

Year 9 Option Choices



February 2026

Y9 Options Guide

Introduction

Y9 students are approaching the end of key stage 3 and it is now time for them to make decisions about their courses for the next two years at key stage 4. Students will need to consider their individual strengths, interests and talents. Students should make choices based on what they enjoy and what they are passionate about. Every combination of subjects that we offer will enable students to access any post 16 course.

In Y10 all students will be required to study:

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Combined Sciences (two GCSEs)
- Core Physical Education (practical PE - no exam)
- PSHE (no exam)

Students will opt for

One from GCSE Spanish GCSE Geography GCSE History	Three from GCSE Spanish GCSE Geography GCSE History GCSE Art GCSE Computer Science Btec Drama Btec Engineering Btec Health & Social Care Btec Media Studies GCSE Music Btec Sport
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Key points

- All subjects we offer are valuable
- All combinations chosen are good combinations
- Maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum is of utmost importance
- No matter what subjects are chosen, excellent attendance is vital to maximise outcomes

Why humanities or a language?

There is evidence to support students following this route (The Sutton Trust, July 2016). The English Baccalaureate refers to a group of options in which a child studies: English Language and Literature, Maths, Combined Science, Geography or History and a language. Research from 300 schools found that statistically students following the English Baccalaureate subjects were:

- more likely to achieve good GCSEs in English and maths
- more likely to be taking an A level or other level 3 qualification after the age of 16
- less likely to have dropped out of education after the age of 16

GCSEs and Vocational subjects

Both types of qualification are valid. The most significant differences are in the balance of theory/practical work and the style of assessment.

GCSEs	Vocational (Btec or OCR National)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More theoretical• More exam based and less practical in many cases (not all)• More aligned to A Levels• Graded as a number from 9 to 1 (nine being the highest)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A career focus grounded in the world of work.• Usually more practical than GCSEs• Mainly coursework but still an exam• Grades are Distinction, Merit and Pass rather than numbers (as GCSEs are)

- All students will study English Language, English Literature, Maths, two Sciences, and core PE. No option choices are required for these
- You cannot choose the same subject twice

The subjects we offer

GCSEs	Vocational qualifications
Art	Drama
Computer Science	Engineering
Geography	Health & Social Care
History	Media Studies
Spanish	Sport
Music	

The process of choosing subjects

To support students in making the best choices they:

1. Have had information sessions in Character lessons and in assembly
2. Have received guidance from their Form Tutor
3. Have had the opportunity to attend ARD
4. The Options Evening
5. Parents complete the choosing of subjects via the MCAS app. We will complete the process in school with any who are unable to do this.
6. The choices of every individual student will then be quality assured in school to ensure it maximises their chances of success

In July you will be informed of the subjects allocated to your son/daughter for Key Stage 4. It is important to note that choices cannot be guaranteed.

Options – Frequently Asked Questions

Who will be the teacher for each option subject?

This cannot be answered until much later in the year so do not assume it will be the same person who teaches you this year. It is wiser to make an option choice based on the subject content and assessment style rather than on who teaches the subject.

Are there boys and girls subjects?

Absolutely not. All subjects are appropriate for all students.

Am I guaranteed to get my option choices?

No. We will do all we can to ensure you get your choices but it cannot be guaranteed. Most students do have their first choices met. There are a number of reasons for not getting your choices:

- Too few people might opt for a subject so no class can be created
- More people opt for a subject than can be in a class e.g., we cannot place over 30 students into a Computing class due to the number of PCs available. If enough students opt for this we can create a second class

Will I be able to change my mind in September?

No. It is important to make the correct choice in the first instance, based on all of the information available.

Who can help me with my choices?

Your Tutor and your subject teachers are the first people to ask for help and advice.

Do I have to put reserve choices on my options form?

Yes. If a subject you have opted for is full, you will be allocated one of your reserve choices.

What is the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)?

The EBacc is not a qualification in itself. It is a measure of performance introduced by the Government. This is recognised by some universities, post 16 providers and employers as a reflection of a broad and balanced curriculum which facilitates progression to many other qualifications and jobs. To achieve this performance measure, a student must achieve a grade 5 or higher in English, maths, two Sciences, a humanities subject (Geography or History), and a modern foreign language (Spanish).

Are there any restrictions on choices?

Yes. Some subjects are limited in capacity due to facilities and staffing. For example, we cannot have more students in a Music class than we have keyboards/relevant instruments for.

Engineering will be limited to one class. If more students choose this than we have capacity for, the criteria for this subject will be attendance. Although most subjects will have capacity, where there is not, those with the highest attendance will be prioritised.

The option subjects

<p>Art Content: Two coursework projects. One main project completed during year 10 and a mini Design based project completed in term one of year 11. The externally set examination is given to students in year 11 term 2. Assessment: 60% coursework 40% Controlled test</p>	<p>Computer Science Content: Paper 1 is about the role of the CPU, hardware, software, networks and storage in a computer. Paper 2 is more practical and involves creating programs and solving algorithms. Assessment: Paper 1 exam - worth 50% Paper 2 exam - worth 50%</p>
<p>Drama Content: Students will study and perform different plays for their coursework components. For their external assessment, students will create their own performances in groups to fulfill a brief given to them. Assessment: 60% coursework 40% Controlled assessment</p>	<p>Engineering Content: Students learn about different types of engineering, the mathematics of engineering, how to produce hand-drawn technical drawings, how to use CAD , how to project plan. For their coursework students are required to research, plan, draw, CAD, build and evaluate a product Assessment: 60% coursework 40% Controlled test</p>
<p>Spanish Content: Students will study a range of topics including people who are important to them, travel and tourism, global and social issues and technology. They will study vocabulary, grammar and phonics in depth. Assessment: 25% reading, 25% listening, 25% speaking, 25% writing</p>	<p>Geography Content: We look at a range of different topics, covering Human and Physical Geographical issues. Those that affect the UK and the wider world. Students also complete a day field trip to Dawlish Warren to experience collecting data. Assessment: 3 exam papers (1hr 30 mins each). Paper 1 (35%), Paper 2 (35%), Paper 3 (30%)</p>
<p>Health & Social Care Content: The Human Development Lifespan Health and Social Care Services and Values Health and Wellbeing Assessment: 60% coursework 40% Examination</p>	<p>History Content: We cover 5 main topics: People’s Health (from the Middle Ages to Present Day); Viking expansion; Big Pit (including a trip); Elizabethan England; and Nazi Germany Assessment: 3 exam papers: Paper 1 (1 hour), Paper 2 (1 hr 45), Paper 3 (1 hr 45)</p>
<p>Media Studies Content: Exploring Media Products: Learning how media products are made for audiences. Developing Digital Media Production Skills: Learning the skills of photo-editing to create a magazine. Creating a Media Product in Response to a brief : Creating a product for a specific target audience.</p>	<p>Music Performance : Solo and ensemble performances, recorded submissions. Composition : Free and set brief compositions, teacher-assessed. Listening & Appraising : 1hr 30min exam covering Concerto, Rhythms, Film, Pop. Assessment:</p>

<p>Assessment: 60% Coursework 40% Controlled assessment</p>	<p>60% Coursework 40% Listening Exam</p>
<p>Sport Content: Two coursework components involving a mixture of typed responses to a set assignment, and practical performing assessments involving coaching and playing sport. One exam component Assessment: 60% coursework 40% exam</p>	