



BRENTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

LEARNING AND ACHIEVING TOGETHER

Name:.....

KS4 Courses 2026-2029

Guidance for Year 8



Contents

Title	Page
Message from Headteacher	3-5
Overview of Blue Pathway and Silver Pathway	6
Message from Mr Chelh, Year 8 Leader	7
The Key Stage 4 Curriculum	8-9
Glossary of Terms in this Booklet	10
Grades at Key Stage 4	11
Core: the Core Curriculum for all Students	12
Citizenship	13-14
English Language	15-16
English Literature	17-19
Mathematics	20
Physical Education Core	21
Religious Studies	22-23
Science	24-25
Modern Foreign Languages	26-27
Selection within Pathways:	28
Art, Craft and Design	29-31
Computer Science	32-33
Design Technology: Product Design	34-35
Drama	36-37
Food Preparation and Nutrition	38-40
Geography	41-42
Health and Social Care	43-44
History	45-46
Media Studies	47-48
Music (Traditional)	49-50
Music Technology	51-52
Physical Education GCSE	53-54
Alternative Pathways	55
English as an Additional Language	56
Heritage Languages	56
College Courses	57
Qualification Codes & Controlled Assessments	58-59
Sample Options Forms: Blue Pathway and Silver Pathway	60-61
Contacts	62

Message from our Headteacher

March 2026

Key Stage 4 at Brentside High School

Dear Student and Parent/Carer,

This booklet is designed to provide information about the options process that our Year 8 students are currently involved in and also about the individual courses that students will study at Key Stage 4 from September 2026. It complements the assemblies that are underway as well as the information that will be shared at the Options Evening event on Thursday, 5 March 2026.

Nationally, all Key Stage 4 qualifications changed between 2018 and 2020. The updated courses have greater content and build in higher levels of challenge; grades are awarded from 9 – 1 instead of the old A* – G, and there has been a reduction in controlled assessment or coursework for many subjects and the complete removal of such in some. This has led to an increase in the weighting of assessment in the terminal examinations. To support students in managing the increased content and challenge whilst maintaining some element of choice and breadth, at Brentside High School, we start the GCSE option courses at the start of Year 9. Staff and students value this additional time.

As part of the options process, there are some subjects that students may elect to stop studying in order to increase the time they spend on their chosen option subjects, as well as their core subjects, in Key Stage 4. Staff in all subjects design the Year 9, 10 and 11 curriculum to ensure that learning is ordered in a way that supports students, giving them access to the key skills they will need to succeed, and plenty of time to practise these skills. It also means that the more demanding content can be spread out over time and that subjects have time to build in revision at the end of the course.

This guide is intended to support students and families in the transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. Brentside High School staff will also support during the process. Some points to consider when making choices are:

- **Ability** – students should recognise their greatest strengths and choose courses where greatest success is possible with the right amount of work.
- **Interest** – success is often related to hard work, which in turn is often related to the interest that a student has in that subject.
- **Career and qualifications** – very few students in Year 8 know exactly which career, higher or further education path they would like to embark on. Later on, certain subjects may become an essential requirement for certain careers, but at this stage, our curriculum is designed to minimise the possibility of restricting future career paths.

- **Advice** – staff will be giving as much guidance as possible to students throughout this period of decision making. However, please do not hesitate to contact your Year Leader or relevant Subject Leader if you require further assistance in making the final decision.
- **Flexibility** – be prepared to have some reserve choices because option subjects will only be timetabled if there are sufficient numbers to make a viable group size.
- **Look at extra-curricular opportunities** that enable engagement in a subject without selecting a related GCSE.

We are committed to personalised learning and believe that all students have:

- Some needs in common with all other students.
- Some needs in common with others in a particular group of students.
- Some needs that are individual.

When we plan the curriculum, we take into consideration:

- The Government's National Curriculum, which makes certain subjects compulsory.
- If it is appropriate for a student to follow a curriculum with additional time given to English and mathematics (the enabling qualifications).
- Our intention to provide a 'broad and balanced' education for all students, whilst providing the opportunity for a degree of specialisation.
- Our intention to enable the individual student to progress to appropriate further study or employment.

A broad and balanced curriculum lies at the heart of a successful GCSE experience, ensuring that students develop the essential knowledge, skills and versatility needed for future study and employment. The highly respected core qualifications of English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, the Sciences and a Modern Foreign Language, provide a strong academic foundation and are widely valued by colleges, universities and employers for the doors they open and the rigour they represent. At our school, 75% of the cohort will study this full suite of core subjects (the Blue Pathway), reflecting our commitment to breadth, aspiration and the long-term benefits these qualifications bring. Together, they equip students with analytical thinking, effective communication, problem-solving ability and cultural understanding, preparing them confidently for a rapidly changing world.

For approximately 25% of students, a similarly broad and ambitious curriculum is followed, ensuring access to most of these qualifications while incorporating an enhanced support pathway (the Silver Pathway). This tailored route may include additional English and Mathematics, targeted provision for students continuing to develop English as an additional language, or focused support in strengthening literacy skills or there may be an alternative course. Each of these elements is designed to underpin success across all GCSE subjects, ensuring that every student is equipped with the foundations they need to thrive academically and to progress confidently to the next stage of their education.

Similarly, when students make their option choices, a small number will select courses that lead to certification rather than a GCSE. These include the Arts Award and Employability Skills qualifications, which provide valuable opportunities to develop creativity, confidence and workplace-ready competencies. Each subject page in this booklet clearly states whether the course leads to a GCSE, BTEC or certification. If you are unsure about the qualification type or what it involves, please do ask during the Options Evening or contact us by email for further guidance.

The staff and students are proud of Brentside High School. We are all high achievers, and the school gives us all the opportunity to do well. With consistent hard work by students and the high-quality teaching and support provided by staff, we are confident that our students will achieve their potential, enabling them to pursue further qualifications and training in today's highly competitive society.

The majority of students at Key Stage 4 at Brentside, on average, make progress within the top 20% of schools nationally. Part of this success is supported by the collaboration between students, families, and the school. We are grateful for your ongoing communication with the school and for your continued support; working together, we are able to support our young people to meet our core values of Respect, Excellence, Achievement, Citizenship and Happiness.

We look forward to working with you all during Key Stage 4 and will provide our students with appropriate teaching and other resources in order to support learning and therefore maximise potential.

Yours faithfully,



Ms Hames
Headteacher

Blue Pathway and Silver Pathway Overview

Blue Pathway

All students following the Blue Pathway will study the following core subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Religious Studies or Citizenship (core elements of the course they do not opt for will be covered during days such as applied learning days).

In line with the Blue Pathway they will study:

- French or Spanish depending upon which they studied in Year 7 or Year 8 or in their previous secondary school
- Geography or History

Students then have one further remaining subject to choose from the open choice displayed in the KS4 curriculum table on page 8 of this booklet.

Silver Pathway

All students following the Silver Pathway will study the following core subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Religious Studies or Citizenship (core elements of the course they do not opt for will be covered during days such as applied learning days).

In line with the Silver Pathway they will study:

- Curriculum support, literacy or English as an additional language. These subjects are part of our additional support and development curriculum and do not result in a GCSE or BTEC qualification but may result in an entry level qualification.
- Alternatively students may opt to study for Arts Award or Employability Skills. We look at these in our Alternative Pathways section of this booklet on page 55.
- Geography or History or we may offer an alternative to tailor curriculum further through discussion with students and families.

Students then have one further remaining subject to choose from the open choice displayed in the KS4 curriculum table on page 8 of this booklet.

Additionally, students are given the opportunity to enter for Heritage Language GCSE or A Level if they read and write in any language that these qualifications exist for nationally.

Discussions will take place with the Year Team, KS3 Assistant Headteacher or other key staff, for those students who will be suitable for this pathway.

Message from the Year Leader

Dear Students,

This is an extremely important time for Year 8 in your school journey. Entering Year 7 and up until now, all subjects have been chosen for you and have been compulsory. This is an exciting time for you as there are some subject choices that each of you can make. You will continue with all of the subjects that are statutory in schools such as English, mathematics, science and physical education. You will choose history or geography from one block, religious studies or citizenship from another and then you will make a choice from the free choice option block consisting of subjects including history, music, health and social care, graphic design and sculpture. We are here to support you, guide you and to advise you throughout this process to ensure you are making the right choices for you.

This booklet has information about every Key Stage 4 subject and gives you a detailed account of what you will be studying, the different subjects that are available to you and subjects that you have not studied before. This booklet will ensure that you are informed of the relevant information and help you to reach the next steps in your school life. It will also inform you of the different career paths that will be available to you depending on the options that you choose. This week in form time, your tutors will also be discussing different career options with you. This is a great chance to think and explore the many career paths available. Pay attention, take part in discussions, and make a note of any questions you have.

There will be an Options Evening on **Thursday, 5 March 2026 from 16:30 – 18:30**, when you and your parents/carers can find out more about the curriculum at Key Stage 4 by visiting subject areas and hearing key information in the presentation. In addition to the Options Evening and this booklet, you will have heard more about the process in assemblies and will have the chance to discuss ideas with your teachers and form tutor. Target Review Day on **Friday, 27 March 2026**, will also be an opportunity to ask any remaining questions.

Please do not hesitate to ask your tutor or myself if you or your parents or carers have any further questions.

I hope that you all enjoy the options process and the journey into your GCSE years.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Chelh
Year Leader

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum Blue Pathway

All students study all the subjects in the 'core' row. They then select one from each of the next five rows.

Core (all)	English and Literature 1	Mathematics 1	Science 1	Physical Education			
Languages (one of)	French 3 (if studied at KS3)	Spanish 3 (if studied at KS3)					
Humanities (one of)	Geography	History					
Open Choice (one of)	Art	Computing	Drama	Food Preparation and Nutrition	Health and Social Care	History	
	Media Studies	Music	Physical Education	Product Design			
Religious Studies or Citizenship				Religious Studies 2	Citizenship 2		
Light grey shaded options do not lead to a GCSE				Dark grey shaded options lead to a GCSE			

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum Silver Pathway

All students study all the subjects in the 'core' row. They then select one from each of the next five rows.

Core (all)	English and Literature 1	Mathematics 1	Science 1	Physical Education			
Silver Pathway subjects	*Curriculum Support	*English as an Additional Language	*Learning Support	*Arts Award	*Employability Skills	*Literacy	
Humanities (one of)	Geography	History					
Open Choice (one of)	Art	Computing	Drama	Food Preparation and Nutrition	Health and Social Care	History	
	Media Studies	Music	Physical Education	Product Design			
Religious Studies or Citizenship				Religious Studies 2	Citizenship 2		
Light grey shaded options do not lead to a GCSE				Dark grey shaded options lead to a GCSE			

- 1 The core subjects of English, mathematics and science lead to a GCSE.
- 2 Students choose either religious studies **or** citizenship at GCSE.
- 3 Students following the Blue Pathway will continue studying French or Spanish depending on which they studied in KS3 leading to French GCSE or Spanish GCSE.

Subjects marked * are part of our additional support and development curriculum and do not result in a GCSE or BTEC qualification but may result in an entry level qualification. Discussions will take place with the Year Team, KS3 Assistant Headteacher and those students who will be suitable for this pathway. There are also opportunities for students to achieve additional qualifications in many heritage languages. Students following the Silver Pathway can opt to study for the Arts Award or Employability Skills course if they wish to. When we feel that curriculum support, English as an Additional Language or Learning Support will be more supportive we will discuss this with students and their families.

Within each subject, there may be different routes depending on a student's aptitude for the subject, for example: some students will sit more GCSEs within a subject area than others; some subjects have tiered examinations offering Higher (9 - 4) and Foundation (5 - 1) tiers.

Students cannot select the same subject twice in different rows.

Glossary of terms in this booklet:

Term	Explanation
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education: Qualification at Levels 1 and 2 (9 – 1 grades). All GCSE courses are worth 1 GCSE.
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council: These are applied learning qualifications related to the world of work. All BTECs are worth the equivalent of 1 GCSE.
Level 1 course	This can be a BTEC, GCSE or other recognised Level 1 qualification and is worth a 4 – 1 grade.
Level 2 course	This can be a BTEC, GCSE or other recognised Level 2 qualification and is worth a 9 – 5 grade.
16+ progression	This refers to the options students aged 16-19 have that are supported by the qualification they are taking at ages 13-16.
Tier of entry	Some subjects have two tiers of entry, and the exam papers/assessments structures are slightly different at each tier even though the content studied is usually the same. Students' grades throughout the course influence which tier they are entered for.
Higher tier	This allows students to achieve 9 – 4 grades.
Foundation tier	This allows students to achieve 5 – 1 grades.

Key Dates for the Option Process:

February and March: Tutor guidance, subject assemblies, options assemblies, subject input
March: Options booklet introduction by tutors and copies to students
March: Tutor time use of booklets and discussion of options
March 5: Options Evening for students and parents/carers (16:30-18:30)
March 27: Target Review Day: individual conversations with students, tutors and parents/carers
March 27: Deadline for Options Forms to be submitted

Grades at Key Stage 4

Students with older siblings may know that grades used to be letters from A* to G, with A* being the highest grade. Over the past few years, the grading system has been changed nationally at GCSE and grades are now awarded as numbers, from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade.

We include the table below as we think that some parents and students would like to know how the new numbers compare to the old grades.

New GCSE grading structure	Old GCSE grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5 Grade 5 (a 'good pass' – DfE)	
4 Grade 4 is the equivalent of Grade C in the old system	Grade C is 'good pass' in the old system C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve grade 4 and above as previously achieved grade C and above in the old system. Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve grade 7 and above as previously achieved grade A and above. The bottom of grade 1 is aligned with the bottom of the old grade G. BTECs continue to have the following grades:

Distinction*	Equivalent to GCSE 8.5 / A*
Distinction	Equivalent to GCSE 7 / A
Merit	Equivalent to GCSE 5.5 / B
Pass	Equivalent to GCSE 4 / C

Core

All students take these subjects, which are part of the statutory National Curriculum at Key Stage 4.

Subject	Contact	Page
Citizenship	Ms Rosenblatt	13-14
English Language and Literature	Ms Al-Sikab	15-19
Mathematics	Ms Nagra	20
Physical Education Core	Mr Reynolds	21
Religious Studies	Ms Sarpi	22-23
Science	Dr Malik	24-25
Modern Foreign Languages	Mrs Sáenz	26-27

Modern Foreign Languages

Most students will continue studying the foreign language studied in Years 7 and 8.

Citizenship and Religious Studies

Students will study for a GCSE in one subject. All statutory content for the subject they are not studying at GCSE level will be covered at set times throughout the academic year.

CITIZENSHIP STUDIES



Contact: Ms Rosenblatt

Course Description

All students study citizenship as part of their Key Stage 3 curriculum with approximately half of Year 8 going on to further specialise and take the course as a full, three-year GCSE which is examined at the end of Year 11. The course builds on the Year 7 and 8 curriculum and provides students with a solid platform from which to study GCSE Citizenship. Students learn about community and society, rights, power and democracy, the operation of government at the local and national level, the legal system, and the role of the UK in the wider world. They explore and learn about a range of topical issues with political, social, and ethical dimensions, and within local and global contexts.

The course content is divided into five themes:

1. Theme A: Living together in the UK
2. Theme B: Democracy at work in the UK
3. Theme C: Law and justice
4. Theme D: Power and influence
5. Theme E: Taking citizenship action

Assessment

Paper 1: 1 hour 45 minutes (50%)

This covers Themes A, B and C

Paper 2: 1 hour 45 minutes (50%)

This covers Themes D and E with 15 mark synoptic questions that link several themes together.

The Theme E: The Taking Citizenship Action unit is a project-based element of the course, where students are required to carry out an investigation and action. This is based on themes and issues arising from the course content and is centred around either a social action or raising awareness of an issue. The purpose of Theme E is to provide a useful, skills-based, experience for students to learn from trying to make a difference themselves, particularly around teamwork, research, advocacy, and evaluation; key life skills that are vital when navigating adult and working life and an ever-changing world.

Qualification Target

GCSE in citizenship studies within the Edexcel 1CS0 specification.

16+ Progression

The course content provides a foundation for further academic or vocational study in a wide range of areas such as government and politics, sociology, law, media, history, geography, religious studies, health and social care or business studies.

Careers Information

This course develops several key skills and is extremely useful for any student wishing to progress to further education in any area requiring independent learning and research, or those entering employment that wish to further develop transferable skills such as communicating, teamwork, action planning and evaluating. It provides knowledge and skills useful for a wide range of careers such as public service, politics, journalism, law, or social care. Most importantly, citizenship provides students with the opportunity to debate important current issues, develop knowledge of how our country is governed and ensure all students have a clear respect for British values. This course helps students to become well-rounded and informed citizens.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE



Contact: Ms Al-Sikab

Course Description

Students will take both GCSE English literature and GCSE English language.

There are two English language examination papers at the end of Year 11. Marks gained in the examinations constitute 100% of the total GCSE English language marks.

GCSE in English language enables students to:

- Read fluently and with good understanding, a wide range of texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, including literature and literary non-fiction as well as other writing such as reviews and journalism.
- Read and evaluate texts critically and make comparisons between texts.
- Summarise and synthesise information or ideas from texts.
- Use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing.
- Write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately.
- Use grammar correctly and punctuate and spell accurately.
- Acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.
- Listen to and understand spoken language and use spoken Standard English effectively.

Assessment

Reading Paper 1: Explorations in creative reading and writing

Section A (25%)

Students are required to show understanding of one prose (story) extract (about 600 – 1000 lines) of literature assessed through a range of structured questions.

Section B (25%) Prose writing

Students are required to complete one creative writing task from a choice of two.

Reading Paper 2: Writers' viewpoints and perspectives

Section A (25%)

Students are required to show their understanding of one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text, assessed through a range of structured questions.

Section B (25%) Writing

Students are required to complete one compulsory transactional or persuasive writing task in which they give their opinion on a 'controversial' statement.

Spoken language assessment (0%)

Students are required to produce a presentation/speech (8 – 10 minutes), including responses to questions and feedback. This is an individual task and will be video recorded as per exam board expectations.

Achievement in spoken language will be reported as part of the qualification.

Qualification Target

The course will lead to a GCSE in English language.

16+ Progression

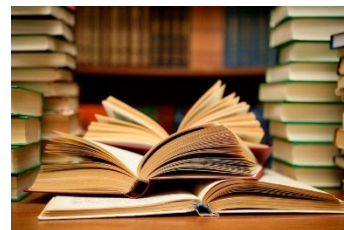
English language will help you in any chosen further study or career path. If you would like to continue to study English at A Level, it is a requirement that you obtain at least a 6 in both English language and English literature at GCSE.

Careers Information

Succeeding in English language will open many doors in terms of your career. For any career path you choose, it will certainly be expected that you will be able to communicate with others through reading, writing, speaking and listening.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Contact: Ms Al-Sikab



Course Description

Students will take both GCSE English literature and GCSE English language.

There are two English literature examination papers at the end of Year 11. Marks gained in the examinations constitute 100% of the total GCSE English literature marks.

Students are **not** permitted to take copies of the set texts into the examination.

The AQA GCSE in English literature encourages students to develop knowledge and skills in reading, writing and critical thinking. It provides students with opportunities to read widely for pleasure across a range of high-quality texts in the genres of prose, poetry, and drama and to develop an understanding of how literature is both rich and influential. It enables students to make connections across their reading and develop a clear understanding of literary works and also prepares them for the study of literature at a higher level.

GCSE in English literature involves:

Reading:

- literal and inferential comprehension: understanding a word, phrase or sentence in context, exploring aspects of plot, characterisation, events and settings, distinguishing between what is stated explicitly and what is implied, explaining motivation, sequence of events, and the relationship between actions or events.

Critical reading:

- identifying the theme and distinguishing between themes, supporting a point of view by referring to evidence in the text, recognising the possibility of and evaluating different responses to a text, using understanding of writers' social, historical and cultural contexts to inform evaluation, making an informed personal response that derives from analysis and evaluation of the text.

Evaluation of a writer's choice of vocabulary, grammatical and structural features:

- analysing and evaluating how language, structure, form and presentation contribute to quality and impact, using linguistic and literary terminology for such evaluation.

Comparing texts:

- comparing and contrasting texts studied, referring, where relevant, to theme, characterisation, context (where known), style and literary quality, comparing two texts critically with respect to the above.

Writing:

- producing clear and coherent text, writing effectively about literature for a range of purposes, such as, to describe, explain, summarise, argue, analyse and evaluate, discussing and maintaining a point of view, selecting and emphasising key points, using relevant quotation and using detailed textual references.

Accurate Standard English:

- accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Assessment

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th century novel

Section A (20%) Shakespeare – Macbeth

One question based on the reading on a Shakespearean text. Students will be required to write a detailed essay about an extract from the play and then write about the play as a whole.

Section B (20%) 19th Century Prose – A Christmas Carol

One question based on the reading of a novel. Students will be required to write a detailed essay about an extract from the novel and then to write about the novel as a whole.

Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry

Section A (20%) Modern Texts

Students select one essay question out of a choice of two (one will be on character the other theme) on An Inspector Calls (Priestley)

Section B (20%) Poetry

Students write a comparative poetry essay on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster – power and conflict.

Section C (20%) Unseen Poetry

One question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.

Qualification Target

The course will lead to a GCSE in English literature.

16+ Progression

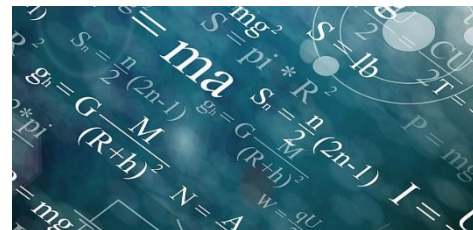
English literature will help you in any chosen course or career path. If you would like to continue to study English at A Level, it is a requirement that you obtain at least a 6 in both English literature and English language at GCSE.

Careers Information

Succeeding in English literature will open many doors in terms of your career. For any career path you choose, it will certainly be expected that you will be able to communicate with others through reading, writing, speaking and listening.

MATHEMATICS

Contact: Ms Nagra



Course Description

The mathematics course follows the GCSE Edexcel syllabus. This continues naturally from the various areas of mathematics met in Key Stage 3: number, algebra, ratio, proportion and rates of change, geometry and measures, statistics and probability.

Assessment

Students' understanding is assessed through written examinations (100% of the qualification) consisting of three papers: one non-calculator paper and two calculator papers. The three papers will also assess the functional elements of mathematics.

Qualification Target

This course leads to a GCSE in mathematics.

Levels of entry are as follows:

Higher tier	Grades available: 9 – 4
Foundation tier:	Grades available: 5 – 1

The level of entry will depend on the ability demonstrated by the individual student.

Set 1 will also follow the AQA Level 2 Further Mathematics GCSE qualification which will bridge the gap between GCSE and A Level mathematics. The course embeds and deepens the algebraic content.

16+ Progression

Provisionally, GCSE mathematics at Grade 5 or above is an essential requirement for almost any form of higher or further education. If you would like to continue with mathematics at A Level, you will need to follow the higher tier and attain a Grade 6 or above.

Careers Information

This course will enhance many areas of study and many careers require some form of mathematical qualification. If you are considering a career in accountancy, banking or computing, you must ensure that you gain a good grade at GCSE. All A Level courses require a good grade at GCSE for entry and mathematics is valued as a key life skill.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: CORE

Contact: *Mr Reynolds*



Course Description

Core PE will continue for all students throughout Key Stage 4. Students will receive two hours of core lessons a week that will continue in the same manner as they experienced in Years 7 and 8.

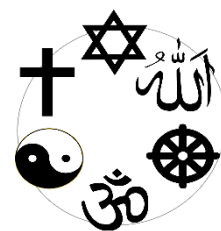
Students will participate in a full range of activities such as fitness, rugby, football, netball, basketball and athletics.

Please note that if your child has chosen GCSE PE then core PE is in addition to this, not instead of.

Assessment

There is no formal examination in Core PE.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES



Contact: Ms Sarpi

Course Description

All students study Religious Studies as part of their Key Stage 3 curriculum with approximately half of Year 8 going on to further specialise and take the course as a full, three-year GCSE (AQA examination board) which is examined at the end of Year 11.

The RS GCSE course covers a wide range of issues from different perspectives. Students are made aware of common themes and points of difference across world religions and the society in which they live.

Students develop their critical thinking skills, literacy skills, tolerance, and respect for others. They are expected to explore religious facts and cultural diversity and develop their personal response to them. They are encouraged to explore and make ethical decisions for themselves. The course offers all students from a religious or non-religious background the opportunity to discuss common themes in a safe but challenging environment.

We will study the beliefs and practices of Christianity and Islam, including topics such as marriage, the roles of men and women, sexism, war, justice, abortion, euthanasia, death penalty and beliefs about God (to name just a few).

Assessment

GCSE RS students will sit two papers.

Paper 1 focuses on Christianity and Islam.

Paper 2 focuses on themes. The themes we cover are matters pertaining to religion and life, crime and punishment, peace and conflict and relationships.

There is no coursework in RS. However, there are regular assessments in Years 9 – 11, which support the examination process. The course is assessed in the summer of Year 11, by examination only.

Qualification Target

A GCSE in religious studies.

16+ Progression

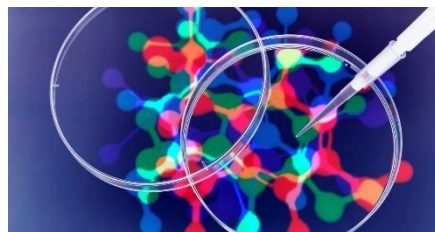
Throughout the course, students develop a range of skills which are useful in the world of work, such as critical thinking and analysis. They develop their written skills as well as their oral communication skills. A GCSE in RS is relevant to a variety of post-16

options, as the students will be working with others from a wide range of different beliefs and perspectives to their own. This develops empathy and listening skills. Students can later progress to A Level in religious studies that builds upon the GCSE qualification.

Careers Information

The course in RS is an invaluable qualification for the world of work as it enables students to become more aware of the society in which they live. Great emphasis is placed on people and the diversity that exists within the workplace and the wider community. It underlines the link between the right of the individual, the law and respect. In essence, it provides students with life skills that are invaluable. Students who choose to study RS as their GCSE go on to pursue careers in Law, Medicine, Teaching, Policy Writing, Human Resources, Publishing (to name a few).

SCIENCE



Contact: Dr Malik

- **COMBINED SCIENCE**
- **SEPARATE SCIENCE**

Course Description

All students will sit six science written examination papers at the end of Year 11. Two papers in each of biology, chemistry and physics. Some students will be entered for the GCSE combined science pathway, others for separate science pathway in biology, chemistry and physics.

- **Combined science** – students will be awarded **two** GCSE grades.
- **Separate sciences** – students will receive **three** GCSE grades, one for each of the science disciplines: biology, chemistry and physics.

The separate science pathway is generally followed by more able students who perform well throughout the years. Provisional decisions of the pathway and tier of entry that students will follow will be made at the end of Year 10. Final decisions of pathways and tiers will be confirmed following mock examinations in Year 11.

Science homework is set three times every two weeks, once for each science discipline. Homework will consist of Seneca assignments, written tasks, research or revision and learning key facts.

Assessment

Students following the separate science pathway will sit longer examination papers to reflect the additional content they will have studied.

Scientific investigations and practical work are an essential component of all GCSE science qualifications and students will undertake a number of core practicals during the course. These are important and are assessed through written papers.

Students on both pathways will sit either foundation tier which covers grades 5 – 1, or higher tier which covers grades 9 – 4.

Qualification Target

The combined science award results in two GCSE grades.
Separate science students will achieve three GCSE grades, one in each science discipline.

16+ Progression

If you would like to continue to study science at A Level, it is a requirement that, in addition to at least grade 5 in English and grade 6 in mathematics, you obtain at least a high grade 6 in the separate science discipline that you wish to pursue or a high 6-6 grade in combined science.

For BTEC Applied science courses, at least a grade 4 is required in combined science, English and mathematics GCSEs.

Careers Information

A good grade in science is increasingly becoming an essential requirement for many careers. GCSE science at grade 4 or 5 is required to become a nurse or a primary school teacher. A Level chemistry or biology is usually required for entry to courses relating to healthcare including medicine and pharmacy. A Level physics is usually required for entry to engineering-related courses. Careers such as law and journalism consider a science background to be an advantage, due to the requirement for a combination of highly developed literacy, numeracy, analytical and problem-solving skills.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES: FRENCH & SPANISH



Contact: Mrs Sáenz – Subject Leader

Course Description

The majority of students at Brentside High School are expected to continue studying the foreign language which they began in Year 7 through to GCSE level. Our aim at Brentside is for students to develop competency in the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, alongside teaching essential grammatical enhancement, translation skills and an enriching cultural background of the countries where the language is spoken.

- The world is clearly more international – it is increasingly easy and widespread to work in another country – where you will need to use a different language in everyday life.
- A GCSE qualification in a language shows that you have a wealth of transferable skills and that you can master one of the more academic GCSE subjects on offer.
- At Brentside, we are extremely close to major international airports and London is a major tourist and commercial centre. We need an ever-diverse body of linguists!
- If you are considering going on to university, there are many interesting courses which combine a language with another subject as well as language courses which offer the possibilities of travel and work abroad. Some university courses still require a GCSE language qualification as part of the entry requirement.

Assessment

We carefully create our curriculum based on the Pearson Edexcel GCSE course. Students are assessed in four separate skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing; each worth 25% of the final grade. All examinations occur at the end of Year 11 and entry is either at Foundation Tier (GCSE Grades available 1 – 4) or Higher Tier (Grades 5 – 9).

Qualification Target

Both the French and Spanish courses lead to a full GCSE qualification at the end of Year 11.

16+ Progression

The Sixth Form at Brentside offers A Level courses in both French and Spanish for students who wish to follow a further academic course of study post GCSE on the Pearson Edexcel A Level course.

Careers Information

Your chances of getting many professional jobs will be increased if you can offer your employer a recognised GCSE qualification in a modern foreign language. A wide range of areas including travel and tourism, the hotel trade, catering, retail and marketing in all fields, as well as professions such as medicine, law and teaching; all need people who can offer extra languages.

Heritage Languages

If you can speak, read, and write another language at home, and would like the chance to gain an additional qualification, please look at the 'Heritage Languages' section on page 56 and speak to Mrs Sáenz about this separately as she will be able to organise this for your child when they are in Year 11.

Selection within pathways

Subject	Contact	Page
Art, Craft and Design	Miss Naeem	29-31
Computer Science	Mr Fruzza	32-33
Design Technology: Product Design	Miss Naeem	34-35
Drama	Ms Northcott	36-37
Food Preparation and Nutrition	Miss Naeem	38-40
Geography	Ms S Shah	41-42
Health & Social Care	Ms Yatirawana	43-44
History	Mr Kamoga	45-46
Media Studies	Miss Naeem	47-48
Music (Traditional)	Mrs Reddaway	49-50
Music Technology	Mrs Reddaway	51-52
Physical Education GCSE	Mr Reynolds	53-54
Alternative Pathways	Mr Sandelson	55
English as an Additional Language	Miss Shah	56
Heritage Languages	Mrs Sáenz	56

ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN



Contact: Miss Naeem

Course Description

Students will have the opportunity to choose an area of art and design to specialise in. Students study options are fine art, sculpture, textiles, graphic design.



During the course, students will work towards practical briefs in their chosen discipline. It is an opportunity for students to develop their skills and creative ideas and concepts using a range of materials. Afterschool clubs and catch-up sessions allow students to work across the year groups and support each other.

Along with the practical elements, lessons are planned to investigate a range of diverse, contemporary artists, analysing their work making links to the students own art work.

Assessment

GCSE art and design consists of two units of controlled assessment/portfolio which aim to develop the skills essential to the subject whilst fully meeting the four assessment objectives.

Unit 1: Personal portfolio in art and design (60%) coursework

Unit 2: Externally set assignment in art and design (40%) consisting of preparatory studies developing work in sketchbooks and a practical exam of 10 hours.

Qualification Target

The course will lead to a GCSE in art and design.

16+ Progression

Those students wishing to progress to A Level or Level 3 National Diploma courses in art and design will require a minimum of a grade 5 in GCSE art and design.

Careers Information

At Brentside High we have developed a series of industry links with established companies as RIBA, Found Futures and local galleries and more where students have the opportunity to work with visitors and develop their interest in the subject along with making key decisions about a career in the creative sector. There are an increasingly wide range of courses at universities that offer not only traditional art and design courses such as graphic communications design, fashion and textiles, product design and fine art, but also those combining practical skills with business application including broadcasting, communication training, advertising and business promotion.

Art, Craft and Design

The GCSE in Art, Craft and Design is a broad and flexible course that requires students to develop an appreciation of the creative process through a practical response, using a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional media, materials, techniques and processes. Students will explore critically how artists, craftspeople and designers from diverse cultures, times and societies have arrived at solutions and communicated meaning using the formal elements. Students will use this knowledge when developing new ideas, recording observations and creating outcomes which fully realise their personal intentions.

Fine Art

Fine Art may be defined as work developed primarily to communicate aesthetic, intellectual or purely conceptual ideas and meaning, rather than to serve a practical or commercial function. For example, work could be the outcome of personal experiences, thoughts and feelings, or simply to observe and record people, places and things in new and unique ways. Fine art will demonstrate an understanding and application of formal elements and creative skills, including mark-making. Students will use visual communication sensitively and thoughtfully to document their artistic journey and fully support their intentions. Students will also understand that Fine Art practitioners may work to client commissions or undertake self-directed projects. They will need good communication skills in order to liaise with clients, and promote and exhibit their own work.

Graphic Communication

Graphic Communication introduces students to a visual way of conveying information, ideas and emotions, using a range of graphic media, processes, techniques and elements such as colour, icons, images, typography and photographs. Students

should conduct primary and secondary investigations during their design development, and explore traditional and/or new technologies. They should also consider the use of signs and symbols, and the balance between aesthetic and commercial considerations. Students will also understand that Graphic Design practitioners may work within a small team environment or work as freelance practitioners. They may be responsible for a particular aspect of the Design or Production process or for the entire design cycle. They will need good communication skills in order to liaise with clients and to promote themselves as graphic designers.

Textile Design

Textile Design is a versatile practice that involves the creation, selection, manipulation and application of a range of materials such as fibres, yarns and fabrics, and processes such as weaving, knitting, stitching and printing to create designs and products. Textile designers work in multi-disciplinary ways to create ideas, materials and techniques for different applications. Textile designers also play an important role in the world of fashion, theatre, performance and retail. Students will also understand that Textile Design practitioners may work within a team environment in a large commercial manufacturing company, on a single aspect of the design or making process, or work as freelance practitioners on commissions or self-directed projects. They will need good communication skills in order to liaise with clients and to promote themselves as textiles designers and makers.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Contact: Mr Fruzza



Course Description

This is an OCR GCSE Computer Science course. This is a technical course and is mostly suitable for students in sets 1-3 mathematics and science with a keen interest in computer programming.

GCSE in computer science will enable students to:

- Develop their understanding of current and emerging technologies and how they work and apply this knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts.
- Understand the use of algorithms in computer programs to solve problems using programming.
- Use their knowledge and understanding of computer technology to become independent and make informed decisions about the use and the implications of different technologies.
- Develop computer programs to solve problems.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of computer programs.

Assessment

Component 1: Computer systems (1 hour 30-minutes, worth 50% of total GCSE)

Includes: systems architecture, memory, storage, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, protocols and layers, network security, systems software, moral, social, legal, cultural and environmental concerns

Component 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming (1 hour 30-minutes, worth 50% of total GCSE)

Includes: translators and facilities of languages, algorithms, high and low-level programming, computational logic and data representation

Programming project (not assessed): Programming

Includes: programming techniques, design, development, effectiveness and efficiency, technical understanding, testing, evaluation and conclusion

Qualification Target

This course leads to a GCSE in computer science.

The written papers will have a total weighting of 100%.

Upon completion of the course, students will receive a GCSE grade (9-1).

16+ Progression

The course can lead, with further development, to an A Level in computing.

Careers Information

Web development, computer animation, game development, computer programmer and software developing.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY – PRODUCT DESIGN

Contact: Miss Naeem

Course Description

In GCSE Product Design is an exciting and hands-on subject that allows you to bring your creative ideas to life! If you enjoy problem-solving, designing, and making real-world products, this course is perfect for you. You will develop skills in sketching, 3D modeling, and working with materials like wood, plastic, paper/boards and smart materials. Not only will you build technical knowledge, but you will also improve your creativity, resilience, and ability to think critically, these are valuable skills for any future career. Whether you dream of becoming a designer, engineer, or innovator, GCSE Product Design will give you the foundation to succeed. Take the opportunity to design the future, choose GCSE Product Design!

In the first half of the course, students undertake a range of design and make projects to develop knowledge and understanding. Processes including designing using a range of CAD software and making use of CAD/CAM equipment including a laser cutter/3D printer, as well as using machine and hand tools.

In the second half of the course, students concentrate on a personal project of 35 guided learning hours (GLHs).

Assessment

Coursework (50%)

A folder of work and a final product demonstrating knowledge of core technical principles, specialist technical principles and designing and making principles.

Final examination (50%)

A written examination of two hours at the end of the course.

Qualification Target

The course will lead to a GCSE in Design and Technology – Product Design.

16+ Progression

Those students wishing to progress to A Level or Level 3 courses in product design will require a minimum of a grade 6 in GCSE design technology.

Careers Information

Those thinking of pursuing a career either in the design or engineering sectors or in the craft or construction industries would be well advised to take this course. Product design including CAD, engineering, spatial design and architecture are areas of study that former students of this course have gone on to study at university.

.

DRAMA



Contact: Ms Northcott

Course Description

GCSE drama follows on from the Key Stage 3 curriculum. Students will have the opportunity to develop their drama skills in order to explore, create, perform, analyse and evaluate drama. A love of working collaboratively with peers is essential for all aspects of the course; students will frequently work in groups, however, they will also work individually. Drama is an academic, as well as a practical subject, and the development of knowledge and skills through written work is integral to the journey through the course.

Component 1: Devising Theatre

- Create, develop and rehearse a devised piece from a stimulus, in groups.
- Perform this devised piece.
- Analyse and evaluate both the devising process and performance, through a written portfolio (1000 words) and evaluation (1 ½ hour, exam conditions)

Component 2: Performing from a Text

- Perform two extracts from a performance text for a visiting examiner.
- Write a short statement of dramatic intentions about each performance piece.

Component 3: Interpreting Theatre

- Practical exploration and study of one complete performance text.
- Developing detailed ideas and notes on how you would perform, direct and design for the different roles and scenes across the text.
- Analyse and evaluate live and digital theatre productions.

Assessment

Component 1: 60 marks (40%) - practical and written coursework

Component 2: 60 marks (20%)

Component 3: 1 hour 30 minutes written examination – 60 marks (40%)

Qualification Target

The course will lead to a GCSE (9 – 1) in drama, following the EDUQAS specification.

16+ Progression

The course provides a clear progression route to study post-16 A Level Drama and Theatre studies, which is offered at Brentside High School.

Careers Information

Drama is a vibrant and exciting subject that complements the study of any other subject due to the extensive range of skills developed. These will prepare students for careers in diverse fields, including management, journalism, law, teaching and health careers, including medicine.

Drama-specific career paths can be found in the industries of theatre, film, TV, training providers, events and computer entertainment. Some of these are actors, writers, directors, producers, radio presenters, TV presenters, sound designers, advertisement voiceovers, lighting designers, newsreaders, stage managers, make-up artists, costume designers, artistic directors of theatre companies or festivals.

Studying Drama enables students to develop key transferable skills in written and spoken communication, alongside problem solving and teamwork skills.

FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION



Contact: Miss Naeem

Course Description

Do you love preparing, cooking, and tasting food? Are you curious about different ingredients and food products? Would you like to learn where our food originates? If so, this subject could be perfect for you!

This course will help you explore the fundamentals of food science, develop essential cooking skills, and gain a solid understanding of nutrition. Additionally, working in food and nutrition offers hands-on opportunities for research development. Practical work is a key component of both class activities and coursework, adding extra value to your learning experience!

The food preparation and nutrition GCSE is an exciting and creative course developed by OCR which focuses on knowledge and practical cooking skills. This GCSE course builds on work introduced in Key Stage 3. The course will ensure students develop an understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials. Students will also learn about British and international culinary traditions, food security and food safety. At the heart of the qualification is a focus on developing practical cookery skills and a strong understanding of nutrition.

The specification will encourage students to develop a broad range of knowledge, understanding and technical skills related to food preparation and nutrition. The emphasis is upon enabling students to make connections between theory and practice and apply understanding of food and nutrition when preparing and cooking food. The specification will cover the following topics:

Nutrition:

- Students develop knowledge and understanding of the functional properties and chemical processes as well as the nutritional content of food and drinks. Students understand the relationship between diet, nutrition and health, including the physiological and psychological effects of poor diet and health.

Food: food provenance and food choice:

- Students understand the economic, environmental, ethical and socio-cultural influences on food availability, production processes, and diet and health choices.

Cooking and food preparation:

- Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of functional and nutritional properties, sensory qualities and microbiological food safety considerations when preparing, processing, storing, cooking and serving food.

Skill requirements: preparation and cooking techniques:

- Students demonstrate effective and safe cooking skills by planning, preparing and cooking using a variety of food commodities, cooking techniques and equipment. Students understand and explore a range of ingredients and processes from different culinary traditions (traditional British and international), to inspire new ideas or modify existing recipes.

Students will need to provide their own ingredients and will be cooking on a regular basis.

Assessment

The final GCSE grade is comprised of 50% written exam and 50% non-exam assessment (formally known as controlled assessment).

The written exam is sat at the end of Year 11. It is composed of 10 questions varying in styles.

The non-exam assessment should be completed in Year 11. This will be made up of two tasks:

Task 1: The food investigation (15%)

This will be a scientific experiment. The title will be set by the exam board.

Task 2: The food preparation assessment (35%)

This task will involve planning, preparing, cooking and presenting food. Again, a title will be released by the exam board in Year 11. 70 of the 105 marks will come from preparing, cooking and presenting a menu of three dishes in a three-hour cooking exam. Students will be expected to plan how this will be achieved.

Both non-exam assessments will be completed in Year 11. Deadlines will be set throughout the year to ensure these are completed by the April of Year 11.

Qualification Target

The course will lead to a GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition.

16+ Progression

Students may wish to consider a college-based vocational course or an apprenticeship within the catering or hospitality industries.

Careers Information

In addition to building essential organisational and practical skills for everyday life, this subject is particularly valuable for those pursuing careers in the food industry. It also appeals to individuals interested in fields related to food and nutrition, such as sports nutrition, health careers, and even marketing and advertising. The course content overlaps with subjects like science and PE, which can be beneficial when revising for exams.

GEOGRAPHY



Contact: Ms S Shah

‘Geography is all around us. Where we come from, what we do, what we eat, how we move about and how we shape our future are all the concern of the geographer’ – Michael Palin, journalist, traveller, comedian, broadcaster.

Course Description

Are you interested in studying geography further? You should be, because geography tackles the big issues:

- Our links with other countries
- Environmental responsibility
- Improving living standards
- Cultural understanding

The world in which we live is likely to change more in the next 50 years than it has ever done before. Geography explains why and helps students to prepare for those changes. The skills that geography fosters will also help in future employment. Geography encourages flexible thinking, and as it is less likely that we will spend all our lives in one job, flexible thinking is a great advantage.

GCSE geography builds on the knowledge and skills that students learn in Key Stage 3. It is an enjoyable subject where students can voice their opinions, have frequent debates on current issues and make decisions to solve local and global problems. They will have the opportunity to use ICT for internet work and map work as well as going on field trips.

Following AQA examination board, we study:

- Physical geography: The challenges of the natural hazards (Tectonic and Hydro-metrological), The living world (Ecosystem), Physical landscape of the UK (Coasts and rivers)
- Human geography: Urban issues and challenges in the developing (India) and developed world (UK), The challenges of the economic world, The challenges of the resource management (Water)

Assessment

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment (35% of total mark)

Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment (35% of total mark)

Paper 3: Geographical applications and skills (30% of total mark)

Qualification Target

The course will lead to a GCSE in geography.

16+ Progression

Geography offers all sorts of knowledge and skills that are useful in the world of work whatever you do. You can continue to study geography at A Level and then at university.

Careers Information

Geography graduates from university are among the most employable and highest paid. Possible careers include working in TV, journalism, travel agent, estate agent, surveyor, accountant, management, finance, law, geographical information systems work and much more. The skills that you learn in geography will be good for any type of job. These include working with others, debating, working alone, researching, fieldwork, ICT skills, numeracy skills, literacy skills and analysing information.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE



Contact: Ms Yatirawana

Course Description

Students will cover three units.

Unit 1: Human lifespan and development

How do people grow and develop through their lives? How can factors such as lifestyle choices and relationships affect this? Understanding these processes is essential knowledge and understanding for health and social care practitioners. Students will investigate how, in real situations, human development is affected by different factors and that people deal differently with life events.

Unit 2: Health and social care services and values

At some point in your life, you will need health care. It is likely that you have already had an appointment with a doctor. If you did, you are described as a 'service user'. That means you have been given health care from a person who was trained to give you care – they are called 'service providers'. You might know someone who needs social care. This is different from health care, although both types of care are very closely linked. People who need social care are not always ill – they may be unable to do everyday activities, like getting dressed, or feeding themselves, or need help with their day-to-day lives. Students study and practically explore health and social care services and how they meet the needs of real service users. They also develop skills in applying care values.

Unit 3: Health and wellbeing

What does being healthy actually mean? It can mean different things to different people. You might think 'healthy' is not having to visit the doctor, but an older person might consider it being mobile and able to get out and about, being happy and having friends. Students will study the factors that affect health and wellbeing, learning about physiological and lifestyle indicators and how to design a health and wellbeing improvement plan.

Assessment

This qualification is modular and is split into three units. One is an externally assessed unit under examination conditions and the other two are internally assessed.

Qualification Target

The course is a BTEC Technical Award Level 1/2 and is equivalent to one GCSE in Health and Social Care and is examined by the Pearson examination board.

A Technical Award is a Key Stage 4 qualification to be taken alongside GCSEs. It is the same size as a GCSE and has the same value as a GCSE. It counts in the DfE performance tables and offers an equivalent level of rigour and challenge as a traditional GCSE. The Technical Awards give students insight into the professional sector and develop transferable skills that will be useful for further study whilst also recognising their achievements and efforts at all levels.

16+ Progression

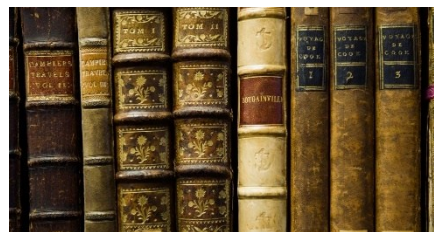
A Level options including health and social care, psychology, sociology and other humanities subjects (requires five 9 – 4 GCSE grades including English and maths).
Level 3 BTEC/CTEC course (requires four 9 – 4 GCSE grades).

Careers Information

Students that have completed similar courses have pursued higher education to become nurses, midwives, mental health workers, teachers and counsellors.

HISTORY

Contact: Mr Kamoga



‘If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday’ – Pearl Buck, Civil Rights and Women’s Rights Activist.

Course Description

Following the Edexcel History GCSE syllabus, students will study: Medicine in Britain, c. 1250 – present *and* The British Sector of the Western Front, 1914-18: Injuries, Treatment and the Trenches, Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941-91: Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-39 and Henry VIII and his Ministers 1509-40.

These options allow students to gain a wide-ranging understanding of different societies and periods in history. Students will learn how medicine progressed from operations without anaesthetics to our modern-day, high-tech world; how Hitler was able to gain power legally in Germany: the intrigues of the Tudor Court; the development of the Cold War and the ensuing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Assessment

Paper 1: 1 hour 20-minute written examination (30% of total mark)

Paper 2: 1 hour 50-minute written examination (40% of total mark)

Paper 3: 1 hour 30-minute written examination (30% of total mark)

Examinations will be a mixture of knowledge and source-based questions.

Qualification Target

The course will lead to a GCSE in history.

16+ Progression

History is an excellent choice for those wishing to stay on for further study after Year 11. It is good preparation for A Level history, sociology, geography, classical civilisation and English literature. It also provides a good background for those wishing to study the sciences as it demonstrates the ability to consider different opinions.

Careers Information

History is a highly regarded subject by both employers and universities. It shows the ability to understand social, political, and economic issues, relate to the lives of others, analyse evidence and put forward a well-supported argument. History is very good preparation for all careers, especially in law, management, the Civil Service, local and

national government, journalism and business. For those wishing to follow careers in medicine and science, the skills developed throughout the course are very useful, for example, doctors need to be able to read medical studies and journals and judge how trustworthy the information is; a skill developed in GCSE history.

MEDIA STUDIES



Contact: Miss Naeem

Course Description

The Film and Media Studies Department offers a wide range of learning experiences. Students will have the opportunity to study 9 different mediums including TV, Games, Online media, Magazines and more; looking at how they are constructed, sold, and promoted to the target audience, with the aim of understanding how and why. The course has a large practical element to it with 30% set aside for practical assessment and in Year 9 you will get to experience all of the 9 mediums available and, in Year 10, will then have the opportunity to create your own media product based on the areas of media which we have studied.

Students should be creative and critical thinkers with analytical skills and cultural knowledge. This is a course which embraces both theoretical knowledge and creativity where students will learn and explore media texts through a range of written and practical tasks. All of us that have consumed media have some understanding of it. This course will give you the language to explain, the knowledge to analyse, the skills to evaluate and the tools to create.

The practical skills you will develop on this course are camera and video camera operation, editing skills for images and video, as well as, design and planning skills.

At the end of the course, students will be effective critical thinkers and communicators, skilled in the development, analysis and production of 21st century media texts. The GCSE is comprised of nine close study products and five areas of study:

Media Theoretical Framework (MTF)

- Media Language – How media texts are designed and made such as camera work and editing.
- Media Industries – How the industry has progressed to its current state and how it is regulated.
- Media Audiences – Why different audiences watch and consume media as well as the different ways they react and are targeted.
- Media Representation – How various groups of people are represented such as gender and ethnicity.
- Context – How the state of the world, at the time a media text is made, influences the text. We look at this for all nine close study products.

Close Study Products (CSPs)

- TV – Doctor Who & His Dark Materials: looking at all areas of the MTF.
- Online – Studying the various online sites for Marcus Rashford & Kim Kardashian under all areas of the MTF.
- Games – Looking at Kim Kardashian: Hollywood and Lara Croft Go under all areas of the MTF.
- Newspapers - We study 2 newspapers looking at all areas of the MTF.
- Magazines – Heat & Tatler magazines looking at media language and representation.
- Radio – Radio 1 launch day & Kiss Breakfast, looking at industry, audiences & context.
- Advertisements - We study 3 adverts looking at language, representation & context.
- Music videos - We study BlackPink (How You Like That) & Arctic Monkeys (I Bet That You Look Good on the Dance Floor) looking at the industry, audiences & context.
- Film - We study Black Widow and I, Daniel Blake looking at the film industry.

Assessment

Paper 1: 84 marks, 90 mins	35%
Paper 2: 84 marks, 90 mins	35%
NEA Coursework Production: 60 marks	30%

Qualification Target

This course leads to a GCSE in Media Studies.

16+ Progression

Students can go on to study either A Level Media Studies or A Level Film Studies. The course also supports an English, Business, Psychology or History degree.

Careers Information

An A Level will allow students to follow a wide range of courses at university, both theoretical and practical in nature. If they choose to embark on a media or film career and enter employment in that field, the practical experience they will have gained and their knowledge and familiarity with real-world production strategies will be highly valued by employers.

MUSIC (Traditional)



Contact: Mrs Reddaway

Course Description

GCSE music covers performing on your chosen voice or instrument, composing and listening to a wide variety of musical styles – popular music, world music, film music and classical music. There are regular opportunities to compose your own music and perform, whilst learning about a variety of styles and types of music. The course builds on the performing, composing and listening skills developed in Key Stage 3.

You will enjoy this course if you want to study a subject that:

- Involves performing and composing music in a wide range of styles.
- Involves listening to different styles of music from throughout history.
- Gives you the opportunity to perform music with others.

Assessment

Exam board: AQA

Performing (30%)

You will either perform two pieces on any instrument or voice, from any style of music or complete a technology-based performance.

Composing (30%)

You will have to compose two pieces of music:

1. Free composition – based on a brief agreed with your teachers.
2. Set brief composition – based on a brief set by the exam board.

This component is internally assessed and externally moderated.

Listening (40%)

You will sit a listening paper on styles of music studied during the course, from a list of set works published by the exam board. You will study two set works from classical music and popular music and learn to listen to unfamiliar music from a wide range of styles and genres.

Qualification Target

This course leads to a GCSE (9 – 1) in music.

16+ Progression

GCSE music is good preparation for further musical study and a solid foundation for Level 3 qualifications: A Level music and BTEC music technology.

Careers Information

Studying music can lead to a career working in the music industry, publishing, entertainment, teaching or any job which involves communication and expressive skills. Music is highly valued by the Russell Group of top research-intensive universities, including Oxford and Cambridge.

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY



Contact: Mrs Reddaway

Course Description

The NCFE Technical Award in music technology enables students to develop skills, knowledge and understanding of the music technology industry. It is suitable for those students who are motivated by learning through hands-on experiences. Students will gain practical skills in creating music using technology. This course does not require the ability to play a musical instrument.

You will enjoy this course if you want to study a subject that:

- Involves using software to record and create your own music.
- Offers opportunities to record using the recording studio.

Assessment

Exam board: NCFE

Content Area 1 – Introduction to music technology and the music business
1.1 Understand roles and responsibilities within the music business, and developments in music technology.
1.2 Understand how music technology has developed over time and how this has affected creative practice, music production and consumer access.
1.3 Understand common features of the music industry as a business.
Content Area 2 – The digital audio workstation (DAW)
2.1 Understand the function of the following hardware as part of a DAW and how hardware is used for the recording and editing of audio and MIDI.
2.2 Know and understand how to use DAW software functions.
Content Area 3 – Musical elements, musical style and music technology
3.1 Understand how music is stylistically composed using musical elements.
3.2 Understand how musical elements relate to musical styles and developments in technology from the 1950s onwards.
Content Area 4 – Sound creation
4.1 Understand how sound creation is used in media and how to apply sound creation to work.
Content Area 5 – Multitrack recording
5.1 Understand the recording studio environment, how to use it safely, and how to plan, record and mix a multi-track recording.
5.2 Understand how to plan and undertake multitrack recording sessions and produce mixdowns.
Understand how to mixdown and export to stereo audio files.

Qualification Target

This course leads to a VCERT Level 1 or 2 Technical Award in music technology. This is worth the equivalent of one GCSE qualification.

16+ Progression

Students who achieve this qualification would be able to progress onto further Level 3 qualifications, such as A Level music technology and BTEC Level 3 qualifications in music technology. The course may also be useful to those studying qualifications in film studies, media studies, music, computing, economics and business, science and maths.

Careers Information

Studying music can lead to a career working in the music industry (e.g., as a recording or sound engineer), publishing, entertainment, teaching or any job which involves communication and technical skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: GCSE



Contact: Mr Reynolds

As well as undertaking Core PE, which is compulsory for every student in Key Stage 4, students may choose to take GCSE PE within their options.

Course Description

This award is designed for students who are serious about their sport; it is for those who enjoy and would like to know more about the theory behind sport. It is important to be aware that the majority of the assessment consists of the theoretical knowledge behind sport.

Students will be assessed on the following topics:

Component 1: The human body movement in physical activity and sport

Topic 1: Applied anatomy and physiology

Topic 2: Movement analysis

Topic 3: Physical training

Topic 4: Use of data

Component 2: Socio-cultural influences and wellbeing in physical activity in sport

Topic 1: Sport psychology

Topic 2: Socio-cultural influences of sport

Topic 3: Health, fitness, and wellbeing

Topic 4: Use of data

Component 3: Practical performance

Topic 1: Applied anatomy and physiology

Topic 2: Movement analysis

Topic 3: Physical training

Topic 4: Use of data

Written coursework:

Analysis and evaluation of practical performance

Assessment

Component 1:

Examination worth 30% of the qualification

Component 2:

Examination worth 30% of the qualification

Component 3:
Practical performance worth 30% of the qualification
Written coursework worth 10% of the qualification

16+ Progression

GCSE PE provides a good foundation for students in post-16 education and a suitable foundation for further study within the sector through progression on to other vocational and academic qualifications, such as BTEC Level 3 qualifications in sport or sport and exercise sciences and A Level PE. The underpinning knowledge, practical and vocational skills learnt will also enhance and support progression to a relevant competency-based qualification, such as the BTC Level 3 NVQ Diploma in sports development (QCF) or leisure management (QCF). Successful students at Level 2 (GCSE) may also consider general qualifications at Level 3 (A Level and BTEC), such as a GCE in PE or leisure studies.

Careers Information

GCSE PE is beneficial for those wishing to enter the sport and leisure industry.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS



Contact: Mr Sandelson

Literacy

Students who are not continuing with Modern Foreign Languages may be included in a Literacy class or in a Curriculum Support class. The emphasis in the Literacy classes is on consolidating and developing the fundamental skills involved in reading and writing - whilst also offering students guided speaking and listening opportunities. The students work towards a Functional Skills Level 1 (and in some cases a Level 2) in English, which is a recognised qualification.

Curriculum Support

Curriculum Support lessons are offered to students who are taking fewer GCSE subjects. The extra time is used for additional literacy and numeracy input, to complete GCSE coursework and to develop study skills. Students may also be offered the opportunity to complete Functional Skills English and Maths examinations at Level 1 and if appropriate, will continue to Level 2 in Year 11.

Arts Award

Students are offered a range of creative opportunities which allow them to explore their own interests and record in a variety of artistic media. It is a valuable opportunity to improve language and social skills. The classes enable students to explore their artistic impulses in a safe and accepting environment.

Kings Trust

The King's Trust Level 1 Award supports learners to increase their personal resilience by exploring, experiencing, and developing different protective factors and learning how to apply helpful habits to their lives to manage life's challenges.

The King's Trust's programs are implemented through the Achieve curriculum, which uses a project-based and practical style of learning. Instead of being assessed by exam, students complete portfolios, reflective tasks, and group projects. This flexible delivery model allows the program to be adapted to different school timetables and student needs. The impact of the programme is significant, with students often demonstrating increased confidence, motivation, an engagement in learning.

The award recognises a variety of personal skills, qualities and attitudes required by employers across a range of sectors.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Contact: Miss Shah

Course Description

This option is for students who have recently moved to the UK and are learning English as an Additional Language. You will gain further practice in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The course will help you to develop the skills necessary for academic success in your other subjects. It is specifically designed to support the work done in GCSE English, Humanities and Science.

HERITAGE LANGUAGES

Contact: Mrs Sáenz

Course Description

We are delighted to be able to arrange for you in Year 10 to take an extra GCSE in a heritage language that you can speak, understand, read and write fluently. Although there are no taught lessons in these subjects, you will receive guidance in examination requirements and the necessary preparation to ensure that your language and examination skills are at an appropriate level.

In the past, students have taken GCSE heritage languages in:

Arabic
Farsi
French
German
Gujarati
Italian
Japanese
Panjabi
Polish
Portuguese
Russian
Spanish
Urdu

We may also be able to arrange for you to take an A Level in a heritage language. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For further information, please see Mrs Sáenz in Room S45.

College Courses

For some students, a college place may be appropriate for one day a week in Year 10 and Year 11. This is discussed at the end of Year 9 with individual students in accordance with individual needs.

Qualification Codes & Controlled Assessments

Subjects	Exam Board	Specification Code	Qualification	Exams	Controlled Assessment (Provisional)
Citizenship	Pearson Edexcel	1CS0	Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Citizenship Studies	May 2029	None
English Language	AQA	8700	GCSE English Language	May 2029	None
English Literature	AQA	8702	GCSE (9-1) in English Literature	May 2029	None
Mathematics	Pearson Edexcel	1MA1	Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Mathematics	May 2029	None
Mathematics	AQA	8365	Certificate Level 2 in Further Mathematics	May 2029	None
Mathematics	AQA	5930	Entry Level Certificate	May 2029	Ongoing assessment
Religious Studies	AQA	8062	GCSE Religious Studies A	May 2029	None
Science (separate)	Pearson Edexcel	1BI0	Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Biology	May 2029	None
Science (separate)	Pearson Edexcel	1CH0	Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Chemistry	May 2029	None
Science (separate)	Pearson Edexcel	1PH0	Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Physics	May 2029	None
Science	Pearson Edexcel	1SC0	Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Combined Science	May 2029	None
Art & Design	Pearson Edexcel	1AD0	Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Art & Design: Art, Craft Design	May 2029	Ongoing assessment
Textile Design	Pearson Edexcel	1TE0	Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Art & Design: Textile Design	May 2029	Ongoing assessment
Graphic Communication	Pearson Edexcel	1GC0	Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Art & Design: Graphic Communication	May 2029	Ongoing assessment
Fine Art	Pearson Edexcel	1FA0	Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Art & Design: Fine Art	May 2029	Ongoing assessment
Design & Technology	AQA	8552	GCSE Design & Technology	May 2029	Ongoing assessment
Food Preparation and Nutrition	OCR	J309B	GCSE (9-1) Food Preparation and Nutrition	May 2029	Varies
English as an Additional Language	Varies	Varies	GCSE or AS in a heritage language	May 2029	Varies

Subjects	Exam Board	Specification Code	Qualification	Exams	Controlled Assessment (Provisional)
EMA option	Ofqual	8721 8726	Students may have the opportunity to study Functional Skills Level 1/2 English if appropriate	Online, at will	None
Drama	Eduqas	C690QS	Level 1/Level2 (9-1) GCSE in Drama	Written exam May 2028. Performance March 2029	Practical and Written June 2029
Geography	AQA	Geography (8035)	GCSE Geography	May 2029	None
History	Pearson Edexcel	1HI0	Level 1/Level 2 (9-1) GCSE in History	May 2029	None
Computer Science	OCR	J277	GCSE (9-1) Computer Science	May 2029	None
French	Pearson Edexcel	1FR1	Level 1/Level2 (9-1) GCSE in French	May 2029	None
Spanish	Pearson Edexcel	1SP1	Level 1/Level2 (9-1) GCSE in Spanish	May 2029	None
Media Studies	AQA	8572	GCSE in Media Studies	May 2029	1 out of 3 units internal assessment
Music	AQA	8271	Level 1/Level2 (9-1) GCSE in Music	May 2029	Continual assessment performance and composition
Music Technology	NCFE	NA	NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Music Technology	One two hour external assessment (40% of final grade)	One Non- Examined Assessment - 17 hours, plus 2 hours research time (60% of final grade)
Health and Social Care	Pearson Edexcel	NA	Level 1/Level2 Technical Award in Health and Social Care	May 2029	2 of 3 units controlled assessment
Physical Education	AQA	8582	GCSE in Physical Education	May 2029	Ongoing assessment

Year 8 Options Form 2026

Blue Pathway

Students will be given the appropriate options form for their pathway.

Name:

Tutor Group:

CORE All students study English, literature, mathematics, science, core PE and religious studies or citizenship. They will also study French or Spanish depending upon which modern foreign language they currently study.

1. Humanities:

Choose **ONE** of these. Tick it:

Geography	History

2. Open Choice:

Choose **ONE** of these **PLUS ONE** reserve. Tick your first choice and also write R in your reserve choice (your second choice).

You cannot select any subject below if you have already selected it above.

Art	Computing	Drama	Food Technology	Health and Social Care	History	Media Studies
Media Studies	Music*	Physical Education	Product Design			
	TR					
	MT					

* Music: Within music students will have the choice to study the traditional pathway or the music technology pathway. Please indicate your preferred pathway using the following codes: (TR)Traditional or (MT) Music technology

3. Religious Studies, Citizenship or Art: Students will study **both** Religious Studies and Citizenship through drop down days, however they have the option to sit a GCSE in one of these as well. In addition we will be running two Art classes in this block. Where there is competition for spaces in a subject, those with the highest attitude to learning score in the subject will be prioritised. Please note you cannot select art if you have already selected art in your open choice. Please select your first choice below:

Choose **ONE** of these. Tick it:

Religious Studies	Citizenship	General Art GCSE

Signed: _____ (student) _____ (parent/carer)

Signed: _____ (student) _____ (parent/carer)

Where possible, students will be given their first choices, but they should think carefully about reserves as these may be needed. Remember that all courses offered are subject to availability of staff and group sizes.

Fill in and return to your **form tutor** by **Friday, 27 March 2026**

For more information, please see your options booklet. For support and guidance, speak to your tutor, Safe Worker or Year 8 Leader.

Year 8 Options Form 2026

Silver Pathway

Name:

Tutor Group:

Students will be given the appropriate options form for their pathway.

CORE All students study English, literature, mathematics, science, curriculum support, citizenship, core PE and religious studies.

Additional Support Option

This pathway is for students who will not study a modern foreign language, though they may gain a heritage language GCSE. You will have additional classes to support you in succeeding across the Key Stage 4 curriculum. We will also be running two qualifications which do not count as GCSE level qualifications for some students. We will discuss these qualifications with students before Year 9 or during Key Stage Four (Year 9 to Year 11) if we think a student should consider attending one of these courses. Whilst not counting as a GCSE level qualification, some students will benefit from the skills these courses help them to develop. They are the Bronze Arts Award and the Prince's Trust Level 1 Award in Personal Development and Employability Skills. Talk to your tutor, SAFE worker or Year Leader if you would like to discuss this.

1. Humanities:

Choose **ONE** of these. Tick it:

Geography	History
☐	☐

2. Open Choice:

Choose **ONE** of these **PLUS ONE reserve**. Tick your first choice **and** also write R in your reserve choice (your second choice).

In order to comply with Department for Education requirements students who do not study an MFL must pick a creative subject. Please select an option in light grey on the bottom row of the table below.

Physical Education	Computing	Food Technology	Health and Social Care	History	Media Studies
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Art	Music*	Drama	Product Design	☐	☐
☐	TR ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	MT ☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* Music: Within music students will have the choice to study the traditional pathway or the music technology pathway. Please indicate your preferred pathway using the following codes: (TR)Traditional or (MT) Music technology

3. Religious Studies, Citizenship or Art: Students will study **both** Religious Studies and Citizenship through drop down days, however they have the option to sit a GCSE in one of these as well. In addition we will be running two Art classes in this block. Where there is competition for spaces in a subject, those with the highest attitude to learning score in the subject will be prioritised. Please note you cannot select art if you have already selected art in your open choice. Please select your first choice below:

Choose **ONE** of these. Tick it:

Religious Studies	Citizenship	General Art
☐	☐	☐

4. Curriculum Support, English as an additional language, Arts Award or Employability Skills:

In place of a Modern Foreign Language, we will be advising students whether they should have additional classes in curriculum support, Literacy or English as an additional language. Some students will be able to select the arts award, and some will be able to select employability skills. Please tick one to indicate your preference and we will discuss this option and its suitability with you.

Choose **ONE** of these. Tick it:

Literacy	Curriculum Support	English as an additional language	Arts Award	Employability skills
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Where possible, students will be given their first choices, but they should think carefully about reserves as these may be needed. Remember that all courses offered are subject to availability of staff and group sizes.

Fill in and return to your **form tutor** by **Friday, 27 March 2026**

Contacts

Staff name	Subject/Department	Email address
Mr Chelh	Year 8 Leader	z.chelh@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Ms Nagra	Assistant Head Teacher	s.nagra@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Miss Naeem	Art, Craft & Design Design Technology – Product Design Food Preparation and Nutrition Media Studies	h.naeem@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Ms Rosenblatt	Citizenship	m.rosenblatt@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Ms Al-Sikab	English Language English Literature	n.al-sikab@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Ms Nagra	Mathematics	s.nagra@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Mr Fruzza	Computer Science	a.fruzza@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Mr Reynolds	Physical Education	c.reynolds@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Ms Sarpi	Religious Education	s.sarpi@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Dr Malik	Science	n.malik@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Mr Sandelson	Alternative Pathways	p.sandelson@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Miss Shah	English as an Additional Language	a.shah@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Mrs Sáenz	Heritage Languages	i.saenz@brentside.ealing.sch.uk
Ms Northcott	Drama	f.northcott@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Ms S Shah	Geography	s.shah@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Mr Kamoga	History	a.kamoga@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Mrs Sáenz	Modern Foreign Languages	i.saenz@brentside.ealing.sch.uk
Mrs Reddaway	Music Technology	h.reddaway@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Ms Yatirawana	Health & Social Care	s.yatirawana@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk