English, Maths, Science, Statistics, PE and PD.
Level 1	GCSE grades 3-1 or equivalent, Level 1 pass to Level 1 distinction.
Level 2	GCSE grades 9-4 or equivalent. With grades 5+ being classed as strong pass grades or a Level 2 merit and above.
Level 3	'A' Level Grade A*-E or equivalent.
GCSE	A course graded 9-1. These are assessed mainly or solely by examination. (See individual subject guides for further information)
BTEC Technical Award / EDUQAS Vocational	These are vocational qualifications that are equal to a GCSE. They are graded Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction*. They focus on practical skills and real-world learning, and usually involve more coursework or portfolio work, with some assessment by exam. They are designed to help students develop applied knowledge linked to the world of work.
Facilitating Subjects	Facilitating subjects are those that keep the widest range of future pathways open. They are highly valued by colleges, universities and employers because they develop strong academic skills and provide a solid foundation for further study. These subjects include Maths, English, Sciences, Geography, History and Modern Foreign Languages. Choosing one or more of these subjects can give you greater flexibility when deciding your next steps after KS4.
Ebacc or English Baccalaureate	To complete the full Ebacc, students must take GCSEs in Maths, English, Science, History or Geography, and a Modern Foreign Language. This combination of subjects is recognised for keeping future study and career options open.



Qualifications

English Baccalaureate (Ebacc)

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is not a qualification in itself. It is a particular group of GCSE subjects usually looked on favourably by universities.

The EBacc recognises the success of those young people who attain GCSEs at grades 9-4 across a core of academic subjects - English, Mathematics, Geography or History, the Sciences and a Language. To fulfil the EBacc, you would need 9-4 in English, Mathematics, two Sciences, a Humanities subject and a Language. To achieve the Science element of EBacc, you need to be examined in either Combined Science or three of the Separate Sciences: Biology, Chemistry and Physics and achieve 9-4 in two of these subjects.

You do not need to have studied all of these subjects to go to university but having your GCSE mix steered towards the English Baccalaureate subjects will help to keep your options open as you move into your next phase of education.



Vocational

In addition to GCSEs, students also have the opportunity to study a range of subjects often referred to as vocational qualifications e.g. BTEC qualifications. These qualifications contain examinations in both Year 10 and Year 11 with more of an emphasis on coursework which is assessed throughout the duration of the two-year course. They are robust and challenging qualifications that sit well alongside our GCSE subjects, enabling students to progress into Post-16 education, college, apprenticeships or training. The courses have been carefully chosen, are equivalent to GCSE and could lead to employment opportunities or progression to Level 3 or A-Level equivalent courses at Post 16.

There are a variety of vocational subjects offered to students at Parkside Community School, such as Health and social care, BTEC sport, and ICT.

Guided Choices

This booklet is designed to help students and parents/carers, in consultation with teachers, to create a Key Stage 4 curriculum that will best suit the needs of each student. We hope that the subjects available will enable students to choose a set of courses that they will enjoy and in which they will be successful.

We have taken the following into account when designing this curriculum:

- The importance of gaining a range of GCSEs including English, Maths, Statistics and Science
- Allowing students as much choice as possible whilst maintaining a balanced and appropriate curriculum
- Current Government policy and advice on the English Baccalaureate subjects
- The future needs of students including those who will go on to Further and Higher Education.

The Core Curriculum

As required by the National Curriculum, we have 'core' subjects which all students must follow.

The compulsory core studies are as follows:

- English - two GCSEs, one in English Language and one in English Literature
- Mathematics - leading to one GCSE
- Statistics – leading to one GCSE
- Science - leading to two or three GCSEs
- Physical Education - not examined
- Personal Development – not examined

Options Timeline

Attend Year 9 Options Launch Assembly

4 March

Attend Y9 Options event

9 March 2026

Complete the Online Options form before the deadline

Deadline: Friday 13 March 2026

Where further guidance and advice may be needed, some one-to-one interviews may be held with a member of SLT

16 March onwards

Confirmation of final option choices

Summer Term



Why is Science an option?

All students will study Science. If they do not choose Triple Science then they will follow the AQA Combined (Trilogy) Science course. This leads to 2 GCSEs in Science.

Choosing Triple Science as an option allows students to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics AQA courses, resulting in 3 GCSE outcomes. This choice is suitable for those students who may wish to take Science A Levels or who are considering a Science degree course. However, if a student does not choose Triple Science, studying the Combined (Trilogy) course will still allow students to access A Level Science courses and to go on to study a Science degree.



Reformed Qualifications

GCSEs were reformed in 2017 and are now designed to be more demanding than their predecessors. In addition there is a new grading system that replaces the A*-G grades used previously - the new system will be 9 to 1 (with 9 being the highest).

This table shows how the old and new grading system can be compared:

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	C
4	
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

Tiered Exams

All GCSE qualifications will be examined at the end of the course, which will be the summer of your child's Year 11.

Tiered exams only apply to the subjects of Maths, Statistics, Modern Foreign Languages (Spanish), Separate Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) and Combined Science. Foundation level will cover grades 1 to 5 and Higher Level will cover grades 4 to 9.

Things To Consider

Requirement to pass GCSE English and Maths

There are now requirements that mean all students who have not achieved a standard pass 9-4 GCSE in Maths and English by the age of 16 (end of Year 11) will have to continue to study towards achieving them as part of their 16 to 19 provision. This requirement is the same no matter where students go after Year 11, whether it be to a local Sixth Form, another post-16 provider, college or other training provider. Students are best placed to ensure they achieve these qualifications at the first time of asking, here at Parkside in Year 11.



Raising of the School Participation Age

The government decided that from 2015, all students should stay in some form of learning until they are 18. This does not mean that your son/daughter will have to stay on at school, as it is not about raising the school leaving age or staying on at school or college. There are a large range of other learning opportunities available after Year 11 including apprenticeships, part-time study, voluntary work and jobs with training. However, it does mean that even if a student does leave school to get a job, legally their employer must ensure that they are also enrolled for some kind of study. It also means that, for our Year 9 students, they should take a long-term view of their education.

Examinations Structure

All GCSEs are 'terminal exams' and tested at the end of Year 11. Students will not have an opportunity to re-sit any exams or to take them early. This changes the way subjects are taught as there is a greater content of work to be recalled at the end of Year 11. It means that regular revision sessions will be required throughout the two years of study. There will also be a need for clear and accurate notes and well-presented class and homework throughout Year 10 and Year 11. Parents will be informed regularly of mock examination periods and times in the year when assessments will occur in particular subjects. These will be crucial to students' preparation for, and success in, their final examinations.





Informed Choices

The Russell Group previously published a list of subjects which can be particularly useful for students who aren't sure what to study at university. These subjects are considered essential for many degrees and so can open lots of doors. Rather than give misleading generic guidance the Russell Group has now produced its own website called "Informed Choices" (www.informedchoices.ac.uk), therefore removing the need to publish such a list. Here you can explore the various degrees and subject areas you're interested in – as many as you like – to build up a more personalised picture of the subject combinations which suit your talents and ambitions

Always Consider the Subject not the Teacher

We are very lucky at Parkside to have an excellent and professional team of teaching staff; many of whom have taught at the school for a number of years. While we recognise that everyone has a favourite teacher who makes their subject come alive; students must not simply choose a subject because they like the teacher. Parkside enjoys a very stable staff body, but sometimes teachers leave or retire, and some subjects are taught by multiple staff members. This means we cannot guarantee a student will be in a particular teacher's class for their GCSEs. Choosing a subject you enjoy, or are doing well in, is more important than the teacher. Equally, do not dismiss choosing a subject you love because you may be taught by a certain teacher. If the subject is vital to your plan and next steps, choose it!



Questions you should ask yourself

- Which subjects am I good at?
- Do I need a particular subject for a higher educational course or the career I have in mind?
- Do I like practical subjects?
- Am I good at exams?
- Which subjects do I know enough about to make a good choice?
- Which subjects do I need to find out more about?
- Have I discussed my choice(s) with my parents or carers and with my mentor?

How Will I Be Assessed?

All students will be taking the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) **examination at the end of Year 11 in all their GCSE subjects.** All courses on offer lead to recognised qualifications except for Core PE and PD. There will not be any modular examinations, nor will there will be any opportunity to resit.

Portfolio work, non-examination assessment, or coursework is an important part of vocational subjects. Regular attendance, keeping to deadlines and being prepared to respond to feedback are essential to success.

Subject	Number of Pieces of Coursework/Controlled Assessments	Non-Exam Assessment/Centre Assessment Task %	Length of Written Exam	Level of Entry
English Language	0	0	Paper 1: 1hr 45min (50%) Paper 2: 1hr 45min (50%)	One Entry 9-1
English Literature	0	0	Paper 1: 1hr 45min (40%) Paper 2: 2hr 15min (60%)	One Entry 9-1
Mathematics	0	0	Paper 1: 1hr 30min (1/3) Paper 2: 1hr 30min (1/3) Paper 3: 1hr 30min (1/3)	Higher 9-4 Foundation 5-1
Combined Science	0	0	Paper 1: 1hr 10min (16.7%) Paper 2: 1hr 10min (16.7%) Paper 3: 1hr 10min (16.7%) Paper 4: 1hr 10min (16.7%) Paper 5: 1hr 10min (16.7%) Paper 6: 1hr 10min (16.7%)	Higher 9-4 Foundation 5-1
Separate Sciences	0	0	Biology Paper 1: 1hr 45min (50%) Biology Paper 2: 1hr 45min (50%) Chemistry Paper 1: 1hr 45min (50%) Chemistry Paper 2: 1hr 45min (50%) Physics Paper 1: 1hr 45min (50%) Physics Paper 2: 1hr 45min(50%)	One Entry 9-1
Statistics	0	0	Paper 1: 1hr 30m (50%) Paper 2: 1hr 30m (50%)	Higher 9-4 Foundation 5-1
Geography	0	0	Paper 1: 1hr 45min (40%) Paper 2: 1hr 30min (30%) Paper 3: 1hr 30min (30%)	One Entry 9-1
History	0	0	Paper 1: 1hr 20min (1/3) Paper 2: 1hr 50min (1/3) Paper 3: 1hr 30min (1/3)	One Entry 9-1
Spanish	0	0	Listening—35min(F) & 45 min(H) Speaking—30min(F) (H) Reading— 45min(F) 1hr(H) Writing— 1hr(F),1hr 15min(H)	Higher 9-4 Foundation 5-1
ICT	1	60%	1hr 20min (40%)	Level 2 and Level 1
Design and Technology	1	50%	2 hr (50%)	One entry 9-1
BTEC Sport	2	60%	1hr 45min(40%)	Level 2 and Level 1
Business	0	0	Paper 1: 1hr 30min (50%) Paper 2: 1hr 30min (50%)	Level 2 and Level 1
Fine Art	1	60%	Externally set task (40%)	One Entry 9-1
Health & Social Care	2	60%	2hr (40%)	Level 2 and Level 1
Photography	1	60%	Externally set task (40%)	One Entry 9-1
Textiles	1	60%	Externally set task (40%)	One Entry 9-1

How Do I Make My Choices?

Step 1

You will study the following COMPULSORY GCSE subjects

- English Language
- Mathematics
- Double Award Combined Science
- Core PE (Not examined)
- English Literature
- Statistics
- Personal Development (Not examined)

Step 2

You must choose either History or Geography.

Step 3

You will be studying 2 more subjects from the options below. On your options form, you will be asked to rank your subjects in order of preference. Please note, whilst we will try to give students their first 2 choices, this will not be possible in all cases. Some compromise will inevitably be needed.

Subject	Notes
Art	* You can't study both Art and Textiles
BTEC Sport	
Business	
Design Technology	
BTEC Health and Social Care	
Vocational ICT	
Photography	
Separate Science	
Spanish	
Textiles	* You can't study both Art and Textiles

Step 4

When students have carefully considered their choices, they should complete the online form before the deadline.

Deadline : Friday 13 March

Choices will be confirmed in the summer Term.

Where can I find the Y9 Options Form?

The form will be emailed to the school account of all Y9 students on Monday 9 March. Alternatively, you can use the QR code displayed at parents evening.

Limitations on choice

Students are encouraged to study a broad and balanced choice of subjects. Our overriding commitment is to provide the best possible curriculum for our students so that they can achieve the best outcomes to prepare themselves for future life.

Whilst we will endeavour to give students their preferred choices, this will not be possible in all cases. Some compromise will inevitably be necessary. Unfortunately, there may be times when it is not viable to run a course due to extenuating circumstances. An example of this could be the physical limits to the sizes of groups we can operate and problems can arise where subjects are over or under subscribed. Only classes with viable student numbers will be able to run.

Should it be necessary to reconsider original choices, individual students will be consulted and appropriate guidance supplied.

How will I be guided and supported in making my choices?

Students will be supported in their choice in a variety of ways:

- A GCSE/Vocation Options Launch Assembly to explain the process and answer key questions
- Options 2026-2028 Booklet – This booklet includes key guidance on the options process and information on the subjects and qualifications on offer
- Year 9 Options evening where students and parents can hold in person discussions with subject teachers, members of the Senior Leadership team, careers professionals and the SEND team
- Where a need arises, students may meet with members of the Senior Leadership Team to help them to make choices that are right for them, and to guide them through the options process
- Individual discussions with students, parents, carers, and teaching staff
- Individual discussions with Mr Rooker, our Careers Advisor, where desired

Can students change their mind?

We always do our best to ensure that all students' choices can be matched but please bear in mind that students who submit choices after the deadline may not find it possible to be placed on their preferred courses. As soon as the options deadline has passed, work begins on timetabling. Alterations to choices may not be possible from this point onwards.

Once a decision has been made and a course begun, it is extremely difficult to make any changes. It is therefore essential that time and thought be given to the combinations of courses to be taken.

Online Options Form

Where do I find the online form?

The form will be emailed to the school account of all Y9 students on Monday 9 March. Alternatively, you can use the QR code displayed at parents evening.

Completion guide

Following the emailed link will take you through to an online form where you can tell us what you would like to study next year. You may be required to sign in to your school account to access the form.

Step 1: Firstly, insert your name.

Step 2: Decide whether you would like to study History or Geography.

Step 3: Rank your subjects in order of preference.

Step 4: Tell me about any reasons you may have for choosing your option choices or for your rank order of subjects.

Step 5: Tell me what are your future career aspirations? Have you got any thoughts on what career/job or future study pathways you might like to pursue? E.g. Would you like to go to university? Would you like to do an apprenticeship when you are 16?

Step 6: Once you have answered each question, carefully check each of your responses to ensure that it matches with what you want to study next year. If you are happy with the choices you have made, submit the form by clicking on the 'submit' button at the bottom of the page. You can only do this once.

When is the deadline for my choices?

All forms should be submitted no later than **Friday 13 March**

What if I change my mind?

The options process is heavily linked to the timetabling of next year's classes. As time goes on, and the timetable is set, it can be increasingly difficult to make changes. Please think carefully before you submit your form in the first place and speak to Mrs Asher as soon as possible about any changes.

Careers Guidance

Summary of Careers Education

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) is an essential part of the support we offer to students at Parkside Community School. Effective careers support can help to prepare young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life; it can help them to make decisions and manage transitions as learners and workers. As options for young people become more varied and complex, it is vital that we support them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to make informed choices for their future. As a result, the careers programme has a whole-school remit designed to complement the rest of the school curriculum.



Raising Aspirations

We are delighted to have secured the support of our own Careers Advisor, Mr Rooker.

Every student in Year 10 and Year 11 will receive:

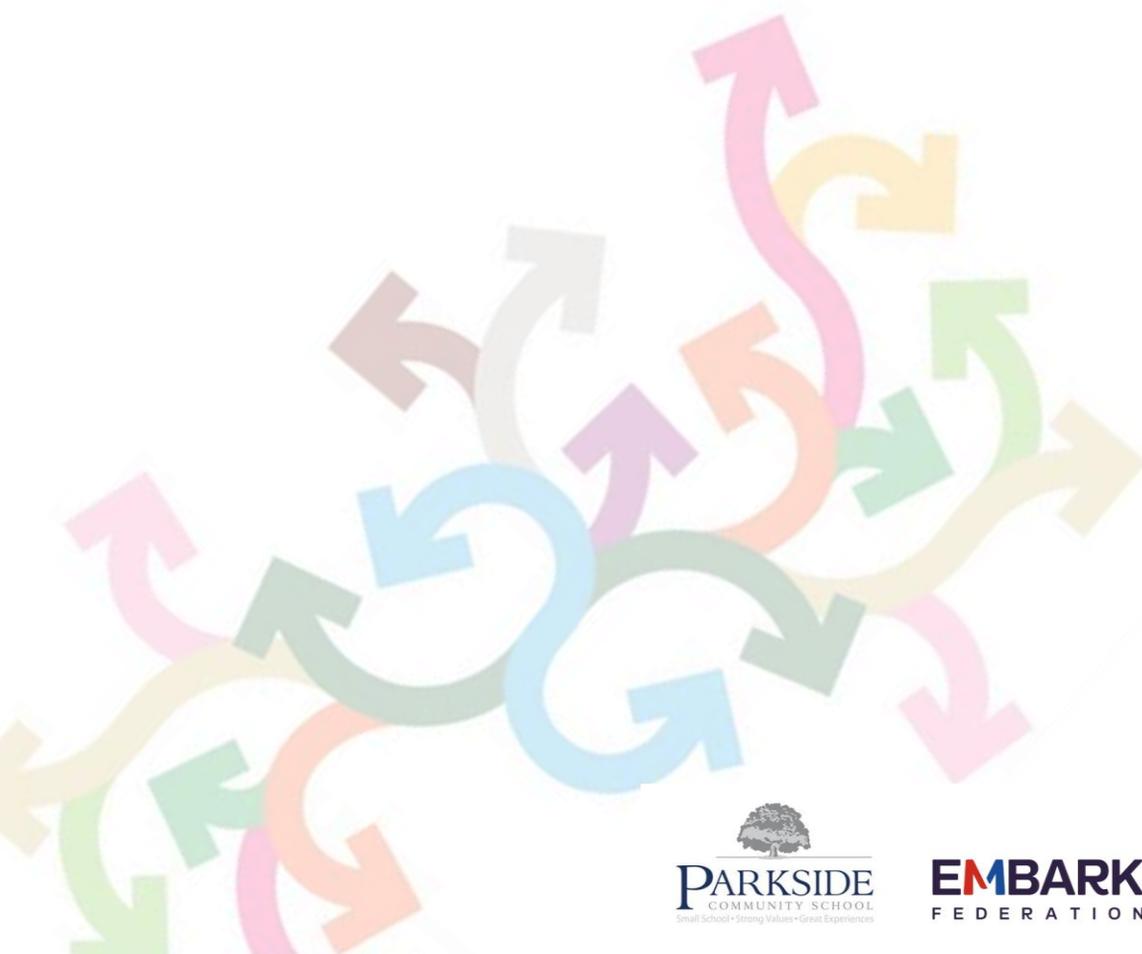
- A one-on-one interview to identify an appropriate career path
- A Career Action plan that will state the specific qualifications and experiences needed to enter your desired profession
- Support with applying for your Post-16 next destination when you finish Year 11
- On-demand support when visiting Post-16 destinations including colleges, sixth form schools, apprenticeship and/or training providers



Subject Guide

Core Subjects

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Statistics
Combined Science
Core Physical Education



GCSE English Language

Core Subject – AQA 8700

What you will learn

In GCSE English Language, you will be given the opportunity to read a wide range of texts both non-fiction and fiction. You will also perfect your writing skills so that you can write accurately for a variety of purposes, audiences and formats.

The writing skills you develop will enable you to be a competent and effective writer. You will build upon the following skills that you have studied in Key Stage 3:

- adapting your language for purpose, audience and a range of formats;
- choosing effective vocabulary;
- using a variety of sentence structures and punctuation marks accurately and for effect;
- using both persuasive and descriptive language techniques.

Your competence will also be developed in the following reading skills:

- reading for meaning;
- making inferences;
- analysing writers' language choices;
- summarising, synthesising and making thoughtful comparisons.

In addition, GCSE specifications in English Language will assess your ability to use spoken language and listening skills to communicate with others. This will be reported on as part of the qualification, but it will not form part of the final mark and grade.

How you will be assessed

Your assessment will take place at the end of the course when you will sit two exam papers.

Paper 1: Reading and Writing— 1 hour and 45 minutes

Paper 2: Reading and Writing— 1 hour and 45 minutes

What can you do at the end of the course?

GCSE English Language ensures progression from Key Stage 3 National Curriculum requirements and provides the foundations for studying English Language at 'A' Level. The skills gained will also help you with any other course where competency in literacy is important. English Language is essential for all further study at post-sixteen colleges and schools with sixth forms; most employers will also ask you to report the grade you achieved for English Language. Therefore, it is essential that you fulfil your potential in your studies.

Where can you find out further information?

Please contact Mr S Kawalek



GCSE English Literature

Core Subject – AQA 8702

What you will learn

In GCSE English Literature, you will encounter a variety of diverse texts from the Nineteenth, Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries. The study of these texts will broaden your horizons and allow you to understand and evaluate many interesting moral dilemmas and viewpoints. To be successful at this course you need to be able to:

- read a wide range of classic literature fluently and with good understanding, and make connections across your reading;
- read in depth and critically evaluate so that you are able to discuss and explain your understanding and ideas;
- understand the context in which different texts were written and the ideas that influenced the writers;
- develop the habit of reading widely and often;
- appreciate the depth and power of the English literary heritage;
- write accurately, effectively and analytically about your reading, using Standard English;
- acquire and use a wide vocabulary, including the grammatical terminology and other literary and linguistic terms you need to criticise and analyse what you read.

How you will be assessed

Your assessment will take place at the end of the course when you will sit two exam papers based on a combination of extracts from the texts you have studied in class and unseen poems that will require you to apply the analytical skills you have learnt.

Paper 1: 19th Century Novel and Shakespeare - 1 hour 45 minutes

Paper 2: Modern texts and Poetry - 2 hours 15 minutes

What can you do at the end of the course?

Studying GCSE English Literature should encourage you to read widely for pleasure and is preparation for studying literature at A Level or at University. The essay writing skills you will learn will help you to write analytically when studying A Levels in other subjects.

Where can you find out further information?

Please contact Mr S Kawalek.

GCSE Mathematics

Core Subject – OCR J560

What you will learn

Maths is an essential subject at GCSE for all students. It teaches reasoning, precision and the ability to understand abstract ideas, in addition to basic numeracy and algebra. This is why it is valued highly by employers and providers of further education.

How you will be assessed

GCSE Mathematics is linear - this means that all the examinations are taken at the end of the course, at the end of Year 11. GCSE Mathematics has a Foundation Tier (grades 1—5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4—9). Throughout the course you will learn to:

Develop knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts, including:

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio, Proportion and Rates of Change
- Geometry and Measures
- Statistics
- Probability

Use your knowledge and understanding to make connections between mathematical concepts and apply the functional elements of mathematics in everyday and real-life situations. You must complete three written papers: each is worth 33.3% of the final grade.

Paper 1: Calculator paper, 1 hour 30 minutes

Paper 2: Non-calculator paper, 1 hour 30 minutes

Paper 3: Calculator paper, 1 hour 30 minutes

You will be assessed entirely by written examinations, which means that no coursework will be expected from you. The exams consist of a mix of question styles from short, single-mark questions to multi-step problems. The mathematical demand increases as you progress through the paper.

What can you do at the end of the course?

A pass in GCSE Mathematics is often vital for entrance to training for any number of professions or careers. It is also very valuable as a supporting subject to many courses at GCSE, AS and A Level and at Degree Level, especially in the Sciences: for example, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Geography, Psychology, Sociology, and medical courses.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Mr J Havard – Head of Mathematics

GCSE Statistics

Core Subject – 8382

What you will learn

All students at Parkside will take GCSE Statistics. GCSE AQA Statistics builds directly on the statistical skills you have already developed in mathematics, extending your understanding of data, probability and real-world problem-solving. While Maths introduces core ideas such as averages, graphs and basic probability, GCSE Statistics takes these further by teaching you how to collect, analyse, interpret and represent data in a much more meaningful and rigorous way.

How you will be assessed

GCSE AQA Statistics is assessed through two written exam papers, each worth 50% of the final grade. Both papers test your ability to interpret data, apply statistical techniques, and solve problems in context. There is no coursework element.

What can you do at the end of the course?

GCSE Statistics opens doors to a wide range of future opportunities. The analytical and problem-solving skills you develop are highly valued in both further study and the workplace. It provides an excellent foundation for A-Level Maths, Further Maths, Psychology, Geography, Business and Science courses, all of which rely heavily on data interpretation and statistical thinking.

Beyond school, statistics is used in almost every sector. Whether you're interested in fields such as medicine, engineering, economics, computing, sports analysis, marketing, or social sciences, a strong understanding of data helps you make informed decisions and better understand the world around you. Employers also value the ability to handle information confidently, spot patterns, and justify conclusions—skills that GCSE Statistics helps you build.

In short, this course equips you with practical, transferable skills that support both academic progression and a wide variety of future career paths.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Mr J Havard – Head of Mathematics

GCSE Combined Science

Core Subject – AQA 8465



What you will learn

This qualification identifies the activities and experiences you will come across in everyday life and links these to scientific ideas and their implications for society. It provides the opportunity to acquire the scientific skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for modern life.

How you will be assessed

Combined Biology: Modules 1 - 6 will be delivered from Year 9 through to Year 11. Modules 1 – 3 will be assessed at the end of Year 11 (Biology Paper 1). Modules 4 - 6 will also be assessed at the end of Year 11 (Biology Paper 2).

Combined Chemistry: Modules 1 - 6 will be delivered from Year 9 through to Year 11. Modules 1 – 3 will be assessed at the end of Year 11 (Chemistry Paper 1). Modules 4 - 6 will also be assessed at the end of Year 11 (Chemistry Paper 2).

Combined Physics: Modules 1 - 6 will be delivered from Year 9 through to Year 11. Modules 1 – 3 will be assessed at the end of Year 11 (Physics Paper 1). Modules 4 - 6 will also be assessed at the end of Year 11 (Physics Paper 2).

Students will therefore sit a total of six examinations at the end of Year 11. The duration of each examination is 1 hour 10 minutes and is worth 16.6% of the Combined Science GCSE (X2 GCSEs).

What can you do at the end of the course?

Achieving Grade 6+ in Combined Science should allow access Level 3 Science qualifications. Please check with your preferred post 16 provider.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Mr C Banyard - Head of Science

Core Physical Education

Core Subject – Non-Examined

All students in Key Stage 4 are required to have core PE lessons. Classes are often mixed depending on the requirements of the curriculum and the student.

For Key Stage 4 PE students, the learning process is a continuation of the activities introduced in Key Stage 3, but with practical tasks added. The change in emphasis to physical activity is a way of embedding a healthy and active lifestyle fostered in KS3, with the aim of forming a foundation for a life time of healthy living. In Year 10 and 11, students are taught a variety of team and individual activities throughout the year. Students at Key Stage 4 participate in a number of activities during their physical education lessons, the main ones include:

athletics	health related fitness	badminton	hockey
basketball	netball	dance	rounders
rugby	rowing	football	softball
gymnastics	table tennis	handball	tennis

Each sporting activity will be assessed to give an overall grade. Teachers track and monitor throughout. When reporting this information to parents and carers, teachers will give one grade that represents the average; this grade will be representative of the qualities a student shows across a range of disciplines.

Year 11 core lessons include team games. The following criteria is applied:

- Students will be put into teams that are fair.
- Each team member will be given different roles to participate in for example as a coach or warm up leader.
- Students will take responsibility for leading their lessons.
- Teams will compete against each other in league and cup competitions in the different sporting disciplines; there will be game play each lesson (game play is when students compete in a match format, not in isolated drills).

Students have the opportunity to develop:

- learning – because they have an increased understanding of different sports. In addition, a deeper knowledge of skills, tactics and strategies evolve because there is interaction between students.
- personal skills – because the PE department provides opportunities to socialise and have fun with other team members.
- responsibility – because they become more skilful when given responsibility. Many students enjoy the freedom of being able to make decisions without the teacher's input; as a result, students become more able to manage themselves and others.
- leadership – because through leading activities they learn to develop leadership skills.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Miss E Rose - Head of PE or Mr M Gould - PE Teacher

Subject Guide

Option Subjects

Art
Business
Design Technology
Geography
Health and Social Care
History
ICT
Photography
Separate Sciences
Spanish
BTEC Sport
Textiles

GCSE Fine Art

Option Subject – OCR J171

What you will learn

GCSE Fine Art gives you experience of a wide variety of materials, processes and skills using both traditional and contemporary media. You will develop critical, analytical and problem-solving skills through studying art work from different times and places. You will use this to develop your own individual pieces of art.

How you will be assessed

Unit 1: Fine Art Portfolio (60% of the qualification)

Portfolio - a collection of work based on a theme set by your teacher. This is produced during Year 10 and term one of Year 11.

You will produce a project based on celebrating culture, students have the option to interpret how they wish with potential interpretations around sport, music, dance etc. You will research ideas on the internet, collect information about your chosen artists' styles and analyse their work. You will be expected to experiment with a range of materials and techniques and show development of your ideas. Your research work will be presented in a folder. You will then produce a final piece based on your research.

Unit 2: OCR set Task (40% of the qualification)

Set Task - a collection of work based on a theme set by OCR. The paper will come into school at the start of the Spring term of Year 11.

You will be given 5 themes set by OCR. You will select one starting point. You will research ideas, collect information about artists' styles and analyse their work. You will be expected to experiment with a range of materials and techniques and show development of your ideas. Your research work will be presented in a folder. You will use the knowledge and skills developed through your coursework to help you explore a range of ideas around your chosen theme and prepare for a final piece.

You will then produce your final piece in 10 hours, in a supervised classroom environment. This is done over 2 days in the art room.

What can you do at the end of the course?

The course provides excellent preparation for higher study and employment in the jobs which require imagination, artistic skills and problem solving. You may also choose to continue to develop your artistic skills as a hobby and many people find creative pursuits relaxing and rewarding.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Mr S Cook - Lead Teacher of Art and Photography

GCSE Business

Option Subject – OCR

What you will learn

When you leave school you may be working for a business or other organisation. After studying Business you will have an insight into just how businesses operate, including how to set up a business of your own.

This is a practical course, using real businesses as examples. You will learn skills to help you in decision making and be one step ahead in understanding how businesses operate. The GCSE Business specification covers:

- Marketing, including advertising, development of products, setting the best price.
- Recruitment, including how businesses get the right staff and keep them working well.
- Business structures, including the different ways to set up a business.
- Finance, including how businesses get the money to set up and operate and how they make a profit.
- Business operations, including how businesses produce the things we buy.
- Influences on businesses, including the environment and how many businesses are operating around the world.

How you will be assessed

Your assessment will take place at the end of the course in Y11 when you will sit two exam papers.

Business Paper 1: 1 hours 30 mins (50% of the qualification)

Business Paper 2: 1 hour 30 mins (50% of the qualification)

There is no controlled assessment. Some questions will be multiple choice, some will be extended writing to test your ability to explain why you made a particular decision.

What can you do at the end of the course?

You will have the knowledge to help you set up a business on your own. The skills you learn such as evaluation and problem solving will be useful in a number of other subjects.

GCSE Business provides a strong base for progression to further education, it is a good stepping stone for you in A Level subjects especially in economics, accountancy and of course A Level Business. You will be able to understand the business world which you will enter after finishing school/ collage/university.

Where can you find out further information?

Visit the OCR website or please contact Miss V Wheeldon - Teacher of Business

Vocational Award in ICT

Option Subject – Eduqas

What you will learn

The WJEC Level 2 Vocational Award in ICT provides students with a practical and engaging introduction to the modern digital world. The course is built around two main units that explore both the role of ICT in society and the hands-on skills needed to solve real problems using digital tools.

Students will learn how ICT is used across organisations, homes and education, examining key technologies such as hardware, software, and communication systems. They will also explore how data is stored, transferred and protected, including legal, ethical and cybersecurity considerations.

A major part of the course focuses on developing practical skills. Students will work with spreadsheets, databases, automated documents and digital images, learning how to plan, create and adapt digital products for specific clients and purposes. These tasks mirror real vocational scenarios and help learners apply their knowledge in meaningful contexts.

How you will be assessed

Assessment is through a mixture of an external exam and controlled assessments. Unit 1 is assessed via an exam worth 40% of the qualification, lasting 1 hour and 20 minutes. Unit 2 is assessed through controlled practical tasks completed in school.

What can you do at the end of the course?

The qualification builds essential workplace skills such as communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, data handling and time management—abilities valued across IT, business, administration and creative sectors. It also supports progression into further study, apprenticeships or entry-level roles in the digital industry by giving learners real experience of producing ICT solutions for specific needs.

Where can you find out further information?

Visit the EDUQAS website or please contact Mrs K Flowers - Teacher of Computing



GCSE Design and Technology

Option Subject – Eduqas

What you will learn

Design and Technology will give you the opportunity to study the processes involved in designing new products and the requirements of a design specification. Through research and practical activities, learners will understand how market requirements and opportunities inform client briefs and will use practical skills such as drawing, computer modelling and product making to communicate design ideas. This will allow them to develop a wide range of transferable skills for future education, work and life.

How you will be assessed

The course consists of one external 2 hour exam which is taken at the end of Year 11, this equates to 50% of the overall grade and one piece of Design and Make coursework worth 50% of the final grade.

Coursework — Internally assessed coursework (50%) including Maths.

Exam — 2 hours. Externally assessed (50%) including 15% Maths.

Coursework

A sustained design and make task, based on a contextual challenge set by Eduqas, assessing candidates ability to identify, investigate and outline design possibilities. Design and make prototypes and analyse and evaluate design decisions and wider issues in design and technology. Students are required to identify a “need” or problem to solve and then design and make a product to provide a solution to the problem.

Written exam

A mix of short answers, structured and extended writing questions assessing candidates’ knowledge and understanding of: technical principals, designing and making principles along with the ability to analyse and evaluate design decisions and wider issues in design and technology. The paper is split into section A for core knowledge and section B for in-depth knowledge and understanding of Timbers. The exam also includes up to 15% Math.

What can you do at the end of the course?

The course provides excellent preparation for further practical study for those wishing to have career in the Design Industry such as product design, graphic design, fashion, illustration/book design, engineering, carpentry, architecture, computer graphics, interior design or teaching.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Mrs A Godley – Head of Arts, Business and Technologies

GCSE Geography

Option Subject – Eduqas C112QS

What you will learn

GCSE Geography gives you a real, in-depth understanding of the world we live in. You will develop critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills through issue-based geographical enquiries. The specification provides coverage of physical, environmental and human aspects of the subject and the linkages that exist between them.

The course consists of three themes:

Theme 1: Changing Places - Changing Economies

Theme 2: Changing Environments

Theme 3: Environmental Challenges

How you will be assessed

Unit 1: Investigating Geographical Issues (30%)

Written Exam Paper: 1 hour 45 minutes

Three compulsory structured questions, one from Theme 1, Theme 2 and Theme 3. The final part of each question will require an extended response.

Unit 2: Problem Solving Geography (30%)

Written Exam Paper: 1 hour 30 minutes

This component will assess content from across the themes using a variety of structured data response questions.

Part A will introduce an issue and set the geographical context.

Part B will outline a number of possible solutions to the issue.

Part C will provide an opportunity for the candidates to choose a solution and justify their choice in an extended response.

Unit 3: Applied Fieldwork Enquiry (30%)

Written Exam Paper: 1 Hour 30 minutes

A written examination in three parts using a variety of structured data response questions some of which will require extended responses.

Part A will assess approaches to fieldwork methodology, representation and analysis.

Part B will assess how field work enquiry may be used to investigate geography's conceptual frameworks.

Part C will assess the application of broad geographical concepts to a wider UK context and assess the ability to make and justify a decision.

What can you do at the end of the course?

The course provides excellent preparation for higher study and employment in the field of Geography.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Miss H Carpenter - Lead Teacher of Geography

BTEC Health & Social Care

Option Subject – Pearson Edexcel

What you will learn

Through investigation of a range of services and organisations, Health and Social Care gives you opportunities to understand aspects of personal development. You will develop a critical and analytical approach to problem solving within the health, social care and early years sectors. You will examine issues which affect the nature and quality of human life, including an appreciation of diversity and cultural issues.

How you will be assessed

Component 1: Human lifespan development. Internal written assessment, completed in Year 10. This contributes to 30% of the overall qualification. In this component, you will study how people grow and develop over the course of their life, from infancy to adulthood, this includes PIES development and the different factors that may affect this. An individual's development can be affected by major life events, such as marriage, parenthood or moving to a new house and you will learn about how people adapt to these changes, as well as the types and sources of support that can help them. You will develop transferable skills, such as written communication skills to support your progression to Level 2 or 3 vocational or academic qualifications.

Component 2: Health and social care services and values. Internal written assessment, completed in Year 11. This contributes to 30% of the overall qualification. In this component, you will study health and social care services and how they meet the needs of real service users. You will look at the different types of services available to people and why they access them at different times of their lives. This component will give you an understanding of health and social care services and the skills, attributes and values that are common across the sector.

Component 3: Health and well being. Externally marked 2 hour examination, 40% of the overall qualification. This exam is taken at the end of the course in Year 11. In this component, you will explore the factors that can have a positive or negative influence on a person's health and wellbeing. You will learn to interpret physiological and lifestyle indicators and what they mean for a person's state of health. You will learn how this information is used to recommend appropriate actions for improving a person's health and wellbeing.

What can you do at the end of the course?

Health and Social Care is one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK with demand for both health and social care employees continuously rising. This course provides excellent preparation for higher study and employment in the field of Health and Social Care, including childcare, care of the elderly and nursing.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Mrs S Welsh - Teacher of Health and Social Care



GCSE History

Option Subject – Pearson Edexcel 1H10

What you will learn

Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9-1) History is an exciting course that will fire learners' enthusiasm for studying history. It encourages learners to become curious, to develop their own opinions based on a respect for evidence, and to build a deeper understanding of the present by engaging with and questioning the past. The specification is based on content which helps learners to address fundamental issues in human history. It brings together people, events and issues that learners will find fascinating and that will stimulate a desire to explore the similarities and differences between people's lives in the past and their own lives now.

In Year 10, you will start the course by studying Anglo-Saxon and Norman England. Explore Saxon society. Choose who deserves to be the next King of England. Battle it out to understand the events of Hastings in 1066. Learn how to dominate a country, and fight off rebels. See how England was changed forever.

You will then cross the Atlantic and enter the American West. Find out if all those cowboy films are correct and how 'wild' the west really was. Discover how native Americans survived the harsh conditions of the Plains, and how a discovery of gold in a small river in California was felt around the world. See the immense efforts people went to, to settle the west, and destroy a people's culture.

In Year 11, you study the development of medicine in Britain from 1250 to the present day. From the Black Death and its curious cures, to injecting yourself with someone else's oozing pus. From rebuilding the faces of soldiers blown apart by war, to understanding the human genome. This topic covers all the changes and continuities in medicine right up to the present day, and you might even learn how to amputate a limb!

Finally, we will be looking at Weimar and Nazi Germany. Delve into the depths of this fascinating part of the 20th century; understanding how the problems of interwar Europe gave the Nazis the chance to dominate Deutschland. See how life changed for ordinary Germans, and how the Nazi's relentlessly persecuted the Jewish population. Terror, propaganda, and the steady march to the world's most destructive war.

How you will be assessed

Paper 1: Medicine in Britain - 1 hour 20 minutes

Paper 2: The American West and Anglo-Saxon and Norman England - 1 hour 50 minutes

Paper 3: Weimar and Nazi Germany - 1 hour 30 minutes

What can you do at the end of the course?

The course provides many transferable skills that can be used for further study and come in useful in the world of work. Forming arguments, assessing evidence, justifying decisions, and writing essays, means that this course can complement many A level choices, and can be particularly useful for those wanting to study law, journalism, politics and the humanities.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Miss Joyce — Lead Teacher of History

GCSE Separate Sciences

Option Subject – AQA 8461 8462 8463

What you will learn

Studying AQA Separate Science allows students to explore Biology, Chemistry and Physics in greater depth, gaining three individual GCSEs and a strong foundation for future STEM pathways. The course covers a wide range of content: in Biology, topics such as cell biology, organisation, infection and response, bioenergetics, homeostasis, inheritance and ecology; in Chemistry, areas including atomic structure, bonding, quantitative chemistry, chemical changes, energy changes, organic chemistry, analysis, the atmosphere and resource use; and in Physics, energy, electricity, particle model of matter, atomic structure, forces, waves, magnetism and electromagnetism, plus the additional topic of space. This route is ideal for students who enjoy science, want additional challenge, and are considering A-Level sciences or future scientific career.

How you will be assessed

Students sit six exam papers in total—two for each science. Each paper lasts 1 hour 45 minutes, is worth 100 marks, and contributes 50% of the GCSE grade for that subject, covering multiple-choice, structured, short-answer and open-response questions. Practical skills are also assessed, with questions based on required practicals included within the written exams.

What can you do at the end of the course?

Taking Separate Sciences provides excellent preparation for A-Level Biology, Chemistry and Physics, as well as future study in STEM fields such as engineering, medicine, environmental science and technology. The deeper content knowledge and stronger practical experience gained through this route help students develop analytical thinking, problem-solving skills and scientific literacy—key skills valued by colleges, universities and employers alike

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Mr C Banyard - Head of Science

GCSE Spanish

Option Subject – AQA 8692

What you will learn

GCSE Spanish encourages you to derive enjoyment and benefit from language learning and helps you to recognise that your linguistic knowledge, understanding and skills help you take your place in a multilingual global society. It also provides you with a suitable basis for further study and practical use of the language. Everything that you have studied so far will be needed for GCSE. The nine topics that you will study include Popular Culture; Lifestyle; Customs and Traditions; Home and Locality; Countries where the language is spoken; Global Sustainability; Current Study; Media and Technology, Jobs and Future Plans.

GCSE Spanish will enable you to:

- develop understanding of the language in a variety of contexts and knowledge of the language and language learning skills
- develop the ability to communicate effectively in Spanish and awareness and understanding of countries and communities where Spanish is spoken.

How you will be assessed

The GCSE is assessed via exams in listening, reading, speaking and writing taken at the end of the course in the summer of Year 11.

Unit 1: Listening - Foundation paper, 35 minutes; Higher paper, 45 minutes

Unit 2: Speaking - 1 speaking exam conducted with your class teacher, 9-12 mins

Unit 3: Reading - Foundation paper, 45 minutes; Higher paper, 1 hour

Unit 4: Writing - Foundation paper, 1 hour; Higher paper, 1 hour 15 minutes

All of these exams have the option of a higher or foundation tier depending on your target grade, and each of the four components above comprises 25% of the final mark.

What can you do at the end of the course?

GCSE Spanish counts towards the EBACC qualification, which is regarded as an advantage when applying to some of the country's best universities.

The course provides excellent preparation for studying further languages as well as for higher study and employment, with many employers looking very favourably on potential employees with a language qualification. Apart from the obvious ones - translation, interpreting, secretarial work, diplomatic work, travel and tourism, journalism, teaching etc. there are very few careers in which knowledge of a language is not useful and potentially financially rewarding in an increasingly globalised world.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Mr D Nolan - Lead Teacher of Spanish

BTEC Sport

Option Subject – Pearson Edexcel

What you will learn

BTEC Sport gives you the opportunity to learn how the body works and how this impacts performance. The course also focuses on knowledge of the rules of sports, performance analysis and gives every student the opportunity to be a sports leader—essential skills for your career development. The purpose of the course is to give you a wider understanding and appreciation of health related exercise and sport.

How you will be assessed

Component 1 – Preparing participants to take part in sport and physical activity fitness for sport and exercise. This component is assessed through non-exam internal assessment. In this unit you will:

- Explore types and provision of sport and physical activity for different types of participant.
- Examine equipment and technology required for when taking part in sport and physical activity.
- Be able to prepare participants to take part in sport and physical activity.

Component 2 – Taking part and improving other participants' sporting performance. This component is assessed through non-exam internal assessment. In this unit you will:

- Understand how different components of fitness are used in different physical activities.
- Be able to participate in sport and understand the roles and responsibilities of officials.
- Demonstrate ways to improve participants' sporting techniques.

Component 3 – Developing fitness to improve other participants' performance in sport and physical activity. This component is assessed through external assessment. In this unit you will:

- Explore the importance of fitness for sports performance.
- Investigate fitness testing to determine fitness levels.
- Investigate different training methods.
- Investigate fitness training programming to improve fitness and sports performance.

What can you do at the end of the course?

The course provides excellent preparation for further vocational study for those wishing to have a career in the sports industry, including in roles such as a PE teacher, a physiotherapist, a sport nutritionist, a journalist, a coach, a referee, a gym instructor and any role within the armed forces.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Miss E Rose - Head of Physical Education

GCSE Textiles

Option Subject – OCR

What you will learn

GCSE Textiles (OCR), students explore a wide range of textile techniques and creative processes. They develop skills in areas such as weaving, printing, pattern making, embroidery (hand and machine), knitting, batik, appliqué and collage. Learners also study fibres, yarns, fabrics and investigate historical, cultural and contemporary textile designers to inspire their own work. Through the Textile Design specification, students learn to express ideas using techniques such as printing, weaving, felting, stitching and embellishment, developing creative thinking, problem-solving and visual analysis skills.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment is through two components.

Component 1: Portfolio (60%) – Students produce a portfolio of practical work responding to a chosen theme, showing evidence of meeting all four assessment objectives. This may include sketchbooks, digital work, fabric samples, prototypes or final textile outcomes.

Component 2: Externally Set Task (40%) – Students choose one of five exam themes, develop ideas through preparatory work, and complete a final piece during a 10-hour supervised assessment.

What can you do at the end of the course?

GCSE Textiles provides an excellent foundation for further study, including A-Level Art & Design or Textiles, Fashion & Design courses, or creative diplomas. It also opens pathways into careers such as fashion design, costume design, interior design, fashion buying, styling, journalism and other creative industries. The course builds strong creative, technical and independent working skills that are valuable across a wide range of future study and employment options.

Where can you find out further information?

Contact Mrs A Godley- Head of Art, Business and Technologies

Need Support?

Do you still have questions?

Do you need some further support to help you make the right choices?

If you have any questions please email or ask a member of staff to contact

Mrs Asher

Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum, Teaching and Achievement)



