



Choices at GCSE

For September 2012

Information for pupils in year 9 and their parents

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Introduction from the Director of Studies

Dear Year 9 Parents,

Process of choice for GCSE

During the course of the next few weeks your son will make choices regarding the subjects he would like to study to GCSE level. It is important that he makes the right choices, and this system has been devised to help him do so. There are three stages to this process:

1. This booklet contains a description of the course structure and of each of the subjects offered. Please read it through with your son.
2. At the coming parents' evening there will be an opportunity to discuss the options with your son's subject teachers. Mrs Stotesbury and Mr Albon will also be available on a non-appointment basis for those who wish to discuss Business Studies or Physical Education GCSE, and I will be on hand to answer any general problem concerning options. **After that evening I will be asking you to return the reply slip indicating the subjects your son has chosen.** The deadline for this is Friday 10th February.
3. I will then arrange the subjects into options blocks and try give as many as possible their first choices. I cannot promise this for all, because some choices may not work together, and because in certain subjects the size of the groups has to be limited for various reasons including health and safety or sizes of rooms. At this stage I will write to any whose first choices cannot be offered, suggesting alternatives.

At any stage of the process I may be contacted by e-mail, or by phone on my direct line, given below. We may also consult with you if we feel that your son's choices may be inappropriate.

Structure of the course

All boys will have the opportunity to study ten subjects at GCSE, which from Sept 2012 will no longer be taught in modular courses. These will include English language, English literature and mathematics. In addition each boy should choose FOUR subjects from one group and THREE from another, as shown on the form at the back of this booklet. In line with our ideas on a 'common core' that should be studied by all our boys, at least two of these should be science subjects: physics, chemistry or biology. Many will choose all three. Also at least one modern foreign language, French, Spanish or German must be chosen.

Considerations in choosing subjects

Naturally everyone will choose subjects they enjoy and in which they feel they can achieve. Any tendency to choose a subject because of a favourite teacher, or because it is being chosen by one's friends, should be avoided. Some, not many at this stage, will have a career in mind and will tailor their subject choices accordingly, but this should not lead anyone into the choice of a subject he finds very difficult. Above all, talk to the teachers at the parents' evening.

J.G. Sykes
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Notes on GCSE Courses for Year 9 Boys (Jan 2012)

English and English Literature

All boys follow an integrated course which will lead to separate qualifications in *English* and *English Literature* in line with the National Curriculum. The department enters candidates for the Cambridge International GCSE (IGCSE). Boys will be in sets for the two years of the course, taking into account their performance in the Year 9 exam together with their progress during that year.

In *English* reading and writing are assessed through responses to literary and non-literary material. There are also opportunities for independent, creative writing of both fiction and non-fiction through a significant coursework component.

English Literature tests pupils' ability in responding to literary texts, to include a play (e.g. *Death of a Salesman*), a work of prose (e.g. *The Great Gatsby*), and a selection of poetry. Pupils are also assessed responding to unseen material.

Both subjects involve final examinations, which account for most of the marks; only language has a coursework component.

RJ Harris

Mathematics

Mathematics is compulsory for all students in Years 10 and 11, who are placed in sets, according to ability. All sets will take 'Higher Tier' papers, with the top grades available to all candidates. There is a strong tradition of A* and A grades and we aim that all pupils should achieve a grade B or above. Students are prepared for the Edexcel International GCSE, specification A, which is assessed by two examinations in which calculators are allowed. There is no coursework.

This specification has a strong emphasis on algebra, and includes study of elementary calculus and other topics which give a sound basis for AS and A-level Mathematics. The top set will take IGCSE at the end of year 10 and go on to take an AS module at the end of year 11. All other sets will take IGCSE in the summer of year 11.

WR Ellis

Modern Languages

At a time of increasing globalisation in the world of work and leisure, good knowledge and awareness of different cultures and languages is becoming not only desirable but essential for the employers and employees of the future. At QEH we offer three languages to GCSE, AS and A-levels: French, German and Spanish. Boys can benefit from speaking in small groups with the French, German or Spanish assistant. We have links and joint events with girls' schools in Bristol, e.g. theatre visits and lectures. There are school trips or exchanges available to France, Germany and Spain and boys are encouraged to participate in trips to gain first-hand insight into European language, culture and ways of life.

The focus of the modern GCSE exam is to prepare pupils to cope in real situations. They learn how to communicate in another country and to talk about themselves and their areas of

interest. In all three languages the skills of listening and reading comprehension are tested and make up 40% of the marks at GCSE. Writing and speaking (60%) are tested by controlled assessment at various stages of the GCSE course. Typical assessments could involve describing how you would change your school and what schools would be like in the future, your taste in music, TV and film or an interview with a famous person. Both the language and grammar at GCSE provide a sound foundation for further study at AS and A2. The new course books have a modern approach, are geared to the GCSE exam and are supported by their own software. We subscribe too to language learning websites for co-curricular support. Magazines, simple readers and language DVDs are available in the library.

All boys must study at least one modern foreign language at GCSE and many take advantage of our comprehensive curriculum to take two languages.

CE Steen

Sciences

Boys will study IGCSE courses offered by the Edexcel examinations board. They can choose to take:

- All 3 IGCSE sciences i.e. biology, chemistry and physics, or
- 2 of the 3 Sciences.

Practical work will be assessed within the written theory papers taken during Year 11 and will count for 20% of the marks. Boys for whom the sciences will form a significant part of their choices at A-level will be advantaged by studying all 3 sciences at IGCSE.

JF Brown

Biology

The course provides an opportunity for pupils to acquire understanding, gain skills and develop an appreciation of biology as a science. It is hoped that pupils will come to understand the relevance of biology to their lives and the social, environmental, economic and technological applications of biology. There will be development of practical skills and boys will be expected to handle apparatus and materials effectively, make and record observations and measurements, interpret and evaluate experimental data, and plan investigations, evaluate methods and suggest possible improvements.

The course includes the following topics: diversity and classification of living organisms, cell structure and levels of organisation, movement in and out of cells, nutrition, transportation, respiration, excretion, coordination and response, reproduction, growth and development, inheritance, and relationships of organisms with one another and their environment.

Any boy considering studying biology at AS level and beyond should take IGCSE chemistry as a sound knowledge of chemistry is vital in understanding the biochemical basis of life.

JF Brown

Chemistry

Chemistry is relevant to everything around us and studying the subject enables you to begin to understand the reasons for the huge diversity of materials in our lives. Some have had a big, and sometimes unfortunate, impact on the environment and an awareness of these problems, and how we might solve them, is very important.

The course continues the IGCSE started in Year 9. It looks at a variety of chemical reactions including some from organic chemistry and some very important reactions from the chemical industry. Some topics such as polymerisation link well with biology.

There is also an introduction to the theories behind why and how different substances react together.

A number of mathematical topics are included as well as a section on chemical analysis. Practical work, which reinforces the theories, plays an integral part.

Some detailed learning is required as well as the ability to apply knowledge.

The course provides a strong basis for the study of A Level chemistry which is essential for courses such as medicine and dentistry.

G. Huband

Physics

The aims of the IGCSE Physics course are to encourage students to

- acquire a systematic body of scientific knowledge and the skills needed to apply this in new and changing situations in many domestic, industrial and environmental contexts
- appreciate the practical nature of physics, acquiring experimental and investigative skills based on correct and safe laboratory techniques
- appreciate the importance of accurate experimental work and reporting to scientific method
- form hypotheses and design experiments to test them
- evaluate, in terms of their scientific knowledge and understanding, the benefits and drawbacks (including social, environmental and economic) of scientific and technological developments
- select, organise and present information clearly and logically, using appropriate scientific terms and conventions.

The course is split into 7 sections:

Section A: Forces and motion

Section B: Electricity

Section C: Waves

Section D: Energy resources and energy transfer

Section E: Solids, liquids and gases

Section F: Magnetism and electromagnetism

Section G: Radioactivity and particles

Students who studying IGCSE Physics are supported by a fully illustrated textbook which has been produced specifically for the course; year 9 students are currently working on the material from Section D will already be familiar with this textbook.

R Dixon

Art

The GCSE Art course endeavours to provide every boy with a fulfilling, exciting and challenging experience, where skills are nurtured within an environment of problem solving and creative thinking. By the end of the course, every boy will have succeeded in producing work of a high standard, and will have developed the intellectual skills to think, work and create independently.

Drawing will form the core of all activity at the outset, though at this point we must lay to rest the myth that “I can’t draw so I can’t do Art.” The GCSE course includes drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, digital Imaging/Photography. So drawing is important but it is just part of an overall experience – the other disciplines offer equal opportunity to create exciting art works.

N. Dyer

Photography: Lens and Light Based Media

(Note: This course may not be chosen in conjunction with Art)

This new course may not be chosen together with art.

The photographic image is an important component of everyday life. Print and film media, internet design, advertising and the most basic project proposals harness the power of the visual image. Most families have a camera to record events.

For the first time we are offering Photography as a distinct GCSE option, although the department has an exemplary history of high grades at AS and A-level and as part of an art GCSE. The department boasts a fully equipped computer suite with PCs and Apple Macs, all equipped with industry standard Adobe Photoshop CS4 software. We also have Cannon Digital Cameras and Viewfinder cameras, professional printers and a digital video camera. Areas of study will include portraiture, industrial and rural landscapes and still life. Students will learn many useful skills and techniques as well as formal elements of visual language. Personal study will include historical and contemporary developments in photography. The full course includes a personal portfolio based on two projects and a timed examination piece.

Assessment and Examination Requirements

2 Units of Coursework	60% of overall GCSE mark/grade
Controlled Test (Exam)	40% of overall GCSE mark/grade

N. Dyer

Business Studies

Business Studies seeks to study how individuals and institutions interact in a dynamic business environment. In Year 10 boys explore the start-up of small businesses and address issues such as spotting a business opportunity and putting a business idea into practice while they will also consider the economic context in which the business is situated.

In Year 11 they take these topics further and look at how businesses can be built up. Topics covered include; marketing, financial management, human resource management and the external influences on businesses.

Assessment for Business Studies GCSE also involves a piece of internally assessed, but externally moderated, coursework. Students are asked to undertake guided research on the

workings of a small business and will complete a piece of written work under controlled conditions using this research.

Unit Title	Assessed
1 Introduction to Small Business	Externally: Multiple Choice Responses (25% of GCSE – Summer Yr 10)
2 Investigating a Small Business	Internally: Coursework completed under controlled conditions (25% of GCSE)
3 Building a Business	Externally: Data Response, short and extended responses (50% of GCSE- Summer Yr 11)

In the sixth form, we offer AS- and A-level courses in both Economics and Business Studies. This course offers a useful introduction to those, but is not a pre-requisite of either.

For further discussion of Business Studies please see me at the parents' evening.

LR Stotesbury

Design and Technology (Resistant Materials)

Design issues affect and control many aspects of our daily existence. With the ever-changing needs of society, design plays an important part in all of our lives.

The first three years of the Design & Technology course at QEH provide an introduction to the process of design by encouraging a thoughtful and creative approach to identifying and solving problems. Boys are given the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of the principles and history of design in its broadest context. They also have the chance to work with a wide variety of materials and gain experience of a range of manufacturing techniques, including CAD/CAM.

Boys following the GCSE course will be expected to build on work done during the first three years to enable them to identify, investigate and solve problems of increasing complexity. Through the process of design, they will be encouraged to develop innovative, effective solutions which they will be able to realise. As well as encouraging an informed working knowledge of design, the course aims to develop pupils' skills in communication and manufacturing techniques, and economic and industrial awareness.

AR Hughes

Drama

The GCSE course is the Edexcel specification. It is designed to develop pupils' ability to create and interpret drama. It encourages the understanding of the dramatic process and builds on individual performance skills. Pupils work collaboratively in groups, learning many transferable skills such as self-discipline, communication and independence. Drama can also do wonders for self-confidence!

The course comprises of three assessed units:

Unit 1: Drama Exploration (30%)

This is the exploration of creative and structural aspects of drama. Pupils will focus on the elements of drama, the drama media, explorative strategies and different forms of stimuli. The unit is assessed through a six-hour workshop together with a written response of 2000 words.

Unit 2: Exploring Play Texts (30%)

The exploration of a play text involves character analysis, interpretation of the play and its design implications. The unit is assessed through a six-hour workshop together with a written response of 1000 words. Pupils will also visit the theatre regularly and will write a response to live theatre of 2000 words.

Unit 3: Drama performance (40%)

This is a performance of a devised or scripted play to an audience, including a visiting examiner. It gives pupils the opportunity to showcase their vocal and physical skills in a small group. Pupils will be guided over an extended rehearsal period and will be responsible for learning lines and organizing props, costume, lighting and sound. Some rehearsals outside of school hours will be expected.

There is no final written examination for this course.

Commitment, motivation and creative energy are essential requirements! Lessons are mainly practical and the course is hard work but extremely rewarding.

P Cawte

Geography

We follow the AQA Syllabus 'A' GCSE course. This covers a broad range of topics and provides a balance between physical and human geography as well as geographical skills. Topics covered include: rocks, ecosystems and coasts, globalisation and tourism.

The syllabus offers a solid grounding in many contemporary issues, stressing the inter-relationships between people and their environment. In places it reinforces work done in several other subjects at GCSE, and also serves as an effective precursor to further study of the subject at A-level.

The coursework component of the GCSE accounts for 25% of the total marks. It involves students undertaking group fieldwork and writing up a report under direct supervision in lesson time. The maximum length for this project is 2000 words and the task is less time consuming than was the case under the previous GCSE specification. All students can expect at least two fieldtrips during their time on the course.

PM Amor

History

Boys will follow a course in Modern World history which will be assessed through a combination of written examinations and Controlled Assessment (carefully monitored coursework)

They will study the immediate prelude to the First World War in Britain, the part that Britain played in that conflict and the immediate aftermath in this country.

We will examine the key events leading up to the Second World War and into the Cold War. Topics will include the Treaties of 1919, the failure of the League of Nations, the controversial policy of appeasement and the Cold War flashpoints of Berlin, Korea, Hungary and Vietnam.

Boys will also study in depth Germany between the wars. The themes that will be considered will be revolution and dictatorship and the means by which these were carried out and maintained.

The course demands a willingness to research topics and to analyse events from different perspectives. The ability to evaluate and process historical evidence is also important. A wide range of resources is available and the course is enriched through a variety of field trips.

JE Martin

ICT

This course leads to an AS level qualification and as such is a more demanding examination than a GCSE. Numbers will be limited and preference will be given to those who have coped very well with the Year 9 course. It should only be chosen by those who have a genuine interest in the subject. The course follows the OCR syllabus and breaks down as follows:

Theory modules on information, systems, communications, and the application of ICT. These modules look at the composition of a computer, network topology, software applications and the many management issues involved in running a large network.

Practical work, in which boys will have to submit solutions to four assignments, is set by the Examination Board. It is anticipated that these will be based around spreadsheets, databases, web sites and computer programming.

At the end of year 11 boys will have an AS-level qualification. At this point they may drop the subject and carry on with four other AS-levels in the lower sixth, or may take ICT as one of their lower sixth subjects. In the latter case, the lower sixth form course leads to a full A level at the end of the year, so they will then drop ICT and normally continue with their other three subjects.

JR Matthews

Latin

A boy who chooses to continue with Latin to GCSE has already completed about half the syllabus regarding grammar and syntax, and well over half of the vocabulary, since the exam is geared particularly for students of the Cambridge Latin Course. The GCSE concentrates on two aspects: the **language**, tested in **two papers** by an even mix of translation and comprehension, and Prose and Verse **literature** (much of year 11 is spent studying the set texts which consist of some of the finest literature in the world), tested in **two separate papers** by a mixture of comprehension questions and some translation. There is no coursework. To achieve a good grade in Latin at GCSE is still highly regarded, and most candidates comment on how the course is a very satisfying challenge and the exam is a good test for them to demonstrate both their knowledge and ability to think coherently.

Looking further ahead, the study of Classics is a very valuable foundation for other interests such as History, French and English, whilst classical literature gives a good grounding for future studies in English Literature and Art. The ages of Greece and Rome both exercised a major influence on the development of Western European civilisation.

Classical literature and history are of considerable interest in themselves, and the study of earlier civilisations' attempts to deal with the great human problems - social, moral and economic – offers an invaluable perspective on our own century. The discipline of a classical language is second to none in developing accuracy of grammar, thought and expression, whilst the combined study of history, literature and language develops the qualities required for a wide range of careers.

PM Jones

Ancient Greek

Any boy who is currently studying Latin in year 9 has the opportunity to take Greek to GCSE. The course covers the necessary language and vocabulary before moving on to the set texts in year 11. The exams balance the testing of linguistic ability and response to literature as in the Latin course. All lessons currently take place during lunch times.

PM Jones

Music

The GCSE Music specification builds upon work studied at KS3, continuing the integration of performing, composing and listening. The flexibly structured course allows students to capitalise on their different interests, and caters for a wide range of musical abilities. All students will use music technology at some stage during the course.

The course comprises of the following components:

Performing 30%

This is assessed by submitting a recording of two performances. The first is a solo performance on the instrument of your choice and in any style. The second is a performance as part of an ensemble. This can also be on any instrument and in any style.

Composing 30%

Two compositions are submitted at the end of the course. The first is a free composition and the second is in the style of one of the Areas of Study covered.

Creative Task 15%

This is an exam that is taken at the end of the course. You are given a variety of stimuli to choose from (a rhythm, melody, chord progression or poem) and are required to compose a short piece in any style in 45 minutes using music ICT.

Listening Exam 25%

The listening exam is taken at the end of the course and covers a variety of Areas of Study. These include:

Shared Music: *Romantic song, Pop ballads, Classical concerto, Jazz, Indian classical music, Gamelan, Baroque and Classical chamber music, African a capella singing*

Dance Music: *Waltz, Tango, Salsa, Irish Jig/Reel, Line Dancing Bhangra, Disco, Club Dance*

Descriptive Music: *Programme Music, Film Music*

EM Gent

Physical Education

This two year GCSE course, following the AQA syllabus, integrates theoretical (40%) and practical (60%) elements of the study of sport and physical activity. Practical aspects include learning a range of techniques, skills and tactics in various practical activities and boys must be able to analyse and improve their own and others' practical performances. They must be able to adopt different roles, other than just as a performer, including learning how to coach, organise and referee in different sports and activities. Activities will include basketball, badminton, weight training, circuit training, athletics, cricket, rugby and football. Four of these sports will constitute 60% of each student's final grade. Therefore it is important that those considering this course should show ability in a range of sports.

The theoretical component is assessed through a 2-hour written exam paper and accounts for 40% of the final mark. Example theory topics include health, fitness, muscular system, skeletal system, diet, types and principles of training, media, sponsorship and the Olympics.

GCSE Physical Education acts as an effective precursor to continue studying sport and physical education at A-Level.

S Albon

Religion & Philosophy

The OCR course covers the Philosophy of Religion and Applied Ethics from a predominantly Christian perspective. It is a lively, relevant subject, which develops skills of reasoning, evaluation and critical analysis. You will need to be open-minded, willing to discuss issues and prepared to respect other viewpoints. It is an academically rigorous examination subject, which is accepted by employers and professions alongside other humanities subjects such as history and geography. Many jobs, for example medicine, the police, the armed forces and caring professions (teaching, social work) appreciate the skills GCSE religious studies will give you. In addition, it is excellent preparation for A-level social sciences (law, psychology) as well as A-level religious studies (philosophy and ethics), history and English. Topics covered in the GCSE are:

Philosophy

Belief about Deity
Religious & spiritual experience.
The end of life.
Religion & Science
Good & evil.
Religion, reason & revelation

Ethics

Religion & human relationships.
Religion & medical ethics.
Religion & equality.
Religion, Poverty & wealth
Religion, peace & justice.
Religion & the media.

Students will study at least eight of the topics. There is no coursework and the exams are taken at the end of the year 11.

GCSE Philosophy & Applied Ethics involves a lot of thinking and writing and shows you are aware of Christian beliefs and the nature of the society you live in. It helps you to think through some of the big issues of life about which adults argue all the time. It is not about making you “religious”. Rather, it is about enabling you to think for yourself about religious and moral issues, preparing you for life itself, giving you the skills you will need to make decisions every adult faces.

RH Steven

GCSE Preferences

Name.....

Form 9.....

1. Compulsory subjects:

Mathematics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	English Language	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	English Literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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2. Some subjects appear in each of the next two blocks. Please make sure you only tick any subject once.

Block One (tick FOUR boxes including at least two science subjects.)

Biology			DT	
Chemistry			Geography	
Physics			History	
Art			ICT (AS)	
Photography				
Drama			PE	

3. **Block Two** (tick THREE boxes including at least one modern foreign language.)

French			Business Studies		Music	
Spanish			Geography		RS	
German			History			
Latin			ICT (AS)			

4. If you are choosing Latin and would like to study Greek as an additional lunch time option, please tick this box

Please return this form to your form tutor by Friday 10th February

Thank you.

JG Sykes
Director of Studies