

# Computer Science

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What exam board do you use?

We take the OCR (9-1) GCSE in Computer Science (J277). You can find the Specification [HERE](#)

### What textbook do you use?

We do not have a set text that we use. Instead we have a range of online resources including presentations and staff-produced videos that cover the content and allow for both pre-learning and revision.

### Do I need to be good at Maths?

This is a common fear for people thinking about Computer Science. For the GCSE, if you are confident with basic arithmetic, i.e. Addition, Subtraction, Division and Multiplication, you will be absolutely fine.

### How much programming is there?

We have a requirement to provide at least 20 hours of programming within the course delivery. In our current delivery plan we have more than double that amount of time scheduled for programming across the 2 years of the course.

The assessments do not require you to write any code on a computer but will assess your ability to think computationally so we ensure you have had enough chance to build your knowledge and skills in doing this.

### How will I be assessed?

You will have 2 exams at the end of Year 11. Each of these is worth 50% of your final grade. To prepare you for this assessment you will have exam practice almost every lesson with “low stakes” testing at the start of most lessons. What this means is you will have the chance to practise using your prior learning without the need to worry about the result being recorded.

This is basically regular practice for your half-termly assessments and mock exams.

### 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, 8-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 standpoint on given scenarios.

### What do students who have studied GCSE 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 A Levels, Technical awards and a range of apprenticeships.



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### Is Computer Science hard/only for “clever students”?

No GCSE is easy. But at the same time we have not found any evidence that GCSE Computer Science is any more difficult than the other GCSE subjects.

Like the other subject areas, we have students who have a natural affinity with Computer Science and find the GCSE “easy”. Then we have had students who have had to work hard to achieve their target. Also, like the other subjects, it is a 9-1 course. That means it is accessible for students of all abilities.

One thing we can almost guarantee is that those students who have worked consistently hard throughout the course achieve well. As a result we are in the top 12% of Computer Science departments in the country for GCSE progress.

If you are interested in Computer Science and willing to work, IT IS A SUBJECT FOR YOU.

### 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.

### Why should I take Computer Science?

- Do you enjoy programming and learning about technology?
- Do you want to work in the areas of science, technology, medicine, communications, engineering, logistics, research? People working in these industries, and others, benefit from the ability to think computationally. This is a key component of Computer Science.
- Do you want to learn how to program computers?
- Have you enjoyed your Computer Science lessons in Key Stage 3?
- Are you interested in how computers actually work?

If you have answered yes to some of the above questions then you will most likely enjoy studying GCSE Computer Science.

### Who do I contact for further information?

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

