St Edward's
School

Unity - Achievement - Faith

Key Stage 4 Pathways

2026 - 2028

Contents

Introduction Letter

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am pleased to share with you our KS4 Pathways Booklet, which outlines the courses available to students in Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4). This booklet is designed to support both you and your child in making informed decisions about their academic journey, helping them select the courses that best suit their strengths, interests, and future goals.

As students look ahead to beginning their Year 10 studies and starting their examination courses, it is crucial that they choose subjects that are the right fit for them. Their choices should reflect their genuine interests and passions. While friends or particular teachers may influence their thinking, we encourage students to select subjects that align with their individual goals and aspirations, as they may be placed in different classes with different teachers.

At St Edward's, we remain firmly committed to offering a broad and balanced curriculum that opens as many future doors as possible for our young people. National surveys continue to highlight the importance of language skills, with employers reporting shortages of workers who can speak a foreign language—particularly German and French. Studying a language not only enhances employability but also equips students with cultural understanding, communication skills, and cognitive benefits that support success in a wide range of academic and professional pathways.

In support of this broad and balanced approach, all students will be required to choose one 'breadth subject' as part of the options process. This breadth subject—selected from French, German, History, Geography, or Computer Science—ensures that every student maintains a diverse and academically rich curriculum, keeping their future opportunities wide open.

As part of the options process, we have allocated specific pathways to each student to help guide them towards a curriculum that supports their needs, strengths, and ambitions. This structure is designed to ensure that all students follow an appropriate and purposeful programme of study as they begin planning for life beyond Year 11.

If you have any questions or need clarification on any aspect of the Pathways Booklet, please do not hesitate to contact me, your child's tutor, or subject staff. We are here to support you and your child every step of the way.

I hope you find the information in this booklet helpful as you and your child make these important decisions together.

Yours sincerely,

Mr C Farrow, Assistant Headteacher

Key Stage 4 Pathways Timeline - 2026

Y9 Parent and Carer Options Information Evening	**Wednesday 4th March**

An opportunity to learn about the Key Stage 4 Curriculum and Options process. Students receive the same information and the Options window opens.

Pathways Request Deadline	**Wednesday 18th March**

Students must complete their options choices via SIMs. If they have any issues with this, they should speak to Mr Farrow.

Final Confirmation of Subject Allocations	**April**

Letter sent to parents and carers confirming Key Stage 4 subject choices for their child.

Useful information

GCSE Qualifications

GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) are the main qualifications taken by 14–16 year olds. The qualification mainly involves studying the theory of a subject, although some GCSEs are more practically based than others. GCSE subjects are examined at the end of Year 11.

BTEC and Technical Qualifications

BTEC and other vocational qualifications are recognised by both employers and Universities. They are different to GCSEs because less of the final grade is based on written examinations and there is more emphasis on assignments completed during the course, but they are equally demanding and carry the same weighting as GCSE subjects.

A broad and balanced curriculum

At St Edward's, we are committed to ensuring that every student follows a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares them for a wide range of future opportunities. A diverse curriculum helps students develop a rich blend of knowledge, academic skills, and cultural awareness—qualities that are increasingly valued by colleges, universities, and employers.

As students progress through Key Stage 4, maintaining variety within their studies is essential. Subjects such as French, German, History, Geography and Computer Science provide important academic breadth, supporting students in keeping their future pathways open and strengthening applications to further education or apprenticeships. These subjects develop analytical thinking, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and cultural understanding—all of which are recognised as key attributes for success beyond school.

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The Importance of Studying a Language

National surveys on skills shortages continue to show that employers struggle to recruit workers who speak a foreign language, with French and German in particularly high demand. Studying a language can significantly enhance future employability and global mobility, especially as the world of work becomes increasingly interconnected and unpredictable.

Language learning offers benefits that extend beyond communication. It helps students build resilience, memory, confidence, and cultural awareness. Many universities value or require some experience of language study, and some expect students to engage with language learning as part of their degree. Others offer opportunities to study or work abroad, for which language skills are a major advantage.

Most importantly, languages provide students with knowledge and experiences that cannot be replicated elsewhere in the curriculum, enriching their understanding of other cultures and perspectives. For these reasons, languages continue to play a significant role in ensuring that students have the broadest possible foundation for their future.

Curriculum Constraints

Some subjects have significant overlap in content or skills, so students are not able to choose more than one from the same area. This includes the technology subjects (Food, Resistant Materials, and Graphics) as well as the two different music courses. In addition, students cannot study both languages.

Students should also be aware that some subjects involve a substantial Non-Exam Assessment (NEA) component. These subjects require ongoing project work alongside written or practical assessments. Subjects with a large NEA element include Art, Technology, Drama, Music, PE, and Computer Science. When selecting options, it's important to consider the workload involved, particularly if choosing more than one of these subjects.

Group Sizes

If an option does not attract enough students (a minimum of 15 is required) it may not be viable to run. If this happens, the reserve choices chosen by your son or daughter will be automatically inserted to replace a withdrawn subject. Equally, a subject in a block may attract more students than the class can accommodate (30 for most subjects but 20 for Technology subjects). Where possible, we will put on another class if we can both accommodate and staff it. If we cannot create an extra group for an oversubscribed option, then the limited places that are available will be allocated by preference and then according to students' behaviour records and engagement in that subject. In other words, if your son or daughter is a student who works hard and behaves well, they will be given priority over students that have chosen to make poor choices. We will of course consider a student's aptitude in particular subjects. We can, will and do refuse students access to a course or withdraw them from it if their behaviour creates a health and safety risk.

Whilst it is our aim to ensure as many students as possible can study their first choices, the school cannot guarantee this.

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Curriculum Overview

In Year 10 and 11, all students study a core curriculum:

Subject	Leading to …	Number of Teaching Hours per Fortnight
English	GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature	9
Mathematics	GCSE Mathematics	8
Combined Science	Two GCSEs in Combined Science	10
RE	GCSE in Religious Education	5
Core PE		2
PSHE		1

Students then name choices from the following subject groups:

Breadth Subjects One subject from this group:	Open Options: Two Subjects from this section:		
French	Art & Design	Resistant Materials	*French
German	Business	Food Technology	*German
Geography	Drama	NCFE Graphic Design	*Geography
History	Dance	PE	*History
Computer Science	GCSE Music	BTEC Digital IT	*Computer Science
	BTEC Music		

*** Breadth Subjects are also available in the Open Options section, so if a student wishes to pick more than one of these subjects they can.**

For a small number of students, we have suggested a personalised pathway which includes ASDAN, Level 1 and additional literacy or numeracy. Each of these choices would also take up one option block and this will be indicated on your SIMs options form.

The Core Curriculum

English Language and English Literature

Mathematics

Combined Science

Religious Education

CORE GCSE	English Language and English Literature

Course Description

In Years 10 and 11, students work towards completing two GCSEs: English language and English literature. All examinations in the subject will be taken at the end of Year 11. Students should also be aware that examinations are closed text (they will not be allowed any of the books in the exam with them) and that they are un-tiered i.e. all students will sit the same paper; differentiation will be by outcome.

During the course, students will study a series of topics which integrate the skills of reading, writing and speaking and listening. They should develop in accuracy, detail and appropriateness in these areas. They particularly need to consider the implications of words they use and read and the effect they have on the reader.

Reading

Students are helped to read accurately and fluently, understand and respond to literature and analyse and evaluate a range of other texts. Students will read:

- One Shakespeare play ('Macbeth') and a 19th Century novel ('A Christmas Carol')
- One modern text (An Inspector Calls)
- A range of poetry by both heritage and modern poets
- A range of fiction and non-fiction texts from the 19th Century - present day.

Writing

The emphasis at this stage is on:

- Writing in a wide variety of forms for different purposes.

- Developing and communicating ideas, using a wide vocabulary and effective style, structuring sentences grammatically.

- Accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting.

Speaking and Listening

Students will prepare and deliver a speech on a topic of their choice.

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
Exam Board: EDUQAS	Jo Amos (Subject Leader) jamos@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk
External Assessment in the form of 4 exams	Sam Lee (KS4 Co-ordinator) slee@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

GCSE English language and English literature form the basis for all education or employment pathways after Year 11 as they contain the elements of reading, writing, speaking, and listening which underpin all further education qualifications and employment.

In the Sixth Form, many students choose to continue studying English language and English literature at A Level. A good qualification in GCSE English language and literature as two of the core subjects, will definitely open doors, illuminate pathways and offer opportunities to explore other subjects and qualifications.

CORE GCSE	Mathematics

Course Description

GCSE mathematics allows you to develop your skills and understanding across number, algebra, geometry, measures, statistics and probability. You will learn about the relationships between these areas of maths and where and how they apply to real-life situations.

Existing maths knowledge will be expanded and applied to new and more in-depth challenges. You will learn to make informed mathematical assumptions and prove or disprove them yourself. Your problem-solving skills will be honed and improved; skills that are applicable and valuable in many other subjects within school and careers in the future.

GCSE Mathematics is divided into two tiers of entry: Foundation and Higher. This structure ensures that every student studies mathematics at a level that best supports their confidence, progress and future aspirations. Teachers use classwork, assessments, and progress throughout KS3 to recommend the most appropriate tier. The aim is always to place students where they can achieve their best possible outcome.

The Foundation tier focuses on building secure understanding of core mathematical skills. Grades available 1 to 5

The Higher tier includes all the content from Foundation but extends into the more demanding and abstract areas of mathematics. Grades available 3 to 9

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
Exam Board: Edexcel	Claire Tranter
External Assessment 100%	Subject Leader
Examination One - Non-calculator	ctranter@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk
Examination Two - Calculator	Natalie Parris
Examination Three - Calculator	KS4 Coordinator
	nparris@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

Mathematics GCSE is a requirement for a huge number of Post 16 courses and for all University degree level courses. It is highly valued by employers, not only for showing your numerical ability, but also to show your ability to learn new skills and processes.

At St Edward's many students choose to study A level mathematics. This is a challenging yet rewarding course for both gifted and hardworking Mathematicians. A number of students every year go on to read mathematics at university.

Students also have the opportunity to study Core Maths in Sixth Form which focuses on using and applying maths to solve problems drawn from other subjects, work, and real life.

CORE GCSE	Combined Science

Course Description

Science is a compulsory core subject at KS4. Students will follow the AQA GCSE specification for combined science which assesses across biology, chemistry and physics. Students will have the opportunity to learn about how living organisms grow, change and control their internal conditions. They will discover how and why chemicals react. They will learn about the fundamental forces that control the way objects move and the way in which electricity is used.

Students will be able to develop their practical skills and complete experiments to further develop their understanding of the key concepts that underpin the subjects. Students will also complete compulsory practical work which will be assessed across all examination papers in the summer of Year 11.

As each course is comprised of topics from biology, chemistry and physics, students will gain a broad foundation in science. Students will need to display a similar ability in each subject as the two GCSE grades awarded at the end of the course contain marks from each subject area. The course can be followed at either foundation or higher tier and the suitability for a student to follow a particular route will be made based upon the evidence gathered in Year 10 and finalised in Year 11.

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
Exam board – AQA Assessment structure – 100% written examination Exam structure – 6 x 1 hour 15-minute written exams each of 70 marks in the summer of Year 11 (two papers from each of biology, chemistry and physics.) Exams completed at either Higher or Foundation tier.	Steve Dell Subject Leader sdell@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

The grades students attain will support further study at A level and access to other education programmes. Students can progress onto A levels in sciences from these two science qualifications including biology, chemistry, physics and psychology. Students will need to sit all examinations at higher tier to gain the entry requirements for A level study in the sciences.

Students sitting foundation tier exams are able to gain the entry requirements for the Applied Human Biology (BTEC) course.

Students who make good progress throughout this course will be selected to progress on to the Triple Science course and gain 3 separate GCSE grades, one for each science. This carries an increased workload due to additional content that is taught and an additional 30 minutes on to each examination in the summer of year 11.

The Triple Science programme is a challenging course that includes all Combined Science content plus additional extension material. In Biology, students study body regulation and human interactions with the environment. Chemistry focuses more on energy changes in reactions and trends in the periodic table, while Physics explores light behaviour and electrical transfer in greater depth. Students are selected based on prior science attainment and study Biology, Chemistry, and Physics throughout Year 11, earning separate GCSEs in each subject. None of the sciences can be dropped.

CORE GCSE	**Religious Education**

Course Description

GCSE RE is a vibrant subject that helps prepare students for modern life in a rapidly changing world. It teaches students about different belief systems and how these have an impact upon peoples' lives and the decisions they make. GCSE RE at St Edward's is a very successful subject with many students consistently achieving their target grade or higher.

The GCSE course is rigorous and engaging. Students learn about the beliefs, teachings and practices of two main religions; Christianity and Judaism. They also examine how these religions respond to a range of contemporary moral issues.

RE helps students to develop and refine a number of key transferable skills such as evaluation and critical thinking. The philosophical and theological elements help students to think in abstract ways and the ethical and moral dimensions encourage empathy and respect for the views of others. There is a focus on the use of scripture which encourages students to engage with original texts and be selective in their use of evidence to support an argument. These skills will help students in their studies for other subjects and help to prepare them for many Key Stage Five courses too.

Method of Assessment	**Course Contact**
Exam Board: WJEC Eduqas.	Trevor Willis
3 external exams at the end of Year 11:	Subject Leader
Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World (50%)	twillis@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk
Study of Christianity (25%)	
Study of Judaism (25%)	
External Assessment in the form of two 2-hour examinations.	

Pathways after Year 11

RE is widely recognised and valued as a rigorous academic subject, but it is much more than that. It provides students with another qualification to help them take their next steps into education, training or employment, but GCSE RE will also help them to explore their own beliefs and values so that they can consider more deeply what direction they want their life to take. It is a subject that will challenge them in many ways and help to prepare them for life in a changing and challenging world.

In the Sixth Form, students can continue their study and the A Level course allows for further exploration of some of the ideas touched upon at GCSE as well as introducing exciting new concepts. The main areas of study are Philosophy of Religion, Religious Ethics and Developments in Christian thought. The A Level is usually very popular with many students opting to study it.

Breadth Subjects

Modern Foreign Languages, French and German

Geography

History

Computer Science

BREADTH GCSE	Modern Languages – French and German

Course Description

Learning a foreign language opens up opportunities in ways that most other subjects cannot. It is this fact that drives our decision to make languages a core subject for many of our students, and it is why the government is encouraging the increase of the number of students taking languages at GCSE, thus recognising the importance of language skills in both personal and professional contexts.

In today's globalised world, employers often struggle to find young people with strong language skills, particularly in French and German. Studying a language at GCSE can boost future employability and keep our students' options open. Beyond career benefits, our GCSE courses are enjoyable, challenging, and provide a solid foundation for further study at A Level. Learning languages also broadens our students understanding of other cultures, helping them gain a deeper appreciation of the world around them. As the Czech proverb says, "He who learns a new language acquires a new soul."

The GCSE specifications aim to develop both language skills and cultural understanding. Students will study a range of topics, including: identity and relationships, education and work, customs and festivals in French and German-speaking countries, celebrity culture, media, the environment, and travel and tourism.

In addition to classroom learning, we are one of very few school to offer students the unique opportunity to participate in full foreign exchange visits to France or Germany. These exchanges allow students to make new friends, practice their language skills, and experience life in these countries first-hand.

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
Exam Board: AQA	Berengere Pawley
Unit Assessment: All assessment is by final external exam with an even 25% split between 4 assessed skills: Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing	Subject Leader
	bpawley@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

One of the great things about learning a language is that it is so much more than a subject - you will be acquiring a skill which, with practice, you can retain for the rest of your life. After Year 11 you will have the opportunity to continue studying your chosen language to A level. This enables you to achieve a high level of fluency in the language and, with languages so highly regarded by top universities, can be a ticket for entry to a range of courses. Languages give students a clear edge in their future lives and careers.

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BREADTH GCSE	Geography

Course Description

In our modern, globally interconnected society, it is more important than ever that people understand the world around them. This new specification gives you the chance to learn about those changes.

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment will give you a sound understanding of the natural world processes such as earthquakes and volcanoes, ecosystems, the atmosphere and climate and the water cycle.

Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment focuses on human geography. You will study how populations grow and change, where people live and work and how they exploit and use resources.

Paper 3: Geographical applications focuses on practical geography. This requires field study skills and techniques.

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
AQA Exam based - No coursework	Craig Major

AQA Exam based - No coursework

Paper 1 & 2, each worth 35% of GCSE. Exam papers are resource based. You will have maps, photographs and diagrams to help you answer the questions. Questions will range from short questions up to larger extended writing questions.

Paper 3, worth 30% of the GCSE geographical applications, is a decision-making exercise based on resources given. These will consist of a colour resource booklet on a geographical issue or location. Questions will assess your understanding of the resources in relation to environmental issues and sustainability. You will also be expected to apply your fieldwork knowledge and skills to respond to a range of questions.

In GCSE geography there is **no controlled assessment** (coursework) unit. Instead you will complete two fieldwork and data collection enquiries for knowledge and skills experience, to aid preparation for Paper 3.

Craig Major

Subject Leader

cmajor@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

Geography is a broad-based academic subject which is well respected by employers and educational establishments. GCSE geography may well be the first step to further education. Geography graduates have one of the highest rates of graduate employment. Geographers enter a very wide range of career areas, the main benefit of studying geography is that the investigation focus will allow young people to develop an incredible range of transferable skills as well as important transferable attributes such as communication, presentation and team-working. Some of the well-paid jobs geographers go into include; engineering, planning, researching and sciences, travel and tourism, banking and insurance, law, journalism, government, marketing, presenting, health services and management.

BREADTH GCSE	History

Course Description

History is a subject that gives us the opportunity to delve into the past, to study rulers and regimes seemingly far removed from the world we live in today. However, by learning about what has come before, we develop a much clearer understanding of the present and are able to identify patterns and themes that are both consistent and contrasting. This GCSE course enables students to study a wide range of fascinating topics which set the scene for the modern world. It celebrates the highs and reflects on the lows of humanity over the last thousand years with units on British and global historical events. We also take students to Belgium and France to study the First World War battlefields which forms a core part of the course.

History teaches a range of transferable skills, which make you employable. These include:

- Using evidence to construct arguments
- Critically analysing sources of information
- Debating events, deciding why you think the past developed as it did.

Method of Assessment

AQA – GCSE History (Code: 8145) has 2 external exams (2hours each)

Paper 1: Understanding the modern world

- Conflict and Tension, First World War: 1894-1918
- Germany: democracy and Nazi dictatorship: 1890-1945

Paper 2: Shaping Britain

- Health and the people: c1000 to the present day: a thematic study looking at the development of medicine, treatment and changes to disease over time. Students will study medieval medicine, developments of the Renaissance, the impact of scientific discoveries, and the birth of the National Health Service.
- Elizabethan England 1568-1603, looking in depth at religion, exploration and politics. This unit includes an historic environment study, previous years being Hardwick Hall, the Globe Theatre and the Spanish Armada.

Course Contact

James Stockley

Subject Leader

jstockley@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

Historians are welcomed into a broad range of careers requiring an inquisitive, creative mind, self-discipline, creativity, analytical thinking and an evaluative understanding of the world. An essay-based subject, history is highly thought of by top universities offering competitive courses such as international relations, law, politics and more. GCSE history prepares students well for both A level study and apprenticeship and job interviews by honing their speaking and listening skills. Potential career opportunities are varied from journalism, law, media, politics and business to the art world, civil service and teaching.

BREADTH GCSE	**Computer Science**

Course Description

Computer Science underpins so much of our everyday life and routines - everything from the obvious technology items (phones, laptops, tablets) through to the less-obvious things (bank cards, weather forecasts, bar and QR codes) depend upon this subject.

In GCSE Computer Science, students study 6 topic areas as follows:

Topic 1 - Computational Thinking (e.g. How do we solve problems with computers?)
Topic 2 - Data (e.g. Binary, Text, Images, Sound)
Topic 3 - Computers (e.g. Hardware, Software)
Topic 4 - Networks (e.g. LANs, WANs, the Internet)
Topic 5 - Issues and Impact (e.g. Network Security, AI, Environmental Issues)
Topic 6 - Programming (in Python)

Topics 1 - 5 are assessed in a paper-based exam and Topic 6 is assessed through an on-screen programming exam. Throughout the course, students are prepared for the on-screen exam by doing a wide variety of programming tasks and exam-type problems. They are also provided with a booklet of key Python commands to use during the exam, allowing the focus to be on problem-solving rather than remembering code and syntax.

This course is excellent for students who have an interest in working out solutions to problems, learning how things work at a deeper level and want to be a part of the development of the technology of the future.

Method of Assessment

Exam Board: Edexcel
Subject Code: 1CP2 (2020 Spec)

2 Exams:
Paper 1 – Principles of Computer Science (50%, paper exam)

Paper 2 - Application of Computational Thinking (50%, on-screen exam)

Course Contact

Mr C Prince

Computer Science Subject Leader

cprince@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

Studying GCSE Computer Science can lead to a number of pathways by developing in a number of transferrable skills. Further study within this subject area could either be A Level Computer Science or an Applied or Vocational course at Level 3. It can also lead to apprenticeships in any technology-based industry, which is currently one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK. The skills of problem-solving, curiosity and logical-thinking can all be transferred to any other discipline and programming is now a part of a growing number of jobs and higher education courses, all of which are covered in this course.

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Open Options

GCSE Art & Design

GCSE Business

BTEC Digital Information Technology

GCSE Dance

GCSE Drama

GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition

GCSE PE Studies

GCSE Resistant Materials

NCFE Graphic Design

GCSE Music

BTEC Tech Award in Music Practice

OPEN OPTION GCSE	Art & Design

Course Description

Art allows students to develop manipulative skills using a range of media, alongside problem solving and creative thinking. An independent approach to learning enables students to make full use of their class time and a motivated attitude to home learning gives students further opportunities to develop skills and explore ideas.   A portfolio of work is selected from all work produced during the GCSE course. During the course students will have the opportunity to experience a wide range of materials and techniques such as drawing and painting, printmaking, photography and three-dimensional work. An important requirement of the course is that the student demonstrates an awareness of Art outside the classroom in its historical, cultural and contemporary contexts. Therefore, it is hoped that a student will have the opportunity to see work first hand during the course.

The GCSE course in art & design is assessed on a portfolio of coursework completed during Years 10 and 11 and a final externally set assignment in Year 11. There is no written exam for this subject.

Portfolio of work - 60% of total marks

A portfolio of coursework will be selected from work undertaken during the course and will show the development of at least two themes from observational studies and sketches through to concluding pieces of work. There is no limit to the number of pieces of work the portfolio may contain.

Externally set assignment - 40% of total marks

Assignment papers are issued in the spring term of Year 11 and students select one question to explore. Students will have a period of preparation time to prepare preliminary studies. A ten-hour period of supervised time will be allocated in which to produce their concluding piece of work.

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
Exam Board: AQA	Melanie Biggs
Unit 1: Portfolio of Work	Subject Leader
Unit 2: Externally Set Assignment	mbiggs@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

A GCSE in art & design can lead on to A level art & design, BTEC art courses or courses in Photography or Textiles. The creative thinking, aesthetic awareness and manipulative skills are also beneficial to a diverse range of jobs and training. Many of our students, post A Level, go on to a one-year foundation course which leads to a wide range of creative degrees and industries such as illustration, model making, fashion, make up for film or television, architecture, fine art, or photography. Other students have gone on to courses and careers as diverse as Criminology, Paramedic, Accountant or Law.

OPEN OPTION GCSE	Business

Course Description

The study of business is a dynamic and fascinating one. We will be using contemporary business contexts to provide a real and relevant insight into the running of a business in an ever-changing world. The course will provide students with the opportunity to study local business examples in theme 1 through to the study of international brands students recognise in theme 2.

Theme 1 - Investigating Small Business

Theme 1 concentrates on the key business concepts, issues and skills involved in starting and running a small business. Many young people will be thinking about setting up their own business in the future and this unit will provide an excellent insight into the skills and qualities required. It provides a framework for students to explore concepts through the lens of an entrepreneur setting up a business.

Theme 2 - Building a Business

This unit builds on the first unit and examines how a business develops beyond the start-up phase. It explores topics such as marketing, operations, finance and human resources. It uses these key business concepts to explore the issues and decisions required to help grow a business. It also considers the impact of the wider world on the decisions a business makes as it grows. This will include the ethical and social decisions international businesses have to make in a complex globalised economy.

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
Exam Board - Edexcel 2 external examinations (50% each at end of Year 11)	Colin Kilpatrick Subject Leader ckilpatrick@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

GCSE Business aims to develop students' understanding of many concepts and situations that will be encountered after leaving school. It is an excellent foundation for A-level courses in Business and Economics, or simply to develop some of the key skills and knowledge required to set up your own business.

Such is the real and relevant use of case studies that students will be more informed of the globalised nature of business and the economy. This will be important knowledge when pursuing any career in a dynamic economy such as the UK. The course can also act as a catalyst to pursue careers in areas such as accountancy, marketing, human resources, and public relations.

OPEN OPTION BTEC Tech Award	BTEC Digital Information Technology

Course Description

IT plays such a significant part in our everyday lives and is such a core part of many career paths - this course is for those students who want to focus on the using of IT, especially in a business context, rather than the inner-workings of computers or programming (see Computer Science for this). It is equivalent to a GCSE but graded on a BTEC scale and is 60% assessed by controlled coursework undertaken in both Years 10 and 11.

In BTEC Digital Information Technology, students take 3 components as follows:

Component 1 - Exploring User Interface Design Principles and Project Planning Techniques
Students examine the design behind different applications, from layout and emphasis through to accessibility requirements. They then look at how they can plan projects through techniques such as Gantt charts. The assignment for this component requires students to use Word to plan and review their projects, Excel to produce a Gantt chart and PowerPoint to create a prototype of a user interface.

Component 2 - Collecting, Presenting and Interpreting Data
Students examine how data is collected and used by organisations, touching on the threats to individuals and their privacy from this. They then look at spreadsheets and dashboards as a means of presenting data using techniques such as conditional formatting, graphs, charts and sparklines. The assignment for this component requires students to use Word to write 2 reports on suitable data collection methods and trends and patterns from a dashboard in context and Excel to produce an analysis and dashboard on some given data.

Component 3 - Effective Digital Working Practices
Students look at the ways modern technology is used in businesses including cloud technologies, communication tools, cyber-security and data protection. All of these things are key to success in modern career paths. This knowledge is assessed through an external exam. This course is excellent for students to get a grounding in a number of both knowledge-based and practical IT concepts to set them up for success in their future.

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
Exam Board: Pearson Subject: BTEC Tech Award Level 1/2 in Digital Information Technology3 Components: Component 1 - Internal Assignment set by Exam Board (30%) Typically completed in Spring of Year 10 Component 2 - Internal Assignment set by Exam Board (30%) Typically completed in Autumn of Year 11 Component 3 - External Exam (40%) Typically taken in Summer of Year 11	Mr C Prince Computer Science Subject Leader cprince@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

This course will be valued across any discipline as it demonstrates a number of key transferrable skills. Specifically in the IT sector, there are a number of vocational courses that this could progress to at Level 2 or Level 3 and there are a growing number of apprenticeships in the digital sector.

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OPEN OPTION GCSE	**Dance**

Course Description

Are you ready to unlock your creativity, grow in confidence, and explore the incredible world of performing arts? GCSE Dance at St. Edward's School is your ticket to an exciting, rewarding, and inspiring journey. Whether you dream of performing on stage, designing stunning visual elements for productions, or simply want to challenge yourself in a new way, GCSE Dance is for you.

Why Choose GCSE Dance?

- This course isn't just about moving to the music (although that's amazing too!). It's about telling stories, expressing emotions, and crafting experiences. You'll learn how to choreograph, analyse, and even design for dance performances. This makes it perfect for performers, aspiring directors, costume designers, lighting experts, and anyone with a passion for the arts.
- Dance combines physical skill with artistic creativity. You'll develop flexibility, strength, and stamina while sharpening your critical thinking and teamwork skills. This holistic approach builds both body and mind, preparing you for success in any field.
- Our experienced and enthusiastic teachers are here to guide you every step of the way. We believe in helping every student shine, whether you've danced your whole life or are trying something new. You'll feel supported, encouraged, and celebrated in every lesson.
- From group performances to solo choreography, GCSE Dance gives you plenty of chances to show your skills. Plus, you'll get to perform in front of live audiences, building confidence and stage presence in an environment designed to nurture your growth.
- Thinking about studying performing arts or production design in college? Dreaming of a career in theatre, film, or event management? GCSE Dance is a perfect stepping stone. It's a recognized and respected qualification that opens doors to countless creative opportunities.

Whether you see yourself on stage, working behind the scenes, or simply want a course that's fresh, fun, and challenging, GCSE Dance is for you. No prior dance experience is required—just a willingness to learn, experiment, and push yourself to new heights.

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
Examboard- AQA **Performance:** Develop your technical and expressive skills in solo and group settings- 30% **Choreography:** Explore your creativity by crafting original routines-30% **Dance Appreciation:** Learn to analyse professional works and gain a deeper understanding of different styles and genres- 40%	Lauren Keene Head of Performing Arts lkeene@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

GCSE Dance opens up a world of possibilities, from further study in A-Level Dance or specialist conservatoires, to careers as a performer, choreographer, teacher, or behind-the-scenes roles like lighting and costume design. It equips you with transferable skills like creativity, teamwork, and confidence, which are valued in any career. Whether you aim to pursue the arts or develop life-long skills, GCSE Dance is your springboard to an exciting and dynamic future.

OPEN OPTION GCSE	Drama

Course Description

Are you ready to step into the spotlight—or work behind it? GCSE Drama is so much more than acting; it's about discovering your creative potential**,** building lifelong skills, and exploring the magic of live performance in all its forms. Whether you dream of being on stage, designing jaw-dropping costumes, crafting stunning sets, or perfecting lighting and sound, GCSE Drama is your ticket to an unforgettable learning experience. At St. Edward's Performing Arts Department, we believe everyone has something unique to offer.

Why take Drama?

- Drama helps you find your voice, express yourself, and build self-belief that will serve you in any career or life situation. From performing to presenting ideas, you'll learn how to stand out.
- Not keen on acting? No problem! Drama isn't just for performers. Discover roles as a set designer, costume creator, lighting expert**,** sound technician, or director**.** You'll learn how to bring your ideas to life in exciting and professional ways.
- Our Drama teachers at St. Edward's are not just passionate—they're experts in their field who will support you every step of the way**.** We celebrate your creativity, nurture your skills, and ensure you have fun while learning.
- Drama isn't just about the arts; it's about preparing for life. You'll develop skills like teamwork, problem-solving, time management, and critical thinking—the kind that employers and universities value.
- From devising your own performances to seeing professional theatre productions, Drama is packed with opportunities to connect with others, challenge yourself**,** and make lasting friendships.

Drama isn't just a subject—it's a journey that will inspire you, challenge you, and equip you with skills to succeed in the arts and beyond. The transferrable skills will be hugely beneficial for your future.

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
Examboard- $\qquad$ **OCR** **Devising Drama**: Create your own performances from scratch- 30% **Scripted Drama**: Bring famous plays to life with your unique spin- 30% **Performance or Design**: Choose your specialty and shine as an actor or designer- 20% **Live Theatre Analysis**: Watch professional performances and discuss what makes them amazing- 20%	Lauren Keene Head of Performing Arts lkeene@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

In terms of careers, Drama isn't just for those aiming to work in the theatre or film industries. While it can lead to roles such as actors, directors, set designers, or stage managers, it also prepares you for careers in public relations, advertising, event management, and sales, where strong communication and presentation skills are essential. The confidence and adaptability you build in Drama are also highly valued in fields such as teaching, youth work, law, and politics, where the ability to connect with and inspire others is crucial. GCSE Drama helps you develop skills like problem-solving, teamwork, creativity, and self-confidence, which are transferable to almost any career. Whether you want to pursue a future in the arts or take the lessons learned in Drama into another pathway, this subject equips you with the tools to succeed in whatever you choose to do.

UNITY $\qquad$ ACHIEVEMENT $\qquad$ FAITH

OPEN OPTION GCSE	Food Preparation & Nutrition

Course Description

This course focuses on both practical cooking skills and the science of nutrition. Your lessons will be made up of a mixture of 50% practical and 50% theory work. You will need to bring ingredients into school to cook approximately once a fortnight. You will learn a wide range of practical food and presentation skills. The five theory units you will study are:

- Food, Nutrition and Health
- Food Science
- Food Safety
- Food Choice
- Food Provenance

To be successful on this course you need to love cooking and be willing to practice and experiment with dishes at home. You need to be well organised and have creative ideas. The course involves a food science element, and students will need to develop an understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients.

Method of Assessment

50% Final exam end of year 11

50% NEA. Two tasks are completed in Year 11;

NEA 1 - A Food Science assessment in the autumn term.

NEA 2 - A Food Preparation assessment where you will cook 3 dishes in 3 hours in the spring term.

Course Contact

Jane Knight

Food Teacher

jknight@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Chloe Duke

Subject Leader

chuerga-duke@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

The course provides a pathway into further education courses such as Food Technology, Food, Nutrition and Health, Professional Cookery Studies, and Hospitality and Catering as well as apprenticeships.

Students will develop transferable skills that they can use in all areas of their life. This course provides a solid foundation in food with links to Sports studies, Science and Health studies.

OPEN OPTION GCSE	PE Studies

Course Description

GCSE Physical Education (PE) gives students the opportunity to develop both their physical abilities and their understanding of sport, health, and the human body. The course combines an in-depth level of theory with elements of practical sport, helping students understand how the sporting industry works. Through GCSE PE, students will not only take part in a range of physical activities but also explore how the body works, how to improve performance, and how sport can support a healthy and active lifestyle. This subject is well suited to students who enjoy being active, are interested in sport or fitness, and want to develop skills that are valuable in the world of sport.

The aims and objectives of the course are

- To develop theoretical knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin physical activity
- Understand how the physiological and psychological state affects performance in physical activity and sport
- Perform effectively in at least 3 different sports and regular playing competitive sport

Develop the ability to analyse and evaluate to improve performance in physical activity

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
Written Paper - 1 hour 45 minutes (Externally Assessed) 36% Written paper 2 - 1 hour 15 minutes (Externally assessed) 24% Practical performance (30%) Personal exercise programme (10%)	Sam Pope Subject Leader spope@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

A Level options: A level PE Studies, OCR Technical Level 3 Single or Double Award.

Progression routes: University Degree – Sports Science, Teaching, Physiotherapy and more.

Careers: PE teacher, coach, sports events organiser, professional athlete, physiotherapist, sports psychologist, sports nutritionist, sports development, coaching manager and working within the media of sport.

OPEN OPTION GCSE	**Resistant Materials**

Course Description

The course enables students to understand and apply iterative design processes through which they explore, create and evaluate a range of outcomes. The qualification enables students to use creativity and imagination to design and make prototypes (together with evidence of modelling to develop and prove product concept and function) that solve real and relevant problems, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values. It gives students opportunities to apply knowledge from other disciplines, including mathematics, science, art and design, computing and the humanities while also helping to develop a functional understanding of the world.

Throughout the course students will experience the range of material areas within Technology and have the autonomy to specialise in a particular area, whether that be wood, metal or plastic.

In Year 10, students will complete a series of short projects where they will develop practical skills and knowledge in designing and fabrication techniques.

In Year 11 students will independently complete a design and make project which is assessed in four key areas;

- Investigate - This includes investigation of needs and research, and a product specification
- Design - This includes producing different design ideas, review of initial ideas, development of design ideas into a chosen design, communication of design ideas and review of the chosen design
- Make - This includes manufacture, and quality and accuracy
- Evaluate - This includes testing and evaluation.

Method of Assessment

Exam Board: Edexcel

Component 1: Written exam worth 50% of the GCSE. The exam test students on their core and specialist knowledge.

Component 2: Portfolio and final product worth 50% of the GCSE. Students will be assessed on four areas; investigation, design, make and evaluate.

Course Contact

Chloe Duke

Subject Leader

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Tom Coles

RM Teacher

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Pathways after Year 11

A Level Design and Technology and Level 3 Technical Award in Engineering at St Edward's are ideal courses for students who intend to pursue a career in architecture, graphic design, product design, engineering, surveying and design linked courses such as animation.

Apprenticeships at either Year 11 or Year 13 in engineering or construction are also clear progression routes from this course.

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OPEN OPTION NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award	Graphic Design

Course Description

The Level 1/2 Technical Award in Graphic Design is designed for learners who want an introduction to graphic design that includes a vocational and project-based element. The qualification will appeal to learners who wish to pursue a career in the graphic design sector or progress onto further study.

This qualification has been designed to sit alongside the requirements of core GCSE subjects and is appropriate for learners who are motivated and challenged by learning through hands-on experiences and through content which is concrete and directly related to those experiences.

This qualification aims to:

- Focus on the study of the graphic design sector.
- Offer breadth and depth of study, incorporating a key core of knowledge.
- Provide opportunities to acquire a number of practical and technical skills.

The course encourages the learner to apply their knowledge and use practical tools across a range of areas within graphic design;

- Components of graphic design
- The work of graphic designers
- Requirements of a graphic design brief
- Planning, development and experimentation
- Graphic design production

Displaying, presenting and promoting graphic design work

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
Exam Board: NCFE Non-exam assessment (NEA) worth 60% of the final grade is externally-set, internally marked and externally moderated. Examined assessment (EA) worth 40% of the final grade is a written exam	Chloe Duke Subject Leader/Graphic Teacher chuerga-duke@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress onto level 3 qualifications and A Levels, such as the Level 3 Applied General Certificate in Art & Design and A Level Design and Technology.

It may also be useful to those studying qualifications in the following sectors: Design and Technology, Art and Design, and Creative Media.

UNITY   ACHIEVEMENT   FAITH

OPEN OPTION GCSE	Music

Course Description

Edexcel GCSE music is an exciting and enjoyable course about making, listening and forming personal and meaningful relationships with music through the development of musical knowledge. understanding and skills. It covers performing, composing and listening to a wide variety of musical styles – popular music, world music and classical music. There are also opportunities to use music technology.

Students will be encouraged to engage critically and creatively with a wide range of music, develop an understanding of the place of music in different cultures and contexts, and reflect on how music is used in the expression of personal and collective identities. There is also an expectation that students carry out wider listening in addition to their set works, to support them in building transferable appraisal skills.

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

- involves performing on your own and with others

- involves listening to and understanding a wide range of music

- involves composing or arranging music on your own and with others in e.g. rock group, bands or orchestra

- will broaden your knowledge of music theory

Method of Assessment

Method of Assessment	Course Contact
There is one exam in the summer of Y11 worth 40% of the final grade. You will listen to various music tracks and answer questions on twelve different pieces you have studied. Coursework consists of two compositions (15% each) and two performances (one solo and one ensemble both 15% of final grade) which are worth 60% of the total mark. Students wishing to study GCSE Music have an expectation of having achieved Grade 3 or working towards Grade 3 on their main instrument.	Lauren Keene Head of Performing Arts lkeene@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

GCSE Music develops a wide range of vital skills including confidence to perform in front of others, the ability to work effectively in a team, analysis skills, essay writing, target setting and creativity. The skills are essential for further study or any career you choose to pursue after Key Stage 4. GCSE music is highly regarded by universities and leads on perfectly to A Level Music as well as BTEC Level 3 Music.

Previous alumni include students who have gone on to study Music at prestigious Music Conservatoires such as the Royal Academy of Music, Trinity Laban, Leeds College of Music.

GCSE Music is an excellent asset to musicians hoping to achieve their Grade 5 theory, advance on their instrument or improve their ensemble, orchestra and/or choir skills.

OPEN OPTION BTEC	BTEC Tech Award in Music Practice

Course Description

Do you love making music? Would you like to learn how to record and produce your own music? We are excited to offer the BTEC Tech Award which is a level 2 qualification (equivalent to one GCSE grade A* - C). This course is an exciting and highly creative course which focuses on developing skills in analysing music from different genres including Britpop, Blues, EDM (e.g. Trap), Grunge, Music for Media (e.g. Music in Gaming and Films), and Reggae to name but a few. You will study these genres of Music, discovering what makes them special and unique whilst developing your theory and vocabulary knowledge. It is a structured course including practical sessions where you will develop skills in performing as part of an ensemble on your chosen instrument. You will be provided will plenty of opportunities to develop your performance ability and confidence through extra-curricular activities and events like Battle of the Bands, Christmas Concerts and the annual school production.

This BTEC in music will allow you to:

- Enhance your performing solo and group performing skills and deepen your skills on Music Technology (e.g Cubase)

- Understand how to build knowledge on manipulating musical material in creative and unique ways during performance and composing assignments.

- The opportunity to use amazing facilities within the department, including Cubase, Sibelius, MuseScore, BandLab and the use of the recording booth and control room to record, edit and produce your own music.

- Work with industry specialists on creative music projects and visit recording studios and other relevant music venues to gain an insight into the music business.

Method of Assessment

The qualification consists of 3 units, 100% coursework.

1. Exploring Music Products and Styles- 30%
2. Music Skills Development- 30%
3. Responding to a Music Brief- 40%

BTEC Music students are expected to already be able to play an instrument/ sing and to consider taking lessons for their instrument if they haven't already. They should have a willingness to learn Music Theory, though prior knowledge is always useful.

Course Contact

Lauren Keene

Head of Performing Arts

lkeene@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Pathways after Year 11

Many previous students have gone on to study at prestigious Music Conservatoires including the Royal Academy of Music, Trinity Laban, Leeds College of Music. Alumni have experienced success within the Music Industry, including working with popular artists, composing, producing, performing on tour and teaching. This course sets students up to be well-rounded musicians with knowledge of not only performance and composition, but also knowledge of music events management, record studios, music production, promotion, DJs, Music lawyers and many more. This course is set up well to follow with Level 3 BTEC Music. Music is also well thought after subject for students wishing to continue a career outside of the Music Industry.

UNITY   ACHIEVEMENT   FAITH