

NEWSTEAD WOOD SCHOOL



GCSE OPTION CHOICES 2025-2026

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Making the right choices for Year 10 and 11

Throughout Key Stage 3, students have followed the same broad curriculum. At Key Stage 4, they are given a number of option choices and are required to make decisions about which subjects they wish to continue studying.

We will provide students with plenty of support and advice during this time to ensure that each student feels confident and well-informed when making their subject selections.

There will be a Year 9 Options Evening on 26 February 2026 from 6pm until 8pm, when parents and students will be able to meet with teachers and discuss option choices. You will have the opportunity to hear from the Headteacher and Head of Year, followed by the chance to visit departments. This will enable you to learn about our courses and explore everything we have to offer.

What are the options?

It is time to make choices for the future. During the next two years, students will study some compulsory, core subjects. The rest will be subjects they choose. In order to remain open to as many careers and university courses as possible, students are encouraged to study a broad and balanced range of subjects. This is why some subjects are compulsory, and certain restrictions are in place for the remaining choices.

All Year 10 students will study:

GCSE English Language, GCSE English Literature, GCSE Mathematics, GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry and GCSE Physics, GCSE Religion, Philosophy and Ethics, and Physical Education (non-examined).

Students need not consider Further Mathematics, as this decision will be taken by Mathematics teachers at the end of Year 10. All classes follow the same curriculum in Year 10 for these subjects; they sit the same assessments and are given the same homework.

The choice of remaining subjects is made from the following:

Art and Design Textiles, Fine Art, Computer Science, Design and Technology, Drama, Engineering, Food Preparation and Nutrition, Geography, History, Modern Foreign Languages (French, German and Spanish) Music, and Physical Education.

Twilight courses:

Japanese

Latin

Chinese (Mandarin)

Twilight courses are additional to the set curriculum and provide an opportunity to explore extra subjects. Before continuing in a twilight class, we ask that students, along with their parents or carers, carefully consider their current workload and overall wellbeing. Approval from both the twilight course teacher and Ms Bongout (KS3 Lead) will be required to be able to continue. If a student is finding it challenging to manage their existing workload with their current subjects, it may not be appropriate to take on a twilight course at that time. Our aim is to ensure all students can succeed and maintain a balanced approach to their studies.

GCSE Options for 2025

Please see the table below for Year 9 GCSE Options Blocks 2025. Students must choose **one** subject from each block.

Block A	Block B	Block C
		Art
Computer Science	Computer Science	Computer Science
History	History	History
Geography	Geography	Geography
		Music
Spanish	Spanish	
		DT: Textiles
French	French	
	German	
		Engineering
Drama	Drama	
		DT: Design and Technology
DT: Food Preparation and Nutrition		DT: Food Preparation and Nutrition
		Physical Education (GCSE)

When selecting your options you will be asked to give a reserve option subject.

Elective Options

In Years 10 and 11, students have a choice of elective options in which they can try out new activities, learn new skills, take part in physical activities, and foster a healthy work-life balance and good mental health.

We encourage all students to choose one academic elective and one sporting elective. This year students have chosen from:

- Fencing (paid option)
- Boxing
- Table Tennis
- Reading Group
- Outreach at a local primary school
- Reading and Research for Medicine
- CREST Science Silver Award
- Study Period
- Yoga (paid option)
- Dance - Jack Petchey Step into Dance Award (paid option)
- First Aid - St John's Ambulance Qualification
- CREST Science Bronze Award
- Introduction to Neuropsychology
- Sports Leadership Award
- Team Sports
- GCSE Intervention in Year 1

You can see more about the current year's elective options [here](#). Please be aware elective options may vary each year.

Additional qualifications that can be taken during electives:

GCSE Statistics

This GCSE gives students a good grasp of the statistics required for Maths A Level as well as some other courses such as Geography and Psychology. It overlaps significantly with the GCSE Mathematics course and gives students a deeper understanding and fluency in the statistics element of the standard GCSE course. To choose this option for electives, students must have an exam mark of 80 or above for Mathematics in Year 9. This year the fee for this paid-for Elective option was £240.

IGCSE Environmental Management:

The Geography Department runs this course which is examined in the summer term of Year 10. Students must also opt for Geography to take this course. This year the fee for this paid-for Elective option was £240.

More information about these courses will be provided after we have finalised our provision for next year. Students will receive final details about their Elective Options in July.

Beyond Year 11 – Career Learning and Development

Your GCSE option choices will impact to some extent the choices available beyond GCSE; therefore, it is important to understand what those choices are.

All young people are now required to continue in education until at least their 18th birthday. This is of significant benefit – not only does it provide the opportunity to acquire a range of important employability skills, but it also enables students to take the time to carefully consider a variety of options for their future. So, whilst students may decide to stay on at Newstead Wood School after Year 11, there are other choices available to them too, including study at another school, college/training provider, or an apprenticeship or traineeship.

Here to point you in the right direction

There are many things to think about as students approach the next step in their education, and they can be confident that the Careers Team at Newstead Wood School and their Head of Year will be there to advise and guide them at every stage of their journey.

Some students may already have a very clear idea about what they want to do next. Equally, some may feel unsure about what the future holds. Either way, it is important to recognise that the options available to them in Year 12 will largely depend on the outcome of study in Years 10/11 and the results of their GCSE exams.

The Careers Team supports students to develop the necessary skills, experience, self-awareness and knowledge to make informed decisions about their future career paths. We hold careers@lunchtime events throughout the year, a speed networking event, and a CV workshop in the summer. Year 11 students all have a 1-2-1 careers guidance interview in the autumn term. A monthly newsletter is produced with relevant important information, and much more. This all helps students connect to employers, universities, alumni and apprenticeship providers, and to understand the full range of opportunities. All students will be enrolled with Unifrog, which is an online careers platform.

Progression to Sixth Form

Enrolled students are required to meet certain requirements for entry to our Sixth Form. These are all available [here](#). It is important that students understand what these requirements are before making plans about their future. Newstead Wood School offers A Level courses in academic subjects such as the ones they have been studying at GCSE, as well as additional subjects such as PPE.

Finding an apprenticeship or traineeship

An apprenticeship is a real job with training, which allows students to earn while they learn and receive recognised qualifications as they progress, up to degree level. They take between one and four years to complete. To find out about apprenticeships, click here: [Apprenticeships](#).

Our commitment to you

We deliver a unique, award-winning, career learning and development programme at Newstead Wood. We are proud of the exceptional academic success of our students, but we take equal satisfaction in their personal development too. The Careers Team plays a key role in this aspect of your education, helping to equip you with important skills for future career happiness, such as decision-making, resilience and an engagement with lifelong learning. We very much look forward to supporting you in your journey.

Core Subjects

English Language and English Literature

Examination Board: AQA

Studying English is about thinking clearly and precisely; it is about communicating with clarity; it is about detailed and focused analysis of language and ideas; it is about enjoying language in all its creativity, variety and playfulness.

A good command of the skills of English is invaluable for any pathway through life, and a good grade in English Language GCSE is a powerful indicator of an ability to think and communicate clearly. As such, it is highly valued by universities and employers as well as being essential for life.

All students study towards two GCSE qualifications: English Language and English Literature. All assessment is by examination at the end of Year 11. The English GCSE Course develops students' reading and writing skills, exposes them to a wider range of cultures, instils an appreciation for literature and literacy genres, and prepares them for the challenges of A Level and university study.

Content

Students develop their skills as readers and writers by exploring a wide variety of novels, plays and poetry, as well as non-fiction texts. This includes texts by writers from other cultures and traditions. Students will develop their oral and written skills in discussion, argument, role-play, presentation and persuasion, both individually and in groups.

Subject Specific Skills and Areas of Understanding

Students are taught the skills of analysing language, presenting critical arguments, reading with insight and adapting their writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences. Students will learn to make links between texts and contexts and explore the writer's craft and writer intent.

Assessment

In both qualifications, all assessment is through examination at the end of the course. There are two examinations for English Language and two for English Literature, which include:

English Language

Paper 1 – Explorations in creative reading and writing: reading literary fiction and writing a narrative or a description (50%).

Paper 2 – Writers' viewpoints and perspectives: reading non-fiction and writing an argument (50%).

Speaking and listening skills are assessed at the end of Year 10. Students will receive a separate grade for this component.

English Literature

Paper 1 – Shakespeare and the 19th century novel (40%)

Paper 2 – Modern text and poetry (Anthology poetry and unseen poetry) (60%)



Mathematics

Examination Board: Edexcel

The course is broad and assesses a wide range of topics which fit into the categories below.

Subject	Percentage
Number	15
Algebra	30
Ratio, Proportion and Rates of Change	20
Geometry and Measures	20
Probability and Statistics	15

There is a greater emphasis on problem-solving than in previous years. As a department we have always made problem solving integral to our teaching. However, we are looking to increase students' skills in this area through a range of extra-curricular activities such as early entry to UKMT Mathematic challenges, trips to prestigious universities with a mathematical focus, organising webinars on topics outside the curriculum and many other such events.

The vast majority of the Mathematics GCSE will be covered in Year 10. The Mathematics Department will carefully monitor student progress throughout the GCSE course during Year 10.

All classes will follow the same scheme, sit the same assessments and be set the same homework. At the end of Year 10, the Mathematics Department will decide whether your daughter is to sit an additional Mathematics qualification or will continue with GCSE Mathematics. This decision will be made based on your daughter's attainment throughout Year 10.

Additional Qualifications

1. OCR Level 3 Free Standing Mathematics Qualification (FSMQ)

This Further Mathematics qualification has been designed for students who have an exceptional ability in Mathematics. Many of the students will go on to study Further Mathematics in Year 12, and for these the course provides a strong foundation for both Mathematics and Further Mathematics A Level. This will be taught in normal timetabled lessons.

2. AQA Level 2 Further Mathematics

This Further Mathematics qualification has been designed for students who have a high ability in Mathematics. It has been constructed to broaden knowledge of the pure Mathematics topics contained in the GCSE Mathematics specifications. This is an additional 'stand-alone' qualification, providing an additional challenge for students studying GCSE Mathematics and solid foundations for progression onto Mathematics courses in the Sixth Form. This will be taught in normal timetabled lessons.

3. Edexcel GCSE Statistics

This qualification is intended for students who demonstrate strong mathematical ability and wish to develop advanced statistical skills. GCSE Statistics provides a solid foundation for the statistical components of A Level Mathematics, with considerable overlap with the GCSE Mathematics curriculum. The course will be delivered during timetabled Elective lessons in the first year of Key Stage 4.

Assessment

There is no coursework in any of these Mathematics courses. All exams will be completed in the Summer Term of Year 11.



Religion, Philosophy and Ethics

Examination Board: AQA – Specification A

The GCSE course begins in the autumn term of Year 9. Students consider Islam and Christianity in depth as well as looking at a range of other different religious, philosophical and ethical beliefs; philosophical arguments and ethical issues. This course is taken as a full GCSE by all students at Newstead Wood. This is a subject which excels in producing critical and independent thinkers who can rigorously evaluate ideas and formulate well supported judgements. Through discussion and debate, students learn to listen and speak thoughtfully and to formulate their own views. It also promotes literacy and essay writing skills and helps students to develop their ability to create and sustain written arguments. These skills are transferable and support learning in other subjects such as English, Science and the humanities.

Content

The syllabus will explore the following areas:

- Beliefs and Practices in Islam
- Beliefs and Practices in Christianity
- Peace and Conflict
- Religion and Life
- The Existence of God and Revelation
- Religion, Crime and Punishment

Subject Specific Skills and Areas of Understanding

Students will be given the opportunity to:

- Acquire knowledge and develop understanding of the beliefs, values and traditions of two or more religious faiths
- Consider the influence of the beliefs associated with these faiths
- Consider religious responses to moral issues
- Identify, investigate and respond to fundamental questions of life raised by religion and human experience

They will develop in the following skills:

- The ability to recall, select, organise and deploy knowledge
- The ability to describe, analyse and explain the relevance and application of religious beliefs
- The ability to evaluate different responses to philosophical and moral issues

Assessment

Each candidate will be assessed on two Religions (Islam and Christianity) and on four Philosophy and Ethics topics. There will be two written papers.



Examination Board: AQA

Subject Specific Skills and Knowledge

The AQA Science GCSE courses involve investigating, observing, experimenting or testing out ideas and thinking about them. The way scientific ideas flow through the specification will support students in building a deep understanding of Science, building on the knowledge and skills already developed at Key Stage 3. This will involve talking about, reading and writing about Science plus the actual doing, as well as representing Science in its many forms both mathematically and visually through models.

The specifications encourage the development of knowledge and understanding in Science through opportunities for working scientifically. Working scientifically is the sum of all the activities that scientists do. This will provide a strong set of transferable skills that will be highly regarded by universities and employers.

Content

GCSE Biology (8461)

Topics: cells, mitosis, transport in cells; the digestive system, the circulatory system, plant organs and system; communicable diseases in plants and humans; photosynthesis and respiration; homeostasis, the nervous system, hormonal communication; reproduction, variation and evolution; classification; interdependence and competition; organisation of an ecosystem and biodiversity.

GCSE Chemistry (8462)

Topics: atomic structure and the periodic table; bonding, structure and the properties of matter; quantitative chemistry; chemical changes; energy changes; the rate and extent of chemical changes; organic chemistry; chemical analysis; and the chemistry of the atmosphere.

GCSE Physics (8463)

Topics: forces; energy; waves; electricity; magnetism and electromagnetism; the particle model of matter; atomic structure and space physics.

Written Assessment

All written assessments will consist of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions. All papers will assess knowledge and understanding from a distinct topic area.

Practical Assessment

All three subjects include a set of required practicals that must be carried out by all students with a record of completion. Some questions in the written assessments will relate to practical work. Here at Newstead Wood School, we include many more practical tasks to enhance the learning experience.



Subject Options

Art & Design Textiles

Examination Board: AQA

Learning about Textiles encourages our students to develop design, practical and thinking skills that open a world of possibility, giving students the tools to create the future. This specification is designed to allow for creativity to engage them with a personal investigation, giving them the freedom to develop their own pathway within the subject. It aims to relate existing artists work with their own, giving them the opportunity to develop their own style and techniques within the subject area.

Students use creativity, leading towards two final products of their own choice, to design and make samples and test pieces that link to their artists and personal theme.

This course has two components so that students are working in **one or more** areas of textile design, with the ability to overlap or blend techniques such as those listed below:

- art textiles
- fashion design and illustration
- costume design
- constructed textiles
- printed and dyed textiles
- surface pattern
- stitched and/or embellished textiles
- soft furnishings and/or textiles for interiors
- digital textiles
- installed textiles

Students choosing the Textiles pathway:

A qualification in Textiles will develop your creative thinking; dexterity; project management skills; manufacturing knowledge and skills; digital and software design skills and your ability to show independent learning and time management. This qualification is great for anyone wishing to study Design, Fashion, Architecture, Print Design, and Illustration as well those interested in marketing and business.

Through design and manufacturing tasks, students gain experience of working with a broad range of materials and processes to create end products showcasing their exploration. They extend their creative and practical skills and apply a range of skills throughout their learning journey. Presentation techniques include design communication skills using a range of media; mood boards and testing of techniques to formulate original ideas; CAD/CAM and Photoshop to manufacture with the option of using both the laser cutter and sublimation printer.

Textiles trips, visits and guests:

Students will have the opportunity to explore their career paths further with lectures and workshops run by design professionals from leading design consultancies and agencies. There will be opportunities to visit the V&A, The Design Museum and The Tate Modern to explore different artists and artwork to help influence and inspire their own work.

AQA Art & Design Textiles Assessment Overview:

NEA 1 Portfolio – 60%

NEA 2 Externally set assignment – 40% – After a preparatory period over several weeks, students produce their piece in a 10-hour examination.



Examination Board: AQA

Art is a very popular subject as a GCSE option and is limited to 25 places per group (50 in total). It is therefore advantageous to not only have consistently gained high marks in Year 9, but also to have been consistent with homework, producing high grade results.

Content and Skills

The core of the course (as it is in Year 12 and 13) is **drawing in all its forms**.

However, students opting to follow an Art course will enjoy participating in a wide range of practical activities including drawing, painting, sculpture, clay, printmaking, photography etc., as well as critical studies in the History of Art. This course will also include visits to a gallery.

Study skills are taught in the area of investigation, documentation, experimentation and realisation. There will also be the opportunity in Year 11 to specialise in a chosen area and to experiment with larger pieces of work and different media. Individual projects are based on themes which give scope for imaginative interpretation in 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional materials.

Assessment

Coursework assessment is ongoing with clearly defined teacher-led projects in Year 10 and more individually researched themes during Year 11. Students will be encouraged to pursue studies in areas of the Visual Arts that interest them and to explore those areas in greater depth, investigating influences, materials, meanings and personal responses to the artwork.

Examination

This consists of a 10-hour examination. The brief is given to the candidates approximately eight weeks before the examination during which time research work is completed showing individual interpretation and response to the theme. Any medium may be used for the preparation and examination piece.

The examination piece, research work and coursework are then exhibited and the overall grade awarded is based on 60% for the coursework and 40% for the examination.

Please note: It is not possible to take A Level Art unless you have completed the GCSE course.



Examination Board AQA GCSE Computer Science (8525)

Computer Science is a very popular subject for GCSE. While there are no strict prerequisites, having a genuine interest in the subject, a logical mindset and proficient mathematical abilities are recommended. In Year 9, students will be introduced to Python programming, and it is advisable for them to carefully assess their coding experience, interest and performance as they make their decision.

Overview

Whether your ambitions lie in computer programming, gaming, ethical hacking, or digital forensics, this course offers a robust foundation for your goals. Alternatively, if you envision shaping the future of medicine, fashion, engineering, or economics, a deep comprehension of digital technology is essential.

Skills you will acquire

Computer Science aligns with subjects such as Maths, Science, and Languages. Developing problem-solving skills, comparable to Maths, is crucial, especially in the context of practical programming. Like any scientific discipline, there is a spectrum of theories to grasp and apply when addressing written paper exam questions. Overall, Computer Science allows you to think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically – skills that are sought after by universities and employers in all disciplines. It is an ideal preparation for A Level and beyond, opening doors to a variety of Level 3, A Level, and degree courses.

What will you study?

Students will develop a solid foundation in programming fundamentals using Python, applicable to diverse high-level languages encountered in further education.

Computational Thinking and Programming Skills: This unit covers Computational thinking, code tracing, problem-solving, programming concepts including the design of effective algorithms and the designing, writing, testing, and refining of code.

Computing Concepts: This unit covers theoretical themes such as cyber security, data representation, databases and SQL, computer systems and networks, along with ethical, legal, and environmental impacts. The paper has a strong focus on theory and understanding of the subject beyond programming skills.

How is this course assessed?

Paper 1 – Computational Thinking and Programming Skills – Written exam – 2 hours – 90 marks – 50% of GCSE
A mix of multiple choice, short answer and longer answer questions assessing programming, practical problem-solving and computational thinking skills.

Paper 2 – Computing Concepts – Written exam – 1 hour 45 minutes – 90 marks – 50% of GCSE
A mix of multiple choice, short answer, longer answer and extended response questions assessing theoretical knowledge and SQL programming skills.



Design and Technology

Examination Board: OCR

Learning about design and technology encourages students to develop design and thinking skills that open up a world of possibility, giving them the tools to create the future.

This specification is designed to excite and engage students with contemporary topics covering the breadth of this dynamic and evolving subject. It aims to relate authentic real-world awareness of iterative design practices and strategies used by the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries.

Students use critical thinking, leading towards invention and design innovation, to design and make prototypes that solve real and relevant problems, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values.

OCR have designed this course using research and authentic practices of an initiative called Designing Our Tomorrow (DOT), from the University of Cambridge.

Students choosing the Design & Technology pathway:

Whether you are interested in pursuing a career as a designer or a doctor, Design and Technology will develop your creative thinking; dexterity; project management skills; business/manufacturing knowledge; digital and software design skills and your ability to apply Maths and Science understanding when problem solving. This qualification is great for anyone wishing to study design, engineering, architecture as well those interested in marketing and business.

Through design and manufacturing tasks, students gain experience of working with a broad range of materials and processes to create contemporary design solutions. They extend their creative and practical skills and apply the theoretical aspects of the subject. Presentation techniques include design communication skills using a range of media; mood boards to formulate original ideas; CAD/CAM and Photoshop to manufacture using the laser cutter and sublimation printer or Inventor to manufacturer 3D printing. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to experiment with a wide range of construction techniques to produce innovative products that meet a user's specific needs.

Design & Technology trips, visits, competitions and guests:

Students will be able to explore their career paths further with lectures and workshops run by design professionals from leading design consultancies and agencies.

Students will have the opportunity to explore London's fantastic Design District based in Greenwich Peninsula, visit the V&A and The Design Museum and participate in workshops run by leading design experts.

Students will have the opportunity to build their skills through additional expert skills workshops and to enter their design work into national and international design competitions.

OCR Design & Technology Assessment Overview:

Written Paper 1hr 30mins – 50%

Iterative Design Challenge NEA – 50%



Examination Board: Edexcel

Are you thinking about Drama?

- Do you enjoy acting and performing?
- Do you like working creatively, practically and in groups?
- Do you enjoy going on theatre trips?
- Do you enjoy studying plays practically?

What will you study?

Performance of Play – Text

Each student will perform two extracts from a play. This could be a group scene, a duologue or a monologue. Your Drama teacher will help you with your choice of plays.

Devising

Students will have the opportunity to create, devise, plan, script and rehearse their own original play and then perform it to an audience.

Practical Study of Plays

Students will practically study plays in workshops. This will include: rehearsed readings and performing extracts of the play in class, improvising around scenes and characters, acting techniques, rehearsal techniques, movement exercises, vocal exercises, warm ups, working with design elements such as lighting, costume, sound and masks.

Theatre Trips

Students will have trips to the West End to see a selection of plays and learn about different styles of performance as well as Stage Production, Lighting, Sound and Costume. Plays we have seen previously include: *Blood Brothers*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, *War Horse*, *The Woman in Black*, *The 39 Steps*, *The Play That Goes Wrong* and *Everyone's Talking About Jamie*.

How is the course assessed?

- The text performance will be assessed by an external examiner (20%)
- The devising of an original play will be assessed internally and externally moderated. This will include performance and the assessment of a written portfolio of analysis and evaluation (40%)

The practical study of a play and the study of a live performance will be assessed through a written examination (40%)

Why study this course?

- It's fun and exciting!
- It builds your confidence, communication skills, creativity, social skills, teamwork and leadership skills
- You learn about different plays
- You have the experience of performing to an audience.



Engineering

Examination Board: AQA

Engineering is an increasingly innovative and exciting area to work in. It affects every aspect of modern life from skyscrapers to smart phones, cars to medical and surgical equipment. Students will learn and develop a secure knowledge and understanding of materials, their properties and how these can be utilised in products.

Students will have the opportunity to design and manufacture their own ideas and prototypes in a range on different materials. They will learn about mechanical as well as electronic systems and how to use these to solve problems along with applying knowledge of computer aided design and manufacture and programmable components which they will be able to incorporate into their own project work.

AQA's Engineering GCSE introduces students to a host of new technologies, helping them to gain practical skills and understanding to inspire a lifelong interest in engineering. It will particularly appeal to those who enjoy being creative, with an affinity for drawing, design, maths and problem-solving. This qualification leads well into A-level design or engineering and can help to build the strong foundations required to study engineering at degree level and beyond.

AQA Engineering Course Overview:

- Engineering materials
- Engineering manufacturing processes
- Systems
- Testing and investigation
- The impact of modern technologies
- Practical engineering skills

Engineering trips, visits and guests:

Students will have the opportunity to explore their career paths further with lectures and workshops run by leading design professionals from design and engineering firms and consultancy.

Students will have the opportunity to visit a range of relevant locations and companies to see engineering and its many different specialisms in commercial application.

Students will also have the opportunity to build their skills through additional expert skills workshops. They can also enter their engineering work into National and International competitions and award schemes such as Faraday & Arkwright.

Assessment

2 hour written exam – 60%

Non-Examined Assessment: Practical engineering project – 40% – A project based on a brief set by AQA released in June of Year 10.



Food Preparation and Nutrition

Examination Board: OCR

This qualification aims to bring about real sustainable change, providing students with the expertise and skills to feed themselves and others better. It also provides a good setting for students hoping to move forward with careers in the food and hospitality industries.

Students will discover the essentials of food science, nutrition and how to expertly cook. In addition to this, they will understand the huge challenges that we face globally to supply the world with nutritious and safe food.

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

OCR GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition Course Overview:

Section A: Nutrition

Section B: Food: Food provenance and food choice

Section C: Cooking and food preparation

Section D: Skills requirements: Preparation and cooking techniques

Food Preparation and Nutrition trips, visits and guests:

Students will design and make nutritious food for a pop-up restaurant within school, manufacture food for the school's Christmas fair as well as designing and manufacturing canapés for school events.

Students will have the opportunity to visit some of London's most famous food stands in and around London Bridge at Borough Market and Mulberry Street. Students will experience some of the best food designers and makers from a global perspective.

In 2023 Food GCSE Students visited Sorrento in Italy to spend some time soaking up the Italian cuisine.

Students will have the opportunity to participate in high level skills workshops run by chefs and industry experts.

Assessment

Written Paper 1hr 30mins – 50%

Food Investigation Task (NEA1) – 15%

Food Preparation Assessment (NEA2) – 35%



Geography

Examination Board: Edexcel B

Geography is regarded as one of the most employable subjects to study (DTI). To support this, we follow a broad geographical education based on current issues facing the planet so that students can understand the complexities of the world they live in. The Edexcel course builds on and provides growth for knowledge and understanding from learning in the lower school as well as building a strong base of transferable skills, techniques and attitudes.

Content

The Edexcel B Geography course covers a wide range of themes over the two years.

Unit 1 Global Geographical Issues

- Hazardous Earth, focusing on Climate and Tectonic hazards
- Development dynamics, outlining aspects of global variation with a deep focus on one countries issues.
- Challenges of an Urbanised World, with a range of socio-economic processes and a study of one megacity.

Unit 2 UK Geographical Issues

- The evolving physical landscape, looking at coastal change and conflict and river processes and pressures.
- The evolving human landscape, investigating cities and their sustainability.
- Carry out fieldwork and research to investigate both coastal and urban environments

Unit 3 People and Environment Issues – Making Decisions

- The relationship between people and the biosphere with a detailed focus on forests under threat.
- Issues around the social and economic sustainability of energy resources
- Make supported decisions on big issues based on a varied range of source materials

Subject Specific Skills and Areas of Understanding

During the two years students are expected to identify questions and issues relating to the themes of the course. They will establish sequences of enquiry of both primary fieldwork and secondary evidence. Students will also learn to apply skills and techniques such as map work, Geographical Information Systems and decision making, as well as developing the relevant geographical language to communicate findings in a precise and accurate way.

Assessment

In GCSE Geography all assessment will be through examinations which will test subject knowledge and understanding as well as key geographical skills including fieldwork and decision making, a skill which is highly regarded by both employers and universities.

Global Geographical Issues 1hr 30mins 37.5%

UK Geographical Issues 1hr 30mins 37.5%

People and Environment Issues 1hr 30mins 25%



Examination Board: OCR A 'Explaining the Modern World' (J410)

People who study History are fearless explorers of the past. They investigate past policies, societies, cultures, languages, health, art, education, money, conflicts and more, look at how things have developed over time and connect the dots to understand how we arrive at where we are today.

GCSE History builds on knowledge and skills acquired in the lower school and is an exciting opportunity to study key aspects of medieval, early modern, modern and 20th Century British History and 20th Century International and American History. This fascinating course will appeal to anyone who is interested in investigating historical events, researching questions about cause and consequence, change and continuity and gaining an understanding of current affairs in a historical context. History develops skills that are highly valued in the workplace and history students are analytical and critical when considering information, making decisions and problem solving.

Content

The OCR A History 'Explaining the Modern World' covers a wide range of themes over the two years.

In Year 10 we study Paper One

- The USA 1919-48: The People and the State which looks at the relationship between the people and the state in the USA and includes the key topics of the Roaring Twenties, the 1930's and the New Deal and the Impact of the Second World War on American Society.
- International Relations: the changing international order, 1918-1975 which studies conflict and co-operation 1918-1939, and the Cold War 1945. We also analyse changing interpretations of Appeasement and of the responsibility for Cold War tensions.

In Year 11 we study Papers Two and Three

- Migration to Britain c.1000-2010. We examine various groups which have come to Britain since the 11th Century. We look at the reasons for immigration, the experience and actions of immigrants, responses to immigration and the impact of immigration on Britain's relationship with the wider world.
- The impact of Empire on Britain 1688-1730. This depth study teaches learners about a period of fundamental significance in the development of the British Empire and the shaping of Britain's place in the modern world.
- Urban Environments: Patterns of Migration, looks at why migrant groups settled in Spitalfields in London what impact they had on this area between 1000-2010.

Topics studied in both years will contribute contextual knowledge and skills that will ease the transition to A level at Newstead Wood School.



Modern Foreign Languages – French, German and Spanish

Examination Board: Pearson EdExcel

(French, German and Spanish only. See separate entries for Latin, Chinese and Japanese)

Why study languages?

- **Improve communication skills:** One of the most important skills needed in your personal and professional life. You'll find that your English improves as well as the language you are studying.
- **Gain cultural awareness and empathy:** Develop understanding of the world we live in and appreciate other cultures.
- **Boost confidence:** Being able to speak a second language (or third or more!) will help your self-esteem. Imagine being able to speak with someone in their native language – what an accomplishment!
- **Strengthen problem-solving skills:** When learning a language, your brain is constantly working out which words/phrases you need to say to express what you want. It helps to enhance your concentration, multi-tasking capabilities and improves your listening skills.
- **Sharpen your memory:** Having to learn new vocabulary will help improve your short-term and long-term memory skills, a helpful skill across all your subjects.
- **Stand out from the crowd:** Enhance your employment prospects both abroad and in the UK in an increasingly globalised job market. It will give you that competitive edge over other people. It is a powerful indicator of your mental ability to employers and universities, with leading universities expecting students to have studied at least one language at GCSE.
- **See the world:** The most obvious benefit of learning a language is travelling – not just to France, Germany or Spain, but also other countries in the Francophone, German-speaking and Hispanic world. You will be able to communicate more easily with the locals and maybe even develop life-long friendships.

How will I learn?

You will practise the four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking. There are trips to Germany, Paris in France in Year 11 and a home-stay visit to Spain in Year 10. Films, videos, music, online materials and authentic materials are used to enhance the learning experience.

What will I learn?

You'll build on and extend what you learnt at KS3. The topics covered during the course follow 6 broad thematic contexts: My Personal World, Lifestyle and Wellbeing, My Neighbourhood, Media and Technology, Studying and My Future, and Travel and Tourism.

Assessment

There are four exams, each worth 25% of the final grade:

- Paper 1: Speaking (conducted by class teacher and marked by exam board) – read aloud task, role play task and picture task with conversation (*10-12mins*)
- Paper 2: Listening – comprehension and dictation (*1 hour*)
- Paper 3: Reading – comprehension and translation into English (*1 hour*)
- Paper 4: Writing – 3 tasks with a choice of questions: 1 informal context response, 1 formal context response, and a translation into target language (*1 hour 20 minutes*)



Examination Board: Edexcel

Music is a popular subject at GCSE, particularly among students who already enjoy participating in musical activities inside or outside of school. The course will help you learn more about the music you already enjoy and open your eyes to a world of music that you didn't know existed. Music GCSE is an exciting and engaging course that will develop your confidence, creativity and expression through exciting performance and composition projects. You will also have the opportunity to learn to use industry standard software 'Logic X' in our dedicated Apple Mac Music suite for recording your own musical compositions.

Component 1: Performing Music (30%)

- One solo performance
- One ensemble performance of at least one minute in duration

Assessment: Students will perform for a minimum of four minutes

Component 2: Composing Music (30%)

- One composition to a brief set by Edexcel of at least one minute in duration
- One free composition set by the student, of at least one minute in duration

Component 3: Appraisal (40%)

- A written paper lasting 1hr 45mins
- Questions relating to the set works (below) that you will study throughout the GCSE course
- A Question on an unfamiliar extract that links to one of the areas of study

Assessment: External examination

Area of study and the set works

- 1) Instrumental Music 1700-1820
 - J S Bach: 3rd Movement from Brandenburg Concerto no. 5 in D major
 - L van Beethoven: 1st Movement from Piano Sonata no. 8 in C minor 'Pathétique'
- 2) Vocal Music
 - H Purcell: Music for a While
 - Queen: Killer Queen (from the album 'Sheer Heart Attack')
- 3) Music for Stage and Screen
 - S Schwarz: Defying Gravity (from the album of the cast recording of Wicked)
 - J Williams: Main title/rebel blockade runner (from the soundtrack to Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope)
- 4) Fusions
 - Afro Celt Sound System: Release (from the album 'Volume 2: Release')
 - Esperanza Spalding: Samba Em Preludio (From the album 'Esperanza')



Physical Education

Examination Board: Eduqas

Course Content

The GCSE Physical Education course is both written theory and practical. We aim to develop skills, be creative/tactical and evaluate performances. Through lessons, students will improve their ability to plan, perform and evaluate whilst increasing their knowledge, skills and understanding of a range of physical activities and sport science topics. If you already enjoy sports and physical activity – this is the course for you!

Subject Specific Skills and Areas of Understanding

1. Introduction to physical education

- a) Health, training and exercise
- b) Exercise physiology
- c) Movement analysis
- d) Psychology of sport and physical activity
- e) Socio-cultural issues in physical activity and sport

Exam: The written examination accounts for 60% of the final grade, it is a 2-hour paper. Students are assessed on their understanding of the social, psychological and physical factors affecting performance. The written exam contains a range of multiple choice, short answer and structured long answer questions

2. The active participant in physical education

a) Practical – three activities

The activity list can be found on page 28 of the [course specification](#). The practical assessment accounts for 40% of the final grade. Students are assessed continuously throughout the course in their practical lessons, clubs and matches. Sports not offered in curricular activities or the clubs program can be assessed in consultation with the subject teacher and will require video evidence of training sessions and competitions performed outside of school. For each of their three activities, students will be assessed in skills in the full competition

b) Coursework - Performance analysis and evaluation

Learners must design a personal training programme with the aim of providing recommendations to improve performance in one of the practical activities in which they were assessed.



Twilight and Additional Qualifications

Japanese

Examination Board: Pearson

The course is run as a twilight and lunchtime option and can be taken instead of, or as well as, a Modern Foreign Language. There is normally a weekly one-hour session held after school and a further 45-minute session which runs from 1.20-2.05pm during the lunch hour. Students will take the GCSE Japanese exam at the end of Year 11. Our Japanese teacher is a highly experienced native speaker. Examination results are consistently very high. Following the GCSE, some students go on to take A level Japanese independently.

Course content

Students will develop both linguistic and cultural knowledge of Japan. They will study student-centred topics which will enable them to develop their language skills in speaking, Writing, Reading and Listening. The 5 topics are:

- Identity and culture
- Local area, holiday and travel
- School
- Future aspirations, study and work
- International and global dimension

Assessment

Paper 1: Listening (45mins plus 5mins reading time) – 25%

Paper 2: Speaking (10-12mins) – Role play, Picture based task, Conversation – 25%

Paper 3: Reading (65mins) – includes a simple translation from Japanese to English – 25%

Paper 4: Writing (85mins) – includes a simple translation from English to Japanese – 25%

All questions are in English except for the Speaking exam, and answered in English for Listening and Reading papers.

Homework and Independent Study

Students will be expected to complete one hour of homework per week and will also need to dedicate time to independent study to consolidate and revise their kanji, hiragana and katakana.

Enrichment

Each year, the students visit Japan-related sites of interest in London to deepen their understanding of both language and culture. They are also given the opportunity to use their Japanese language skills through a correspondence exchange with a Japanese secondary school. The Japan trip dates are currently planned for autumn 2026.

Cost of this course

As Japanese is offered as a Twilight course outside of the main curriculum, there is a charge for this course. The 2025 price was £240 per academic year. This charge is non-refundable if your daughter starts the course and drops out after the first three weeks of the academic year.



Examination Board: OCR

Course Content

The GCSE course combines linguistic, literary and cultural elements. Students will increase their ability to handle the complex structures of an ancient language by widening their knowledge of grammar and syntax and acquiring a more extensive vocabulary. They will become proficient in applying this to comprehending Latin at sight, with accurate translation and simple composition where required. Students also study Latin prose and verse set texts. These include works by authors of the ancient world such as Virgil and Tacitus.

Methods of Learning

This Twilight course is delivered in two lessons a week, one after school and one at lunchtime. Students are required to take responsibility for maintaining the momentum of their learning of new grammar and vocabulary. They also need to prepare for the literature lessons.

Language lessons continue to be based on *Latin to GCSE* by Henry Cullen and John Taylor and additional material from *Essential GCSE Latin* by John Taylor.

Subject Specific Skills and Concepts

- Ability to translate unseen Latin
- Ability to understand unseen Latin and answer comprehension and grammar questions in English
- Understanding and appreciation of a prepared set text with due regard to language, style and context

Assessment Requirements

Assessment is by three written examinations

Paper 1: Language – 1hr 30mins – This component is worth 50% of the marks

Paper 2: Latin Prose Literature – 1hr – This component is worth 25% of the marks

Paper 3: Latin Verse Literature – 1hr – This component is worth 25% of the marks

Amount of homework time required per week: 1hr

Significant Dates

The examination is taken at the end of Year 10 in May and early June. Additional classes will be available during lunchtimes.

The students will sit a mock exam in Paper 1, Latin language, in November and a mock exam in all three papers in February/March.

Cost of this course

As Latin is offered as an Enrichment course outside of the main curriculum offer, there is a charge for this course. The 2025 price was £240 per academic year. This charge is nonrefundable if your daughter starts the course and then drops out after the first three weeks of the course.



Chinese (Mandarin)

Examination Board: AQA

The course is run as a twilight and lunchtime option and can be taken instead of, or as well as, a Modern Foreign Language. There is a one-hour session held after school and a forty-five-minute session which runs from 1.20-2.05pm during the lunch hour. We will confirm arrangements closer to September. Students will take their GCSE exam in the summer of Year 11 following a two-year course following the new specification. Mrs Zhang. Our teacher of Chinese is a highly experienced native speaker. For the last two years all students have achieved A*/A grade.

Course Content

Students will develop both their linguistic and cultural knowledge of China. They will study student centred topics which will enable them to develop their language skills.

Subject Specific Skills and Concepts

Students will learn to:

- Listen and respond to different types of spoken language communicated in speech for a variety of purposes
- Read and respond to different types of written language
- Communicate in writing for a variety of purposes
- Use and understand a range of vocabulary and structures
- Understand and apply the grammar of the languages as detailed in the specification
- Translate sentences from Chinese to English and vice versa
- Work on dictation skills to develop their vocabulary

Assessment Requirements

There are termly exams in all of the four skills: speaking, writing, reading and listening.

- Paper 1: Listening (45 minutes) – including 5 minutes reading time – 25%
- Paper 2: Speaking (10-12 minutes) – role play, picture-based task, conversation – 25%
- Paper 3: Reading (60 minutes) – includes a simple translation from Chinese to English – 25%
- Paper 4: Writing (75 minutes) – includes a simple translation from English to Chinese – 25%

All questions are in English except for the Speaking exam, and answered in English for Listening and Reading papers.

Homework and Independent Study

Students will be expected to complete one hour of homework per week but will also need to dedicate time to independent study to consolidate and revise their Chinese characters

Enrichment

Each year, students will have the opportunity to take part in cultural events in London to deepen their understanding of both language and culture. Both the China Night and China Day events will be held in the school each July. Students are also given the opportunity to use their Chinese language skills through a correspondence exchange with a secondary school in Taiwan. The dates for the China trips are currently under consideration.

Charge for this course

As Chinese is offered as a Twilight course outside of the main curriculum offer, there is a charge for this course. In 2025 it was £240 per academic year. This charge is non-refundable if your daughter starts the course and then drops out after the first 3 weeks of the course.



Environmental Management

Examination Board: IGCSE (Cambridge)

As part of the Geography Department's enrichment programme, we offer an additional IGCSE in Environmental Management. This course links together geographical and scientific understanding of the functioning of our planet and how best to manage human impacts of its resources. This course is an extra GCSE offered in the Elective Program and is only open to students who take GCSE Geography. The course is based around one lesson a week and supported self-study, with examinations taken at the end of Year 10.

Content

- Rocks, minerals and their exploitation
- Energy and the environment
- Agriculture and the environment
- Water and its management
- Oceans and fisheries
- Managing natural hazards
- The atmosphere and human activities
- Human population
- Natural ecosystems and human activities

Subject Specific Skills and Areas of Understanding

During the year students are expected to link together and extend their Geography and Science learning. They will carry out fieldwork, lab work and collect secondary research. Students will also learn to apply skills and techniques to both familiar and unfamiliar examples and develop a holistic overview of human uses of the planet, and their management. Evidence shows that students who study subjects which bridge disciplines such as Geography and Science develop improved understanding, resulting in higher outcomes in these subjects as well as Environmental Management.

Assessment

In IGCSE all assessments will be through examinations which will test subject knowledge and understanding as well as key skills including fieldwork and lab work.

Paper 1 Theory – 1hr 45mins 50%

Paper 2 Management in Context – 1hr 45mins 50%



What is Options Evening and when is it?

Options Evening is on 6 March 2025 from 6pm until 8pm. Parents and students will be able to meet with teachers and discuss option choices. There will be information from the Headteacher and Head of Year, then the chance to visit departments, find out about our courses and discover what we have to offer.

What does 'non-examined' courses mean?

All schools have a statutory requirement to teach relationship and sex education (RSE) and health education which we refer to as PSHE. This is not examined and there is no formal qualification. Physical Education is also taught to all students and in Year 10 the students have the opportunity to complete the Sports Leaders Level 1 course.

Can you change your mind?

We encourage you to fully consider all subjects and discuss these together before making your choices and submitting your options form. We do understand that on rare occasions there may be a reason to request a change. All requests for change must be made in writing and can only be accommodated if the timetable allows. Late changes are less likely to be accommodated as the timetable will be almost complete.

How should I choose subjects?

What subjects do you like? (Make a list)

You will probably try harder at the subjects you like. You will gain more enjoyment from doing these subjects and interest often leads to success.

What subjects are you best at? (Make a second list)

You may stand a better chance of getting good results and examination success in these subjects. However, every student at Newstead Wood School is capable of success at GCSE in any subject.

What subjects do you need? (Make a third list)

Have you any idea of the career you might wish to follow? If so, you may need certain subjects as qualifications. You may be thinking of going on to further study in specific subjects in the Sixth Form and beyond. Many A level courses require students to pass certain GCSEs before beginning study. Subject staff can give you further advice on this.

Should you choose your GCSE options based on how good you are at the subject or how much you enjoy it?

This is a good question. There is no doubt that achieving the Sixth Form Entrance Criteria is a key factor and thus choosing subjects that you are good at makes sense. However, we have full confidence that all Newstead Wood students have the potential to meet the Sixth Form Criteria and therefore students should have the confidence to choose subjects they enjoy.

What if you have no career in mind or if you change your mind?

Many Year 9 students are undecided about their future plans. Others may have some idea but may find that these change during the next two or three years. Therefore, it makes sense to keep as many career options open as possible. It is advised that students aim for balance; a balanced selection would include a humanities subject (History, Geography) and one practical or creative subject (Music, Art, Computer Science, Drama, Design Technology, Physical Education) as well as a Modern Foreign Language.

Studying a broad range of subjects, will enable each student to have as much choice as possible for progression into the Sixth Form.



Can you choose the same subjects as your friend?

Friends sometimes choose the same options because they have the same interests, but this is not a good way to make a decision. Even if you choose the same subjects as your friends, you may well find yourself in a different group, for example, there may be three History groups and four French groups.

How many lessons are there per week?

Core Subjects: English and Maths have four periods per week, Science has six periods per week

Option choices have two periods per week

RPE and Electives have two periods per week

PE (Core) has one period per week.

How do I submit my choices?

Using the Year 9 Options online form. Login details will be emailed to students' school email addresses in due course and will need to be completed by **Tuesday 11 March 2025**.

How can I find the login details for the online form to submit the choices?

The username and password will be emailed to students' school email addresses. The email will also include instructions on how to log in to the online Applicaa system. Please ensure you keep this email and the login details safe.

Is there any benefit in submitting the form early - is it first come first served?

There is no benefit to submitting your GCSE Options form early. You should use the time carefully to consider your choices. Organising blocks and preparation of the timetable will not happen until after the deadline of **Tuesday 11 March 2025**.

How does the GCSE grading system work?

GCSEs are graded from 1-9 with 9 being the top grade. Grade 4/5 is considered a pass and 'U' means Ungraded.

How are course places allocated if a subject is oversubscribed?

We make every effort to accommodate all option choices. If a subject is oversubscribed, we will deal with this on a case-by-case basis and will contact you to discuss your options.

If a student does not opt for a particular subject, do they completely stop studying that subject?

Students only attend lessons for the subjects they have chosen, the core subjects and non-examined subjects.

If somebody does a GCSE outside school, can they do fewer GCSEs at School?

No, that is not an option. Students would need to be supervised for the periods of the week they are not being taught which we cannot cater for.

Can I drop a subject?

There is no curriculum narrowing. All students are expected to complete their course of study. Please consider carefully the demands of the combination of subjects you choose.

When are the GCSEs taken?

GCSEs are all taken during summer examination period.

Is it possible to do some GCSE exams early and repeat the next year if needed?

That is not possible as course content will not be completed by the end of Year 10.



If a student takes a Twilight subject for GCSE, can they do fewer subjects in curriculum time?
No, Twilights are considered an additional GCSE. If a student takes a twilight and feels their workload is too heavy, they may stop the twilight. **No other subject can be ceased.**

What are the entry criteria for Newstead Wood School Sixth Form?

The entry requirement for Newstead Wood Sixth Form is a minimum of eight GCSE passes, including Mathematics and English; four at Grade 6 or above and four at Grade 7 or above, of which eight GCSEs must be achieved in one exam season. There are also subject-specific entry requirements – please see [here](#) for full details.

Can you choose a subject at A Level that you didn't take at GCSE?

In the majority of cases, you need to have taken the GCSE to study the subject at A Level. Please see [our website](#) for subject specific A Level entry requirements.

New subject requirements:

Economics: At least Grade 7 in GCSE Maths and GCSE English or a Humanities Subject.

Psychology: At least Grade 7 in GCSE English Language or Literature and Grade 7 in Mathematics and Biology.

Classical Civilisations: At least Grade 7 in GCSE English Language or Literature or History or Religious Studies

Politics: At least Grade 7 in GCSE English Language or Literature and a Humanities Subject

