

Heron Hall Academy

2026-2028

Year 9 Options

[Heronhallacademy.org.uk/Year-9-options](https://heronhallacademy.org.uk/Year-9-options)

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Year 9 Options

Dear students and families,

Welcome to the start of the Year 9 Options process. Over the next few weeks, you will receive information about the subjects on offer and this will lead to you making choices about the subjects you will continue to study in Year 10 and Year 11. It is crucial that you use this time wisely and think carefully about the choices you will make.

Every student will have a core offer of subjects that are compulsory to all Key Stage 4 students. These are:

- **English Language**
- **English Literature**
- **Maths**
- **Science**
- **Religious Studies**
- **Core PE**
- **PSHE**

All students then have their option choices to make and this year we are hoping to accommodate three choices for each student. When you fill out the online options form, you should put your first and second choice of subject for each block. It is worth noting that if the numbers for a specific subject are too low, we may not be able to run it. Likewise, if there are too many students who choose one subject, we will take into account each individual student's attitude to learning, progress, grades and commitment to the subject during Key Stage 3 to support the decisions that we make.

There will be plenty of information about the content of the curriculum, what you can expect from lessons and how you will be assessed or examined during and at the end of each course.

On **Thursday 5th February 2026** there is an opportunity to take time to talk to staff about their subject in the Year 9 Options Evening, the event will start at 5pm and finishing at 7pm at the Academy, with a presentation at 5.30pm. In choosing your option subjects, it is vital you think about which qualifications will best suit your needs as you move on from school to either further education, apprenticeships or employment. We want you to choose subjects you enjoy, subjects that you look forward to going to, subjects that will give you the platform that you need to excel in your chosen route after leaving school. As students, you must be committed to your own learning and be ready to show independence and diligence in the areas you choose. We recommend that students have a balanced and broad range of options so the next few weeks is the time for students to speak with their class teachers, the academy's careers advisor, their tutors or Head of Year and, of course, their families about the right choices for them.

Madam Ali
Year 9 Year Attainment Manager

Key Dates and Information

DATE	INFORMATION	DETAILS
January and February 2026	Student assemblies & support meetings.	New subjects presented and discussed.
Thursday 5th February 2026	Options Evening, 5pm start. 5.30pm main presentation.	An opportunity to speak to subject teachers and senior staff on the process and subject content. Options Information Booklet issued to all Year 9 students on the evening and available online.
Thursday 12th February 2026	Deadline for Your Choices Form to be submitted.	You will need to select your options online. A form will be available on our website at heronhallacademy.org.uk/year-9-options
Summer term	Students and parents informed of the outcome of their options choices	We will write to families. New subjects are studied from September 2026.

Core and Optional Subjects

CORE SUBJECTS

ALL STUDENTS MUST STUDY

- ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- ENGLISH LITERATURE
- MATHEMATICS
- SCIENCE
- RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

GCSE

History
Geography
Art
Business Studies
Citizenship
Computer Science
Design & Technology
Drama
Psychology
Sociology

VOCATIONAL

Sports Studies
Health & Social Care
Digital Information
Technology
Vocational BTEC
ESOL
Life Skills Programme

NON EXAMINED SUBJECTS

Core PE
PSHE

Students must indicate their choices for 3 option subjects ensuring there is curriculum breadth, meaning choices are not too similar. For each optional subject students must make a first and second choice for each option choice. Please note that while we will do our utmost to ensure students are allocated either their first or second choice within the option blocks, this cannot always be guaranteed. We will, however, work carefully to ensure all students follow an appropriate and balanced curriculum.

GCSE

BTEC

APPRENTICESHIPS

Industry linked courses

HERON HALL 6TH FORM

A Levels and vocational courses

COLLEGES

Practical courses

GCSE Art & Design – Fine Art

Entry requirements

GCSE Art and Design is suitable for students with an interest in creativity and developing analytical thinking. This subject will stretch, and challenge students' concepts of what art is and help them understand the conceptual meanings behind it. Students will be introduced to a variety of materials and techniques through the exploration of a wide range of artists. They are encouraged to be experimental, working from observations and imagination to develop their ideas. Students must be committed to attending four Art Club interventions per month, either at lunchtime or after school.

What will I learn to do?

- To investigate artists and produce analytical written annotations and responses to art.
- To respond to artists' works of art and produce copies and inspired pieces.
- To work independently on ideas from the start of a project to the final set of outcomes.
- To create personal ideas, subject to themes, within a historical, cultural, and environmental context.
- To experiment with concepts, materials, tools, and subject matter.

What skills do I need?

- An ability to experiment with different ideas and be willing to try a wide range of materials and art techniques.
- The ability to develop drawing skills for different needs and purposes used throughout the course.
- The ability to work independently and refine works of art.
- The ability to research and analyse artists' work using SPaG throughout the course.
- To be reflective and critical through annotations of practical work, using SPaG and key art terms.

How will I be assessed?

Component 1—Portfolio (coursework) worth 60% of total grade.

Component 2—Externally set assignment from AQA (Exam) worth 40% of total grade.

Component 1 and component 2 are both judged using the 4 Assessment Objectives.

Assessment Objectives:

AO1: Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.

AO2: Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.

AO3: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.

AO4: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

Course breakdown

Year 10: The Coursework Component commences from the start. Students explore their first topic, which delves into deeper concepts of theory and practical skills in Art during a 6-week Skills topic. Students will then have 2 other topic-based projects as part of their coursework, where they will implement skills and knowledge following the Assessment Objectives. These themes will be explored visually and contextually, adhering to the Assessment Objectives. These projects are all part of the coursework and count for 60% of the overall grade.

Year 11: Completion of the Coursework Component includes a 5-hour Mock Exam, where a final piece(s) linked to the final coursework topic is created. The coursework started in Year 10 is collated and presented in a portfolio, submitted in December of Year 11.

In January of Year 11, students receive their Externally Set Investigation-Exam Component from AQA, which counts for 40% of the overall grade. Over 3 months, students apply their skills and knowledge to the selected topic. The exam concludes with a 10-hour session over 2 days, where students create a final piece(s) corresponding to their investigation. Component 2 is assessed against the Assessment Objectives. The Art & Design Exam is the first exam in Year 11, held in early spring

Beyond Year 11

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A Level Art and Design A Level Fashion, A Level Photography, A Level Graphic Design, Community Arts.	Courses in Art and/ or a degree in various areas of Art & Design.	Architecture, Interior Design, Product Design, Fashion, Photography, Graphic Design, Fine Art, Animation, Fashion.

GCSE Business Studies

About the subject

Studying the AQA GCSE Business Studies course will give you great foundational knowledge of what it is like to work in a business and the things that go into making a business successful or not. The important thing about Business Studies is that it is universal - the terms and concepts you will learn do not differ depending on where you are.

In every business there will be different departments doing different things, but studying this course will give you a good understanding of how each of these departments function and how they work together.

The concepts will be covered over six units. In chronological order, these units are Business in the Real World, Influences on Business, Business Operations, Human Resources, Marketing and Finance.

What will I learn to do?

- To develop an idea, spot an opportunity and turn it into a successful business
- To manage their finances
- To explore real business issues and understand how businesses work
- To make decisions and respond to stakeholders using such information
- To apply your knowledge and understanding to different business contexts
- Learn how to analyse a business situation and make informed decisions
- To hone your exam technique, thereby achieving consistently high grades

What skills do I need?

- Good communication (oral and written)
- Analytical and critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Logical thinking
- Mathematical
- Interpersonal

How will I be assessed?

Paper 1: Units 1 - 4

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 90 marks
- 50% of GCSE

Paper 2: Units 1, 2, 5 & 6

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 90 marks
- 50% of GCSE

Beyond Year 11

GCSE Business equips students with the skills required to prepare and succeed for entry to A Level or BTEC Business Studies.

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
Business administration apprenticeship A Level Business Studies BTEC Level 3 Courses.	Bachelor's degree in business, Master's degree in business.	Management, marketing, finance, accounting, banking, retailing, manufacturing and local government.

GCSE Citizenship

About the subject

GCSE Citizenship Studies has the power to motivate and enable young people to become thoughtful, active citizens. Citizenship studies investigates how the citizen is enabled by society to play a full and active part and how citizens are empowered to effect change within society. Citizenship understanding develops through the knowledge of how a society operates and functions and its underlying values. The overarching theme of this subject is 'How citizens can try to make a difference'. This is supported by three content themes: Life in modern Britain, Rights and responsibilities and Politics and participation.

What will I learn to do?

Students gain a deeper knowledge of democracy, government and law, and develop skills to create sustained and reasoned arguments, present various viewpoints and plan practical citizenship actions to benefit society.

They will also gain the ability to recognise bias, critically evaluate argument, weigh evidence and look for alternative interpretations and sources of evidence, all of which are essential skills valued by higher

What skills do I need?

- Fluent reading and writing skills
- Communicate your ideas clearly through discussion
- Presentation skills
- Extended writing skills
- The ability to analyse text
- The ability to use textual evidence to support your ideas

How will I be assessed?

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

Paper 1 – Active Citizenship and Politics and Participation - 1hr 45– 50% of GCSE

Section A: Active citizenship questions: questions on the citizenship action of others and questions on the students taking citizenship action investigation (40 marks)

Section B: Politics and participation question (40 marks)

Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, source-based questions, extended answer

Paper 2 – Life in Modern Britain and Rights and Responsibilities - 1hr 45– 50% of GCSE

Section A: Life in modern Britain questions (40 marks)

Section B: Rights and responsibilities questions (40 marks)

Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, source-based questions, extended answer

Beyond Year 11

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
BA' Levels in Government and Politics Law Criminology Sociology History Media	Degree courses in Law Politics Criminology Journalism Media	Lawyer/Barrister Teacher Politician Journalism Judge Solicitor

GCSE Computer Science

About the subject

In computing, you learn how computer systems work, from the physical stuff (the hardware) to the apps and programs that users interact with (the software). You also learn how to create and manipulate computer systems, and how to apply the skills and approaches you pick up in computing to tackle real-life problems creatively.

This course helps to highlight intrapersonal skills such as communication, teamwork and leadership all of which are valuable assets in the workplace.

What will I learn to do?

It's a great way to develop critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills, which can be transferred to further learning and to everyday life. Students who want to go on to higher study and employment in the field of computer science will find it provides a superb stepping stone.

This subject is relevant to the modern and changing world of computer science. It is a practical subject where learners can apply the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to real-world problems. It is an intensely creative subject that involves invention and excitement.

What skills do I need?

Students entering this course should have achieved a good level in Maths and Computer Science.

How will I be assessed?

The examination consists of two written examinations (40% each) and an externally moderated non exam assessment (20%) with the OCR Examination Board.

Beyond Year 11

The course will provide an excellent background for Advanced level qualifications which enable students to progress either directly to employment, or to proceed to further qualifications, e.g. Level 3 qualifications such as GCSE, AS and A Level Computing and GCSE ICT.

Students who are awarded mainly Grades 9 - 5 at GCSE would be well prepared for study at Level 3 within the National Qualifications Framework.

The qualification will also provide a good grounding for other subject areas that require computational thinking and analytical skills.

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A Level Computer Science Creative i-Media level 3.	Degree in robotics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, cloud computing, Apprenticeships are available in IT, cybersecurity and other areas related to computing.	These are just some of the careers you can go onto: Applications developer, Big data processing, Business Analyst, Networking, Ethical hacking, Cyber security analyst. Development Data analyst, Forensic computer analyst, Game designer, Games developer, IT sales professional.

GCSE Design Technology

About the subject

Are you interested in finding out how things are designed and manufactured? Do you want to be the next James Dyson? Do you enjoy designing products, modelling prototypes and manufacturing in a range of materials? This course offers you the opportunity to develop all these skills as well as evaluating products currently available to the consumer.

What will I learn to do?

Over the two years there will be an emphasis on designing and manufacturing of products.

Year 10: You will learn the skills of investigating, designing and making various products based on core principles and techniques. Skills such as designing packaging, furniture and toys will be explored. You will develop knowledge and skills in a variety of industrial processes, tools and computer aided design/manufacturing techniques through practice assignments.

Year 11: You will need to prepare for the written exam paper, demonstrating your knowledge, skills and understanding. You will need to undertake research, marketing, consumer protection and use this information to help you design and make your final product. You will be expected to analyse and evaluate your final product and produce a portfolio for submission.

What skills do I need?

- Analytical skills
- Planning skills
- Thinking Skills
- Evaluation skills
- Making skills
- Self-reflective skills

How will I be assessed?

Product Design is assessed in two different ways: -

Written exam – 50% (2 hours)

Coursework - 50% (Controlled assessment to be completed in Year 11)

Careers and where it can take you

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A Level Design & Technology A Level Fashion & Textiles. Technical level qualifications in Manufacturing & Engineering. Processing & Control, Electronic Engineering, Product Design, Art & Design.	You can continue to study Design & Technology in UK-based universities. There are many courses linked to the subject.	Product Designer, Industrial Designer, Graphic Designer, Design Engineer, Architect, Car Designer, Fashion Designer, Packaging Designer.

BTEC Level 2 Tech Award in Digital Information Technology

Who is the qualification for?

For learners who want to acquire sector-specific applied knowledge and skills through vocational contexts by studying project planning, data management, data interpretation, data presentation and data protection as part of their Key Stage 4 learning. The qualification recognises the value of learning skills, knowledge and vocational attributes to complement GCSEs. The qualification will broaden learners' experience and understanding of the varied progression options available to them.

What will I learn to do?

The Tech Award gives learners the opportunity to develop sector-specific applied knowledge and skills through realistic vocational contexts. The focus is on four areas of equal importance, which cover the:

- development of key skills that prove your aptitude in digital information technology, such as project planning, designing and creating user interfaces and dashboards to present and interpret data
- process that underpins effective ways of working in digital information technology, such as project planning, the iterative design process, cyber security, virtual teams, legal and ethical codes of conduct
- attitudes that are considered most important in digital information technology, including personal management and communication
- knowledge that underpins effective use of skills, processes and attitudes in the sector such as how different user interfaces meet user needs, how organisations collect and use data to make decisions, virtual workplaces, cyber security and legal and ethical issues.

Component titles:

- Component 1 - Exploring User Interface Design Principles and Project Planning Techniques (internal)
- Component 2 - Collecting, Presenting and Interpreting Data (internal)
- Component 3 - Effective Digital Working Practices (External/Synoptic)

Tech Award complements the learning in GCSE programmes such as GCSE Computer Science. It is an introduction to the application of project planning techniques to plan, design and develop a user interface, how to collect, present and interpret data and the use of digital systems.

Beyond Year 11

The choices that learners can make post-16 will depend on their overall level of attainment and their performance in the qualification. Learners who generally achieve at Level 2 across their Key Stage 4 learning might consider progression to:

- A Levels as preparation for entry to higher education in a range of subjects
- study of a vocational qualification at Level 3, such as a BTEC National in IT, which prepares learners to enter employment or apprenticeships, or to move on to higher education by studying a degree in the digital sector.

Learners who generally achieve at Level 1 across their Key Stage 4 learning might consider progression to:

- study at Level 2 post-16 in a range of technical routes designed to lead to work, employment, apprenticeships or further study at Level 3. The attitudes and the reflective and communication skills covered in this qualification will help these learners.
- study of IT Support or Digital Technology through a Technical Certificate. Learners who perform strongly in this qualification compared to their overall performance should strongly consider this progression route as it can lead ultimately to employment in the digital sector.

GCSE Drama

About the subject

GCSE Drama is an exciting, inspiring and practical course. The specification promotes involvement in and enjoyment of drama, as performers and/or designers. Additionally, it provides opportunities to attend live theatre performances and to develop skills as informed and thoughtful audience members. We engage in, and actively explore, a wide range of activities that are thought-provoking and stimulating, drawing from a variety of situations and contexts that you can relate to.

How will I be assessed?

Component 1 (Devising):	40% of GCSE	Combination of practical and written work (Coursework) Internally assessed by your teacher consisting of a; Devised performance of 20 minutes and 1500 word log book
Component 2 (Performance from a text):	20% of GCSE	Performance of a key extract Assessed by a visiting examiner Perform two extracts of a play text specifically chosen for you
Component 3 (Theatre Makers in Practice):	40% of GCSE	Written exam – 1 hour 45 minutes Section A = Exploring An Inspector Calls Section B = Analysing and Evaluating a performance

What skills will I learn?

GCSE Drama encourages you to develop critical thinking skills and become effective and independent learners. With the focus on working imaginatively, collaborating creatively and communicating effectively, Drama is highly beneficial to all students. However, it is those with a passion for the subject, who succeed.

Transferable skills developed in Drama include:

- Creativity, confidence, communication, cooperation and self-control
- Self-discipline, time management and organisational skills, teamwork and independent learning
- Acting and performance skills, lighting and set design and directing and leadership skills

Beyond Year 11

It is one of the few subjects, which assesses a student's ability to work as part of a dynamic team, and schools, colleges, universities and businesses alike recognise this.

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
BTEC Performing Arts with Acting or Musical Theatre pathways. A Level Drama and Theatre, Studies Doctor/nurse/ social, Performing Arts Industry apprenticeships Drama Extended diploma: Production Arts Talent agent Music producer	Degrees in Drama Performance Media and Law	Performing Arts Industry Media – broadcast presenter Law work Community arts worker therapist Theatre director/stage manager

GCSE English Language & Literature

About the subject

English Language and English Literature are two separate GCSEs studies as part of one combined subject. Students are assessed in the un-tiered, closed book examinations Grades 1 to 9 KS4 focuses on both language and literature and sometimes uses literature texts as vehicles for studying language skills. Specifically, year by year, students will study:

- Year 9 students will begin their study with Gothic Literature followed by further study of 19th Century literature including Oliver Twist and Romanticism Poetry. Their study will conclude with the classic Shakespearean Tragedy Romeo and Juliet.
- Year 10: Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls' and Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' are both taught this year. Students also prepare for Language Paper 1 before revising the 'Conflict' cluster of poetry at the end of the year.
- Year 11: Paper 2 is taught. Students also study their final Literature text, Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' and study their 'Unseen poetry' unit. Students then return to all exam papers in both Literature and Language. Skills are revised and honed, in preparation for the final GCSE.

What will I learn to do?

You will learn a range of skills including how to read and analyse a wide range of texts from an anthology of poems to Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. You will also explore how meaning is created in a variety of texts from different eras. You will learn how to develop complex analytical ideas through meaningful discussion in formal and informal contexts. You will also learn how to translate these complex analytical ideas into clearly expressed, confident essays on a wide range of different subjects, as diverse as Charles Dickens, Shakespeare, 19th, 20th and 21st Century texts.

What skills do I need?

- Fluent reading and writing skills
- The ability to develop and communicate your ideas clearly through discussion
- Extended writing skills
- The ability to analyse text
- The ability to learn and use textual evidence to support your ideas
- The ability to convey complex ideas in a range of informal and formal contexts, such as discussion and essay writing

How will I be assessed?

English will be assessed in the following ways:

- English Language written examinations = 100% of the final grade for English Language is examined in two written papers
- English Literature written examinations = 100% for the final grade for English Literature is examined in two written papers.
- Spoken Language Endorsement = will be awarded as a separate grade on your certificate

Beyond Year 11

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A Level Literature & A Level Language	BA (HONS) English Language BA (HONS) English Literature	Teacher Research assistant Journalism Paralegal Marketing executive Editor Museum curator Freelance writer

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Skills for Life

About the subject

Pearson ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Skills for Life qualifications support learners whose first language is not English, helping them gain the communication skills needed to progress in the workplace, education and beyond. This is a Discrete Option meaning that students are invited to. ESOL qualifications give learners the competence and confidence to use their English skills in their studies and employment and other areas of their life.

They give learners the opportunity to:

- improve their English language knowledge and skills
- achieve a nationally recognised qualification
- develop personal growth and engagement in learning
- acquire English skills for personal and employment-related application.

Pearson ESOL qualifications

Pearson offers ESOL Skills for Life Awards in Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening at:

- Entry 1
- Entry 2
- Entry 3

Certificates that cover all three areas are available from Entry 1 - 3 set out below.

What will I learn to do?

Qualification	Reading	Writing	Listening and Speaking
Entry 1	I will learn to read, understand and obtain information from short texts on familiar topics, common signs and symbols. I will be able to respond to simple written narratives, statements, questions, instructions.	I will learn to write simple sentences correctly and complete simple forms.	I will learn to speak and be understood when conveying basic information, feelings and opinions.
Entry 2	I will learn to read, understand and obtain information from short, straightforward text, including chronological and instructional text types, signs and symbols. I will be able to respond to familiar written straightforward information, short narratives, explanations, instructions.	I will learn to write to convey information with some adaptation for the intended audience, using correct punctuation, grammar and spelling.	I will learn to listen to other people and speak to convey information, feelings and opinions on familiar topics, including when in discussion with others.

Entry 3	I will learn to read, understand and obtain information from short, straightforward chronological, continuous descriptive, explanatory texts from everyday sources. I will be able to respond to written straightforward information, narratives, explanations and instructions from everyday sources.	I will learn to write to convey information with some adaptation for the intended audience, using correct punctuation, grammar and spelling.	I will learn to listen to other people and speak to convey information, feelings and opinions on familiar topics. I will be able to speak to respond using appropriate formality for the situation, including when making points and responding to others in discussions.
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What skills do I need?

No prior knowledge, understanding, skills or qualifications are required before learners register for this qualification. However, your teacher will likely assess your speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in English to see at what level you have the potential to achieve the qualification.

How will I be assessed?

The table below gives a summary of the assessment methods used in the qualifications.

Unit	Assessment method
Reading and Writing units	Pearson-devised assessment: paper-based test
Speaking and Listening units	Pearson-devised assessment: task

Pearson sets the unit assessment, the centre assessor assesses the test or task, the centre internally verifies the assessments and a Pearson Standards Verifier samples assessment to check centre quality assurance and the maintenance of standards.

Beyond Year 11

These qualifications enable learners to progress towards Level 1 qualifications, for example Functional Skills English units/GCSE English. They give learners the competence and confidence to use their English skills in their studies and employment and other areas of their life. They help the speakers of other languages to achieve a nationally recognised qualification. The Awards and Certificates in ESOL Skills for Life can be used to motivate learners to build their English language skills for use in their social, educational and working life and build their confidence to undertake the Functional Skills English Unit components of Apprenticeships or GCSE English.

GCSE Geography

About the subject

Geography is important as it allows us to understand the world we live in. Geography helps us to think more about ourselves, how to live and the futures that we may need to face. The study of Geography stimulates an interest and a sense of wonder about places, people and the environment.

The Geography GCSE Specification B is split into three content components:

Paper 1 – global geographical issues such as climate change, development and urbanisation.

Paper 2 – UK geographical issues such as coastal and fluvial processes and the challenges of urban life.

Paper 3 – making geographical decisions on a pre-release booklet involving energy and forests.

How will I be assessed?

There are three papers. All the papers are 1 hour and thirty minutes long, two are worth 37.5% of the final grade and one is worth 25% of the final grade. The topics for each paper are displayed in the table above.

Field study

The field study element of the course is a study of coasts which is assessed through the component 2 examination instead of through coursework. The field study will involve students visiting at least 2 locations to collect data. There is also a study of the impact of regeneration in Stratford to make up the human geography element.

What use would this qualification be after I leave school?

Geography is a highly sought-after subject by employers! This is because students of Geography develop the largest variety of skills. A qualification in Geography also keeps all your options open for the future! As it is such a broad subject it links with English, Maths, Science, Sociology, Economics, ICT, Politics, Ecology and many other subjects.

A GCSE in Geography can lead to careers in: Tourism, social work, journalism, law, military, marketing, architecture, and the civil service to name a few. Many employers see a geography qualification as an indication of a well-rounded student due to the balancing of literacy, and mathematical skills as well as the focus on problem solving and essay writing. It is a respected academic subject which shows employers your skills to research, evaluate and organise at the highest level.

Beyond Year 11

It is one of the few subjects, which assesses a student's ability to work as part of a dynamic team, and schools, colleges, universities and businesses alike recognise this.

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A Level study of geography, politics, sociology, environmental studies.	Geography degree or other related subjects e.g. law, finance, environmental.	A wide range of skills used in teaching, law, construction and design, crisis management, disaster planning.

BTEC Health and Social Care (OCR)

About the subject

Health and social care is one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK with demand for both health and social care employees continuously rising. The Pearson BTEC Level 2 Tech Award in Health and Social Care is ideal for you if you would like to find out more about health and social care.

What will I learn to do?

This course will give you the opportunity to develop knowledge and technical skills in a practical learning environment. You will also develop key skills relevant to the health and social care sector such as research techniques and how to measure someone's physical health. You will also develop your written communication skills as you create health and wellbeing plans for an individual with specific needs.

Everyone taking this qualification will study three components, covering the following content areas:

- Human Lifespan and Development gives you the opportunity to study how people grow and develop over the course of their lives, from infancy to old age.
- Health and Social Care Services you will investigate common services as well as those for specific needs and consider how they may work together to meet individual's needs.
- Health and Wellbeing explores the factors that can have a positive or negative influence on an individual's health and wellbeing.

What skills do I need?

Good communication skills are needed as you will be required to complete assignments as part of your assessments and to work alongside others within the class.

How will I be assessed?

There are two internal components that are assessed using a Pearson set assessment and marked internally by your teacher but moderated by Pearson. The other component is an exam marked by Pearson.

Beyond Year 11

Once you have completed the qualification, you will have developed a practical understanding of the health and social care sector. You will have built useful skills, which are not generally covered in GCSE courses, and you will have developed a good understanding of whether the health and social care sector is for you, and if so, which part of it you might want to study further.

If you decide to go on to further study health and social care, the best option for you will depend on the grades you have achieved in this and the other qualifications you have taken. You could continue your studies in Health and Social Care and progress to a Level 3 programme or continue with A Levels.

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
Advanced Level 3 Health and Social Care, University Social Care Courses.	Level 4 HND Health Care Practice, Access to nursing, Technical Diploma in Childcare.	Roles working with people in a supporting capacity, social work, nursing, dental nurse, health advisor, youth work, care worker.

GCSE History

What the course is about?

History is all around us: we can see historical footprints in technology, human rights, laws and society. Through a challenging but exciting GCSE History course, students will explore how the world has changed and developed. We will investigate different interpretations of historical events such as WWII.

Who should consider this course?

Historians are independent thinkers and enquirers, who are skilled at learning, developing, researching and debating historical events. Students should have the ability to analyse and evaluate factual evidence using key concepts and differing interpretations to form their own conclusions about past and present events.

What will we study?

Students will complete two papers in History. Paper One consists of two units: the first unit looks at the changes in Germany between 1890-1945 and includes the reasons behind Hitler's rise to power and how he changed Germany. The second unit looks at International Politics after WWI and how Europe dealt with the conflict right up until the outbreak of WWII. Paper Two is more focused on British History and unit one includes our breadth study which looks at the change and developments in medicine from 1000 to the present day. The focus is on the key individuals and events that have developed the understanding of medicine. The second unit in the paper is our medieval unit and looks at the Normans from 1066-1100 and how they founded and consolidated their position in England.

How will I be assessed?

There are two papers and each one is worth 50% of the final grade. There are 18 questions across the 4 topics which involve a range of historical skills including interpretation, source analysis, source comparison, inference and essay writing.

What use would this qualification be after I leave school?

GCSE History is used a stepping stone for future lawyers, journalists, archaeologists, and politicians. It is a respected academic subject which shows employers your skills to research, evaluate and organise at the highest level. History develops skills of analysis and evaluation which are particularly helpful to those who wish to progress on to A Level History and other Humanities subjects: Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, Politics, Geography, Law, and Economics.

Careers and where it can take you

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A Level Government & Politics A Level Economics A Level Sociology	BA (HONS) Law BSc (HONS) Finance BSc (HONS) Politics	Journalism Archaeology Law

GCSE Mathematics

What the course is about?

Some subjects are compulsory at GCSE level and must be taken by all young people, Mathematics is one of those subjects!

GCSE Mathematics helps students develop a knowledge and understanding of: problem solving, reasoning, applying maths in context and functional elements of Maths. All GCSE exams in mathematics will include questions that allow students to draw on elements from within and across different topic areas, and questions that allow students to provide extended responses.

All students in years 9, 10 and 11 study a maths course which leads to GCSE entry at one of two different tiers: Foundation or Higher. Each course contains content from six main elements of mathematics - Number, Algebra, Ratio, Proportion and rates of change, Geometry and measures, Probability and Statistics. At Foundation level content is included up to grade 5 and at Higher Level up to grade 9.

The teaching groups are set accordingly to students' pace and comprehension and students in the accelerated sets will study an extra qualification in either AQA certificate in Further Mathematics and/or GCSE Higher Statistics.

How will I be assessed?

The Government has decided to change the nature of GCSEs to make them more challenging - they think this will help young people to be better prepared for further academic or vocational study, or for work. We will work together to ensure that you perform well in your GCSEs as there is a requirement that you leave school with a good Mathematics grade. Should you fail to do so you will be required to continue to study the subject at post-16.

To do well you need to:

Ultimately the key to success in Mathematics is small amounts of regular practice of challenging topics. The students who make the most progress are those who make the most of their valuable lesson time, make full use of the opportunities for independent study outside school, and seek out their teacher for extra help with any problems.

What use would this qualification be after I leave school?

Whatever you are planning to do in the future, it is now a requirement for you to retake both Maths and English Language GCSEs until you obtain a Grade 4. If you achieve the top grades in your GCSE, you can access the AS and A Level Mathematics courses.

Careers and where it can take you

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A Level Maths A Level Statistics	BSc (HONS) Mathematics Actuarial Science and Mathematics Applied Mathematics BSc Physics BSc Economics and Mathematics BA French and Mathematics BSc Mathematics and Philosophy BSc/BA/MMath Mathematics	Careers stem from maths BSc qualifications including: teaching, finance, banks and building societies, technical and scientific jobs, engineering, medicine, dentistry, and nursing.

GCSE in Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

About the subject

Studying a GCSE in French or Spanish is a valuable qualification that develops a range of skills in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. These skills are essential for success in further education and provide a solid foundation for diverse career paths. Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) are a key component of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), which is highly valued by universities and employers. Completing a GCSE in an MFL demonstrates academic rigor and cultural awareness.

What will I learn to do?

Building on the foundations of Years 7, 8, and 9, the GCSE curriculum will deepen your understanding of:

- Authentic language use in real-world contexts.
- Cultural insights into French- or Spanish-speaking communities.
- Essential grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation to communicate confidently and fluently.

At GCSE, you will explore themes such as:

Theme 1: People and lifestyle

Topic 1: Identity and relationships with others

Topic 2: Healthy living and lifestyle

Topic 3: Education and work

Theme 2: Popular culture

Topic 1: Free-time activities

Topic 2: Customs, festivals and celebrations

Topic 3: Celebrity culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

Topic 1: Travel and tourism, including places of interest

Topic 2: Media and technology

Topic 3: The environment and where people live

Assessment

The GCSE in MFL consists of four equally weighted exams, each contributing 25% to the final grade:

- **Paper 1:** Listening and understanding
- **Paper 2:** Speaking
- **Paper 3:** Reading and understanding
- **Paper 4:** Writing

GCSE French

About the subject

The AQA GCSE in French aims to develop your ability to:

- Communicate confidently and fluently with native speakers in speech and writing.
- Understand and respond to a range of authentic spoken and written material.
- Deepen your cultural understanding of French-speaking countries and communities.
- Apply language skills in real-life scenarios such as travel, work, and social interactions.
- Explore and appreciate French traditions, arts, and contemporary issues through the lens of the language.

What will I learn to do?

Students will explore themes such as:

- Identity and relationships
- School and education
- Travel and tourism
- Free-time activities and cultural traditions
- The environment and future aspirations

The course includes a focus on French culture, including arts, literature, and cinema, to foster a lifelong appreciation of the language and its significance.

When you study French at GCSE level, the emphasis is on developing your confidence to use and understand authentic materials in order to enjoy your development in the language and culture that you are studying. This course has a strong focus on French Culture in particular, and we will study French arts, poetry and movies

How will I be assessed?

- **Paper 1:** Listening and understanding in French
- **Paper 2:** Speaking in French
- **Paper 3:** Reading and understanding in French
- **Paper 4:** Writing in French

Careers and where it can take you

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A-Level in French allows you to deepen your knowledge of the language and its culture, study literature and film, and debate global issues while improving your communication skills.	Bachelor's degrees in French Take the opportunity to study a language and culture at university in addition to working/ studying abroad.	Language skills and cultural knowledge are highly valued in our increasingly globalized economy, enhancing career prospects in fields like international business, diplomacy, translation, and tourism.

GCSE Spanish

About the subject

The AQA GCSE in Spanish is designed to:

- Develop your ability to communicate effectively with native speakers.
- Enrich your understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures and communities.
- Equip you with the skills to use Spanish in real-world contexts.
- Build confidence in applying language skills for travel, leisure, and professional settings.
- Cultivate an appreciation for Spanish traditions, music, literature, and modern-day issues.

What will I learn to do?

Students will explore themes such as:

- Identity and relationships
- School and education
- Travel and tourism
- Free-time activities and cultural traditions
- The environment and future aspirations

This course emphasizes Spanish culture, arts, and traditions to encourage a broader appreciation of the language and its global influence.

How will I be assessed?

- **Paper 1:** Listening and understanding in Spanish
- **Paper 2:** Speaking in Spanish
- **Paper 3:** Reading and understanding in Spanish
- **Paper 4:** Writing in Spanish

Careers and where it can take you

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A-Level in Spanish allows you to deepen your knowledge of the language and its culture, study literature and film, and debate global issues while improving your communication skills.	Bachelor's degrees in Spanish Take the opportunity to study a language and culture at university in addition to working/studying abroad.	Language skills and cultural knowledge are highly valued in our increasingly globalized economy, enhancing career prospects in fields like international business, diplomacy, translation, and tourism.

GCSE Community Languages

About the subject

We encourage students to explore opportunities to achieve a GCSE in their home or heritage language. This allows students to gain formal recognition for their linguistic abilities while maintaining a connection to their cultural identity. Community languages are an excellent addition to your academic portfolio and are equally valued by universities and employers.

In addition to French and Spanish, we may offer GCSEs in the following community languages through examination boards like AQA and Edexcel:

- **Arabic**
- **Bengali**
- **Biblical Hebrew**
- **Chinese**
- **Greek**
- **Gujarati**
- **Italian**
- **Japanese**
- **Modern Hebrew**
- **Panjabi**
- **Polish**
- **Portuguese**
- **Russian**
- **Turkish**
- **Urdu**

Eligibility and Assessment

Students wishing to take a GCSE in a community language will undergo a diagnostic assessment using past papers to ensure readiness. This assessment will evaluate their proficiency in all required skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Successful candidates will be entered for the GCSE exam in Year 11.

Note:

Choosing a community language does not exclude students from taking French or Spanish within their normal options preferences. Achieving a qualification in both an MFL and a community language strengthens students' profiles, particularly for the EBacc.

GCSE Psychology AQA

About the subject

Are you curious about how the mind works? Wonder why people behave the way they do? Studying GCSE Psychology will help you understand human behaviour, emotions, and the brain while exploring some of the most exciting and important questions about people and society.

Whether you aspire to a career in healthcare, education, or business, Psychology will give you a strong foundation for understanding people and improving your skills for the future.

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour. Psychologists seek to understand why people think, act, and feel the way they do.

From memory and mental health to how we interact in social groups, Psychology offers insights into everyday experiences and answers questions about human nature.

What will I learn to do?

- Learn about key psychological theories and experiments.
- Develop critical thinking and analysis skills.
- Understand how science is used to study behaviour.
- Explore real-life applications of Psychology in society.

What skills do I need?

- Fluent reading and writing skills (learn and apply theories / studies to a variety of exam questions)
- The ability to develop and communicate your ideas clearly through discussion
- Presentation skills
- Extended writing skills
- Mathematical knowledge - Research methods

Assessment

You'll sit two written exams at the end of the course:

Paper 1: Cognition and Behaviour, Time: 1 hour 45 minutes, Marks: 100 marks

Topics: Memory, Perception, Development, Research Methods

Paper 2: Social Context and Behaviour, Time: 1 hour 45 minutes, Marks: 100 marks

Topics: Social Influence, Language and Communication, Brain and Neuropsychology, Psychological Problems

Both papers include: Multiple choice questions, Short-answer questions and Extended writing questions

Careers and where it can take you

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A wide range of A Level courses such as A Levels in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sociology• Anthropology• Politics• Psychology• History• Geography• English	A wide range of degree courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bachelors Degree Bsc in psychology and• Bachelor's Degree BA in Sociology• Social Work, Law, Politics, Philosophy, Marketing, Business, Criminology, Statistics <p>Plus a huge variety of degree combined courses such as: Psychology with sociology</p>	Careers directly related to Psychology These careers typically require further training or postgraduate study: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clinical Psychologist• Counselling Psychologist• Educational Psychologist• Forensic Psychologist• Health Psychologist• Occupational Psychologist• Neuropsychologist• Sports Psychologist <p>These careers value the transferable skills gained from a psychology degree, such as communication, data analysis, and understanding human behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human Resources (HR) Specialist• Marketing or Consumer Research Analyst• Social Worker• Youth Worker• Careers in Teaching• Police Officer or Probation Officer

GCSE Religious Education

About the subject

The UK today, especially London, is a mix of different world views and religions. Therefore, it's the basic democratic right of all pupils to have an opportunity to study different world views so they can understand the beliefs of their fellow citizens and potentially further consolidate their own world views. RE provides an opportunity to dispel many misconceptions about religion, which are ever present in world of growing social media. As pupils are more informed about the different beliefs of peoples in the UK the drive for community cohesion in the UK is strengthened.

What will I learn to do?

A key part of religious studies is learning to express, support, and evaluate key beliefs and views on various issues such as medicine and moral challenges. Through engaging in the study of various views on these issues pupils will develop the skills needed to research and develop arguments for or against specific opinions. Along with this, pupils will understand what makes a strong argument and to appraise their own arguments to strengthen them in an academic manner. This provides the framework needed for academic writing in any humanities or social science subject.

How will I be assessed?

- Two written exams: Each 1 hour 45 minutes

Component One:

The study of beliefs and practices of TWO world religions. At Heron Hall Academy we have decided to study Christianity and Islam based on the school demographics and the demographics of London.

Component Two:

The study of four religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes. Students should consider different religious, philosophical and ethical arguments and their impact and influence in the modern world. They should be aware of different perspectives on the issues studied, within and/or between religions, as well as non-religious views. At Heron Hall Academy, the chosen themes are the following

- Relationships and families • Religion and Life • Religion, peace and conflict
- Religion, crime and punishment

Careers and where it can take you

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A Level RE A Level Philosophy A Level Law Other Humanities A Level Health and Social Care	BA (Hons) RE BA (Hons) Theology BA (Hons) Philosophy BA (Hons) Politics BA (Hons) Law BSc (Hons) Psychology	RE is seen as a foundation for a number of skills used in all workplaces such as conflict resolution, management or research.

GCSE Science

About the subject

GCSE study in the sciences provides the foundation for understanding the material world. Scientific understanding is changing our lives and is vital to the world's future prosperity. Science groups are organised by the Science Department, based on ability, attitude and progress made at the end of Year 9. Students will study Biology, Chemistry and Physics. GCSE - Combined science (9-1)

Pupils follow a programme leading to 2 GCSEs in Science. They will study a wide range of scientific concepts and is appropriate for students with a general interest in Science.

Aims

- To gain a systematic body of scientific knowledge, and the skills needed to apply this in new and changing situations
- To gain an understanding of scientific ideas, of how they develop, and of the factors which may affect their limitations
- To consider and evaluate critically students' own data and conclusions, and those obtained from other sources
- To evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of scientific and technological developments, including those related to the environment, personal health and quality of life, and to consider ethical issues where these arise
- To use electronic and more traditional sources of information to collect data and ideas on a topic of scientific interest

What skills do I need?

- Fluent reading and writing skills
- The ability to develop and communicate your ideas clearly
- Extended writing skills
- Mathematical skills
- The ability to learn and use scientific ideas and apply them in a new context

How will I be assessed?

The AQA Combined Science: Trilogy GCSE (9–1) consists of six externally examined papers (two for each science) lasting 1h 15min each. Students must complete all assessments in the same tier. These are available at foundation tier and higher tier.

Students must complete all assessments in May/June in any single year.

Careers and where it can take you

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A Levels in Biology, Chemistry and Physics	Most STEM degree courses Medicine Nursing Midwifery Engineering	STEM careers are the fastest growing industry on the planet

GCSE Sociology AQA

About the subject

The course aims to broaden students' minds, helping them to see their world from different perspectives and in new and thought-provoking ways. Studying Sociology gives students the opportunity to consider the world through perspectives other than their own and to be respectful and tolerant young people. As a Sociology student, you'll develop a wide range of skills such as how to analyse and interpret data and arguments and how to apply theories and concepts to explain our social world.

The function of sociology, as of every science, is to reveal that which is hidden. *Pierre Bourdieu*

What will I learn to do?

Students that study Sociology will develop a wide range of knowledge and understanding about society, and how sociologists study and understand its structures, processes and issues. Sociology is exciting, interesting and relevant to students' lives. This specification encourages students to take a questioning approach to evidence and issues, thus developing their critical and evaluative skills.

What skills do I need?

- Fluent reading and writing skills (learn and apply theories / studies to a variety of exam questions)
- The ability to develop and communicate your ideas clearly through discussion
- Presentation skills
- Extended writing skills (please note there are 12 marker exam essay questions)
- The ability to analyse text
- The ability to use textual evidence to support your ideas
- Mathematical knowledge - Research methods

How will I be assessed?

Sociology is a completely linear assessment, with 2 GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11.

Paper 1 – The Sociology of Families and Education (1hr45) - 50% of GCSE

Section A has two multiple choice questions followed by a range of short and extended responses.

Section B has two multiple choice questions followed by a range of short and extended responses

Paper 2 – The Sociology of Crime and Deviance and Social Stratification (1hr45) - 50% of GCSE

Section A has two multiple choice questions followed by a range of short and extended responses.

Section B has two multiple choice questions followed by a range of short and extended responses

Careers and where it can take you

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A wide range of A Level courses such as A Levels in: Sociology Anthropology Politics Psychology History Geography English.	A wide range of degree courses: Bachelor's Degree BA (Hons/Scie) in Sociology Social Work, Law, Politics, Philosophy, Marketing, Business Criminology, Statistics, Plus a huge variety of degree combined courses such as: Sociology with Law, PR.	Wide range of job opportunities: Analytical and critical thinking skills, problem solving, communication and public speaking skills are fully embedded and utilised within the study of Sociology Social Work, Police, Criminal Justice System, Civil Service, Statistics, Census services, Education.

OCR Cambridge Nationals Sports Studies

About the subject

Sports Studies offers students the chance to develop different types of skills through largely practical means; communication, problem solving, team working, evaluation and analysis, performing under pressure, and formulating written findings from practical investigation. All these skills are transferable and are key skills when looking for employment. The Cambridge Nationals in Sport Studies looks at different sectors within the sports industry, whilst also encompassing some core sport/physical education themes. Students can apply theoretical knowledge about different types of sport and physical activity, skills development and sports leadership to their own practical performance.

What will I learn to do?

Students will learn about contemporary issues in sport such as funding, participation, ethics and role models, and sport and the media. Students will develop an appreciation of the importance of sport locally and nationally, different ways of being involved in sport and how this shapes the sports industry.

How will I be assessed?

Exam Paper Unit R184: Contemporary issues in sport 1 hour

- Issues which affect participation in Sport
- The role of sport in promoting values
- Topic Area 3: The implications of hosting a major sporting event for a city or country
- Topic Area 4: The role National Governing Bodies (NGBs) play in the development of their sport
- Topic Area 5: The use of technology in sport

Coursework Unit R185: Performance and leadership in sports activities

- Key components of performance
- Applying practice methods to support improvement in a sporting activity
- Organising and planning a sports activity session
- Leading a sports activity session
- Reviewing your own performance in planning and leading a sports activity session

Coursework Unit R187: Increasing awareness of outdoor and adventurous activities

- Provision for different types of outdoor and adventurous activities in the UK
- Equipment, clothing and safety aspects of participating in outdoor and adventurous activities
- Plan for and be able to participate in an outdoor and adventurous activity
- Evaluate participation in an outdoor and adventurous activity

Careers and where it can take you

Your listening skills will enhance your listening and understanding in other subjects like foreign languages. Your performing skills will give you confidence in playing to an audience – useful if you intend to pursue, for example, drama or law.

Post 16	Post 19	World of work
A Level PE	BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise	Biomechanic
Level 3 BTEC National Diploma	Science	Physiotherapist
Cambridge Technical Level 3	BSc (Hons) Sport Rehabilitation	Sports Coach
Sport and Physical Activity	BSc (Hons) Sports Coaching and Performance	

Life Skills Programme

About the subject

The Life Skills Programme is an in-house pathway designed to support students who benefit from a more personalised and practical curriculum. Students complete a series of short, accredited courses, including AQA Unit Awards, alongside additional support in English and Maths.

This is a Discrete Option, offered following discussion with students and parents/carers to ensure it is the right pathway.

The programme supports students to develop the skills, confidence and qualifications needed for sixth form, college or apprenticeships.

Students will:

- achieve nationally recognised accreditations
- strengthen English and Maths for future progression
- develop confidence, independence and employability skills
- prepare positively for post-16 education or training

Assessment

- AQA Unit Award Scheme: teacher-assessed evidence
- English and Maths: ongoing assessment through classwork and tasks

Beyond Year 11

The Life Skills Programme supports progression to:

- sixth form (where appropriate)
- college courses
- apprenticeships or traineeships
- further Functional Skills or GCSE study in English and Maths



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North Star Community Trust



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