

Year 9 Options Subjects Guide 2024-2026

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Introduction

Dear Parents, Carers and Year 9 students

Choosing the subjects to study in years 10 and 11 is an exciting time in your education. In Year 9, our students make selections about the subjects they wish to study in their onward learning journey. Making well informed decisions on their subjects to take through to Year 11 is important to ensure a smooth and enjoyable transition to achieving high quality and appropriate qualifications. We will support our Year 9 students every step of the way and this booklet is just one source of information.

To ensure that students make informed choices and succeed in their studies at Key Stage 4, it is important that parents and carers are fully involved and that everyone accesses all the help available. On Thursday 11th January Year 9 students attended an assembly and we have outlined the support that is available. In lessons teachers will talk to students about their subjects at in Years 10 and 11 and answer any questions students may have.

To further support the options process and ensure our students make the choices that best suit their capability needs and aspirations we warmly invite parents, carers and students to our Year 9 Option evening on **Thursday 18th January**. This is an opportunity for parents and carers to find out more about the subjects on offer and we recommend that students also attend the evening.

On **Thursday 1st February** there will be a Parents' Evening; this will be an opportunity to discuss potential choices with teachers. Completed options choice forms must be signed by parents and handed to form tutors by **9am on Thursday 7th February.**

If you have any questions about any of the subjects on offer, or about the options process, please contact us at the following email address:

ks4options@plymstockschool.org.uk

This is an exciting time, but students can sometimes feel a bit overwhelmed with making such big decisions. Please let us know if your child needs any additional support in making their choices. We look forward to meeting you on Thursday 19th January and recommend that you plan in advance which talks you will attend in order to get the most out of the evening.

Best wishes

Her

Mrs Offer DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

Key Stage 4: Years 10 & 11

Core Subjects

All students in Year 10 and Year 11 study three core subjects comprising:

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS and SCIENCE

All students also have the following subjects as part of their statuary curriculum: Physical Education, Religious Studies (EPiC) and Personal Development.

GCSEs

GCSEs are graded on a 9 to 1 scale. The following table shows the comparison between the number grades, and the technical award grades.

GCSE	BTEC Tech Award grade	OCR Cambridge National Certificate grade
9 8	Level 2 Distinction*	Level 2 Distinction*
7	Level 2 Distinction	Level 2 Distinction
6	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Merit
5		
4	Level 2 Pass	Level 2 Pass
3		Level 1 Distinction
2	Level 1 Pass	Level 1 Merit
1		Level 1 Pass
U	U	U

KS4 Qualifications Explained

Qualifications: What the different levels mean

National Qualification Framework Levels	Examples of qualifications	What do they give you?
Entry Level	Entry level certificates	 basic knowledge and skills appropriate for students who will find Level 1 courses too challenging
Level 1	GCSEs grades 3-1Technical Award Level 1	 basic knowledge and skills ability to apply learning with guidance or supervision may be linked to job competence
Level 2	GCSEs grades 9-4Technical Award Level 2	 good knowledge and understanding of a subject ability to perform a variety of tasks with some guidance or supervision appropriate for many job roles
Level 3 Only available at Key Stage 5	A LevelsApplied General QualificationsTech Levels	 ability to gain or apply a range of knowledge, skills and understanding, at a detailed level appropriate if you plan to go to university, work independently, or (in some cases) supervise and train others in their field of work

GCSEs

These are academic qualifications taken by 14 to 16 year olds. Most subjects are assessed mainly by exam, while some have a proportion of non-exam assessment (NEA) which contributes to the final grade. Some subjects also involve practical work. Please see the individual subject pages for the specific details.

GCSE stands for General Certificate of Secondary Education. It is highly valued by schools, colleges and employers, so it will be useful whatever the students are planning to do in their future.

Technical Awards

These are qualifications taken by 14 to 16 year olds where the qualification is awarded by using a combination of course based assessments throughout Years 10 and 11 (NEA) and examination. The proportion of Non Exam Assessment (NEA) is greater. Please be aware that the NEA is a continuous assessment which contributes to the overall grade and therefore must be caught up if missed for any reason. Good attendance to school is essential. Please see the individual subject pages for the specific details.

Many of these courses have been designed in collaboration with industry, so they can equip the student with the skills and knowledge that employers are looking for. The qualifications offer a mix of theory and practice.

If you want to choose more that one Technical Award you must discuss this with Mrs Offer before handing in the Options Form.

Careers @ Plymstockschool

We provide a bespoke Careers programme which is fully mapped to address the Gatsby Benchmarks, the national framework for 'good careers provision'.

Careers Education

Careers Education is delivered to all our students in Personal Development lessons, in assemblies or workshops and through our Tutor Programme.

In Year 10 the focus is on Employability and Work Experience. All Year 10 students are required to complete a week of Work Experience during Challenge Week which takes place in the summer term. In Year 11, talks and workshops are designed to support our students in making their Post 16 decisions.

Careers Information

We have a dedicated Careers Centre where our full time Careers Advisor is based. We use an online computer package called UNIFROG to support our Careers programme, we also use Careers South West to support our work experience. Our students have access to the Careers Centre at break and lunchtime for any careers research they wish to complete.

In November we run our hugely popular Careers Fair. All students from Years 8 to 13 visit the event which is attended by a large number of exhibitors including local FE colleges, Apprenticeship Providers, Universities and Employers. The Careers Fair is an interactive/hands-on event which gives our students the opportunity to 'have a go' at a range of employment activities.

Careers, Advice & Guidance

In Year 10 students will attend a Careers Meeting with our Careers Advisor and they receive an individual follow-up meeting in Year 11. They can ask to book an additional meeting at anytime if needed.

Careers Enrichment

We run a monthly "Careers Clinic" which has a different focus each time and welcomes different employers, colleges and universities. This takes place every first Tuesday of the month in the Library during lunchtime and is open to all years.

Subject departments also lead their own Careers enrichment activities e.g. Women in STEM (Science department) and Business and Entrepreneur talks (Business Studies).

Further information about Careers@Plymstockschool is available on the School Website. Parents are very welcome to contact the Careers Team should they have any questions or queries.

Ms Alicia Le Guefflec, Careers Advisor aleguefflec@plymstockschool.org.uk

Mrs Louise Duff, Director of Sixth Form and Strategic Lead for Careers lduff@plymstockschool.org.uk

Key Stage 4 Core Subjects Compulsory

English Language

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Mr G Dale - KS4 Manager gdale@plymstockschool.org.uk

English Language GCSE involves the study of English in a variety of written and spoken contexts. Students will explore how writers craft language for different purposes and be given opportunities to produce their own creative writing.

English Language GCSE focuses on developing written and spoken communication skills, as well as the ability to read and comprehend increasingly challenging texts.

Areas of Study

Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing: Responding to extracts from literature fiction texts and producing descriptive and narrative writing.
Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives: Responding to non-fiction and literary non-fiction texts as well as the production of writing to present a viewpoint.
Spoken Language: Oral presentation and feedback.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100% NEA: 0%

Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing:	Written examination 1 hour 45 minutes	50% of GCSE.
Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives:	Written examination 1 hour 45 minutes	50% of GCSE.
Spoken Language:	Non-examination assessment - is part of the course with a separate	
	qualification but does not contribute to t	he GCSE.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing:

In response to an extract - eg. How does the writer use language here to describe the effects of ...? How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader? Evaluation - write about your own impressions of the characters; evaluate how the writer has created these impressions.

Writing task - eg. Write a description suggested by this picture. Write the opening part of a story about a place that is severely affected by the weather.

Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives: Response to two extracts - eg. How does the writer use language to...? Compare how the two writers convey their different attitudes to...

Writing task - eg. Write an article for a broadsheet newspaper in which you explain your point of view on...

Spoken Language:

Spoken presentation on a chosen subject or topic.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Success in English Language is relevant to all career paths and is one of the key measures used by employers and educational institutions. Success in English Language is useful for further study of this subject at A Level and for a variety of arts based subjects and courses, such as History, Geography, Drama, Law, Art, Business Studies etc. Career paths could include lawyer, sports journalist, film director, public relations executive, author, politician, etc.

6 English Language

English Literature

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Mr G Dale - KS4 Manager gdale@plymstockschool.org.uk

English Literature GCSE involves the study of a variety of novels, plays and poetry. Students will explore how writers craft texts to create different effects.

English Literature GCSE focuses on developing analytical skills plus the ability to read and comprehend increasingly challenging texts as well as the ideas and concepts they explore.

Areas of Study

Shakespeare and the 19th century novel:

Students study one Shakespeare play, Macbeth, and one 19th century novel, A Christmas Carol.

Modern texts and poetry:

Students study one modern text, An Inspector Calls, and an anthology of poetry which includes poets such as William Blake, Robert Browning, Ted Hughes, Jane Weir and Beatrice Garland. They will also be asked to respond to two unseen poems.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100% NEA: 0%

Shakespeare and the 19th century novel:Written examination 1 hour 45 minutes40% of GCSEModern texts and poetry:Written examination 2 hours 15 minutes60% of GCSE

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Shakespeare and the 19th century novel:

Responding to essay questions - eg. Starting with this speech, explain how far you think Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a powerful woman. Starting with this extract, write about how Dickens presents the importance of love and acceptance to society.

Modern texts and poetry:

Responding to essay questions - eg. How and why does Sheila change in An Inspector Calls? Compare how poets present attitudes towards a parent in... Compare the ways poets present ideas about power in...

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Success in English Literature is useful for further study of this subject at A Level and for a variety of arts based subjects and courses, such as History, Geography, Drama, Law, Art, Business Studies, etc. Career paths could include lawyer, sports journalist, film director, public relations executive, author, politician, etc.

Ethics and Philosophy (EP)

Qualification

Non Exam - Internally assessed throughout the course

Staff Contact

Mrs L Partridge - Head of Department lpartridge@plymstockschool.org.uk

This is the compulsory element of Religious Studies. The course allows students to study religious and non-religious belief and practice through an exploration of philosophical and ethical themes. The scheme of work has been developed specifically for the needs of our students supporting them to develop their knowledge and understanding and to grow their personal belief systems. There will be a key focus on contemporary issues. The department will reflect the dynamic nature of this subject and develop schemes of work that respond to current affairs. Throughout this journey, students analyse and interpret a wide range of religious, philosophical and ethical concepts in increasing depth. They will investigate ethical issues and the impact that religious and secular belief might have on different views and behaviours. They will expand and balance their evaluations of the impact of ethical dilemmas on the individual, communities and societies, locally, nationally and globally.

EP allows you to develop the following key skills to the highest level. This includes empathy, reflection, analysis, communication, ICT, working with others, problem solving and improving your own learning and performance.

Areas of Study

EP incorporates different areas of studies that could include: Philosophical investigations including an exploration of questions such as 'Does God exists?'. Ethical investigations including an exploration of medical ethics and issues such as abortion and euthanasia.

Assessment Procedures

Assessment will be through debate and discussion within the classroom, alongside creative work and, if the opportunity arises, through an extended piece of written work.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Students are assessed throughout the course and expected to evaluate ethical and philosophical concepts in increasing depth and will be encouraged to develop their oral skills in discussion, debate and argument.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Students have found the subject a relevant discipline for future careers in law, the media, history, politics, health, social services and any career where philosophical and ethical issues are important.

Personal Development

Qualification

Non Exam

Staff Contact

Mr D Willcocks - Curriculum Lead dwillcocks@plymstockschool.org.uk

Personal Development is part of our wider 'whole person' Curriculum. The aim of Personal Development is to equip our students with the knowledge, skills and attributes to make the most of the opportunities available to them and to make informed choices about their futures and become a well rounded individual and more knowledgeable citizen.

Personal Development encompasses the statutory requirements and non-statutory guidance for:

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Citizenship Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Careers Education Financial Education

Personal Development is delivered once per fortnight.

Personal Development helps to develop a range of interpersonal skills including identifying personal strengths and learning from experience and making use of constructive feedback. Interpersonal skills such as communication and teamwork are also developed as are the skills of enquiry.

Areas of Study

Transition to GCSE Mental Health & Wellbeing Sexual Health & Reproduction Risks to Health Positive & Negative Relationships Consent Prejudice and Discrimination Relationships and the Law

Assessment Procedures

This programme of study is not formally assessed.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Students will be equipped with knowledge, skills and attributes to make the most of the opportunities available to them and to effectively deal with challenges they will face in the future.

Mathematics

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Miss K Marshall - Head of Department kmarshall@plymstockschool.org.uk

Mathematics is a compulsory subject for all students. Students will develop their basic numeracy skills and their knowledge and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts. The work at GCSE level will build on studies undertaken so far in their mathematics lessons.

Students will strengthen their skills to select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems. The GCSE will require students to reason mathematically, solve problems with a mathematical context and draw conclusions on their findings. Students will need to be able to communicate their work fluently and efficiently.

Areas of Study

The content of the GCSE syllabus will cover topics under the key headings of:

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio, proportion and rates of change
- Geometry and measures
- Probability
- Statistics

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100% NEA: 0%

Students will be assessed for their GCSE in mathematics through external formal assessments (examinations) taken at the end of their studies. All students will have to sit three examinations, each lasting 1 hour and 30 minutes. Paper 1 will be non-calculator. Calculators are allowed for papers 2 and 3. All papers are equally weighted. In assessments students will be required to memorise and recall a large number of the key formulae needed.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Assessments will be undertaken in mathematics frequently throughout the course. These will be in the form of formal half term assessments which include questions in the style of the final GCSE examination questions. Students will also complete examinations at the end of Year 10 and during the Year 11 mock sessions, which include a wide range of topics. All of these formal assessments will be used to assess progress towards their target grades.

Informal assessments will also take place through homework tasks, in class activities and staff questioning.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Results students achieve for their mathematics GCSE will be a key piece of information for future job applications, as well as for further study. This qualification also prepares students for progression to further study of mathematics at A Level, and many other A Level subjects. These Level 3 qualifications prepare students for a variety of further progression routes, for example accountancy, meteorology, teaching, finance and software development.

Physical Education (Core)

Qualification

In-house award

Staff Contact

Mrs K Tyrrell - Head of Department ktyrrell@plymstockschool.org.uk

PE is compulsory for all students, and will be a non-examination subject. The course is structured to allow you to improve your overall knowledge and performance in a range of activities and to develop your understanding of the affects of exercise on your physical and mental wellbeing.

Throughout KS4 you will continue to follow our ME in PE curriculum covering personal development strands that are relevant to the specific stages of your learning journey. We will cover, amongst other things, emotional wellbeing, stress management, self motivation and integrity. Our aim for core PE is simple; we want to fully equip you with the skills you need to meet the challenges of the future, whatever they may be.

You will work towards an in-house award which recognises performance levels, physical and mental wellbeing and personal development. At the end of the two years you will achieve either a Gold, Silver or Bronze award depending on your overall competence and skill level.

Areas of Study

You will study the ME in PE curriculum through a range of different games activities, aesthetic activities and fitness and personal wellbeing.

Assessment Procedures

Over the next two years you will have the opportunity to experience a number of different sports and activities. Each activity will be graded either Bronze, Silver or Gold. The final award will be calculated by taking an average of all of the activities covered.

The assessment of each activity is divided as follows:

Physical ME	Personal performance of individual/group skills and the ability to apply them in the activity/game situation.
	An understanding and application of the rules and regulations.
Social ME	Developing an awareness of how my behaviour can effect the environment around me. My role in creating positive learning environments.
Healthy ME	Understanding of the impact of sport and physical activity on physical and mental wellbeing.
Thinking ME	The ability to evaluate and make judgements of their own and others' performance and the ability to make some suggestions to improve performance.
Employable ME	The ability to work independently demonstrating self motivation, resilience and integrity.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Direct teacher observation for evidence in the following areas: increased knowledge e.g. umpiring; competence and safety in performance; the ability to understand and undertake different roles; the ability to appraise and review their own performance and that of others, the ability to build positive relationships and the ability to develop a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Students can go onto higher coaching awards such as Community Sports Leader and Higher Sports Leader, study for a Level 3 qualification such as the OCR Cambridge Technical Award in Sport or follow a career path in areas like Leisure and Recreation Management and the leisure industry.

This course focuses heavily on developing the skills and qualities needed to be a valued member of society. It highlights how sport and physical activity can help to develop social skills, thinking skills, and employability as well as improving physical and mental wellbeing.

Science: Combined Science

Qualification

Staff Contact

Two GCSEs Graded 9 to 1, U

Mrs S Lockett - Head of Department slockett@plymstockschool.org.uk

Science is a compulsory subject. In an increasingly technological world, everyone needs a working knowledge of science – modern life depends on science. We have worked hard to ensure that the science education that students at Plymstock School receive is personalised, ensuring that students will remain inspired by their learning and will be able to achieve their potential.

Science is a set of ideas about the material world. All the skills a scientist would need are developed, whether it be investigating, observing, experimenting or testing out ideas and thinking about them.

Areas of Study

The content of the GCSE syllabus will cover topics under the key headings of:

Biology

Topics include: Cell biology; Organisation; Infection and response, Bioenergetics, Homeostasis and response, Inheritance, variation and evolution; Ecology.

Chemistry

Topics include: Atomic structure and the periodic table; Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; Quantitative Chemistry; Chemical changes; Energy changes; the rate and extent of chemical change; Organic chemistry; Chemical analysis; Chemistry of the atmosphere; Using resources.

Physics

Topics include: Forces; Energy; Waves; Electricity; Magnetism and electromagnetism; Particle model of matter; Atomic structure.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100% NEA: 0%

We follow the AQA GCSE Combined Science course.

For each subject, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, there are two 70 mark, 1hr 15min exams assessed in the following ways:

Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response.

There are 21 required practicals that have to be carried out in class across the 3 subjects.

Questions in the written exams will draw on the knowledge and understanding students have gained by carrying out the practical activities. These questions will count for at least 15% of the overall marks for the qualification. Many of our questions will also focus on investigative skills and how well students can apply what they know to practical situations, often in novel contexts.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Assessments will be in the form of formal half term assessments which include GCSE style examination questions. Students will also complete mock exams in Year 10 and Year 11. All of these formal assessments will be used to assess progress towards their target grades.

Students will also complete homework and informal quizzes throughout the course.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Good grades in combined science will allow students to progress to Level 3 Applied Science or A Levels in: Biology, Chemistry and Physics. These Level 3 qualifications prepare students for a variety of further progression routes.

Key Stage 4 Optional Subjects

Your choices start here.....

'Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration.'

Thomas Edison

Art, Craft & Design

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Mr O Hurd-Thomas - Head of Department ohurd-thomas@plymstockschool.org.uk

The Creative Industries are one of the strongest performing sectors of the UK economy. Choosing to study Art, Craft and Design puts you on a pathway that could lead to careers in areas as diverse as architecture, game design, fashion and textiles, fine art, costume and set design, advertising, jewellery making, and furniture design. It is also a brilliantly creative and expressive accompaniment to other, more academic areas of study.

To succeed at GCSE you will need to be willing to develop your existing observation and recording skills (drawing and photography), artist research (both visual studies and written analysis), development of a personal idea (experimenting with practical making processes, e.g. painting or ceramics) and creation and presentation of finished artwork.

Areas of Study

The course is split into two areas:

Component 1: Portfolio (60% of marks)

This will include one major project that shows the student's ability to fully develop a creative outcome based upon the skills outlined above. It will also include evidence of smaller skills-based experiments and responses to trips or workshops.

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40% of marks)

Students are given a choice of seven starting points set by the exam board, from which they need to develop a response in a similar manner as for Component 1. This will be given a limited time frame for development (8 weeks) at the end of which will be a 10 hour formal exam, during which a final outcome will be created.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 40% NEA: 60%

All work is marked internally by the Art, Craft and Design team, and then a sample of our marks are moderated and checked by the exam board.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Assessment will be based around the requirements of the exam board. Students will be given general feedback on the areas they need to work into and improve.

Assessment is formative and on-going; for example for a project where a clay outcome is the final piece, students will be given oral and written feedback on all stages of the project. Other formative assessments include observational tasks, artist studies and development of ideas, as well as final pieces. Students will then be expected to respond to feedback, improving and refining sketchbook work and final outcomes accordingly.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

A level courses in Art, Craft and Design, and in Photography. Extended Diplomas in Art and Design, and associated specialisms. Various careers in the creative industries (see above). Having a GCSE in Art will also be supportive if you take a managerial, administrative, marketing or legal role in the creative industries.

Business Studies

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Mr G Hughes - Head of Department ghughes@plymstockschool.org.uk

This course is intended to develop a broad range of skills to equip students for entering the world of work and to prepare them for future study if they wish to do so. They will be encouraged to develop initiative and the skills of problem-solving and decision-making. It is intensive and hard work. To make a success of this course, enterprise and a 'can do' approach are essential. Areas of enrichment will be provided with possible participation in running a small enterprise.

Students will develop skills in leadership, numeracy, literacy, communication, research/analysis, work related learning, enterprise and evaluation. The use of ICT is encouraged throughout the two years.

Please note that students who choose Business Studies will not be able to opt for the course in Enterprise and Marketing.

Areas of Study

We will be studying most areas of the business world such as:

Business Activity: this unit looks at the different types of business setup. Students study the private and public sector and the objectives that business set.

Influences on Business: after this unit students will have examined how ICT, the economy, ethics and the environment can affect the performance of a business.

Marketing: We will study how business seeks to persuade customers to purchase goods and services.

Finance: Students will be able to complete and assess financial documents to determine if a business is succeeding. **Operations:** this investigation will look at global production techniques.

People: During this topic we will look at improving the student's ability to conduct recruitment and selection processes. The unit will also discuss issues of motivation and leadership.

Interdependence: How different functions are affected by each other. This topic also discusses the relationship between the various functions.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100% NEA: 0%

J204/01: Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes. A mix of multiple choice, structured questions based on stimulus material covering business activity, people and marketing.

J204/02: Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes. A mix of multiple choice, structured questions and extended writing covering finance, influences and operations.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Assessment will be based on topical, relevant business scenarios. The planning, monitoring and controlling of all aspects of business will be covered in the related tasks and activities over 4 terms. Each topic will have an end of topic test or presentation. Monitoring and feedback will be given to achieve progress. There will also be a requirement to work independently on tasks at home. The class will also use topical issues to bring relevance to subject in class in the form of class debate and discussion.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Students can move on to study Cambridge Technical Level 3 Business Studies or A Level Business courses. Business can also be combined with many other subjects at University so that students can run their own business in their chosen field. Other useful A Levels to combine with these could be Geography, a Language, PE or Maths. The course will also provide a solid platform for employability.

16 Business Studies

Computer Science

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to1, U

Staff Contact

Mr S Rogers - Head of Department srogers@plymstockschool.org.uk

GCSE Computer Science is for anyone who has an interest in how the computer systems we use on a daily basis actually work. How is it that these boxes of plastic and metal can play games, drive a car and understand what we say to them?

This course is your first step in developing the knowledge and skills needed to understand how computers do this and learn how you can program them to do this and more.

Many people ask if they are capable of doing GCSE Computer Science as they hear it is hard and only for "clever" students. Can you succeed in Computer Science?

Yes - this is a course for everyone who is willing to work hard and keep trying when they don't get something first time. Fundamentally this course is about breaking down complex problems into smaller easier to solve problems. That is the approach we take with the skills and knowledge required in this course. This is not a course only for high flyers, "Computer Science is basically addition and subtraction" - Bill Gates

- You will develop your problem solving, organisation, planning, design, digital literacy and programming skills.
- You will become a confident user in the Python language and you will become confident in the knowledge of how a range of digital systems operate.
- You will develop an understanding of how computers can be used to represent a range of data types and how they can be applied to the resolution of almost any problem.
- You will consider the use of computers in the real world and the Ethical, Legal, Cultural and Environmental considerations they are raising.
- You will learn how to break down problems into small and manageable problems that can be solved.

Areas of Study

Areas you will study include: program development, program design, program testing, networks, number systems (binary, denary, hexadecimal and ASCII), computer systems, the internet, flow charts and pseudocode, representation of data as images and sound, how technology has impacted our ethics, culture and laws.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100%

Your knowledge will be assessed through written examinations at the end of Year 11.

There will be two exams, each worth 50% of your final grade.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

You will be assessed on your practical Computer Science skills through a range of mini-projects in preparation for programming assessments in Paper 2.

You will also be tested on your understanding of theoretical concepts through questioning in lessons, homework tasks and topic tests.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Following this course you could go on to study A Level in Computer Science and be well prepared for study in areas such as Engineering, Maths and Science. Computer Science is fundamentally about solving problems and there are many occupations where an ability to break down and solve problems will be a beneficial skill.

If you are considering a career in ICT, Software Development, Game Design, Engineering, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Data Analysis, Telecommunications, Web Design or Teaching...Computer Science is very beneficial to your future study and will give you skills that will be useful.

Design & Technology

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Ms E Pring - Head of Department ejpring@plymstockschool.org.uk

Design & Technology is a theoretical & practical subject which requires the application of knowledge when developing and producing ideas. Students will be challenged by the range of activities and the depth of theory that they will have to learn. The knowledge of technology outside of the classroom and in industry will play a large role in the course.

The course should be seriously considered by students who wish to pursue careers in areas such as design, architecture, engineering or practical based careers such as mechanics, technicians & fitters.

The subject develops important problem solving skills, knowledge of a wide range of materials and techniques whilst nurturing creativity and imagination. A wide range of practical skills, working with at least two different materials, will be developed. The theory of design, materials and manufacturing will be studied through practice and as distinct theory lessons. Students will also develop their computer skills through design and make tasks, using 2D design software and the laser cutter.

Areas of Study

The course is split into two distinct areas: designing and making. The distinction between designing and making is a convenient one to make, but in practice the two often merge. The theory is split into the following sections: materials and components, design & market influences and processes & manufacture.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 50% NEA: 50%

Exam: The paper is split into sections and brings together 'core' and 'in-depth' knowledge and understanding. 2 hour written paper worth 50% of the qualification.

Non-Exam Assessment (NEA): Practical work in design and making practice completed in lessons worth 50% of the qualification. This consists of a single 'design and make' activity selected from a range of contextual challenges.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Throughout Year 10 students will experience a range of assessment techniques to evaluate progress. The predominant method of assessment will be through end of term tests and project work, which will include a design element and a practical outcome, with the aim to prepare students for the NEA in Year 11. Students will undertake mini projects throughout Year 10 which will help them develop the necessary design, development and manufacturing skills they will need for Year 11. It will help them understand the full design process and they will have a given brief to work to. The course will also include a theory lesson at least once a week and students will be assessed on their knowledge through homework tasks and practice exam questions. The students will be tested at the end of every half term.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

After completing the course students can go on to study Level 3 courses, including A Level design based courses, the most obvious one being Design & Technology: Product Design. The practical skills developed are directly transferable to the workplace but the most significant skills are the ability to problem solve and work independently. Students will also be able to apply for a range of apprenticeships in a variety of areas including design, engineering & construction.

Drama

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Mr C Swabey - Head of Department cswabey@plymstockschool.org.uk

A study of GCSE Drama is more than simply learning how to develop a student's acting abilities; throughout the course students will hone key transferable life skills, such as communication, collaboration, problem solving and creativity, as well as experiencing the need to manage working under pressure. Students will be introduced to a range of dramatic styles and genres, as well as learning about key practitioners, and theatre groups, ranging from Stanislavski, to Brecht to Frantic Assembly. Students will experience live theatre and study the play 'An Inspector Calls' to develop their working knowledge of how Drama is developed, rehearsed, refined and designed. Students will also have the opportunity to apply this knowledge in the creation of a devised group performance for a specific purpose and audience, responding to a number of different stimuli, such as a painting, a piece of music or a quotation. Students also complete a second performance opportunity, this time showing their ability to understand the context of a chosen playtext, to interpret the development of a character and apply this vocally and physically in developing a performance of their chosen role, to a visiting examiner. If you are committed, creative, collaborative and are prepared to risk-take, then GCSE Drama is for you.

Areas of Study

Component 1: The creation of a devised performance in response to a stimuli provided by the examination board. This performance must be in a specific genre or style selected by the student. Plus, a 900 word creative log of the development phase and written evaluation of the final performance.

Component 2: Students perform the role of one character from two exerts from a published play of their choice to a visiting examiner. Process of creating devised drama. Performance of one piece of devised drama. Analysis and evaluation of own work.

Component 3: Students respond to a variety of questions in the role of an actor, designer and director in relation to the set text 'An Inspector Calls'. Students also evaluate one live theatre experience from their course.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 60% NEA: 40%

Component 1: Devising Theatre (NEA) - 40% Component 2: Performing a text (Examined Practical) - 20% Component 3: Interpreting Theatre (Written Examination, 90 minutes) - 40%

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Component 1: Students devise and perform a piece of Drama for a specific target audience based on the stimuli provided by the exam board. Students complete a written 'creative log' of 900 words before the performance, which requires them to analyse and evaluate their initial reaction to the stimuli and provide examples of how the piece has been developed and refined in rehearsals. Students will perform their devised work in front of an audience, before completing a written evaluation of the final performance under controlled conditions in 90 minutes.

Component 2: Perform two sections of a published playtext to an audience including a visiting examiner, demonstrating your ability to use vocal and physical performance skills.

Component 3: In Section A students answer a series of questions on the set text 'An Inspector Calls', from the perspectives of an actor, director and designer. In Section B students answer one of two questions (one acting, one design-based) evaluating a piece of professional live theatre they have seen.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

This course offers a clear progression into the new A Level in Drama and Theatre Studies. Here you will build on the skills covered in GCSE and further enhance your understanding of theatre, as well as your practical skills.

Taking a course in Drama and Theatre Studies opens up your options in many fields, not just within the Arts sector. Many of our students have used the skills they have learnt in Drama to pursue careers in areas such as Law, Public Services, Business, Education, and Sales and Marketing.

Film Studies

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Ms R Cohen - Head of Department rcohen@plymstockschool.org.uk

"Media and Film contribute £8 million an hour to the UK's economy" (Source: Gov.uk)

Film Studies is not simply the appreciation of Film as a globally-loved and celebrated artistic form, but prepares students practically, for a line of work within one of the UK's largest and most important employment sectors. In studying film, students will appreciate new cultures through learning about the history and evolving technologies of film-making. The course also promotes an understanding of ideology and aesthetics – the beliefs and beauty contained within every film text. These beliefs shape the way we think and react to our ever-growing, technologically and media-driven world.

Film Studies GCSE offers students the opportunity to combine analytical skills with those of a more practical nature. Students will be introduced to new concepts which will enable them to read, interpret and evaluate a range of existing film texts from different genres, eras and countries. They will be required to compare texts from similar genres but produced in different time periods. They will also have access to computers for the practical element of the course, but will need some creative skills to generate ideas for their own film products. The ability to meet deadlines and work independently is essential due to the heavily weighted Controlled Assessment component. Ultimately, Film Studies is the subject for you if you like discussing and interpreting film texts but are also prepared to write about them analytically. Finally, you will possess the creativity to think up your own ideas when creating new film narratives in order to appeal to audiences.

Areas of Study

Knowledge and Understanding of film terminology and theory; the evolution of film and film technology; the history of film and how the industry has changed.

Analysis and Interpretation of a range of film texts; representations of individuals and groups within film; institutional structures of film organisations and the relationship between film texts, narrative and audience.

Production Skills such as researching, planning and creating effective film texts or written texts such as screenplays. This involves developing practical skills such as story-boarding or filming and displaying creativity and initiative in the use of available resources. Students will also be required to evaluate their finished productions.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 70% NEA: 30%

The GCSE comprises 30% non-exam assessment (NEA) coursework (a two-part assignment with a statement of intent (plan) and production of an original media product – either a screenplay or a short film / trailer) and 70% exam. There are two exams; each is 1 hour 30 minutes, and equally weighted. Both exams comprise a range of short answer and extended response questions on film concepts such as cinematography, representation, film language, audiences and narrative. Students are also required to have a knowledge of Film Theory and apply it to a discussion of a range of texts.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Students will sit two formal 'Mock Exams' on their film topics, one at the end of Year 10 and one in Year 11 (December). They will also complete homework and classwork tasks/half termly assessments on exam topics as part of their preparation for the final exams in June. These will be on-going throughout Year 10 and Year 11. With regard to the NEA component, students respond to a brief set out by the exam board and typical assignments might include:

- Plan, film and edit a short film (trailer or key scene) from a choice of genres: crime; sci-fi; war; horror; the teenage film or the musical.
- Plan and write a screenplay (1000 words minimum) for film from a specific genre.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Study A Level Film Studies, English Literature & Language and other Arts based courses. Students with an interest in the fields of film-making or journalism would benefit from studying Film at GCSE. Students who study the GCSE and then A Level Film often go on to take Media Arts/Journalism courses at University.

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French

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Mrs R Kent - Head of Department rmkent@plymstockschool.org.uk

Being able to speak a foreign language is a highly sought after skill in any work place. The new GCSE French course will give you a highly regarded, academic qualification. You will study French within a variety of thematic contexts relevant to your age and interests and will develop a greater awareness of the culture of French-speaking communities and countries. Studying French will also help you develop your English literacy skills, analytical skills and knowledge of some global issues.

Students will develop their skills in reading, listening, speaking, writing and translation throughout the course. Students studying French should be interested in learning about France and the French speaking world as well as being committed to perfecting their communication skills.

Areas of Study

GCSE French covers the following topics:

My personal world Lifestyle and wellbeing My neighbourhood Media and technology Studying and future plans Travel and tourism

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100% NEA: 0%

There are four separate exams for French GCSE, reflecting the key skills:
Reading Listening
Speaking Writing (including translation)
Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade and papers are taken at the end of Year 11. There are two tiers of entry for the exam - foundation and higher.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

In order to track students' progress throughout the course there will be regular assessments covering the 4 key skills. By the end of the course students will be expected to understand spoken and written French texts of varying length in different contexts and settings. Students will be able to sustain a spontaneous conversation using a variety of stimulus materials such as role-plays and pictures and will be able to communicate with accuracy through writing for a variety of purposes and a range of audiences. Knowledge of grammar will also be assessed though translation into French.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Students studying GCSE French could go on to study A level French, a highly regarded qualification. This could in turn lead to a degree in Modern Foreign Languages or give an additional skill to include on any university or job application, regardless of the subject.

Studying a foreign language at this level develops a range of transferable skills, including interpersonal communication, debating skills, higher thinking skills and essay writing skills. Research reveals that French speakers continue to be very much in demand in the UK's job market, across every industry sector especially finance, IT and technology, marketing, fashion, business, administration and education.

Geography

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Miss C Richardson - Head of Department carichardson@plymstockschool.org.uk

Throughout the AQA GCSE Geography course students have the opportunity to consider a variety of geographical issues and, in doing so, become knowledgeable and critical geographers. There is a strong emphasis on the understanding of physical processes in the environment, as well as the management and mismanagement of resources by people. Students also have the opportunity during this course to develop their fieldwork skills.

Students will be assessed on their skills in the following areas:

- Cartographic skills relating to a variety of maps at different scales
- Graphical skills
- Numerical skills
- Data and information research skills
- Investigative skills including the ability to formulate an enquiry and argument

Areas of Study

Students will travel the world from their classroom, exploring case studies in the United Kingdom (UK), higher income countries (HICs), newly emerging economies (NEEs) and lower income countries (LICs).

The course is divided into three main themes:

Theme One: Living with the physical environment

In this paper, study will focus on the challenge of natural hazards including volcanoes, earthquakes and tropical storms. Weather and climate change is also a focus, followed by physical landscapes of the UK including coasts and rivers. Finally, the living world which includes ecosystems such as tropical rainforests and hot deserts or cold environments.

Theme Two: Challenges in the human environment

This paper covers population, urban growth, the changing economic world and global development. Resource management including the global distribution of food, water and energy and in particular detail the demand for food resources globally are also a focus.

Theme Three: Geographical applications and skills

This paper involves the undertaking two different fieldwork tasks that will be assessed in the final examinations at the end of Year 11. Pre-released material is received 12 weeks prior to the examination which will be studied in lesson time.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100% NEA: 0%

Theme One: Living with the physical environment 1 hour 30 minutes written exam - 90 marks - 35% Theme Two: Challenges in the human environment 1 hour 30 minutes written exam - 90 marks - 35% Theme Three: Geographical applications and skills 1 hour 15 minutes written exam - 76 marks - 30%

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Assessment will be undertaken after each unit of study through completion of exam questions to assess both knowledge and understanding. Following the fieldwork investigation, students will be assessed on the skills required to address the exam.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Students learn a variety of transferable skills which are in great demand and are recognised by employers and universities. Students can go on to study Geography A Level and then onto further study. Students will have access to a wide range of career and Higher Education opportunities.

Geography also combines well with almost all other subjects. Taken with sciences and mathematics, geography supports applications for almost any science based degree. Taken with other humanities subjects, geography supports a wide range of university courses such as: business; law; media; politics and philosophy.

22 Geography

German

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Mrs L Quinn - KS4 German Manager Iquinn@pymstockschool.org.uk

Being able to speak a foreign language is a highly sought after skill in any work place. The new GCSE German course will give you a highly regarded, academic qualification. You will study German within a variety of thematic contexts relevant to your age and interests and will develop a greater awareness of the culture of German-speaking communities and countries. Studying German will also help you develop your English literacy skills, analytical skills and knowledge of some global issues.

Students will develop their skills in reading, listening, speaking, writing and translation throughout the course. Students studying German should be interested in learning about Germany and the German speaking world as well as being committed to perfecting their communication skills.

Areas of Study

GCSE German covers the following themes: My personal world Lifestyle and wellbeing My neighbourhood Media and technology Studying and future plans Travel and tourism

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100% NEA: 0%

There are four separate exams for German GCSE, reflecting the key skills:ReadingListeningSpeakingWriting (including translation)Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade and papers are taken at the end of Year 11. There are two tiers of entry forthe exam - foundation and higher.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

In order to track students' progress throughout the course there will be regular assessments covering the 4 key skills. By the end of the course students will be expected to understand spoken and written German texts of varying length in different contexts and settings. Students will be able to sustain a spontaneous conversation using a variety of stimulus materials such as role-plays and pictures and will be able to communicate with accuracy through writing for a variety of purposes and a range of audiences. Knowledge of grammar will also be assessed through translation into German.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Students studying GCSE German could go on to study A level German, a highly regarded qualification. This could in turn lead to a degree in Modern Foreign Languages or give an additional skill to include on any university or job application, regardless of the subject. Research reveals that German speakers continue to be very much in demand in the UK's job market, across every industry sector especially finance, IT and technology, marketing, engineering, business and education.

Health & Social Care

Qualification

Cambridge National Certificate Level 1/2 Graded Distinction*, Distinction, Merit & Pass, U

Staff Contact

Mrs L Dover - Head of Department Idover@plymstockschool.org.uk

Health & Social Care is the study of people and their needs. It is also the study of the services and support available to keep them well and have a good quality of life.

The course is aimed at students who are interested in working in health, social care or child care.

The course aims to develop the skills associated with working in health and social care settings including communication and confidence in dealing with people. You will be required to work independently so planning and organisational skills are essential.

Areas of Study

This course includes a focus on the rights of individuals, person centred care values and how to apply them in a health and social care environment. Students will lean about health and safety, personal hygiene and safeguarding. Students will gain an understanding of communication skills and how to communicate efficiently.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 40% NEA: 60%

Students will be assessed by a combination of Exam and Controlled Assessment.

Unit RO32 is an examined unit where you will sit a 1 hour 15 minute examination paper which is set and marked by the OCR Exam Board.

Units R033 and R035 are assessed though a series of tasks for a set assignment. The assignments are set by OCR, marked by your Teacher and moderated by OCR.

Year 10 - One Exam Unit. Year 11 – Two coursework units (NEA).

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Sample Exam Question:

Describe ways a health and social care setting can protect it's service users from harm and abuse.

Sample Coursework Task:

Explain the factors that affect the health and wellbeing of teenagers.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Students can go on to study Level 3 Cambridge Technical in Health & Social Care. Students will have access to a wide range of Higher Education/University and careers e.g. nursing, social work, education.

There is a huge range of qualification pathways available: Health & Social Care and childcare, nursing, midwifery, primary education, youth work and care for the elderly.

History

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Mr A Withey - Head of Department awithey@plymstockschool.org.uk

The GCSE in History will be examined through three exams following a two-year course. There is no coursework element to this qualification.

The study of History has always been a highly regarded and respected qualification. It comprises part of the EBacc and is a very popular course of study at A Level. Success in the subject requires students to become familiar with new bodies of knowledge, manage its recall and interrogate and analyse it to be able to create extended written responses. In an information rich age the skills are invaluable and applicable to many careers and other disciplines. The subject places a high regard on its students' ability to both reflect and learn independently, empowering them to manage their learning and revision.

The GCSE skills tested in History will be familiar to students working their way through Years 7-9. Extended writing and the ability to plan and construct essays is the key demand of a successful GCSE History student as well as the ability to interrogate and reflect upon the use and value of sources of information.

Areas of Study

Paper 1 - The Thematic Study & Historic Environment:

Students will study the history migration the Britain from c.800 until the present day Students will study the factors that encouraged migration as well as the impact and experience of the migrants. An in-depth focus within this paper will be on Notting Hill from c.1948 until c.1970

Paper 2

Will involve a British focus upon early Elizabethan England 1558-1588 and the American West 1835-1895. Paper 3

The final unit of study will be upon Weimar and Nazi Germany from 1918-45.

The course will be fully supported with teaching and learning materials available on the school network as well as support pages to be found at: www.historynetwork.co.uk.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100% NEA: 0%

GCSE History will be assessed through three GCSE papers sat at the end of the two-year course. In order to inform progress, students will be regularly assessed through internal examinations and mock papers. These will be used to direct future revision, teacher intervention and class setting.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Internal assessments will be based upon approved assessment materials and past papers to provide accurate snapshots of students' progress. Each of the four topics of study (Migration, Elizabeth I, The American West and Weimar and Nazi Germany) will have at least two key assessments as well as regular homework assignments in order to consolidate and further classroom understanding.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Successful students can continue their studies of History to A Level standard. A Level History complements the undergraduate study of both Law and Politics. Studying history can lead to a great number of careers as diverse as the media, government, heritage organisations, conservation, teaching, archives, museums and galleries, the police and law.

Information on our post GCSE provision can be found at: www.historynetwork.co.uk

Hospitality & Catering

Qualification

Vocational Qualification Edquas Level 1/2 Award Distinction*, Distinction, Merit, Pass & U

Staff Contacts

Ms E Pring ejpring@plymstockschool.org.uk

This qualification is designed to support learners in schools who want to learn about the vocational sector of Hospitality and Catering, as well as having an interest in food and cookery. It will help learners to prepare and cook using basic skills, understand food and its functions, understand balanced diets, modification of recipes and plan and produce dishes for a purpose. It can offer them the potential to further their career or study further. The course has a large proportion of practical work; however, written assignments and theory work also make up an important and compulsory element to the course.

This course provides learners with experience of using different cooking techniques and methods to enable them to use these within further education and apprenticeships. It is appropriate for learners who are motivated and challenged by learning through hands-on experiences and through content which is concrete and related directly to those experiences.

Learners will develop skills in planning, researching, communicating, problem solving and health and safety, skills that are essential for the modern workplace.

Please note that students who choose Hospitality and Catering will not be able to opt for Food Preparation and Nutrition.

Areas of Study

Learners must study and achieve two mandatory units to achieve the qualification which are:

Unit 1. The Hospitality and Catering Industry

Unit 2. Hospitality and Catering in Action

Through the two units, learners will gain an overview of the hospitality and catering industry and the type of job roles that may be available to assist them in making choices about progression.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 40% NEA: 60%

The course consists of two elements, an internal assessed unit which will take 72 guided learning hours and an externally assessed exam.

Unit 1. The Hospitality and Catering Industry - Externally assessed. One written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes. Unit 2. Hospitality and Catering in Action - Internally Assessed. This takes the form of a controlled assessment assignment and there are three stages of assessment - Task setting, Task taking & Task marking. The applied purpose of the unit is for learners to safely plan, prepare, cook and present nutritional dishes.

Learners must be successful in both types of assessment to achieve the qualification.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Examples of assignments would include: preparing a range of dishes to develop skills such as soups; pasta dishes; bakery products e.g. bread/pizza. Through the practical and theory lessons they will need to develop their understanding of the ingredients used in the practicals and study healthy eating and nutrition, including balanced diets. Students will be required to modify recipes according to dietary requirements. Students will therefore need to be able to plan their practical lessons.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Students after studying this course will be able to progress and develop their skills through training at college or through an apprenticeship. Where the Edquas Level 1/2 Award in Hospitality and Catering is achieved together with other relevant Level 1/2 qualifications, such as GCSEs in English and Maths and Science, learners may be able to access Level 3 qualifications relevant to the hospitality and catering sector.

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Music

Qualification

Staff Contact

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Mrs S Lowe - Head of Department slowe@plymstockschool.org.uk

Music GCSE builds on the work you have done during Key Stage 3 in performing, composing and listening. It is a course for anyone who enjoys all three areas of the subject. The course will extend your skills in all areas of music through listening to, performing and composing a range of music from classical to pop to rock to film.

To succeed in GCSE Music, you must be a competent and confident performer on an instrument or voice. You will need to do two performances during the course and they will need to be of a good standard.

You must also be able to devise composition ideas and be able to develop them into a whole piece of music.

Areas of Study

- 1. Musical Forms and Devices—a study of classical music and how composers have used musical devices to create and develop music.
- 2. Music for Ensemble—this looks at music from chamber music, musical theatre, jazz and blues.
- 3. Film Music—a study of how composers use the elements of music to create specific effects in film.
- 4. Popular Music: learners will develop an understanding of pop, rock, bhangra and fusion

Students will also study two set works: one piece of classical music and one piece of pop music which they will analyse and answer questions on in the final exam.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 40% NEA: 60%

Performance: 30% - one solo performance and one ensemble. If you are choosing a GCSE in music please note that you will be required to perform to your teacher and should be able to perform a piece at the start of the course. You can perform on any instrument or you can sing.

Composition: 30% - 2 compositions. One to a brief set by you. The second to a brief set by the exam board.

Listening and Understanding: 40% - A written paper, answering questions based on the areas of study, listening to examples on a CD.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Students will perform several times through the course and their best two performances will be submitted for assessment.

Several composition exercises will be completed before doing the composition coursework. These will be assessed and targets set accordingly.

The learning of the Areas of Study will incorporate several listening questions in the style of the exam.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Students who complete a GCSE in music will be equipped to do A Levels in Music or Performing Arts. Further careers could be as a performer, music technician, music teacher or composer.

Photography

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Mr O Hurd-Thomas - Head of Department ohurd-thomas@plymstockschool.org.uk

Choosing to study Photography puts you on a pathway that could lead to careers in areas as diverse as Editorial Photographer, Commercial Photographer, Wedding Photographer, Film Editing, Photojournalist, Special effects Technician, Fashion Photographer, Scientific Photographer, Fine Art Photographer, and Advertising. It is a great creative accompaniment to other, more academic areas of study.

To succeed at GCSE you will need to be willing to develop your photographic observation and recording skills, artist research (both visual studies and written analysis), development of a personal idea (experimenting with practical processes and digital manipulation using programmes such as Adobe Photoshop) and creation and presentation of finished photographic work.

It is strongly advised that students taking the course have their own digital cameras – we do have a small number of cameras that can be borrowed but it will be easier for students if they have their own. Any student who wants advice on buying a camera prior to the course should come and talk to our teaching and technical staff.

Areas of Study

The course is split into two areas;

Component 1: Portfolio (60% of marks) This will include one major project that shows the student's ability to fully develop a creative outcome based upon the skills outlined above. It will also include evidence of smaller skills based experiments and responses to trips or workshops.

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40% of marks) Students are given a choice of seven starting points set by the exam board, from which they need to develop a response in a similar manner as for Component 1. This will be given a limited time frame for development (8 weeks) at the end of which will be a 10 hour formal exam, during which a final outcome will be created.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 40% NEA: 60%

All work is marked internally by the Art, Craft and Design team, and then a sample of our marks are moderated and checked by the exam board.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Assessment will be based around the requirements of the exam board. Students will be given general feedback on the areas they need to work into and improve.

Assessment is formative and on-going – for example, a project where the final outcome is a series of photographs exploring identity, or types of location, students will be given oral and written feedback on all stages of the project – shoots and write ups, photographer studies and development of ideas, as well as final sets of images. Students will then be expected to respond to this feedback, improving and refining sketchbook work and final outcomes accordingly.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

A level courses in Photography. Extended Diplomas in Photography, and associated specialisms. Various careers in the creative industries (see above). Having a GCSE in Photography will also be supportive if you take a managerial, administrative, marketing or legal role in the creative industries.

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Religious Studies

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U AQA Specification A

Staff Contact

Mrs L Partridge - Head of Department lpartridge@plymstockschool.org.uk

Religious Studies is a vibrant subject where students can discuss, debate and deliberate contemporary issues of the wider world. The subject provides opportunities to engage with questions of belief, value, meaning, purpose, truth, and their influence on human life from Christian and Buddhist traditions. Being able to handle controversial subject matter is essential.

Religious Studies allows you to develop the following Key Skills to the highest level. These include: empathy; reflection; analysis; communication; ICT; working with others; problem solving and improving your own learning and performance.

Areas of Study

Religious Studies incorporates three areas of studies:

Component 1: The study of religions - BuddhismComponent 2: The study of religions - ChristianityComponent 3: Thematic Study: Relationships; Religion and Life, Crime and Punishment and Human Rights

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100% NEA: 0%

The course is assessed at the end of two years through three exams as detailed below:

Component 1: The study of religions - Buddhism 25% (1 hour) **Component 2:** The study of religions - Christianity 25% (1 hour) **Component 3:** Thematic Study - 50% (2 hours)

Throughout the course students will be assessed using the same format and criteria as the end examinations.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Students are rigorously assessed throughout the course and expected to act on written and verbal feedback given and know where to improve in relation to the examination assessment criteria. Students will be formally assessed after each topic. Students will encounter exam-style assessments throughout the course, particularly after each module.

Personalised Learning Checklists and comprehensive Revision Guides will be given to each student to match individual needs.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

A Level course in Religious Studies. Students have found the subject a relevant discipline for future careers in Law, The Media, History, Politics, Health, Social Services and any career where philosophical and ethical issues are important.

Future jobs may include counsellor, charity officer, housing advisor, journalist, adult education lecturer / tutor, HE lecturer, teacher, lawyer, medical professionals like nurses, doctors.

Religious Studies is one of the fastest growing degree courses. It gives you a good grounding in logic and argument and is relevant to the deep study of almost every other subject. Professions increasingly have a need for candidates who are able to look at issues from a variety of viewpoints and who have the ability to think questions through, on the basis of sound reasoning and solid evidence.

Science: Three Separate Sciences

Qualification

GCSE Biology GCSE Chemistry GCSE Physics Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Mrs S Lockett - Head of Department slockett@plymstockschool.org.uk

Two of these GCSEs are incorporated within the combined science lessons. Opting for three separate sciences will provide a third GCSE. Although Combined Science is compulsory, those students who are really curious about how the world works will be interested in studying separate sciences. The course goes into more depth in Biology, Chemistry and Physics topics and develops understanding in areas that are not covered in Combined Science.

Lessons will develop practical skills and extend students' understanding to be able to interpret and succeed in a fast paced technological age that relies ever more heavily on science.

Please note that due to the amount of curriculum time and level of demand of the course a student's suitability for the course will be determined by the Science department. If you are interested in studying Separate Science you must discuss this with your Science teacher prior to completion of the options form.

Areas of Study

The content of the GCSE syllabus will cover topics under the key headings below. These are very similar to the Combined Science but go into more detail to give better understanding.

Biology: Topics include: cell biology; organisation; infection and response; bioenergetics; homeostasis and response; inheritance variation and evolution; ecology.

Chemistry: Topics include: atomic structure and the periodic table; bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; quantitative chemistry; chemical changes; energy changes; the rate and extent of chemical change; organic chemistry; chemical analysis; chemistry of the atmosphere; using resources.

Physics: Topics include: forces; energy; waves; electricity; magnetism and electromagnetism; particle model of matter; atomic structure; space physics.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 100% NEA: 0%

For each subject, Biology, Chemistry and Physics: There are two 100 mark, 1hr 45min exams assessed in the following ways: multiple choice; structured; closed short answer and open response. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas.

There are a total of 28 required practicals across the 3 subjects that have to be carried out in class: 10 for Biology; 8 for Chemistry and 10 for Physics. Questions in the written exams will draw on the knowledge and understanding students have gained by carrying out the practical activities. These questions will count for at least 15% of the overall marks for the qualification. Many of our questions will also focus on investigative skills and how well students can apply what they know to practical situations often in novel contexts.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

Assessments will be in the form of formal half term assessments which include GCSE style examination questions. Students will also complete a mock exam in Year 11. All of these formal assessments will be used to assess progress towards their target grades.

Students will also complete homework and informal quizzes throughout the course.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Good grades in the three separate sciences will allow students to progress to A Levels in: Biology, Chemistry and Physics. These Level 3 qualifications prepare students for a variety of further progression routes.

Sports Studies: Physical Education

Qualification

GCSE Graded 9 to 1, U

Staff Contact

Mrs K Tyrrell - Head of Department ktyrrell@plymstockschool.org.uk

Studying GCSE Physical Education will open your eyes to the amazing world of sports performance, developing a knowledge and understanding of the how and why in physical activity and sport.

The GCSE PE course is designed to further develop students knowledge and understanding of a number of elements. Developing a knowledge of the functions of the body systems as well as an understanding of how these adapt during physical activity and training. You will develop the skills to analyse movement in Sport and how to assess and improve performance. You will learn the reasons why we do things, why some people outperform others – mentally and physically. You will also delve into the ethical considerations behind the use of drugs and gain an understanding of the consequences of inactivity and poor diet.

The GCSE PE Course also expands students' knowledge of key sociocultural studies surrounding sport and its development in the modern day.

Areas of Study

The GCSE Physical Education specification content is divided into three components.

Component 1 – The human body and movement in physical activity and sport

Component 2 – Socio – cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport.

Component 3 - Practical performance in physical activity and sport.

Assessment Procedures Exam: 60% NEA: 40%

60% Theoretical Assessment (2 x 1hr 15 minute papers each worth 30%) 40% Practical Assessment

The practical element of the course is assessed across three different sports, students must select one team sport, one individual sport and one other from either category. A list of approved sporting activities from which to select, can be found on the AQA website or please ask your PE teacher if the activities you take part in out of school are on the list. The assessment in each sport is based on the quality of your skills and your application within a competitive environment. As part of the NEA students are required to complete written coursework based on their evaluation of their own competitive sporting performances. Each sport assessed for the practical element makes up 25% of the NEA (so 75% in total), with a written coursework accounting for the other 25%.

Students opting for this course must bear in mind that 60% is theory based and that four of their five lessons a fortnight will take place in the classroom. With 40% of the course being assessed on students' practical performance, it is essential that students are competing regularly. GCSE students are expected to regularly attend at least one sports club either in school or within the community.

Examples of Assessments Used During the Course

In many areas of the course the assessments and home learning tasks focus on applying knowledge to practical examples of physical activity and sport.

Assessments will be set periodically at the end of each unit of work. Home learning tasks will be set weekly and will be used to assess learning.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

Students who engage well with the GCSE Course may wish to move on to Study Physical Education at A Level or OCR Cambridge Technical.

Possible career paths may include leisure and recreation management, exercise physiology, physiotherapy, PE teaching, sports science, sports psychology, sports coaching, sport rehabilitation and other related recreation/sport degree courses. This course also sets the foundation for careers in the armed forces.

Travel & Tourism

Qualification

Technical Award BTEC Tech Award - Level 1/2 Graded Distinction*, Distinction, Merit & Pass, U

Staff Contact

Ms V Ellis - Head of Department vellis@plymstockschool.org.uk

The BTEC Tech Award will provide students with a broad range of work-ready skills not solely for the Travel and Tourism industry such as team work, time management, customer care and IT. This qualification will also give them a great basis on which to build if they do wish to progress to further education, training or employment within the Travel and Tourism sector. The course is vocational, involving personal research, investigation into real life travel and tourism activities and educational visits. Students will study a range of subject areas including the UK Travel and Tourism Sector, International Travel and Tourism Destinations and Itinerary Planning for different customers. Students will investigate the appeal of different holiday destinations all over the world and discover how these destinations can increase their appeal to attract a wider customer base.

BTEC courses are popular and effective because they engage students to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop skills that are essential for the modern-day workplace. Lessons are initially taught in the classroom and then students work independently to prepare their assignments, mostly in ICT rooms.

BTEC courses motivate students and open doors to progression into further study and responsibility within the workplace. During the two year course we look at real businesses such as Hays Travel in Plymstock and the appeal of local attractions such as Dartmoor Zoo, Woodlands Adventure Park and local National Trust properties.

Areas of Study and Assessment Procedures Exam: 40% NEA 60%

As BTEC Travel & Tourism is a vocational subject, it provides a link between education and real life. All lessons are based on real businesses and destinations.

The BTEC Tech Award is made up of three components:

Component One: Travel and Tourism Organisations and Destinations

(This is internally assessed and is worth 30% of the course)

Learners will investigate travel and tourism organisations, their aims and how they work together. They will explore types of travel and tourism and the features that make destinations appealing to visitors.

Component Two: Influences on Global Travel and Tourism

(This is externally assessed and is worth 40% of the course)

Learners will explore the different factors that may influence global travel and tourism, and how travel and tourism organisations and destinations respond to these factors. Learners will examine the potential impacts of tourism at global destinations and how destinations can manage the impacts of tourism and control tourism development to achieve sustainable tourism.

Component Three: Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism

(This is internally assessed and is worth 30% of the course)

Learners will investigate how organisations use market research to identify travel and tourism trends, and customer needs and preferences. They will apply their understanding by selecting products and services, and planning a holiday to meet customer needs and preferences.

After Successfully Completing This Course:

The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Travel and Tourism provides the skills, knowledge and understanding for students to progress to: other Level 2 vocational qualifications; Level 3 vocational qualifications, such as BTEC Nationals, specifically the Pearson BTEC Level 3 in Travel and Tourism (QCF); which is currently offered at Plymstock School Sixth Form; related academic qualifications, apprenticeships and employment within the travel and tourism industry, for example posts in travel agencies; visitor attractions and the tourist information centre.

Students who achieve the qualification at Level 1 may progress to related Level 2 vocational or academic qualifications such as BTECs or GCSEs.

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