

MELBOURN
VILLAGECOLLEGE

Key Stage 4 Options Information Booklet 2025-2027

Key Dates:

12 th Dec	Parents' Evening
<i>Weeks of...</i>	
6 th +13 th Dec	Taster lessons in KS4 subjects
20 th +27 th Jan	Guidance meetings for each pupil
3 rd Feb	Year 9 full reports published
	Link to online options form sent to parents
14 th Feb	Options form completion deadline

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Introduction

This is the 2025–2027 KS4 Options booklet and we hope that you find the information interesting, useful, and accessible. It is the intention of all staff and governors at the school to produce a curriculum which is interesting, exciting, and relevant. As the curriculum offers more choices, it also has more complexities and so the following points will be of some help in outlining the structure of the curriculum and some key considerations.

Examination subjects all pupils take:

All pupils take GCSEs in the following subjects:

- **English Language**
- **English Literature**
- **Mathematics**
- **Science (two or three GCSEs; see later)**

Non-examination subjects all pupils take:

Personal Development (PSHE)

Key Stage 4 pupils are given a range of opportunities to engage with education centred around citizenship; careers and futures; and their personal and social health including relationships and sex education.

Throughout their GCSE years, pupils will have a series of lessons in which they will study a particular subject. These tend to have a focus on options, career pathways and the application process for moving to their next step – be it further education or otherwise. To augment this, we are also fortunate to receive a number of visiting speakers who present pupils with stimulating talks, aimed at educating pupils on a broad range of issues, from the risks of alcohol and drugs, to positive mental wellbeing and self-esteem.

Year group teams also play a vital role in upholding our values and ensuring that pupils receive a fully rounded education, exploring pertinent issues in a tutor group context.

Religious Education

All pupils have to cover the elements of the national curriculum in RE. This will be delivered across KS4 through timetabled lessons in a rotation with PSHE.

Physical Education

We try to encourage pupils to lead healthy and active lives and taking part in sport is a key element of this. All pupils will take part in one hour per week of core PE as part of their school studies.

Computer Science and ICT

Pupils will cover the national curriculum in CS and ICT through a combination of collapsed sessions, and learning through another subject e.g. maths.

An adapted curriculum

For the vast majority of pupils at Melbourn, it will be appropriate that they take the full range of core subjects, plus four options subjects. However, for a small minority, it may be appropriate that they take a slightly reduced number of subjects in order to concentrate on their core studies. We will speak to parents if we think this applies to their child.

In this booklet is some material to help pupils make appropriate choices, and this can be used in form time or at home.

All pupils will also be invited to a Guidance Meeting with senior staff to discuss suitable options for them to study; parents are welcome to attend these if they are available.

The options form this year will be electronic and a link to it will be emailed to all parents at the appropriate time.

It is very important that you think carefully about all six of your choices and rank them with the most important subject to you at the top of the list.

You are likely to end up studying one of your fifth or sixth choices or, in rare cases, to have to reconsider your choices and possibly consider further choices of subject.

We allow pupils to make free choices with regards to options, and then we work out the timetabling patterns (bands) to make it possible for the largest number of pupils to receive their chosen subjects.

If a particular option choice is oversubscribed, decisions about who should study the course will be taken by the relevant teachers and senior staff. These decisions will be based on teacher assessment, along with consideration of any other factors we believe relevant in determining a pupil's suitability for a particular course. Behaviour record and past effort may be relevant.

Some of the courses offered may not run if we do not have sufficient pupil number to make them viable.

FAQs

Why do I have to make choices?

As you made your way through Key Stage 3, you studied all the available subjects, but now we ask you to choose some to stop studying and we offer you a couple of subjects you haven't previously studied.

The reason is that we want you to concentrate on subjects that are (i) vital to your future – this is why you all continue to study Maths, Science, PE and English, and (ii) interesting and relevant to your future; you have the chance to 'specialise' a little bit.

As you travel through Key Stage 4, you may decide to study further by taking A-levels and then you will be asked to 'specialise' even further.

What is the core curriculum that all pupils take in Years 10 and 11?

All pupils continue to study English, Mathematics, Science and PE through timetabled lessons. RE, work related learning, citizenship, computer science and personal development also form part of the curriculum through lessons, collapsed days, cross-curricular links and other experiences (such as work experience). Every pupil will continue to have one lesson a week that consists of RE and Personal Development.

How many option choices do I have to take?

Pupils will study FOUR option subjects alongside the core curriculum. So why do you have to choose 6 on the form? Because some other factors mean that not every pupil can have their top 4 choices...think of number 5 and 6 as reserve choices. But see the box on the last page – you may end up taking option 5 or 6, so make sure that you put all 6 choices in the right order – your favourites first.

How much time does each option get?

Each option choice is taken as 5 lessons a fortnight.

Is PE in the core, or an option?

Both. All pupils have core PE. It is also possible to opt for a qualification in PE (BTEC Sport).

Is RE in the core, or an option?

Both. All pupils study PD and RE as timetabled lessons, but Religious Education, Philosophy and Ethics can also be an option.

How do I know what subjects to take?

There is lots of guidance available and you will have a specific guidance interview to discuss your option choices. Read the options brochure, and talk to your teachers and parents. As a general rule, choose the subjects which you like most and work hardest in, whilst aiming to keep a broad range.

What is the difference between GCSEs and the other courses offered?

GCSEs are qualifications where the full range of grades (from 9 to 1) are achievable. Other courses are equivalent to GCSEs but have other titles such as Certificate, Award or Diploma – some of these can be offered at level 1 (GCSE grades 1 to 5) or level 2 (GCSE grades 5 to 9) or BOTH levels and so are suitable for all levels of pupil.

How do I find out more about the content of each course?

For GCSE courses we have included the name of the Exam Board and the Qualification Number (QN) under the 'Type of qualification' heading; the QN can be used to find the full syllabus details on the exam board's website.

What happens after I have submitted my online form?

All the options are collected and everybody's option choices are entered into a computer. We then use this to work out the 'best fit' model for the classes. However, we have to speak to a few pupils because of a few things:

- Perhaps not enough people want a particular option, so we cannot make a class
- Perhaps too many people want an option and we haven't got enough teachers to put on an extra class
- Perhaps somebody has made option choices that are inappropriate for them

What is Progress 8?

Progress 8 is a value used by the government to measure the outcomes of schools. P8 takes the outcomes for each child's English, Maths, Science and best other 4 GCSEs and compares them to what their KS4 indicator was (a prediction based on their KS2 scores). Thus, pupils who do better than predicted have a positive P8 figure, and those who do less well than predicted have a negative P8 figure. All the pupils' P8 figures are collected together and give the school's P8 figure.

What is the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc)?

The Ebacc is a name given to a particular combination of courses. Pupils are encouraged to study English, Maths and Science (all of which are core subjects) a language plus either history or geography.

MVC does not make this set of choices mandatory, but we do recognise that some providers of later courses of study may place a higher value on these subjects.

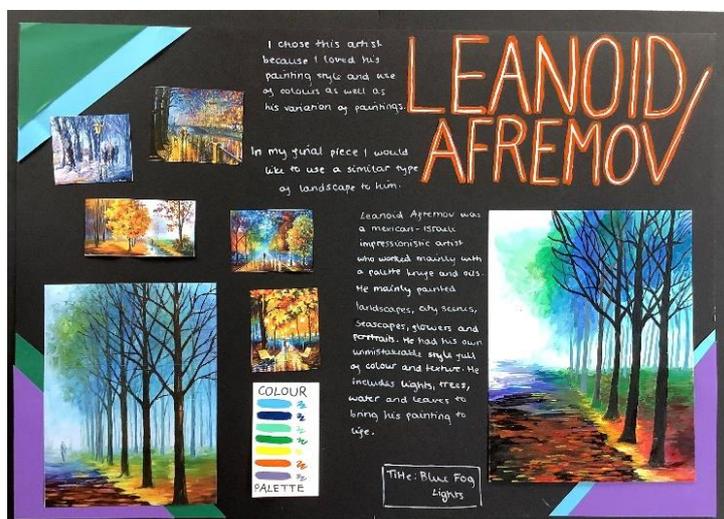
Pupils who have these subjects are keeping their future pathways very broad as they provide a good grounding for the study of a wide range of other subjects.

We would expect every pupil to study at least one GCSE from Geography, History, Spanish, Mandarin and Computer science. We also expect the majority of pupils to study at least one modern foreign language at GCSE (Spanish or Mandarin). The government expects 90% of pupils to study a language *and* one of these three options.

GCSE Fine Art

Type of qualification: Eduqas GCSE (9-1) Fine Art (601/8087/0)

How it is assessed: **60% Personal Portfolio of coursework** set by Teacher
40% Practical Examination with prep work set by Exam Board



Course Overview

- The course develops pupils' ability to improve their creative fine art skills and gain an understanding of the work of a range of artists. The course is also analytical, and pupils must write in depth about all aspects of their art work and research.
- Homework is also a key to completing the course successfully and pupils must be willing to undertake a minimum of **2 hours independent** work outside of lessons each week. This allows them to practise their fine art techniques and embed good artistic practice.
- Pupils will spend time producing creative and original sketchbooks which reflect their research into a variety of artists, visual experimentation, creative ideas and observational skills. They will go on to produce a series of final pieces inspired by their experimentation and research. They will add reflective and analytical notes to all sketchbook pages showing knowledge and understanding of art.
- **Observational drawing** is a **key** component of the course and is assessed so pupils must be able to draw objects from life not photographs. All pupils will have to use drawing skills for different needs and purposes appropriate to content to successfully complete this course.
- All pupils will have to **use written annotation and appropriate specialist terminology** to record their ideas, observations, insights and independent judgements. An ability to research and **write fluently is a key requirement**. There is an increase in the amount of writing required in the new specification and higher quality demanded in the reflective and analytical content so pupils who do not enjoy researching, writing and reflecting on their work will find this course more difficult.

Notes: Pupils will need to buy a sketchbook (approx. £6) and/or an art pack (approx. £35 including sketchbook) which provides the basic equipment to aid homework/coursework. Other expenses may be incurred for materials required as the pupils progress through the course, e.g. Canvases.

GCSE Business Studies

Type of qualification: Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Business (1BS0)

How it is assessed: 100% Examination (2 written papers weighted at 50% each)

Course Overview

Pupils apply their knowledge and understanding to different business contexts ranging from small enterprises to large multinationals and businesses operating in local, national and global contexts. Pupils develop an understanding of how these contexts impact business behaviour.

Why consider this subject

This should be considered a serious choice of subject as many pupils will either wish to go and work in a company, from a family-owned enterprise to a government-run organisation. The subject will lend itself to the operation of any business, how to keep track of finances, what decisions are best avoided in terms of growth, and the different ratios and mathematics needed to oversee the company's costs and profits. Pupils will need to apply their mathematical skills to real-world examples and apply their language skills to write reports in good English.

Pupils will draw on the knowledge and understanding to:

- Use business terminology to identify and explain business activity
- Apply business concepts to familiar and unfamiliar contexts
- Develop problem-solving and decision-making skills relevant to business
- Investigate, analyse and evaluate business opportunities and issues
- Make justified decisions using both qualitative and quantitative data including its selection, interpretation, analysis and evaluation, and the application of appropriate quantitative skills.

Pupils will learn about

- Business in the real world
- Influences on business
- Marketing
- Finance
- Business operations
- Human resources



Where it can lead

Business Studies GCSE provides a broad understanding of the world that would benefit any young person whether they are aiming for further education or to enter the workplace. As well as possibly leading to level 3 BTEC courses or A-levels, a Business Studies GCSE would be an asset to anyone considering running their own business.

GCSE Computer Science

Type of qualification: AQA GCSE (9 - 1) in Computer Science (8520)

How it is assessed: 100% Examination (2 written papers weighted at 50% each)

Course Overview

This course provides the opportunity to discover how computer technology works and to take a look at what goes on 'behind the scenes'. Through the introduction of programming, it helps pupils to expand their problem-solving skills. For many, it will be a fun and interesting way to develop these transferable skills, which can be applied to further learning and everyday life.

Pupils will learn

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable pupils to:

- Understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science, including abstraction, decomposition, logic, algorithms, and data representation
- Analyse problems in computational terms through practical experience of solving such problems, including designing, writing and debugging programs
- Think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically understand the components that make up digital systems, and how they communicate with one another and with other systems
- Understand the impacts of digital technology to the individual and to wider society
- Apply mathematical skills relevant to computer science.



Reasons to choose computing

1. Allows pupils to explore how computer systems work and how to program them
2. Includes several practical units for pupils to demonstrate programming skills and learn Python
3. Simple assessment method with two written papers to test theory knowledge.

Where it can lead

The course is a solid introduction to computing and is excellent preparation for pupils looking for a career in the field or for those who want to study the subject at a higher level. Pupils wishing for a career in the computing industry or in computer software should study this at GCSE.

GCSE Drama

Type of qualification: AQA (9-1) GCSE Drama (8261)

How it is assessed

Component 1: Understanding Drama –

Written Examination (40%)

Component 2: Devising Drama –

Practical Performance Acting with devising log (40%)

Component 3: Texts in practice –

Practical performance of a scripted piece (20%)



Course Overview

The course is designed to be practical, engaging and creative. It will provide the opportunity to examine drama, the work of theatre professionals and to explore the range of drama as an art form. Pupils will be able to work independently; as well as in a group, to create drama whilst making informed artistic choices.

The course enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the process of creating and developing drama to their own performance work. It gives the opportunity for a pupil to solely focus on either the performance or the technical aspect of theatre should they wish too.

You will learn about all areas of theatre and drama, looking at technical skills as well as acting within performance. You will become critically aware of your own and others' work and understand the social context of your work and that of others. You will look at different practitioners and playwrights and gain the opportunity to study and perform in a range of styles and genres; you will develop your learning of strategies, and the process of a play structure. You will see live theatre productions and analyse and evaluate the work of playwrights.

It is important to note that when deciding to study GCSE Drama, excellent attendance is vital to success, not only individual success, but also the success of others within your group. Formal practical assessments take place, and they rely on everyone in the group being present for creating, planning rehearsals and practice, as well as for the formal examination.

Where it can lead

Studying drama develops many transferable skills; the ability to research, analyse and select essential information. The vital importance of the ability to work independently and work as a team. The development of time management; planning and organisation. A successful drama pupil will also have the drive and determination to succeed; a vital characteristic for employers, colleges and sixth form establishments,

Drama experience is considered extremely useful in the following career paths:

- Actor
- Stage Manager
- Arts Administrator
- Teacher
- Drama Therapist
- Television Production
- Director
- Youth and Community worker
- Personnel manager
- Social Worker
- Journalist
- Marketing manager
- Any position which requires communication, teamwork and creativity.

GCSE Design and Technology

Type of qualification: Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Design and Technology (1DT0/1F)

How it will be assessed

Unit 1 – Coursework 50%	Unit 2 – Examination 50%
Design, make and evaluate task	Design and Technology core and specialist knowledge
<p>A design and make task, based on a contextual challenge that is set by the exam board which assesses the candidates' ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, investigate and outline design possibilities that solves a problem and is linked to the contextual challenge. • Design and make functioning prototypes that are based on an identified user. • Analyse and evaluate design decisions and the wider issues in design and technology. 	<p>A mix of short answer, structured and extended writing questions assessing candidates' knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core technical principles and specialist knowledge • Designing and making principles. • Being able to analyse and evaluate design decisions and the wider issues in design and technology.

Course Overview

The Edexcel GCSE in Design and Technology offers a unique opportunity in the curriculum for pupils to identify and solve real life problems, while using their creativity and imagination, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values. Through the iterative design process pupils will explore, create and evaluate a range of outcomes that builds on KS3, incorporating specialist knowledge and understanding of different materials and manufacturing processes. They will learn how to take design risks, enabling them to develop an awareness of practices from the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. Through studying GCSE Design and Technology, pupils will be prepared to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world; and learn from, wider influences on design and technology, including historical, social/cultural, environmental and economic factors.

The course enables pupils to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise, in order to:

- Demonstrate their understanding that all design and technological activity takes place within contexts that influence the outcomes of design practice
- Develop realistic design proposals as a result of the exploration of design opportunities and users' needs, wants and values
- Use imagination, experimentation and combine ideas when designing
- Develop the skills to critique and refine their own ideas whilst designing and making
- Communicate their design ideas and decisions using different media and techniques, as appropriate for different audiences at key points in their designing
- Develop decision making skills, including the planning and organisation of time and resources when managing their own project work
- Develop a broad knowledge of materials, components and technologies and practical skills to develop high quality, imaginative and functional prototypes
- Be ambitious and open to explore and take design risks in order to stretch the development of design proposals, avoiding clichéd or stereotypical responses
- Consider the costs, commercial viability and marketing of products
- Demonstrate safe working practices in design and technology
- Use key design and technology terminology including those related to designing, innovation and communication.



Where it can lead

Level 3 courses in either of the following - Product Design, Engineering, Architecture and Industrial Design.

GCSE English Language & GCSE English Literature

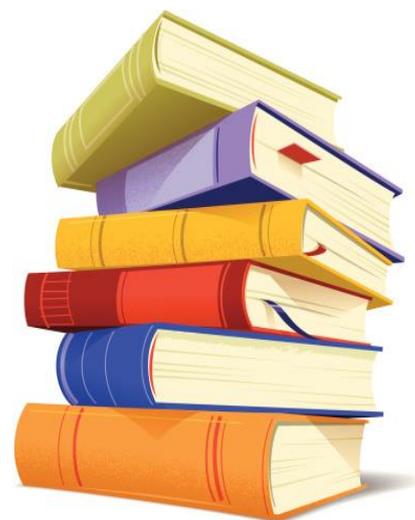
Type of qualification: AQA GCSE (9-1) English Language (8700)

Nature of assessment: Two examinations at the end of the course. Each last 1 hour 45 minutes and each is worth 50% of the overall mark. One exam focuses on reading and writing fiction and the other on non-fiction.

Pupils will study a range of texts which are creative as well as from real and relevant contexts. Pupils will have opportunities to develop higher order reading and critical thinking skills that encourage genuine enquiry into different topics and themes.

Pupils will learn to:

- Read with good understanding, a wide range of texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, including literature and literary non-fiction as well as other writing such as reviews and journalism
- Read and evaluate texts critically and make comparisons between texts
- Summarise and synthesise information or ideas from texts
- Use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing
- Write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately
- Use grammar correctly and punctuate and spell accurately
- Acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- Listen to and understand spoken language and use spoken Standard English effectively.



Type of qualification: AQA GCSE (9-1) English Literature (8702)

Nature of Assessment: Two examinations at the end of the two-year course.

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th Century Novel 1 hour 45 minutes (40%)

Paper 2: Modern Texts, anthology poetry and unseen poetry 2 hours 15 minutes (60%)

Pupils will study a Shakespeare play, a 19th Century novel, a modern novel and play and a range of poetry from the 18th Century to the present day. Pupils will study the texts in depth and learn to write critically about these texts. Pupils will learn how to write comparatively about the texts.

Where they can lead

English Language is a core subject and is fundamental to progress in further education. Many courses will require pupils to have achieved a level '5' grade or above.

There is a wealth of opportunities to take forward the topics studied at GCSE to post-16.

There are A levels in English Literature, English Language, or English Literature and Language (combined).



GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

Type of qualification: AQA GCSE (9-1) Food Preparation and Nutrition (8585)

This new GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition is an exciting and creative course which focuses on practical cooking skills to ensure pupils develop a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials. The course is 50% theory and written work.

Course Overview

Food preparation skills – these are intended to be integrated into the five sections:

1. Food, nutrition and health
2. Food science
3. Food safety
4. Food choice
5. Food provenance



How it is assessed

The Course is divided into two sections:

Paper 1: Food preparation and nutrition –

Theoretical knowledge of food preparation and nutrition from Sections 1 to 5, which is assessed with a written 1 hour 45-minute exam. This is worth 100 marks and 50% of the GCSE. There are five multiple choice questions each worth 20 marks. These five questions are divided into several sub questions, worth 80 marks.

The second section is a non-exam assessment (NEA) This consists of two tasks –

Task 1: Food investigation (30 marks). Pupils' understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients. Practical investigations are a compulsory element of this NEA task. This Task is assessed by a written or electronic report (1,500 – 2,000 words) including photographic evidence of the practical investigation. This is a science-based experiment.

Task 2: Food preparation assessment (70 marks). Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking, presentation of food and application of nutrition related to the chosen task.



Pupils will prepare, cook and present a final menu of three dishes within a single period of no more than three hours, planning in advance how this will be achieved. This task is assessed by a written or electronic portfolio which must include photographic evidence of the three final dishes.

Where it can lead

Pupils will be qualified to go on to further study; study WJEC Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition or embark on an apprenticeship or full time career in the catering or food industries such as, health, hygiene and safety roles, health promotion, dietetics, food advertising, food innovation.

GCSE Geography

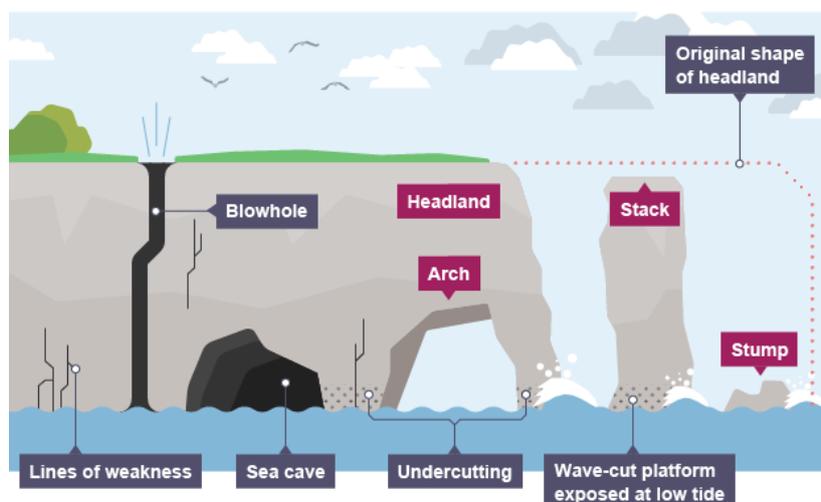
Type of specification: AQA GCSE (9-1) Geography
How is it assessed: 100% written examination
Course overview: The course is split into three exams.

Living with the physical environment

This unit is concerned with the dynamic nature of physical processes and systems, and human interaction with them in a variety of places and at a range of scales. The aims of this unit are to develop an understanding of the tectonic, geomorphological, biological and meteorological processes and features in different environments, and the need for management strategies governed by sustainability and consideration of the direct and indirect effects of human interaction with the Earth and the atmosphere. The exam is for 1 hour and 30 minutes and is worth 35% of the overall grade.

Challenges in the human environment

This unit is concerned with human processes, systems and outcomes, and how these change both spatially and temporally. They are studied in a variety of places and at a range of scales and must include places in various stages of development, such as higher income countries (HICs), lower income countries (LICs) and newly emerging economies (NEEs). The aims of this unit are to develop an understanding of the factors that produce a diverse variety of human environments; the dynamic nature of these environments that change over time and place; the need for sustainable management; and the areas of current and future challenge and opportunity for these environments. The exam is for 1 hour and 30 minutes and is worth 35% of the overall grade.



Geographical applications

The Geographical applications unit is designed to be synoptic in that pupils will be required to draw together knowledge, understanding and skills from the full course of study. It is an opportunity for pupils to show their breadth of understanding and an evaluative appreciation of the interrelationships between different aspects of geographical study. The exam is for 1 hour and 30 minutes and is worth 30% of the overall grade.

Where can it lead

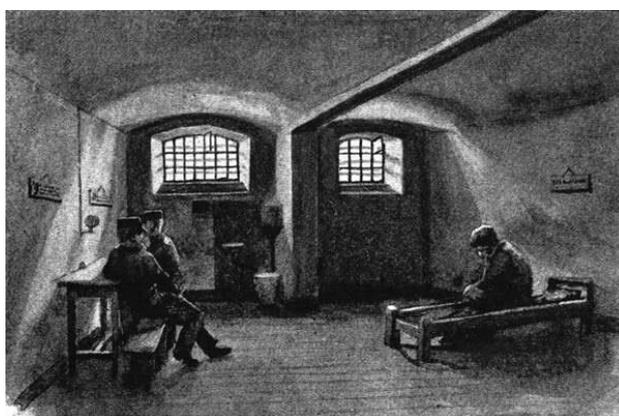
This specification provides a very strong foundation for Geography at A level. Geography is a very versatile subject that is very popular at university and highly valued by employers for the transferable problem-solving skills that the pupils learn.

GCSE History

Type of qualification: Edexcel GCSE (9-1) History (1HI0)
How it is assessed: 100% Written Examination, three examinations

Areas of Study

1. **Paper 1 (30%)** Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1000-Present and Whitechapel, c1870-c1900, Policing and the Inner City.
2. **Paper 2 (40%)** Early Elizabethan England 1558-88 and the American West, 1835-1895.
3. **Paper 3 (30%)** Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-1939.



Course Overview

This is a varied and interesting course. You will learn about people and issues from the distant past right up to the modern world. There are three exam papers and four subjects as you can see above. These include a study of the American West and Crime and Punishment, as well as studies of Elizabeth's England and Hitler's Germany. History looks at a variety of areas including resistance to the Nazis, the problem of Elizabeth's marriage, the culture of the Native Americans and the causes of crime. We also examine the culture of the life of the cowboy, the journey to the great American desert and why war broke out between the US Government and the tribes living on the plains.

Where it can lead

GCSE history is excellent preparation for a number of humanities and social science courses. Recent GCSE History pupils have taken courses at Hills Road, Long Road and Comberton Sixth Form studying a wide variety of related and unrelated subjects such as History, Politics, Geography, Media Studies, English, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Art. In all cases the rigorous study of History has led pupils to challenge ideas, debate important issues, effectively use data and construct a written argument. We are proud to have pupils who took GCSE History at Melbourn go on to take History degrees at Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and other universities and encourage pupils to consider History A Level after leaving Melbourn as a great number of pupils continue their love of the subject in later life.

GCSE Mandarin and GCSE Mandarin (MEP)

Type of qualification: AQA GCSE (9-1) Mandarin (8673)
How it is assessed: (All examinations are at the end of Year 11)
25% Listening Examination
25% Speaking Examination
25% Reading Examination
25% Writing Examination

Course Overview

Mandarin provides a practical and engaging course, designed to inspire and develop pupils' language skills. Pupils will develop transferable skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, which they will apply to a range of contexts as outlined below. This approach supports the new style linear framework. It will also provide very marketable skills, as employers are increasingly seeking employees with language skills.

The course covers the following themes and topics:

Theme 1: Identity and culture

- Relationships with family and friends
- Marriage/partnership
- Technology in everyday life
- Free-time activities
- Customs and festivals in Chinese-speaking countries/communities

Theme 2: Local, national, international and global areas of interest

- Home, town, neighbourhood and region
- Social issues, which include charity/voluntary work and Healthy/unhealthy living
- Global issues; which include the environment and poverty/homelessness
- Travel and tourism

Theme 3: Current and future study and employment

- My studies
- Life at school/college
- Education post-16
- Jobs, career choices and ambitions



Finally, please remember that this course requires a strong work ethic, as regular consolidation of the learning outside the lessons is essential for pupils to achieve their potential.

Where it can lead

A GCSE in a foreign language is a well-respected qualification that will benefit a number of areas, even if you don't decide to continue its study at A-Level. Indeed, in the recent past, a Foreign Language GCSE was a pre-requisite for entry to many universities. It is also a key differentiator of job applicants across a wide range of areas. The knowledge of Mandarin is in high demand in many industries.

Mandarin Excellence Programme (MEP)

Pupils currently following the MEP in year 9 will be expected to continue and to take the Mandarin GCSE; they will be taught in a different class from other pupils selecting Mandarin GCSE as they have had a different experience through key stage 3.

MEP Pupils - select 'Mandarin GCSE (MEP)' on the options form

Other Pupils - select 'Mandarin GCSE' on the options form

GCSE Mathematics

Type of qualification: AQA GCSE (9-1) Mathematics (8300)

How it is assessed

100% Examination based with three papers worth one third of the total marks each. The first paper is non-calculator, the second and third permit the use of calculators.

Course Overview

Pupils will take either the higher or foundation versions of the courses.

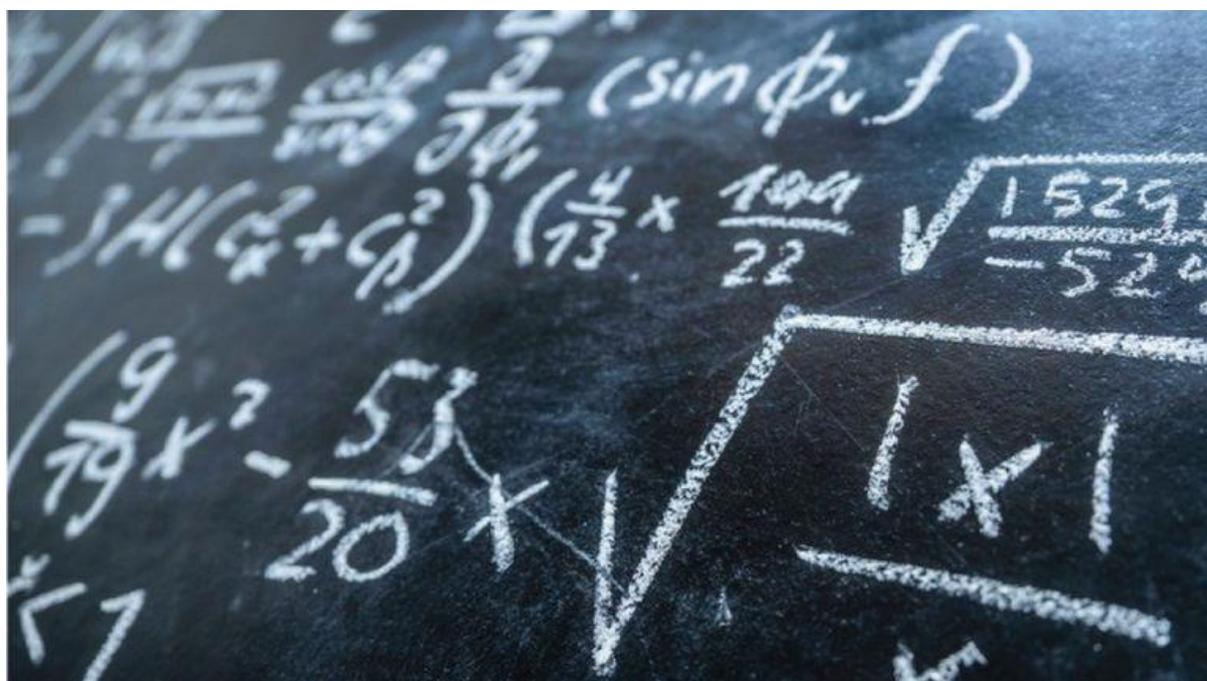
The foundation course incorporates topics such as solving algebraic equations, Pythagoras' Theorem and trigonometry. It also has a significantly higher proportion of numeracy questions than the higher tier. The grades which can be achieved on Foundation are grades 1-5.

The higher course extends these topics to include surds, circle theorems, vectors, 3D trigonometry and quadratic equations. The grades which can be achieved on the higher tier are grades 4-9.

The course will be taught over 3 one hour lessons each week.

Where it can lead

As a core subject it is fundamental in order to progress in further education. Many courses and employers will require pupils to have achieved a grade 4 or above. Mathematical or scientific courses at sixth form often ask for the equivalent of grade 6 or higher, this varies from college to college.



GCSE Media Studies

Type of qualification: Eduqas GCSE (9-1) Media Studies (603/1115/0)

How it is assessed: 30% Coursework
70% Examination

Course Overview

The new Media Studies course has a heavy focus on the theory behind the creation of different types of media products. The four key areas of theory are:

- Audience
- Representation
- Media Language
- Representation

Pupils will be expected to study a range of different 'texts' including television shows, advertising and online games and consider how the social, historical and political issues of the time influence their creation. For example, considering how gender stereotypes in the 1950s affected the development of adverts.

Pupils will study a range of theories and will closely study 15 named products from across all media (such as newspapers, magazines and music videos) and learn how to apply theory to these products. They will develop an ability to apply the same analysis to 'unseen' media texts.

Pupils will sit two 1 hour 30 minute papers, which will include short topic questions and longer essay questions. They will also complete a controlled assessment towards the end of year 10, likely designing a front cover and key pages for a magazine. The new content of the course, particularly the conceptual theories and required level of writing, is rigorous and challenging and therefore a competent level in English is required to achieve highly.

Where it can lead

Media Studies teaches pupils to read between the lines, to complete independent research, to follow a brief, to write analytically, and to create effective products of their own. It also provides a strong understanding of how the social context can influence a product, a skill which fits well with both History and English.

Media Studies can lead to Media Studies or Film Studies A-Level and on into a career in the media industry but also helps pupils looking at any creative profession to gain a broad understanding of theories and techniques used to appeal to consumers. The analytical side of Media Studies is an excellent complement to English Literature and History.





GCSE Music

Type of qualification: OCR GCSE (9-1) Music (J536)

GCSE Music is a great qualification to undertake for anyone who has been learning a musical instrument or singing, for 2-3 years.

How it is assessed

- **Integrated Portfolio – 30%** This consists of a performance on the pupil's designated instrument and a composition.
- **Practical Component – 30%** An ensemble performance and composition set to a brief designed by the examination board released at the start of Year 11. The ensemble performance can be on any instrument/voice and in any genre.
- **Listening Exam – 40%** Listening, appraising and notation skills will be assessed at the end of the course.



Course Overview

The current course has become both more inclusive in its appeal and more relevant to pupils growing up in a multi-cultural Britain within an increasingly complex and changing world. Pupils follow five broad Areas of Study. (AOS1-5)

AOS1 “My Music”

Pupils relish the freedom to further develop existing skills on their voice or instrument for which they currently receive free instrumental tuition as 60% of the examination is related to performance in some way. This can involve any instrument or use of the voice - singing, rapping or beat boxing or DJ-ing or Sequencing

AOS2 “The Concerto through time”

Pupils explore how this rich and varied musical genre, begun in the 18th century, pitches the soloist battling against the might of the orchestra in what is a spectacle of music theatre.

AOS3 “Rhythms of the World”

Pupils study the traditional rhythmic roots of four geographical regions:

India and the Punjab
Africa

Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East
Central and Southern America

AOS4 “Film Music”

GCSE musicians take the Year 9 “Film Music” unit further by studying:

- Music that has been specifically composed for film.
- Music from the western classical tradition that has been used within film.
- Music that has been composed as a soundtrack for a video game.

AOS5 “Conventions of Pop”

GCSE musicians take the Year 9 “Into the Blue” unit further and study a range of popular music from the 1950s to the present day focusing on:

Rock ‘n’ Roll of the 1950s and 1960s
Pop Ballads of the 1970s - 1990s

Rock Anthems of the 1970s and 1980s
Solo Artists from 1990 to the present day

Where it can lead:

GCSE Music is essential for pupils interested in post-16 study and beyond, besides being ideal for those that simply like playing an instrument or singing. Within the course Music technology plays a vital role in facilitating composition and much more.

OCR Cambridge National Sports Studies Level 1/2

Type of qualification: OCR Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Sport Studies

How it is assessed

There are three units:

R184: Contemporary issues in sport. This is assessed by an exam. By completing this unit pupils will understand a range of topical and contemporary issues in sport, including learning about participation levels and barriers to completing sporting activities. Pupils will also learn how participation is impacted by the promotion of values and ethical behaviour, about the role of high-profile sporting events, the role of national governing bodies and how technology is used within sport.

Topics include issues which affect participation in sport, the role of sport in promoting values, the implications of hosting a major sporting event for a city or country, the role National Governing Bodies (NGBs) play in the development of their sport and the use of technology in sport.

R185: Performance and leadership in sports activities This is assessed by a set assignment. In this unit pupils will have an opportunity to develop their skills both as a performer in two different sporting activities, and as a leader, developing a range of transferable skills. Pupils will work both independently and as part of a team, including communicating with team mates as well as being in front of an audience when you perform. Pupils will perform under pressure, both as a participant and as a leader, and will use their initiative to solve problems and make decisions. Finally, you will deal with rapidly changing conditions and situations. Topics will include key components of performance, applying practice methods to support improvement in a sporting activity, organising and planning a sports activity session, leading a sports activity session, reviewing pupils' own performance in planning and leading a sports activity session.

R187: Increasing awareness of Outdoor and Adventurous Activities This is assessed by a set assignment. In this unit pupils will understand how to find out information about what opportunities there are in your local area as well as nationally in the UK for all different types of outdoor/adventurous activities. Pupils will learn how to enjoy the activities safely by finding out what equipment, clothing, facilities and technology they need, as well as completing planning to help keep them safe. Topics include provision for different types of outdoor and adventurous activities in the UK, equipment, clothing and safety aspects of participating in outdoor and adventurous activities, plan for and be able to participate in an outdoor and adventurous activity evaluate participation in an outdoor and adventurous activity.

Possible outcomes

The grades available are:

- Distinction* at Level 2 (2*)
- Distinction at Level 2 (D2)
- Merit at Level 2 (M2)
- Pass at Level 2 (P2)
- Distinction at Level 1 (D1)
- Merit at Level 1 (M1)
- Pass at Level 1 (P1)

Where it can lead

- A Level (level3)
- Apprenticeships
- Cambridge Technicals (Level 2/3)



GCSE Religious Education, Philosophy and Ethics

Type of qualification: WJEC Eduqas GCSE (9-1) in Religious Studies Route A C120P1

How it is assessed: 100% Written Examination

Course Overview

This course consists of three modules.

- Component 1 is based on Ethical Studies which covers 4 themes: Relationships, Life and Death, Good and Evil and Human Rights.
- Components 2 and 3 are studies of Christianity and other religion, in this case Buddhism. This will focus on the beliefs, teachings and practices of these religions building upon work completed in Key Stage 3. To ensure a well-rounded course, there are also opportunities to investigate these different concepts from a Humanist and atheist point of view.

This course is designed to make pupils think about what they and what others believe. It focuses on showing that they understand and can dig into the important teachings from different religious groups and apply these to modern scenarios. Pupils will also dive into different ideas within beliefs or belief systems. This helps pupils develop the skills to use what they know to make strong and fair arguments about the beliefs and teachings they are investigating, backing up their points with appropriate evidence.



Where it can lead

Contrary to the general misconception that the only career open to a pupil of Religious Studies is the priesthood, there are a large number of career pathways that are open to you.

The top careers are:

1. Advertising	4. Human Resources	7. Media (journalism)	10. Social/Public Service
2. Archivist (Museums and Libraries)	5. Law	8. Medicine	11. Teaching
3. Charity work	6. Politics / Civil Service	9. Publishing	12. The Church

The course offers a solid foundation in multi-perspective thinking, making it an ideal choice for pupils considering pathways into social sciences like Philosophy, Law, and Religious Education, given its academic rigor. Additionally, this subject imparts essential principles aligned with the British Values of fairness and tolerance of diversity. Such values are crucial for professions such as law enforcement, the armed forces, legal practice, nursing, or any field involving significant interaction with diverse individuals.

GCSE Sciences

Type of qualification: AQA GCSE (9-1) (either 8461/2/3, or 8464)

Pupils will either follow the Triple Sciences course or the Combined Sciences course. All pupils will study the three main areas of Biology, Chemistry & Physics, regardless of which qualification they eventually take.

Combined Science (8464) – Trilogy

Who is it designed for?

Combined Science (Trilogy) is designed for pupils who have an interest in science but prefer a broader approach. This course covers a wide range of scientific concepts and is suitable for those who want a general understanding of biology, chemistry, and physics.

Areas covered:

Biology:

- Cell biology: Study of cells, their structure, and functions.
- Organization: Understanding the hierarchical organization of living organisms.
- Infection and response: Exploration of the body's defences against diseases.
- Bioenergetics: Investigation of the flow and transfer of energy in living organisms.
- Homeostasis and response: Study of how organisms maintain a stable internal environment.
- Inheritance, variation, and evolution: Understanding genetic principles and mechanisms of evolution.
- Ecology: Exploration of ecosystems, populations, and environmental interactions.



Chemistry:

- Atomic structure and the periodic table: Study of atoms, elements, and their arrangement.
- Bonding, structure, and properties of matter: Understanding how atoms combine to form substances.
- Quantitative chemistry: Application of mathematical concepts to chemical problems.
- Chemical changes: Investigation of reactions and their products.
- Energy changes: Exploration of energy transfer in chemical reactions.
- The rate and extent of chemical change: Study of reaction rates and equilibrium.
- Organic chemistry: Understanding the properties and reactions of organic compounds.
- Chemical analysis: Techniques for identifying and measuring substances.

Physics:

- Energy: Study of different forms of energy and energy transfers.
- Electricity: Understanding the principles of electric circuits and devices.
- Particle model of matter: Exploration of the properties and behaviour of matter at the particle level.
- Atomic structure: Study of atoms and their structure.
- Forces: Investigation of forces and their effects on objects.
- Waves: Understanding the properties and behaviour of waves.
- Magnetism and electromagnetism: Exploration of magnetic and electromagnetic phenomena.
- Space physics: Study of the solar system, stars, and the universe.

How is it assessed?

Combined Science is assessed through six exam papers, two for each of the three sciences: Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Each exam lasts 75 minutes. Exams are taken at the end of Year 11.

Higher Tier

The higher tier in Combined Science (Trilogy) is designed for pupils aiming for higher grades. Pupils on the higher tier will be assessed on a broader range of topics within each science, covering more complex concepts and applications. This tier provides the opportunity for pupils to achieve grades 9/9 to 4/4.

Foundation Tier

The foundation tier in Combined Science covers a subset of topics within each science at a level suitable for pupils targeting grades 1/1 to 4/4. The questions on the foundation tier are designed to assess understanding of fundamental concepts without delving into the more advanced aspects covered in the higher tier.

Required Practical Activities

Throughout the course, pupils will engage in a series of required practical activities that complement theoretical learning. These hands-on experiments provide a practical understanding of scientific concepts and develop essential investigative skills.

Main Differences from Separate Sciences

- **Depth of Study:** Combined Science covers a broad range of topics in each science discipline but with less depth compared to Separate Sciences.
- **Number of Exams:** Combined Science pupils take six exams (two for each science) compared to Separate Sciences pupils who take nine exams (three for each science).
- **Content:** Separate Sciences go into greater detail on specific topics, providing a more in-depth understanding of biology, chemistry, and physics.

Making Your Decision

Consider your interests, strengths, and future aspirations when making your decision. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to your teachers for guidance. Best of luck with your GCSE Science journey!

Separate Sciences

Biology (8461) Chemistry (8462) Physics (8463)

The three separate science GCSEs have to be studied together; pupils cannot choose just one or two of the courses alone.

The separate sciences cover more material than the combined sciences course; where they study the same topic, the separate sciences courses go into greater detail.

The teaching time for the separate sciences is the same as for combined sciences course; therefore, the pace of the separate sciences course is faster to cover all of the material.

Tiers of entry

As with the combined sciences course, the exams can be taken at both foundation and higher level.

Who is this choice aimed at?

This pathway is aimed at pupils who are:

- Wishing to go into careers in science and/or study a scientific subject at university – medical, veterinary, pharmaceutical, chemical, engineering, nuclear, astronomical etc.
- Wanting to follow a face-paced course and gain an extra GCSE in the process.
- Or just interested in the natural world and how things work.

How is it assessed?

Biology, Chemistry, and Physics are assessed by three exams for each discipline. Exams are taken at the end of Year 11.

GCSE Spanish

Type of qualification: AQA GCSE (9-1) in Spanish (8692)

How it is assessed: (All examinations are at the end of Year 11)
25% Listening Examination
25% Speaking Examination
25% Reading Examination
25% Writing Examination



Course Overview

Spanish provides a practical and engaging course, designed to inspire and develop pupils' language skills. Pupils will develop transferable skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. This approach supports the new style linear framework. It will also provide very marketable skills, as employers are increasingly seeking employees with language skills.



The course covers the following themes and topics:

Theme 1: People and lifestyle:

- Identity and relationships with others
- Healthy living and lifestyle
- Education and work

Theme 2: Popular culture:

- Free-time activities
- Customs, festivals and celebration
- Celebrity culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us:

- Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Media and technology
- Celebrity culture

Finally, please remember that this course requires a strong work ethic, as regular consolidation of the learning outside the lessons is essential for pupils to achieve their potential. Pupils who have had only one Spanish lesson per week will not be able to choose this option.

Where it can lead

A GCSE in a foreign language is a well-respected qualification that will benefit a number of areas even if you don't decide to continue its study at A-Level. Indeed, in the recent past a Foreign Language GCSE was a pre-requisite for entry to many universities. It is also a key differentiator of job applicants across a wide range of areas. The knowledge of Spanish is in demand in many industries.

Notes to complete before your guidance meeting

Date and time of guidance meeting	Who with? Where?

What career might you like to pursue? _____

Will you need A-levels/ a degree / an apprenticeship? _____

Where might you like to go when you leave MVC? _____

Which options might you like at the moment? (1=favourite, 2= next favourite.....)

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	