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Middle School Curriculum



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February, 2017

Dear Member of the Third Form,

Middle School Curriculum 2017/18

I am very pleased to present this curriculum document to you. It contains information on the Middle School courses on offer at Denstone College commencing September 2017.

There is a lot of information in this document that should help you in deciding upon your most appropriate options. In the coming weeks you will all have the opportunity to discuss your choices with Mr Wray, our Head of Careers / UCAS, as well as having discussions with tutors and relevant subject teachers about the best options for you. Take some time to read this booklet carefully and seek available advice; your GCSE options are an important decision!

All GCSE and IGCSE examinations are now sat at the end of the course (i.e. the summer term of the fifth form), while non-exam assessment tasks continue to take place in some subjects at different times throughout the fourth and fifth forms. From September some departments will be teaching reformed GCSE specifications, in line with the government's ongoing reforms of academic qualifications. These reforms involve significant changes to the content and assessment of subjects involved. Specifically, most subjects will be adopting the newly-introduced 9 to 1 grading scale, further details of which can be found in this booklet. There is a noticeable step up in the skills and complexity involved in all subjects at this stage of your education and it is very important that you take time to make the best decisions for you in terms of subjects to study.

Remember to return the proforma enclosed in these pages to me via your academic tutor no later than **Monday 13th March, 2017**. There is no benefit to returning forms early; I would rather you spent time giving your options sufficient thought!

There will be further opportunities to discuss your subject choices at the Third Form Parents' Evening early in the summer term, when it will still be possible to amend your options for next year should you wish to do so.

Yours sincerely,

T J Bell
Director of Studies

DENSTONE COLLEGE MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-2018

The term 'Middle School' at Denstone College refers to the fourth and fifth forms (years 10 and 11).

The Middle School curriculum is composed of a mixture of compulsory and optional courses making a normal total of between 8 and 10 GCSE/IGCSEs. These years are an important period of transition as you move towards preparing for Sixth Form and then university and you begin to specialise after the broad curriculum you have been following until now.

The purpose of providing this document is to help you in deciding upon a suitable collection of courses to study. There is a lot of information to consider. Think carefully about it and discuss things fully with your parents/guardians, tutors, Heads of House and subject teachers before making any decision. You may also speak to Mr Wray (Head of Careers/UCAS) if you already have specific careers or university courses in mind, and want to know the best GCSE's to follow.

The compulsory GCSE curriculum

Five subjects are compulsory in Middle School for most students and represent a possible total of seven or eight GCSEs. They are:

1. **English** (IGCSE English Language and IGCSE English Literature)
2. **Mathematics** (IGCSE)
3. **Science** (Two or Three GCSEs)
4. **Modern Foreign Language** (French or Spanish, with Supervised Study now an option for a few pupils not taking a language GCSE)
5. **Religious Studies** (this course also incorporates elements of the former PSHE curriculum)

In all these compulsory subjects, pupils are taught in sets based on their ability.

Each member of the Middle School can also pick up to three optional subjects to study at GCSE. Some pupils may benefit from more time to concentrate on fewer GCSE's. In this case, there exists a **Supervised Study** option in place of studying a Modern Foreign Language, whereby the pupil will have four periods of supervised study each week to commit to the other GCSE subjects they are studying. In this way, it is possible for some pupils to study a slightly narrower range of courses. **Please note that, once courses commence in September, pupils will only be allowed to drop a GCSE subject in exceptional circumstances; we expect pupils to be fully committed to the subjects they choose.**

Optional GCSEs

Optional subjects available are:

- Triple Science (for pupils who wish to study separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
- Art
- Design and Technology (DT)
- Drama
- Business
- Spanish (for pupils who wish to study both Spanish and French)
- Geography
- History

- Computer Science
- Music
- Physical Education (PE)
- IGCSE Further Maths

Which ones should be chosen?

The selection decision should be seen as an opportunity to create a personal curriculum of choice. The decision about options is an important one and a number of important questions should be borne in mind:

How good are you at a particular subject; do you have an aptitude for it?

Are you interested in these subjects?

What are the implications for A levels, higher education and career choices of one subject rather than another?

Are you able to successfully study for 9 or 10 (1) GCSEs, or would you benefit from spending more time on fewer subjects?

It is generally sensible to keep some breadth in your chosen programme. We advise that at least one humanities subject (such as Geography or History) and at least one practical, artistic subject (such as Art, DT, Drama or Music) is chosen. **It is our recommendation that pupils should follow a balanced curriculum and not become over-specialised too early in their academic careers.** For this reason we anticipate that the vast majority of pupils, including all those currently in higher tier sets, will opt to study at least one Modern Foreign language at GCSE level

Please remember that GCSE choices can have an influence on the subsequent selection of A Level subjects. It is perfectly possible, however, to commence many of our sixth form courses without having done the subject at GCSE. For example, the A Level course in Business requires no previous knowledge of the subject.

Please select three optional subjects from the previous list. We will then endeavour to produce a set of option blocks that will allow us to accommodate as many choices as possible. After this time, you will still be able to change your option choices so long as they are within the settled blocks. You may particularly want to review choices after the Third Form Parents' Evening in the Summer Term.

Choose French as the compulsory language and then pick Spanish from the list of options if you wish to study both languages at GCSE. Please note that the second language option will only be taught if the number of students choosing both languages makes this viable.

Choose Triple Science as an optional subject if you wish to study the three separate sciences at GCSE (GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics). You should then pick two other subjects from the list of those available.

Please bear in mind that it may not be possible to timetable all the combinations of subjects that are chosen, and you may have to choose an alternative option, but we will assist you if this is the case. For this reason, please give some thought to the subject you wish to nominate as your reserve (4th) option choice.

New GCSE specifications

In September 2017 some GCSE subjects are starting courses with new specifications (many others started these in September 2016). These changes are part of the government's ongoing reform programme for A Level and GCSE courses across the country.

The new courses will adopt a different grading scale, abandoning the traditional A*-G grades in favour of numerical grades 9 to 1 (with 9 being the highest available grade). Some of our GCSE courses remain with their existing specifications for this year, meaning that the A*-G grading scale will still be in use for certain subjects (see the list below). Our College assessment policy will change to reflect these reforms, with the new 9 to 1 scale in use for many subjects.



New GCSE grading structure

New grading structure	Current grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

GOOD PASS (DfE)
5 and above = top of C and above

AWARDING
4 and above = bottom of C and above

The new grade 4 equates to a low C grade under the traditional GCSE grading system, whilst the top grades 7-9 will be gained by around the same proportion of pupils who currently gain an A grade or better.

From fourth form attainment grades in these reformed GCSE courses will reflect the new grading criteria, allowing pupils and parents to see the standard of work being achieved in terms of grades 9 to 1.

IGCSE English and English Literature courses continue to use the traditional A* to G grading scale.

GCSE Results 2016

(Fifth Form only, full course)

Subject	Entries	A*	A	B	C	D-	%A*	%A*A	%A*-C
Art	22	12	3	6	1	0	54.5	68.2	100.0
Biology	65	13	18	25	9	0	20.0	47.7	100.0
Business & Economics	44	7	4	15	7	11	15.9	25.0	75.0
Chemistry	65	19	20	22	3	1	29.2	60.0	98.5
Chinese	4	4	0	0	0	0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Design and Technology	24	8	15	1	0	0	33.3	95.8	100.0
Drama	20	0	11	5	3	1	0.0	55.0	95.0
English Lang IGCE	85	8	34	29	14	0	9.4	49.4	100.0
English Lit IGCE	68	25	27	13	3	0	36.8	76.5	100.0
French	30	9	8	2	4	7	30.0	56.7	76.7
Geography	36	11	12	9	4	0	30.6	63.9	100.0
History	45	12	13	16	3	1	26.7	55.6	97.8
ICT	7	1	3	3	0	0	14.3	57.1	100.0
Mathematics IGCSE	86	35	18	16	16	1	40.7	61.6	98.8
Music	10	0	7	3	0	0	0.0	70.0	100.0
Physical Education	28	6	10	6	5	1	21.4	57.1	96.4
Physics	65	13	18	21	13	0	20.0	47.7	100.0
Religious Studies	86	24	26	22	9	5	27.9	58.1	94.2
Science	18	0	0	7	9	2	0.0	0.0	88.9
Science (Additional)	21	0	2	4	12	3	0.0	9.5	85.7
Spanish	53	12	16	9	16	0	22.6	52.8	100.0
Totals	882	219	265	234	131	29	24.8	54.9	96.3
Cumulative %		24.8	54.9	81.4	96.3	99.5			

Average passes per pupil: 10.3

Denstone College GCSE Option Choices: 2017

Name:

House:

Tutor:

1. Compulsory Modern Foreign Language: **FRENCH** **SPANISH** **EAL** **SUPERVISED STUDY**

(Please circle your preferred language)

2. Do you wish to study TRIPLE or DUAL science? **TRIPLE** **DUAL**

3. The next stage is to indicate your three preferred subject options. Remember that triple science should be listed as one if these subjects if you wish to study this. There is **no need to list English (Language and Literature), Mathematics, Science or RS.**

My option choices for GCSE are:

1.

2.

3.

[4th reserve choice =

(if any of the above are not available)]

Please return this form to Mr. T Bell, Director of Studies, at Denstone College as soon as possible but **no later than Monday 13th March, 2017.**

It is very important that the information you supply is as accurate as possible because our planning for the GCSE courses commencing September 2017 will be carried out on the basis of this evidence. Failure to meet the above deadline means that your preferences will not be taken into account when option blocks are created.

English (IGCSE)

CIE

English provides the skills that are the cornerstone of a first-rate education and a successful, fulfilling life: creativity, clarity of thought, and effective communication. At the heart of our work is a passionate belief in the power of language, the adventure of literature and the joy of self-expression.

Students are encouraged to read widely across all genres and respond with all the force of their own personalities and insights. They will also be led to become inquisitive readers, who interrogate texts and dissect arguments: in other words, they will learn how to think.

Writing too is not merely a necessary life skill but an art to be nurtured and honed. Students will learn to write with accuracy and elegance, paying respect to their readers; at the same time, they will learn the power and versatility of the tools they have been given. They will write poems, scripts, short stories, journalism and essays and they will learn to emulate the craft of established writers, as well as to develop a distinctive personal style.

All students are entered for IGCSE English Language, and most are also entered for English Literature (CIE), both rigorous and prestigious international qualifications. The subjects are 'taught together' but lead to two separate qualifications. English Language ensures students are critical readers and effective writers, whilst English Literature introduces students to the appreciation and analysis of a wide range of classic literary texts. In addition to the compulsory written elements of the English Language course, all students are entered for the additional Speaking and Listening component, which is graded separately.

For a minority of students, the decision may be made at the beginning of Fourth Form to focus entirely on gaining the highest grade possible in the crucial English Language qualification. These students will not ultimately be entered for the Literature exam, although they will have access to a range of literary and other texts over the course of their two-year course in English Language.

Assessment



The course is taught simply as "English" but results (for most students) in two separate qualifications: CIE IGCSE English Language and IGCSE English Literature.

English Language is 50% examination and 50% written coursework, plus a separately graded Speaking and Listening component.

English Literature is 75% examination and 25% written coursework. Set texts include novels, plays, and a collection of classic and contemporary poems.

For further details about this course, please contact Dr D. Baker, Head of English.

Mathematics (IGCSE)

Edexcel

We are delighted to be offering IGCSE Mathematics at Denstone College. This course provides excellent learning opportunities beyond the standard GCSE course and also gives those pupils who are aiming for a B or C grade the best possible chance of success of reaching their targets.

Within the mathematics department we are constantly looking for ways to improve our delivery of the subject, and have, for example, built up an extensive suite of video tutorials that pupils will be able to access in their own time as well as in lessons as part of the course.

There are three major topics that are assessed in IGCSE Mathematics that do not feature in the standard GCSE course:

- Calculus
- Venn Diagrams
- Function Notation

In addition to this there are a few further smaller topics contained:

- The Intersecting Chord Theorem
- Quadratic Inequalities
- Conditional Probability
- Modulus of a Vector

We believe it is very important that pupils are stretched during their time at Denstone; the IGCSE course will help us achieve this aim. In addition to IGCSE, further enrichment is available via the individual and team UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenges. Pupils will have the opportunity to compete against other mathematicians around the country.

Pupils also have the opportunity to study IGCSE Further Maths as one of their optional subjects (see separate entry).

Assessment



Pupils will sit 2 exams at the end of the course, each lasting 2 hours.

Pupils are allowed to use a calculator in both exams, although questions are worded so that pupils must display their understanding of arithmetic.

For further details about this course please contact Mr B Duerden, Head of Mathematics.

Sciences

AQA

Whilst Science remains compulsory for all pupils, Denstone now offers two option routes through the Sciences from September 2016.

Pupils will be advised on the most appropriate route for them during the third form, based on assessments undertaken that year.

- (1) AQA GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy
- (2) AQA Triple Science: Biology, Chemistry, Physics

The Combined Science course is similar in nature to the current Core and Additional Science GCSEs (equivalent to two GCSEs). It shares a lot of content and practical experiments with the triple science courses but is aimed at pupils who probably won't want to pursue science beyond GCSE but who do want to study and have an interest in science as a pure subject and as a context to real world science.

The Triple Science course leads to separate GCSE grades for Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Pupils opting for this, more demanding route should have a genuine interest in each of the pure sciences and consider themselves all-rounders. It is expected Triple Science students are seeking to extend their knowledge of a pure science beyond GCSE with a strong desire to study at least one of the science subjects in depth to A level and possibly beyond.

Further details on the content and assessment of these reformed specifications can be found on the AQA website: www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/new-science-gcse-specifications or by speaking with the relevant head of department: Mr Tomlinson (Head of Science and Chemistry), Mrs Rylance (Head of Biology), Mr Lightfoot (Head of Physics).

Assessment



Each separate science subject is assessed by two terminal examinations at the end of the fifth form, with papers longer in duration for those taking Trilogy Science.

Practical science is integral to both courses, taking place throughout the two years of study and assessed within the terminal examinations for each science subject.

There is no controlled assessment for these reformed GCSE courses.

For further details about this course please contact Mr J Tomlinson, Head of Science.

French

Eduqas (WJEC)

Most pupils are expected to opt for at least one modern foreign language in the Fourth Form, with some pupils opting to study two. With GCSE entries in MFL subjects still in decline nationally, it is certainly a distinct advantage for our pupils to be able to demonstrate a motivation and ability in at least one foreign language up to GCSE level.

French is an important global language. Indeed, a recent study by the investment bank, Natixis, states that French is set to become the most commonly spoken language by 2050. Moreover, in 2015, the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) named French as the most desired language for UK business.

French follows the Eduqas GCSE course, which aims to develop a desire and ability to communicate with and understand speakers of the language, as well as developing a cultural awareness of the many countries and communities where the French is spoken.

There are three themes which apply to all four assessed units of the GCSE course. These are:

Identity and Culture: (Self and relationships, technology and social media, health and fitness, entertainment and leisure, food and drink, festivals and celebrations)

Local, national, international and global areas of interest: (Local areas of interest, transport, local and regional features and characteristics, holidays and tourism, environment, social issues)

Current and future study and employment: (School/college life, school/college studies, work experience and part-time jobs, skills and personal qualities, applying for work/study, career plans)

Course assessment concentrates on the four skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing. There are no controlled assessments and there is a greater emphasis on grammar development, with writing and translation skills tested without prior knowledge of the question topics in the final exam. There are no split tiers of entry and pupils will be entered for foundation or higher in all four skills.

Assessment



Unit 1: Listening (25% of the course) is examined by a series of tasks based on pre-recorded material with answers in both English and French

Unit 2: Speaking (25%) is assessed by a role play, a photo card discussion and a general conversation, none of which the candidate will have knowledge of before the exam.

Unit 3: Reading (25%) is examined based on a number of questions in English and French based on French texts and one translation task from French into English

Unit 4: Writing (25%) requires candidates to complete a series of tasks including lists, messages, one translation from English into French and, at higher level, a longer structured task.

For more details, please contact: Miss J. Pitt, Assistant Head of Modern Foreign Languages.

Spanish

AQA

Spanish follows the AQA GCSE course, which aims to develop a good understanding of the language in a variety of contexts, building up pupils' ability and confidence when communicating as well as developing an awareness of the relevant countries and communities where the language is spoken.

There are three themes which apply to all four assessed units of the GCSE course. These are:

Identity and Culture: (Me, my family and friends, technology in everyday life, free time activities, customs and festivals)

Local, national, international and global areas of interest: (Social issues, global issues, travel and tourism)

Current and future study and employment: (My studies, Life at school, Education post -16, Career choices and ambitions)

Course assessment concentrates on the four skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing.

There are no controlled assessments or coursework options and there is a greater emphasis on grammar development, with writing and translation skills tested without prior knowledge of the question topics in the final exam. Pupils will be entered for foundation or higher in all 4 skills (no split tiers), with a maximum grade 4 (equivalent to present C grade) achievable for those who enter at foundation level. Teaching of the GCSE syllabus will start in third form.

Due to the increased emphasis on terminal exams and complexity, in an attempt to give every pupil the best opportunity to get a GCSE in a Modern Foreign Language, it is recommended that pupils who have started Spanish as a second language in the third form should only chose Spanish if it is their second language option. They should firstly opt for French as will have studied this language for longer.

Assessment



Unit 1: Listening (25% of the course) is examined by a series of tasks based on pre-recorded material with answers in both English and Spanish

Unit 2: Speaking (25%) is assessed by a role play, a discussion and a general conversation, none of which the candidate will have knowledge of before the exam.

Unit 3: Reading (25%) is examined based on a number of questions in English and Spanish based on Spanish texts, and translation of a passage from Spanish to English.

Unit 4: Writing (25%) involves candidates completing a series of tasks including lists, messages, and a translation to Spanish., and at higher level a longer structured task.

For more details, please contact: Mr. C. Sassi, Head of Modern Foreign Languages.

Religious Studies

OCR

Religious Studies gives the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the core beliefs held by a range of human beings, some familiar and some strikingly unfamiliar. Key philosophical questions are encountered throughout the course, and are given particular attention within the Philosophy and Ethics component. In developing our response to such questions, with exploration of the arguments laid down by others, we gain a firmer grip on what we know and what we may come to know, including the nature of this knowledge, its meaning and significance. All themes are examined critically, the pursuit of truth within margins of uncertainty lying at the heart of the subject. Students therefore develop an ability to think critically and argue effectively and responsibly, both verbally and on paper.

GCSE Religious Studies is a compulsory subject at Denstone College. The course starts in the third form, where students have two lessons per week. In the fourth form this is increased to three lessons per week, and this continues until examination at the end of the fifth form.

The perspectives of two religions will be studied. Students will cover the key beliefs and practices of these religions and critically investigate the position taken by one of the religions in relation to the following philosophical and ethical themes:

- Relationships and families
- The existence of God and ultimate reality
- Religion, peace and conflict
- Dialogue between religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes

A GCSE in Religious Studies can be viewed as a key stepping stone to discovering and finding success in many future opportunities.

Assessment



The course is broken into two components (worth 50% each).

Component one is assessed by two one-hour examinations.

Component two is assessed by one two-hour examination. All examinations take place at the end of the course.

For further details about this course please contact Mr N. Horan, Head of Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics.

Art and Design

AQA

Art is an excellent subject for those who intend to study a wide range of disciplines at university as well as those who wish to specialise in the visually creative field. There is an emphasis on the ability to produce a series of projects, including personal research and development which will prove useful at both A level and university level.

There are opportunities to produce work in: Textiles, Fine Art, Printmaking, Mixed media, Ceramics and Photography.

The GCSE course requires a substantial personal portfolio, the equivalent of two units of work, and an externally set examination unit (which cover four assessment objectives per unit).

The syllabus encourages a structured approach which allows candidates to develop a sound grounding in a number of skills while still exploring the subject creatively in depth. The specification builds on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired in previous years. It is expected that candidates will have developed sufficient understanding and skill for their programme of study to be rewarding and enjoyable in its own right. GCSE candidates will have the opportunity to experience all mediums but will focus on one for their final outcome(s).

There is greater emphasis on depth and focus at GCSE level; investigating research and ideas, the ability to experiment with materials and media to a high skill level, the exploration of ideas as part of their journey and culminating in an outcome (or series of outcomes) as the realisation of intentions.

Art is a popular and highly successful optional GCSE subject at Denstone College, with typically two teaching groups of studying the subject each year. Success demands an organised and disciplined approach from pupils, who are encouraged to make use of the many opportunities that exist to use the art facilities beyond lesson time.

Assessment



Component 1 is a personal portfolio of work based on themes and projects carried out within the department. The projects are produced throughout Fourth form and part-way through Fifth form. This portfolio contributes 60% of the overall marks available for the qualification.

Component 2 is based on an externally set assignment, issued in January of Fifth form, where preparatory work is carried out leading towards a final outcome(s) produced under exam conditions over a 10-hour period, spread across two days. Work submitted for this unit has a 40% mark weighting overall.

For further details about this course please contact Miss K Lea, Head of Art.

Business

Edexcel

If you enjoy communicating your ideas, thinking creatively, making decisions, working with numbers to solve problems and learning about business through real and relevant examples then the GCSE Business course is right for you.

You might have an interest in business, and want to start your own business one day. You may have an enquiring mind and be interested in learning about the world around you, how businesses are set up, and what it is that makes someone a great entrepreneur.

You'll start by exploring the world of small business through the lens of an entrepreneur. How and why do business ideas come about? What makes a successful business? You will understand how to make a business effective, manage money and see how the world around us affects small businesses and all the people involved.

Then you'll move on to investigating business growth. How does a business develop beyond the start-up phase? You'll learn about key business concepts and issues and decisions you need to make when growing a business and working in a global business. You'll learn about meeting customer needs, making marketing, operational, financial and human resourcing decisions and you'll explore how the wider world impacts the business as it grows.

The key units in the course are:

Theme 1 – Investigating Small Business

Theme 2 – Building a business

Pupils who opt for this new subject should be prepared to develop an interest in global current affairs through the internet, TV news, newspapers etc. A natural curiosity about global issues and the world of business is a definite advantage! There are some numerical aspects to the course which pupils should be comfortable with, such as basic data handling skills and the ability to perform basic calculations, and it is important to be able to follow a logical argument through and apply it to the world around us.

Following the GCSE course can serve as a useful introduction to the subject for those interested in pursuing it at A level, although it isn't essential to have studied the GCSE course for this purpose.

Assessment



Theme 1 and **Theme 2** are assessed by a 1 hour and 30 minute exam on each theme. Both exam papers consist of calculations, multiple-choice, short-answer and extended-writing questions. They are equally weighted.

For further details about this course please contact Mrs. L Gater, Head of Business & Economics.

Drama

AQA

Drama is a very popular and highly successful optional subject at GCSE, involving the practical exploration of different genres of theatre.

The course aims to encourage participating students to explore and actively engage in a wide range of creative and stimulating activities. As well as developing pupils' creative and practical skills, lessons also aim to develop independent learning skills and encourage pupils to become more critical and reflective. Drama is a very collaborative subject, and students will commonly work in groups to contribute and develop a full range of ideas, making practical decisions along the way.

The course comprises of three components:

Component 1: Understanding drama

This component tests the knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre.

Candidates study a set text with a view to how it may be brought to life on stage. Consideration will be given to setting, production ideas and acting techniques. Style, genre, theme, character and context are also important.

Component 2: Devising practical drama

This component assesses the creation and performance of devised drama. It includes the final presentation of a group piece alongside the analysis and evaluation of the work produced.

Component 3: Texts in practice

Students perform two extracts from one play. (The chosen play must contrast with the set text used for component 1)

As 60% of the marks are gained before the written examination, the emphasis is on consistent hard work building up to strong practical performances.

Pupils who enjoy working creatively, being part of a team and performing should consider this subject.

Assessment



Component 1 is assessed by written exam (1 hour 45 minutes) involving multiple choice questions and longer written responses. This accounts for 40% of the overall marks for the course.

Component 2 assessed internally via a devising log and performance (externally moderated). This accounts for 40% of the overall marks for the course.

Component 3 is assessed by an external examiner. This accounts for 20% of the overall marks for the course.

For further details about this course please contact Mrs. R Abson, Head of Drama..

Design and Technology

AQA

Design and Technology is a popular and successful option subject at GCSE. It prepares students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design & Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors. Students will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise.

Pupils follow a programme of study based on the AQA specification, which has been recently updated. The course is designed to encourage candidates to be able to design and make products with creativity and originality, using a range of materials and techniques. Pupils are generally enthused and challenged by the range of practical activities possible. The Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) task will be set late in fourth form and from this point time students will devote time to the task both in and outside of lesson time. Quality coursework does require a good deal of time and dedication.

Whilst the subject clearly builds on the practical skills that have been developed in previous years, pupils should be aware that the course and final examination also require a substantial understanding of theory related topics. 15% of examined questions will also test the pupil's Mathematical skills.

Many Denstonians that have studied A-Level Design & Technology move onto degrees and careers in product design, industrial design, architecture, engineering, interior design, automotive design and other related courses. The GCSE course is an excellent foundation for this. Whether you want to study something on the creative/technical spectrum or not, you could find the GCSE highly rewarding.

Assessment



Component 1 is assessed by a 2 hour final written examination (50% of overall course marks), sat by all pupils at the end of the Fifth form. 15% of questions will be testing Mathematical skills.

Component 2 is a Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) and is worth 50% of the course. This will involve a single design and make activity selected from a range of tasks set by the examination board. The project must result in a three dimensional outcome.

For further details about this course please contact Miss J H Plewes, Head of Design and Technology.

Geography

AQA

Geography is a subject at the heart of our collective future. Take the global issues facing this generation and the next: climate change, mass migration, food insecurity, flooding etc. Many will be addressed by those who have studied Geography.

Geographers are very much in demand. As a subject, it is extremely well respected by employers and universities alike because it prepares pupils for both the great world of work and further academic studies by developing a range of useful, transferable skills.

Geography is a unique subject because it looks at both the physical structure of the planet *and* the social structure. With geography it is possible to understand the social, economic and physical forces which shape our world.

The course emphasises the relationship between people and their environment and adopts a problem-solving approach to a range of issues. Students develop a wide range of skills including report writing, graphical, cartographical, statistical and analytical skills.

Students will get the opportunity to engage in fieldwork and 15% of all marks are awarded in relation to the skills developed outside the classroom.

The course includes both spheres equally. Paper 1 focuses on physical elements for example natural hazards, coasts, extreme weather and climate change. While Paper 2 covers human topics such as urban challenges (slums, crime, regeneration), economic issues (development, aid, tourism) and resource management. The two halves combine for Paper 3 where issue evaluation and fieldwork are the focus.

Students choosing geography will need to demonstrate adequate literacy, numeracy and spatial skills alongside a genuine enthusiasm for the subject. A general knowledge of current environmental issues at a variety of scales is assumed, as is a positive attitude to understanding cultures from all over the world.

Assessment



Unit 1 - Living with the Physical Environment

Assessed in paper 1.
Answer questions from 3 sections.

1hr 30mins

35% of GCSE

Unit 2 – Challenges in the Human Environment

Assessed in paper 2.
Answer questions from 3 sections.

1hr 30mins

35% of GCSE

Unit 3 – Geographical Applications

Assessed in paper 3.
Answer questions from 2 sections.

1hr 15mins

30% of GCSE

For further details about this course please contact Mrs L. Stanley, Head of Geography.

History

Edexcel

History is the study of the world around us and how it came to be what it is today. We deal with huge ideas and issues such as power, war, conflict, racism, change, reform and revolution.

History is also one of the most useful subjects to study. If you were to google the most respected subjects among top universities, you will find that History is always held up as one of the very best – try it yourself and see!

Although university may seem like a long way off at this point, the benefit of studying History at GCSE is that it teaches those same skills that will help you in later life. You will develop really useful skills like research, debate and analysis. It's no surprise then that history graduates can be found at the top of a wide range of professions, including making up a proportionally huge 10% of all directors of top businesses. History is therefore one of the most useful subjects to study, as well as hopefully being one of the most interesting.

The key units in this course are as follows:

Unit 1 (1HI0/10-12) – Medicine in Britain, c1250–present *and* The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches.

Unit 2 (1HI0/20-29) - Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88 *and* Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91

Unit 3 (1HI0/30-33) Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39

From the roots of British greatness under Elizabeth I, through the development of modern medicine to dictatorship, war and conflict in the twentieth century, this course offers something for everyone. Pupils should have an interest in the past, be comfortable with written work, and be able to handle all the excitement that this course has to offer.

Assessment



Unit 1 combines a long-view thematic study with a focus on a particular historic environment. Assessed by a 1hr 15 exam, it includes long, short and source based answers. Worth 30%.

Unit 2 covers both a British depth study with a period of international history. Assessed by a 1hr 45 exam, it includes long and short answers. Worth 40%.

Unit 3 is a modern world depth study. Assessed by a 1hr 20 exam, it includes source work. Worth 30%.

For further details about this course please contact Dr R.Norris, Head of History.

Computer Science

AQA

This course was introduced into the Denstone College curriculum in September 2016 to replace the GCSE ICT course which is now no longer available.

This GCSE course aims to equip pupils with logical and computational skills necessary to succeed at A-level, the workplace and beyond. It builds upon knowledge, understanding and skills acquired through the KS3 computer science curriculum.

There are nine Subject Content areas which will be covered during the two year programme. These are:

- (1) Fundamentals of Algorithms,
- (2) Programming,
- (3) Fundamentals of data representation,
- (4) Computer Systems,
- (5) Fundamentals of Computer Networks,
- (6) Fundamentals of Cyber Security,
- (7) Ethical, legal and environmental impacts of digital technology,
- (8) Aspects of software development,
- (9) Non exam assessment project.

Course assessment consists of two examination papers which are sat at the end of the course, in this case June 2019, and a coursework element which will be delivered during the fourth form. It is anticipated that Python will be the programming language selected for this project.

There are no defined prerequisites for this course; however, pupils interested in this course will need to possess sound mathematical skills and an interest in computer programming.

Assessment



Paper 1: written exam worth 40 % of the course to be sat at the end of the 2 years of study. Paper is 1 hour and 30 minutes consisting of multiple choice, short answer and longer answer questions assessing a pupil's practical knowledge of computational thinking skills linked to Subject content 1 – 4.

Paper 2: written exam worth 40 % of the course to be sat at the end of the 2 years of study. Paper 2 is 1 hour and 30 minutes consisting of multiple choice, short answer and longer answers questions assessing a pupil's theoretical knowledge of Subject content 3 – 7.

Non-exam Assessment: production of a report detailing 20 hours of work on a programming / problem solving task specified by the exam board. Element worth 20% of course.

Please contact S Burrows, Director of IT, for more information

Music

Edexcel

The Edexcel GCSE in Music course is designed to allow pupils to study music through the integration of performing, composing, listening and appraising, with opportunities to use music technology. Experience suggests that GCSE Music students need to possess a wide range of interests and skills; our flexible course allows students to capitalise on their different interests.

There are four areas of study covering a wide range of music, including classical, world and popular music:

Area of study 1: Instrumental Music 1700-1820 (J.S Bach and Beethoven)

Area of study 2: Vocal Music (Purcell and Queen)

Area of study 3: Music for Stage and Screen (Schwartz and Williams)

Area of study 4: Fusions (Afro Celt Sound System and Esperanza Spalding)

Studying music to GCSE gives students the opportunity to make music, both individually and in groups, and to develop a lifelong interest in music. This course is also a good preparation for further musical study, providing a solid foundation for continuing with the subject at A level in the future.

Assessment



Unit 1 (Performing Music) is internally assessed; pupils perform one solo piece and one ensemble piece – both recorded (30% of overall marks).

Unit 2 (Composing Music) is internally assessed; pupils produce two compositions based on different areas of study, with a notated score or written commentary and a recording also provided (30%).

Unit 3 is a 1 hour 45 minutes written paper (Listening and appraising) where pupils answer questions based on the set works they have studied.

For further details about this course please contact Mr N Parrans-Smith, Director of Music.

Physical Education

OCR

Physical Education is a practical subject and the GCSE course is designed to emphasise physical activity, meaning that a high percentage of the marks at GCSE are allocated to practical components. Pupils will have to complete a written coursework project where they apply knowledge of the theoretical elements of the course to how performance can be improved.

Students opting to study PE at GCSE select three activities from a range of areas, such as games, gymnastics, dance, athletics outdoor activities and swimming. Pupils are encouraged to commit to their selected three sports throughout the two year course, which can be performed during school sport or outside school.

There are two examinations at the end of the course, separated into two units:

‘Physical Factors Affecting Performance’: Including applied anatomy and physiology - cardiovascular, respiratory and musculoskeletal health; and physical training

‘Socio-cultural and sports psychology’: including health, fitness and well-being.

The GCSE Physical Education course is a very popular option in the Middle School, with typically two or three sets studying the subject in each year group. The course is both challenging and stimulating, meaning that pupils who are enthusiastic and hard-working are invariably rewarded with excellent grades.

Assessment



Unit 1 (theory) is assessed by two written exams (60% of overall marks).

Unit 2 (performance) involves controlled assessment (40% of overall marks), with pupils selecting three activities for practical assessment.

For further details about this course please contact Mr J Young, Head of GCSE PE.

Further Mathematics (IGCSE)

Edexcel

IGCSE Further Mathematics is a course that can be offered in the GCSE option blocks if a viable number of pupils opt for it. Please make sure that you also choose a plausible reserve option choice in the eventuality that this is not the case.

Pupils who choose the course will be equipped with a superior mathematical knowledge, comparable to pupils from all around the world.

The content within the course is similar to the mathematics learnt in countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and China. These nations rank amongst the highest in terms of mathematical learning from around the globe.

The course is intended for very able mathematicians who have a passion for the subject and wish to specialise in this area at this stage of their education. The course contains a number of topic areas that are related to the A Level Maths and Further Maths courses. The main topic areas are:

Logarithms & Indices

Quadratics

Identities & Inequalities

Graphs

Series & Binomial Expansions

Scalars & Vectors

Rectangular Cartesian Coordinates

Calculus

Trigonometry

Pupils will study this course alongside IGCSE Maths, resulting in two separate IGCSEs in Maths and Further Maths. As with IGCSE Maths, the department endeavor to supplement the classroom based teaching with a wide range of resources enabling pupils to access a range of additional learning materials.

Assessment



Pupils will sit 2 exams at the end of the course, each lasting 2 hours.

Pupils are allowed to use a calculator in both exams, although questions are worded so that pupils must display their understanding of arithmetic.

For further details about this course please contact Mr B Duerden, Head of Mathematics.

