



OXFORD SPIRES ACADEMY

Be the Best You Can Be!

GCSE Options



Principal's Welcome



Dear Parent/Carer

Year 8 is an important year, as our students choose their options for the courses that they will study at GCSE. To achieve the best outcomes for your child, we need to work together to encourage students to see the longer term picture and to choose their options for the right reasons.

Not all students will know what they want to be or the direction in which they want to go when they are in Year 8. Their directions and careers may change as they develop and get older. Options are about giving choices in the future, studying the subjects that they enjoy and making sure that they have a range of GCSEs that will support their progress into university, employment or to high value apprenticeships.

It is important for all students to achieve a good pass in English and maths and, where possible, to study English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects. The full EBacc may not be the best option for all of our students. This is where good support and guidance is crucial so that we can make sure that all students are studying the best qualifications for them.

We all want the very best for your son/daughter and we will support you fully throughout the option process. If you have any questions or queries then please do not hesitate to speak to us and we will provide you with the best information possible.

Please come along to our options evening on Thursday 11th January, 6.30pm and take the time to read carefully through this options booklet. It will provide you with all the information that you may require to start having those so important conversations with your child.

Best wishes

Marianne Blake - Principal

Contents

Principal's Welcome	1
The Process Explained	3
Options Blocks	3
Options - Choosing Subjects	4
English and English Literature	5
Mathematics	6
Religious Education	6
Science	7
Humanities - History	8
- Geography	9
Art & Design	10
Business	11
Computing	12
Drama	12
Engineering	13
Food Preparation and Nutrition	14
Music	15
Physical Education	15
Product Design	16
Key Dates	17
Application Form	18

The Process Explained

THE KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM

All students will study courses leading to the new GCSE qualifications.

Compulsory GCSEs

- English and English Literature
- Mathematics
- General Science (including Biology, Chemistry and Physics and are worth two or three GCSEs)
- Religious Education

All students will also continue their Modern Foreign Language (Spanish, French or German) and /or Humanity (History and/or Geography)

Compulsory non-examination courses

- Physical Education
- Personal and Social Education (including Religious Education and Careers and Citizenship)

Optional GCSEs

Students will select two further optional subjects from a broad range of other subjects. This booklet briefly describes all these courses to help with choice. Students should seek advice in order to be clear that they are making the right choice for them. Parents should help their son/daughter by asking them helpful questions. It is unlikely that subject choices will be career specific at this stage but it is worth ensuring that no doors are closed to further study. Students who select subjects which they enjoy and have ability in will reap future success. Choices should not be made based on friendship groups or teachers!

Option Blocks

Students must choose one **Purple** subject (Humanities) and/or one **Gold** subject (languages). They are free to choose between geography or history and, if they wish, take both.

Students **MUST** choose the language that they have been studying in Years 7 and 8. They cannot pick a new language as this GCSE continues from their studies in years 7 and 8.

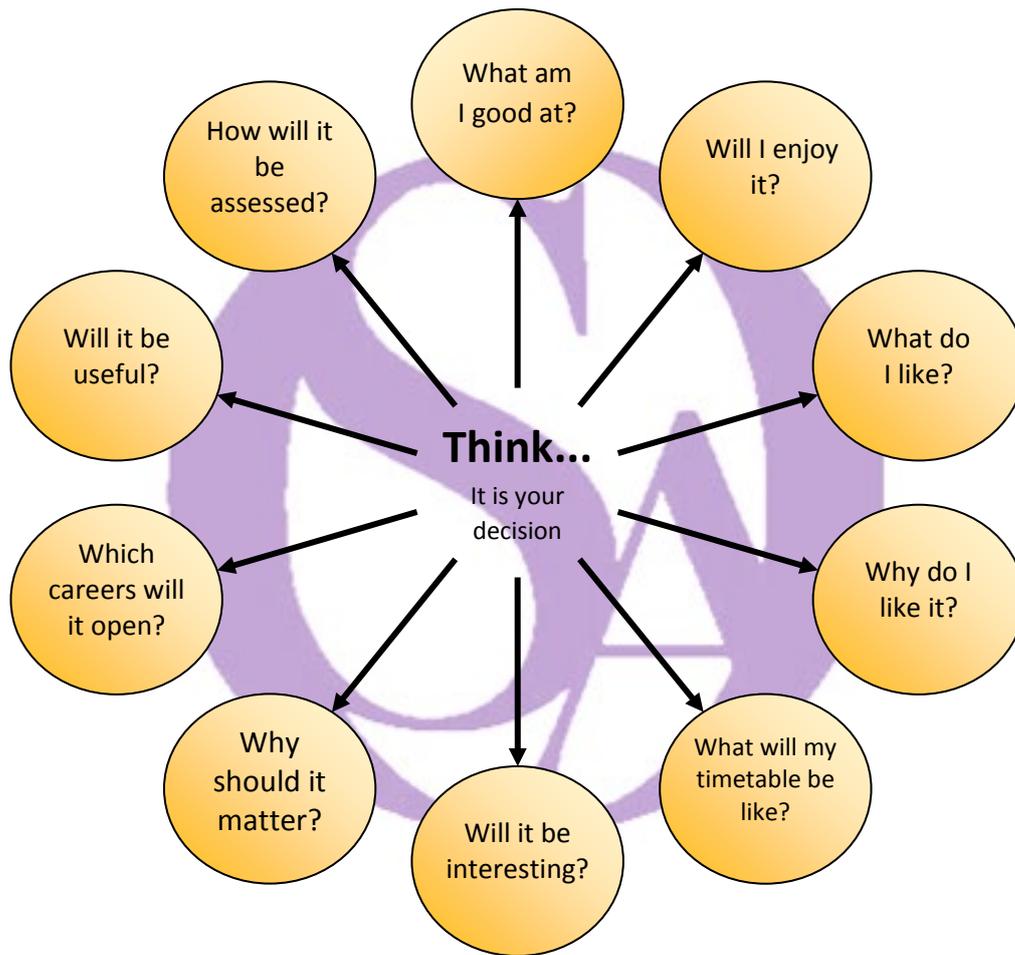
Students must select one option from each of the four blocks.

Guidance will be given at the Options' Evening and to students at tutor time.

Year 8 Options - September 2018

BLOCK A	BLOCK B	BLOCK C	BLOCK D
Art	Drama	Art	Computing
Business	Engineering	Business	Drama
Food Technology	Geography	French	History
French	German	History	Physical Education
Geography	Music	Music	Spanish
Product Design	Spanish		

Choosing subjects How can I choose?



But who will HELP me decide?

Form Tutor

Subject Teacher

Parents

Older Students

Mr Dixon

Mr Khan

Careers

Please note that the syllabi may change from the detail herein as new syllabi are issued by the exam boards.

English and English Literature

EXAM BOARD - Edexcel

Edexcel English Language

This course will be assessed through two exams:

Fiction and Imaginative Writing

- Section A - Reading: questions on an unseen 19th century fiction extract.
- Section B - Writing: a choice of two writing tasks. The tasks are linked by a theme to the reading extract.

Non - Fiction and Transactional Writing

- Section A - Reading: questions on two thematically linked, unseen non-fiction extracts.
- Section B - Writing: a choice of two writing tasks, the tasks are linked by a theme to the reading extracts.

Edexcel English Literature

This course will be assessed through two exams: Shakespeare and post-1914 literature.

Section A - Romeo and Juliet: a two-part question, with the first task focused on an extract. The second task is focused on how a theme reflected in the extract is explored elsewhere in the play.

Section B - An Inspector Calls: one essay question.

19th century novel and poetry since 1789

- Section A - A Christmas Carol: a two part question, with the first part focussed on an extract. The second part is an essay question exploring the whole text.
- Section B - Part 1: one question comparing a named poem from the Pearson Poetry Anthology 'Relationships' collection to another poem from that collection.
- Part 2: one question comparing two unseen contemporary poems.

English in Year 9

In Year 9, you will prepare for GCSE by learning many of the skills you will need to be successful on the course. The Year 9 curriculum covers an exciting range of texts and topics including a choice of modern novels such as *My Swordhand is Singing* and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*; a spooky ghost stories unit; work on the play *Macbeth* and a detailed analysis of the film *Freedom Writers*. The key development in your thinking will be learning how to succeed in exams and assessments so that you can get off to a flying start at GCSE. This will involve close analysis of texts, shared and guided writing, note-making and intensive preparation before showing what you have learned in assessments. All of this will help you prepare for Edexcel GCSEs in English Language and Literature.

Mathematics

EXAM BOARD - Edexcel

You will study three years of Maths. The teaching will be widely varied and will include group work, individual work, investigational work and independent study.

You will study and develop various mathematical techniques related to Numeracy (working with numbers), Algebra (working with unknown quantities), Geometry (working with shapes) and Data Handling (working with real-world information).

In addition to the content of the GCSE Maths course, you will also develop skills in reasoning, forming logical arguments, spatial awareness and interpreting and communicating skills.

Your assessment will take place after three years of study.

The assessment for this course is purely examination based, with three exams lasting 90 minutes each. Only one of the exams will be non calculator.

If you have any questions about GCSE Maths then see your class teacher or come and speak to Mr Finch

Religious Education

EXAM BOARD - WJEC Eduqas

Course Title Religious Studies (9-1)

The course is split into 3 main sections.

Religious Ethics

Students will look at a variety of topics: Issues of relationships, Issues of good and evil, Human rights and Issues of life and death based on christian ethics

Christianity

Teachings, beliefs and practices

Islam

Teachings, beliefs and practices

Religious Studies is a core subject and all students at Oxford Spires Academy follow a GCSE programme over three years. Students will study two main religions alongside topics that relate to the modern world such as violence and conflict and dialogue between religious and non-religious groups. The curriculum will enable students to develop a variety of skills. These are essential skills such as making informed judgements, listening and responding to new ideas and evaluating a number of ideas to draw a conclusion. These skills are valuable in the workplace as well as further education.

Science (Double and Triple Award)

EXAM BOARD - AQA

Course Title: Combined Science (Trilogy) GCSE (Double award) or Biology GCSE, Chemistry GCSE and Physics GCSE (Triple Award)

Course Content

All students study the academic content of the Combined Science GCSE with the aim of helping them to make sense of the science they come across in everyday life. They come to appreciate what science can tell them about themselves, the environment and the universe. The Combined Science GCSEs are designed to meet the diversity of students' needs and aspirations and is a double GCSE giving students a double grade worth twice as much as all other GCSEs.

Students will study the moral and ethical issues behind current science in the news. They are encouraged to assess the risk behind the science they come into contact with every day and start to make decisions based on scientific knowledge and scientific methods which will help them in decision making throughout their lives.

Students will study genetics, the human body, evolution, how the body behaves in extreme conditions, growth and development and the brain and mind in Biology lessons. In Chemistry, students study air pollution, how materials are made, the chemistry of salt, the periodic table, chemicals in the natural environment and chemicals in industry. And in Physics, students study the universe, the electromagnetic spectrum, the generation & use of electricity, forces, electricity and radioactivity.

Triple Science

Many students will take three GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics where they will take their studies in these areas to a higher academic level. The numbers taking triple science will depend on how many students want to do triple science and whether their teachers believe that they can still be successful in completing three GCSEs in the same time as they would be doing two. It is usually just under half of the year group.

Year 9 course outline

In Year 9 students will study Biology, Chemistry and Physics with the purpose of ensuring they know the necessary content ready to start GCSEs successfully. They will also practise the many skills needed for success at GCSE such as experimental procedure and critically evaluating science reports from the news.

Humanities - History

EXAM BOARD - WJEC Eduqas

Course Title GCSE (9-1) History

The course will develop students into effective, independent and resilient learners and as critical and reflective thinkers through a process of historical enquiry. Students will develop the ability to ask relevant and considered questions about the past and to investigate historical issues and sources critically.

The course units are:

Changes in Crime and Punishment in Britain, c.500 to the present day

Vagrancy, heresy and treason in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the growth of smuggling and highway robbery in the eighteenth century; Bow St. Runners; Peel and the setting up of the Metropolitan Police in 1829; the purpose of punishment in public over time, from humiliation to public execution; the concept of banishment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the use of prisons to punish and reform in the nineteenth century.

Germany in Transition, 1919-1939

The aftermath of WWI on Germany. Hitler's process to becoming the Fuhrer, the use of propaganda, rallies, radio and cinema in controlling the German people. Resistance of the German people and causes of WWII.

The Development of the USA, 1929-2000

The causes and consequences of the Wall St. Crash. The development of the status of Black Americans through Little Rock High; Montgomery Bus Boycott; the roles of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. The course covers international relations in the Cold War such as; the Cuban Missile Crisis; US involvement in Vietnam. As well as changes in music, entertainment, media and literature. Changes in youth culture and student protest including the changing role of women.

Elizabethan England

The coronation and popularity of Elizabeth I, The importance of popular entertainment; cruel sports; entertainment enjoyed by the rich; the Elizabethan theatre; design, plays; attitudes towards the theatre; contrasting lifestyles of rich and poor; homes and fashion; causes of poverty; issues of unemployment and vagrancy. The role of Mary, Queen of Scots. Reasons for the Armada; war in the Netherlands; course of the Armada – events in the Channel, Calais, 'fireships' and return to Spain; results of the Armada.

This is a linear qualification in which all exams are taken at the end of the course in the summer of Year 11. All assessments will be by examination. Exams will look for students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied. Analyse, evaluate and use sources (contemporary to the period) to make substantiated judgements in the context of historical events studied. History is a useful qualification for those who wish to go onto study any A level subject. The GCSE is also looked for by Universities and can assist in jobs such as journalism, law, teaching, politics or media.

Humanities - Geography

EXAM BOARD - WJEC

Eduqas <http://www.eduqas.co.uk>

Course Title GCSE Geography B

- Component 1: geographical issues 40%
- Component 2: problem solving geography 30%
- Component 3: applied fieldwork enquiry 30%

Field Trips: In order to fulfil component 3, students will go on 3 field trips (1 each year). They will then sit an exam based on their experience and findings in the field.

The component 1 exam is worth 40% and covers current topics such as migration, global cities, development, trade, aid, climate change, coastal/river management, floods, weather, ecosystems, water supply and desertification. The component 2 exam is worth 30% and uses skills gained by our solutions based learning approach to solve a real life problem in a specific part of the world. Students choose the best solution to the problem outlined in the exam, then justify their choice. The component 3 exam is worth 30% and will be based on data collected on the field trips. Students will use scientific processes to collect, analyse and evaluate data from the field in preparation for the exam.

Modern Foreign Language

EXAM BOARD - Edexcel

If you enjoy communicating with others, finding out how language works and discovering different countries and cultures then you will excel in a Modern Foreign Language GCSE.

This subject will enable you to share your interests and opinions with other speakers of your chosen language. You will have an international dimension to your GCSEs, which is increasingly important and sought by higher education institutions as well as employers.

You will develop a range of skills which will be useful in whatever career route you choose, for example, the ability to communicate effectively with others, to speak out in public, to use different problem-solving strategies and so on. All of this will give you opportunities to work abroad or for British companies who have international links. Employers are increasingly looking for those who are able to offer a foreign language.

The language, grammar and skills you have already learned during Key Stage 3 have prepared you to take on a GCSE in your chosen language. You will build on the topic areas you have been studying and have the opportunity to move on to new topic areas such as basic language of the internet, job advertisements/applications, work experience, customer service and transactions.

Art and Design

EXAM BOARD Edexcel

If you enjoy:

- Developing your visual skills.
- Experiencing new and exciting materials, techniques and processes.
- Being creative, enthusiastic and imaginative.
- Visiting galleries, museums, workshops and studios.
- Experimenting and taking risks with your work.
- Working both individually and in groups.

Then our GCSE Art and Design is the ideal subject for you.

The GCSE covers a range of activities and in-depth assignments. You will have the opportunity to experiment with different media in order to explore your strengths and preferences. There are a wide range of options within the different endorsements or you may choose to work in several areas. Whatever you choose, the main aim of the course is to develop your visual language skills and for you to build a comprehensive portfolio of work to progress to further courses or employment.

What can I do with a GCSE in Art and Design?

It teaches you life skills – how to undertake research and investigation, problem solving, confidence building, visual awareness, ability to develop ideas, initiative and cultural understanding. The study of Art helps students develop transferable skills that they can take into any career or job. You need Art and Design for particular careers in fields such as advertising, marketing, design, architecture, publishing in the media where the subject is directly applicable.

Introduction

The GCSE in Business equips students with the skills and confidence to explore how different business situations affect decision-making. They develop their understanding of concepts, objectives and terminology, and the impact of contemporary issues on business operations.

Students must complete both components (01 and 02) to be awarded the OCR GCSE (9-1) in Business.

Content overview

Business 01: Business activity, marketing and people

Students are introduced to business concepts and issues concerning the activities of a business. They explore the purpose and role of a business from spotting an opportunity through to the growth of an established business. They also look at the role of marketing and human resources.

Business 02: Operations, finance and influences on business

Students take a closer look at the role of operations and finance in business activity. Operations include production processes, quality of goods and services, customer service and working with suppliers. Finance covers its role, its sources, costs, profit and loss, cash and cash flow.

They also explore how business responds to external influences, such as ethical and environmental considerations, the economic climate and globalisation, and the interdependent nature of business.

How you will be assessed

Two exams at the end of the course, each 90 minutes long. There is no controlled assessment. Some questions will be multiple choice, followed by extended writing tasks to test your ability to explain why you made a particular decision.

If you:

- Want to understand and succeed in the world of business
- Think that being your own boss at work would be a great idea
- Want to be a better decision maker

Then GCSE Business is the subject for you

Computing

EXAM BOARD - OCR

Do you want to design the next generation of 3-D computer games?
Do you want to specify the requirements for the 5G mobile phones?
Do you want to produce the CGI effects for the next Spielberg movie?
Do you want to write programs that will find a cure for cancer?

Or want to be a

- Systems Analyst
- Database Administrator
- Project Manager
- Computer Programmer

If so then GCSE Computing is the ideal course for you!

There will be two written exams, each worth 40% of the total mark and a programming project worth 20%

Topics for the written exams include

- Systems architecture, memory and storage
- Wired and wireless networks
- Systems software and security
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns
- Computational thinking and algorithms
- Programming
- Logic and languages
- Data representation

Drama

EXAM BOARD - Edexcel

Taking Drama will give you the chance to work in groups, sharing ideas, negotiating, discussing and performing. You will explore issues, take responsibility for your own learning and make decisions. The ability to evaluate your own work is also important. You will spend time rehearsing and going on theatre trips as well as working within lessons. This course is ideal for those who are interested in acting or the theatre as well as those looking to build confidence and self-belief or learn the vital life skills of presentation and manipulating an audience.

During Year 9 the course develops and adds to skills learned in Year 8 and involves extensive rehearsal and performance work as well as preparation for the written exam. This then extends into more public performances in Years 10 and 11 as well as the development of theoretical analysis of performance work, scripts and theatre and the history of theatre.

Engineering

EXAM BOARD - EAL

Course - ENGINEERING and TECHNOLOGY

Certification - Level 1

Overview

This qualification has been developed predominantly for young people aged 14-16 in full time education who are interested in a career in engineering and would like to acquire a basic level of knowledge and understanding about the engineering sector. Pupils will demonstrate their Engineering capability by accurately producing practical work from a working drawing provided by EAL. These will be supported by a written report detailing how the tasks were completed.

What does this qualification cover?

This qualification has one core mandatory unit which provides learners with an introduction to working in the engineering sector, and 18 optional units from which learners will select four from the qualification units. The units consist of practical tasks which are supported by a written report.

Areas that the units cover are:

- Introduction to Machining Engineering Materials
- Introduction to Cutting, Forming and Assembling Engineering Materials
- Introduction to Joining Engineering Materials
- Introduction to Electronics

What could this qualification lead to?

Typical job roles include: Mechanical Fitter, Maintenance Engineer, Manufacturing Engineer, Electrical Engineer, Electronics Engineer, Sheet Metal Worker, CNC operator.

Food Preparation and Nutrition

EXAM BOARD - WJEC

This new GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition is an exciting and creative course which focuses on practical cooking skills to ensure students develop a thorough understanding of nutrition, food origin and the working characteristics of food materials. At its heart, this qualification focuses on nurturing students' practical cookery skills to give them a strong understanding of nutrition.

Food preparation skills are integrated into five core topics:

- Food, Nutrition and Health
- Food Science
- Food Safety
- Food Choice
- Food Provenance

There will be two assessment units:

Unit 1 Principles of Food and Nutrition

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes (40% of the qualification) (80 marks)

This unit will consist of two sections both containing compulsory questions.

Section A: questions based on stimulus materials

Section B: a range of question types to assess all content related to food and nutrition

Unit 2: Food and Nutrition in Action

Non-examination assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated.

Assessment 1: 10 hours

Assessment 2: 15 hours

60% of qualification (120 marks)

Assessment 1: The Food Investigation Assessment

20% of the total marks available will be allocated to a scientific food investigation which will assess the learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the scientific principles underlying the preparation and cooking of food.

Assessment 2: The Food Preparation Assessment

40% of the total marks available will be allocated to a task which assesses the learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking and presentation of dishes to form a menu.

Music

EXAM BOARD - Edexcel

This course will enable you to expand on and develop your existing interest in listening to and performing music. You will have the opportunity to perform in a wide choice of styles, including singing and MC-ing/ DJ-ing. This course allows you to perform solo and in groups of any size so your interests outside of lessons (e.g. choir or playing in a band) can be recorded and assessed for your GCSE course.

You will have the chance to develop your musical understanding through listening exercises as well as building on your performance skills and there will be the option to use music technology as a form of music composition for controlled assessments. Studying music builds confidence and presentation skills as well as giving you the chance to study a subject area which you already engage with in your free time.

Physical Education

EXAM BOARD - AQA

Assessment

This qualification is Linear. This means that all students will sit their exams and submit non-exam assessments at the end of the course. You will be assessed across two exam papers (worth 60% of the GCSE) and Practical Performance (worth 40% of the GCSE).

Unit 1

The human body and movement in physical activity and sport.

In this unit, you will learn applied Anatomy and Physiology (the human body and how it works in sport), Movement Analysis, Physical Training and how to interpret data.

Unit 2

Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport.

In this unit, you will learn Socio-Cultural Influences on Sports Participation, Sports Psychology, Health, Fitness and Well-Being and how to interpret data.

Non-examination assessment.

You will be assessed across a range of sports, whereby performance in THREE sports will be selected as your assessment. You will be assessed in the role of Performer/Player in a team and Individual sports. You will also learn how to analyse performance to bring about improvement in your chosen sport.

On completion of this course, students will be able to access the Level 3 (post-16) courses in Sport and Physical Education with a view to working in the sporting industry.

Important Key Dates

Thursday 11th January 2018

Options' Evening - 6.30pm

Thursday 18th January 2018

Year 8 Parents' Evening (Not an option choice event) 4.30pm

Friday 9th February 2018

Options forms due to Mr Dixon

Oxford Spires Academy, Glanville Road, Oxford , OX4 2AU
www.oxfordspiresacademy.org Tel: 01865 428 200
email: info@oxfordspiresacademy.org

Application Form for Year 9 2018-2019 Options

Name: _____ Tutor Group: _____

Students must select one option from each of the four blocks including at least one Modern Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish - **Gold**) and / or one Humanity subject (Geography and / or History - **Purple**). If you wish to choose the English Baccalaureate route you should choose both a **Purple** AND a **Gold**

	BLOCK A	BLOCK B	BLOCK C	BLOCK D
Subjects	Art	Drama	Art	Computing
	Business	Engineering	Business	Drama
	Food Technology	Geography	French	History
	French	German	History	Physical Education
	Geography	Music	Music	Spanish
	Product Design	Spanish		

Choice 1				
Reserve Choice				

Please tick this box if you are interested in Photography GCSE

Is there anything else which would be helpful for us to know about your choices?

Signed (Student) _____ (Parent) _____

Please pass this form to Mr Dixon via your tutor or the Attendance Office by

Friday 9th February 2018

