

Computer Science A Level FAQs



What exam board do you use?

We take the OCR A Level in Computer Science. You can find the Specification [HERE](#) and some expanded content clarification [HERE](#)

What text book do you use?

We use the PG Online A Level Computer Science text book. Students will be able to obtain one on loan from the school in Year 12 following the payment of a deposit or they can be purchased from PG Online or Amazon.

Title: OCR AS and A Level Computer Science

ISBN: 978-1-910523-05-6

Do I need to be good at Maths?

Ideally you will have achieved a minimum of Grade 5 in Maths. However, there are only one or two topics in the syllabus that would require a higher level of mathematical skill. For the most part, a strong foundation in arithmetic and a good understanding of using exponentiation (powers) will suffice.

It is more important that you have a logical brain that is able to solve problems.

How much programming is there?

There is a significantly larger proportion of programming in the A Level compared to the GCSE. You will not only have a lot more time in lessons where you will carry out both programming challenges and learn how to program standard algorithms but you will have to undertake a programming project that will account for 20% of your final grade.

How will I be assessed?

You will have 2 exams at the end of Year 13 and one piece of Non-Examined Assessment (Coursework). The exams are worth 40% each and the NEA is 20% of the final grade.

What do the exams look like / what type of questions are there?

The exams have a wide range of questions from simpler identify and multiple choice questions to larger 14 mark essay style questions.

Across the two papers all the skills and knowledge will be tested so you will have to work with numbers, memory recall, analysis, problem solving and justify your stand point on given scenarios.

What do students who have studied Computer Science go on to do?

Past students have gone on to do a range of further study and apprenticeships. We have had students go on to study Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence, Physics, Maths and undertake apprenticeships in Software Engineering.

Is Computer Science Easy?

This is a difficult question to answer as some students have found the course to be easy as the concepts and Computational Thinking come naturally to them.

In general however, we would describe the course as a large collection of relatively simple concepts that when put together create a complex one. By this we mean that there are only a few genuinely difficult concepts in computer science but there are a lot of concepts. The reason the course becomes challenging is that you need to be able to apply these concepts to solve a large range of problems.

That is why we say the course is well suited to problem solvers and logical thinkers.

Are there subjects that would be suitable to study alongside Computer Science?

Yes, the obvious areas are Maths and Physics as they tend to suit a similar learning style and type of thinking. However, with computing and data science becoming involved in almost every area of our lives there is almost no bad fit.

Who do I contact for further information?

Please contact Mr Rogers (Head of Department) using srogers@plymstockschool.org.uk