



DIOCESE OF  
OXFORD

**Every Child Every Lesson Every Day**

# **The Key Stage 4 Curriculum 2026-2029**

## **CHOOSING YOUR OPTIONS**

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# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

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# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

*Welcome*

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December 2025

Dear Student

## **Re: YEAR 9 OPTIONS: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE**

Year 8 into 9 Options is one of the most exciting times in your education as it gives you your first real opportunity to select some of the subjects that you will study for the next three years. It also marks the start of planning for your future; the decisions that you make now will have an impact on post 16 and career choices.

At The Piggott School our aim is to offer all students a broad, well balanced and relevant learning programme.

All of you will continue to study the examined 'core' subjects of: **English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science (single or double) and Religious Studies.**

You will also study courses in **Physical Education and PSHCE.** Opportunities exist for you to study a range of other GCSE courses.

Every effort is made by your subject teachers, form tutors, Head of Year and the Senior Leadership Team, to offer you information, advice and guidance in the weeks leading up to this time of choice



Mr MacLeod  
Deputy Headteacher

# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## *FAQs for students*

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### **WHO chooses my options?**

YOU choose your subjects. You should talk things through with your parents and you will also be helped by your teachers.

### **WHY is my choice important?**

You are making a three year commitment and it is vital that you enjoy what you are doing.

You are preparing yourself for both working and leisure time in the future; you should consider both aspects. Your choices now may well make a big difference to which courses you can take in Years 12 and 13 and later, at university, or at work.

### **HOW do I make my choice?**

#### **DO:**

- Find out exactly what each course involves by reading the details in this booklet.
- Consider how well you will cope with the demands of the subject. (Ask your teachers for help.)
- Consider the entrance requirements of any area of employment you are interested in.
- Be careful not to close any doors at this stage because you may well change your mind about jobs later.

#### **DON'T** choose a subject because:

- Your friend is doing the course
- You like the teacher
- You think it will be easy

### **WHICH courses must I take?**

Some of your curriculum is compulsory. You will continue to take English, Mathematics, Science, PE, Religious Studies and PSHCE.

**In addition** you choose 4 subjects from the options blocks.

### **How many examination subjects will I take?**

Most students take a maximum of 10.

# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## *Key stage 4 Option Subject List*

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Art and Design GCSE  
Business GCSE  
Chinese GCSE  
Computer Science GCSE  
Design & Technology GCSE  
Drama GCSE  
Food Preparation and Nutrition GCSE  
French GCSE  
Further Mathematics Level 2 and Statistics GCSE  
Geography GCSE  
German GCSE  
History GCSE  
Media Studies GCSE  
Music GCSE  
Photography GCSE  
Physical Education GCSE  
Spanish GCSE

# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## *CEAIG—Careers Education, Advice, Information & Guidance*

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The choices that you make now are very important as they can affect the range of options available to you at the end of Year 11. To help make the right choices in Year 8, students are provided with reliable and timely careers information.

### **The Piggott School provides:**

#### **Year 8**

- Careers lessons in PSHCE
- Computer software to match strengths and preferences to occupations
- Specialist lessons/assemblies focusing on option choices
- Lunchtime drop-in sessions with our Advice and Guidance Mentor
- Careers guidance from specialist staff at school
- A Virtual Options Evening
- One to one meeting with the Leadership Team
- An opportunity to visit a careers convention/job fair

#### **Year 9 and beyond**

- A PSHCE programme that focuses on preparation for career management and exploration
- Guest speakers in a number of occupational areas from industry
- Interviews with careers advisors
- Help with career decisions at 16+
- Use of drop-in career clinics

### **Students are reminded that they can help themselves by:**

- Researching career options online. Suggested sites are detailed below:  
[www.fasttomato.com](http://www.fasttomato.com)  
[www.icould.com/watch-career-videos/](http://www.icould.com/watch-career-videos/)  
[www.educationandemployers.org/programmes/tes-growing-ambitions/](http://www.educationandemployers.org/programmes/tes-growing-ambitions/)  
[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)  
[www.careersbox.co.uk](http://www.careersbox.co.uk)  
[www.adviza.org.uk/who-am-i/young-person](http://www.adviza.org.uk/who-am-i/young-person)  
[www.unifrog.com](http://www.unifrog.com) (students will receive a log in to this as they move through KS4)
- Using careers related computer software
- Talking about their career ideas with their teachers

# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## *Art & Design*

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### **What are the areas I will study?**

The Art department offers AQA, GCSE Art & Design.

### **What activities will I take part in?**

This course offers each student the opportunity to explore a wide range of materials, skills and techniques, covering a variety of aspects within Art and Design. In Year 9 we will begin with a series of foundation projects that introduce students to skills and techniques that are necessary to successfully complete the course. In year 10 they will complete a project set by their class teacher before moving on to plan and develop their own project based on the skills and strengths of their work.

The themes and materials covered on this course are very wide ranging and include areas of graphic design, including digital design using Photoshop, photography, textile silk design and ceramics, as well as the very popular traditional 2D media of drawing, painting and printmaking including etching and relief printing.

The Art department runs an open studio every Friday from 3pm until 4.15pm and we encourage as many students as possible to attend regularly.

### **What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?**

Students will be encouraged to develop knowledge, skills and values which will help them to express their own ideas, thoughts and feelings. They should gain an understanding of some of the creative processes used within Art and Design, helping them to develop their own ideas and produce their own personal outcomes.

Students will also develop the skills to evaluate their own work and the work of other artists. They will be required to discuss their work and ideas with other members of the class as well as their teacher.

### **How will I be assessed?**

Coursework completed in class accounts for 60% of the final grade. The remaining 40% is an externally set project which culminates in a 10 hour practical examination on a theme for which students have carefully researched and prepared ideas.

### **Who do I see for more information?**

For more information, students can speak to their individual Art teacher or come and talk to Mrs Franklin (Room 10).

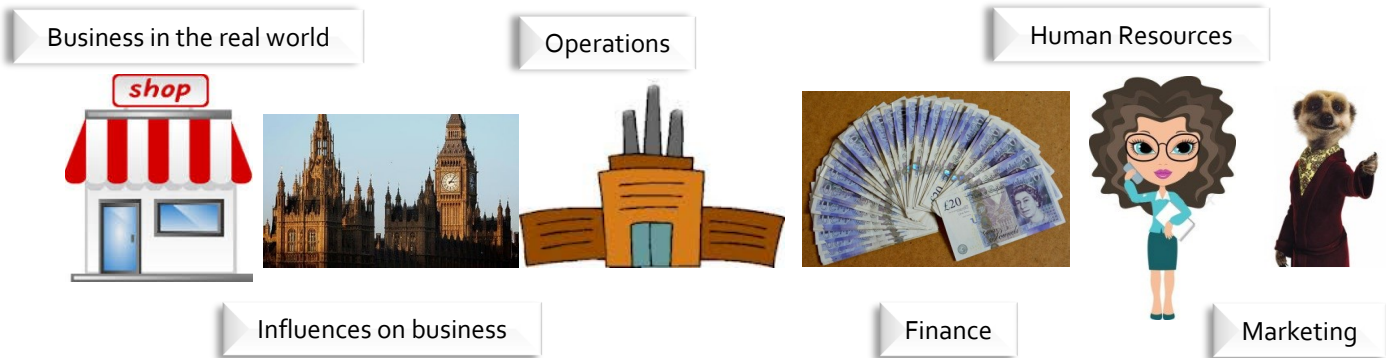


# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## Business GCSE

### What are the areas I will study?

Business is the study of how businesses work, the problems they face and how to overcome them. Business, and the day-to-day running of businesses, throws up a great deal of challenges; you learn to become problem solvers, often by working in a team and using real-life situations and companies. You will study all aspects of businesses including the real world around them. The exam board is AQA.



### What activities will I take part in?

- You will gain an insight on working life and society
- There are informative and enjoyable lessons with opportunities for group and class discussion and opinion on current topics that affect the UK and economies throughout the world
- The department organises trips to companies to appreciate Business outside of the classroom
- Lessons are interactive, engaging, thought-provoking and fun with opportunities to take part in group work, presentations, case studies and ICT activities. Pupils like being in the department!

### What will I study and how will I be assessed?

GCSE Business encourages pupils to:

- ✓ Become effective and independent learners and as reflective thinkers with enquiring minds
- ✓ Develop as enterprising individuals
- ✓ Use an enquiring, critical approach, build arguments and make informed judgements
- ✓ You will develop key skills, such as communication, team-working, organisation, leadership, creativity, speaking and application to the real world through group projects
- ✓ Apply your knowledge, understanding and skills to contemporary business and global issues
- ✓ Appreciate the ever-changing business environment, especially technology
- ✓ Consider ethics and sustainability
- ✓ Develop your skills for further education and employment



The exam asks you to apply your answers to short case studies based on a variety of businesses, you will need the ability to problem solve, apply, think deeply, analyse and give opinion. You will be prepared for this through revision sessions, mock exam papers and one-to-one and group support.

We hope that you find Business challenging and rewarding, and that you gain a greater knowledge of business and the outside world. Most of all: enjoy it!

### Who do I see for more information?

Come and talk to Mr. Drosdzowski (Business Office in Sixth Form or room S3)  
or email: [DrosdzowskiC@piggottschool.org](mailto:DrosdzowskiC@piggottschool.org)

# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## Chinese



### Why should I be considering doing a Chinese GCSE?

Learning a language is a key skill in the modern world of work. Some countries of your age will speak a number of languages, including having an extremely high level of European language and English. We don't want you to be disadvantaged, so having a level of fluency at GCSE Chinese level will be imperative and will allow you to communicate with over one billion of the world.

Chinese GCSE will prepare you linguistically for the next phase of study but will also prepare you to be able to work, study and live in China, Hong Kong & Taiwan or any of the Chinese Speaking countries in the world such as Malaysia, Singapore etc.

### What are the areas I will study?

We follow the Edexcel GCSE exam syllabus. The Chinese course is tailored to the study of practical everyday situations including Identity and culture, Local area, holiday and travel, School, Work, Future plans and international and global areas of interest including Environmental Problems. All these topics are rooted specifically in the customs of Chinese speaking countries and you will absorb aspects of culture, geography, music, traditions and history as part of the course.

The **examined four skill areas** are as follows: listening, reading, speaking and writing.

Support for these areas can be found on specific websites and the relevant Google Classroom platform where we post extra material, revision notes, presentations and study videos, improving your language to GCSE Chinese standard which will give you more ideas of content and ideas for making the most of your Chinese.

### What activities will I take part in? What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?

A GCSE in a Modern Foreign Language will prepare you for the next phase of your life and with the unpredictability of post-Brexit Europe, it is essential that as students of Chinese at the Piggott School, you have the required skills to keep you ahead of your contemporaries in terms of employability. It will also provide you the communication skills and resilience to compete in an ever changing world. You can be a real speaker of Chinese upon leaving the Piggott and at every juncture of the languages learning journey you will find your own success that you will take on to the next phase.

As well as classroom lessons, we will use our new Chromebooks to practise key language and grammar structures using a series of specific MFL apps such as **Quizlet, Edmodo, Mandarin Matrix, Duolingo**, which will allow you to work more independently both in and outside the classroom. These lessons will also be timetabled fortnightly across the timetable and will be integral in all three years of the GCSE Chinese course not only in your language learning, but also in broadening your understanding of other cultures. In classroom lessons you will be given expert teaching in how to expand your knowledge in the four language skills as well as developing a cultural and linguistic understanding pertinent to the language you are studying. Nearer the exams, we will offer weekly bespoke revision and exam skills practice as well as specific revision classes to ensure that you achieve the very highest grade.

Look out for the MEP trip to China, which takes place in Year 9, where you and your friends will be able to put your language skills to the test in real-life situations. As part of this, we dedicate an entire module at the start of the GCSE course to contextualising the trip and practising the language needed to live successfully in China for around 12 days. If you missed the school exchange trip for any reason, you will have another opportunity of join the whole UK's MEP summer camp in summer holiday to suit your timetable better.

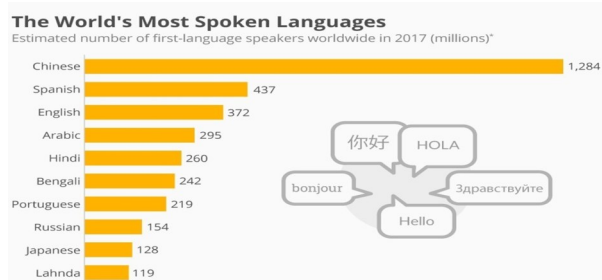
### How will I be assessed?

The final GCSE grade will be split equally between the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Final assessment will be graded from 1-9

<b>Listening Test 25%</b>
<b>Speaking assessment 25%</b>
<b>Reading Test 25%</b>
<b>Written assessment 25%</b>

### Who do I see for more information?

If you wish to know more, please talk to Mr Connor, the Head of MFL, and Miss Hyde and Ms Hsu the Chinese teachers



# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## Computer Science

### What are the areas I will study?

In a day and age where almost every sphere of our life is dominated by computers and technology, the study of Computer Science will teach you how these computer systems are designed and programmed, how they communicate and how data they hold can be kept secure.

You will learn about diverse computational systems and how they influence all fields of life today. Whatever future career you go on to choose, the skills that you will learn in this course, for example, of computational thinking, problem solving, algorithm design and programming, will prove invaluable to you.

This is an academic qualification that counts towards your EBacc. Apart from helping develop general critical thinking and logical reasoning skills, this course is also particularly suited for students who have an interest in software development or a career in a STEM related subject in the future

### What activities will I take part in?

- Computer Science lessons are fun, fast-paced and exciting, where you will have many opportunities for group work and class discussions with like-minded and dedicated peers.
- We have subject specialist teachers who are passionate about the subject and will give you a very solid grounding in it. Our excellent results every year is testimony to this.
- You will be given the chance to mentor younger students and in turn will be supported by your senior mentors in our specially designed support sessions
- You will create your own applications/projects using Python and discover other languages like SQL.
- Discover how you can take an idea and turn it into a working solution.
- We liaise with many organisations including Microsoft, Cisco, Oracle, the NCSC and National Museum of Computing to arrange seminars/competitions/trips for all students.



### Who should do this subject?

You should do this subject if you have liked the programming topics like BitsBox, Small Basic, Python etc. and /or the theory topics like Networking, Binary, Cyber security, etc.

### What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?

The qualification will build on the knowledge, understanding and skills established through the Computer Science elements of the Key Stage 3 programme of study. This qualification gets pupils to think about real world problems and the way they can use computational thinking to solve them. This qualification encourages learners to understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of Computer Science including:

- Knowledge of internals of computer systems, and how computers communicate
- Binary and data representation
- Designing, programming, testing and refining software solutions
- Think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically
- Understand the impact of digital technology to the individual and to wider society

### How will I be assessed?

The exam board OCR requires you to sit 2 externally assessed exams. Each contributes to 50% of your overall grade.

The exams will cover a wide range of topics that teach you the *theory of Computer Science* like components of a PC, CPU architecture, how computers are networked, operating systems, systems security and also, *advanced programming concepts* including algorithms, computational thinking and how data is represented in computer systems.

Questions will include various styles, from short answers to longer style questions that will require both knowledge and its application to given scenarios. You will be prepared for your exams through revision sessions, mock exam papers, and both one-to-one and group support.

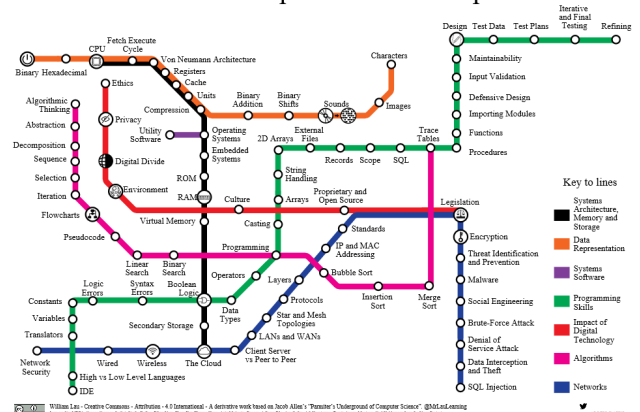
Apart from this, you will also get the opportunity to design, code, and test exciting programs (non-assessed) using Python skills. Through these, you will gain an excellent insight into the world of software engineering, and highly in-demand skills such as analysis, design, programming, logical and critical thinking.

### Who do I see for more information?

*Mrs Bhattacharya—Head of Computing*

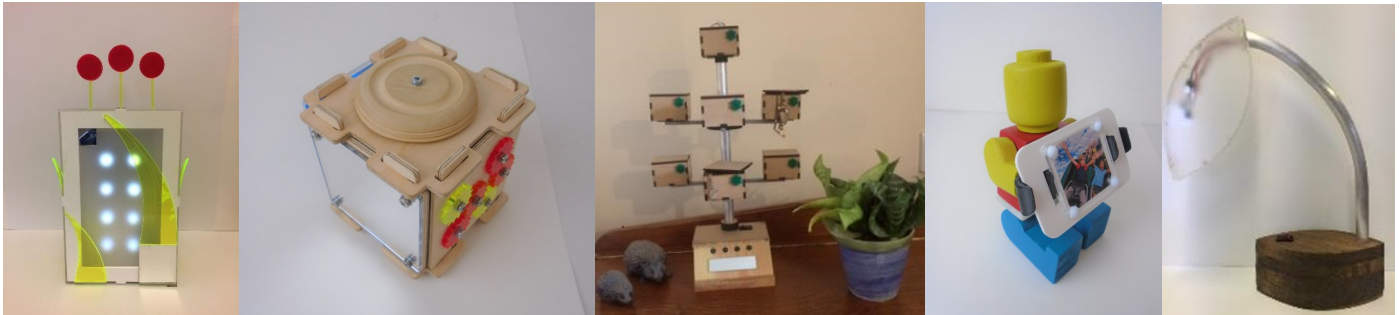


### GCSE Computer Science Map



# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## Design & Technology



Design and Technology will give you opportunities to combine your designing and making skills with knowledge and understanding in order to create high quality products. Design and Technology will also prepare you for future career paths in engineering, manufacturing and the creative industries, whilst developing critical skills in problem-solving, innovation and team-work.

### What are the material areas I can study?

The core theory will cover metals, papers and boards, polymers (plastics), systems (electronics and mechanisms), timbers and textiles. You will have the opportunity to specialise in more depth on a specific material area, which is usually timbers but can depend on the preference and strengths of each group. You will be able to use any materials in your non-exam assessment (NEA) project regardless of the specialist material category you study for the written exam.

### What activities will I take part in?

D&T is predominantly a practical subject that will enable you to understand and apply iterative design processes through which you explore, create and evaluate a range of outcomes. You will use creativity and technical skills to design and make products which solve real and relevant problems, whilst considering your own and others' needs, wants and values.

You will build on your KS3 subject knowledge and understanding of different materials and manufacturing processes in order to design and make prototypes with confidence. You will learn how to take design risks, helping you to become resourceful, innovative and enterprising. You will also develop an awareness of practices from the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries.

### What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?

The D&T department is very well equipped and you will have the opportunity to use a range of specialist tools and equipment, including the laser cutter, CNC router and 3D printer, to safely produce high quality products.

You will learn about a range of materials, including their properties and manufacturing techniques. You will use Computer Aided Design and Computer Aided Manufacture to communicate and develop your designs. You will also develop an understanding of wider issues in design and technology, including social, moral, ethical and environmental impacts.

### How will I be assessed?

50% will be from an external exam which will have two sections: (i) the core content and (ii) specialist material category.

50% of the total marks will be from a non-exam assessment (NEA). The NEA will require you to produce a functioning prototype based on a design brief and specification you develop in response to a challenge set by the exam board. When completing your project you will apply designing and making principles alongside your knowledge and understanding of technical principles.

### Who do I see for further information?

Please see Mr M. Smith (Head of D&T), Mr Demby-Wheeler or Mr V. Smith

# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## Drama



### What are the areas I can study?

Drama is a creative subject that incorporates both practical and theoretical elements through devising, text in performance work, analysis of process (portfolio) and a written exam in the final year that requires practical exploration prior to the examination date. During the course you will work with other people, responding to, developing and presenting your skills through explorative class work and performance. In reflection you will evaluate your own work and that of others through discussion and written based work. From acting, to backstage, design to technical, this is an all-encompassing subject with a range of opportunities made available to you. In addition you will get the chance to see live theatre productions throughout the three years and experience a range of 'developmental' workshops too.

### What activities will I take part in?

**Practical:** *You will be developing your performance skills over the next three years, extending knowledge and understanding of application through a range of different topics/themes, play texts and practitioner study.*

- It is about understanding what it is like to put yourself in somebody else's shoes, considering different viewpoints, as well as your own.
- It is about playing many parts in different imaginary situations, being part of a team and being able to co-operate positively with others.
- It is about being able to work with a variety of people in pair, group and whole class work, as well as individually. To be able to rehearse in and out of the class.
- It is about having the opportunity to create your own work as well as looking at plays written by other people.
- It is about developing communication, confidence and analytical skills, putting forward your ideas and listening to other peoples.

**Written:** *You will be expected to respond to, develop and evaluate classwork and performances in order to become a reflective and independent learner. This will be recorded in purpose-built portfolios and assessed in a final 1 hour 45 minute exam that questions the study of a set text and asks for evaluation of a piece of live theatre seen.*

### What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?

Drama is a subject that develops your sense of responsibility, in terms of working as part of a team and being responsible for your own learning. You will learn to be objective about your work and be able to assess it honestly. In addition, you will develop your knowledge of Drama skills and techniques, playwrights, practitioners and genres/styles.

### How will I be assessed?

The course is in three parts:

Component	Overview	Assessment
<b>Component 1 Devising</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students devise a piece of theatre from a given starting point which they then perform.</li><li>• They will also create a written or spoken portfolio covering the creating and developing process and analysis and evaluation of this process.</li></ul>	Internally assessed Externally moderated <b>40%</b>
<b>Component 2 Performance from Text</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students will either perform in and/or design for two key extracts from a performance text.</li></ul>	Externally assessed by a visiting examiner <b>20%</b>
<b>Component 3 Theatre Makers in Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choice of one set text from eight. Must be explored practically. Questions will explore approaches as a performer, director and designer.</li><li>• Evaluation of a piece of Live Theatre they have seen.</li></ul>	Exam: 1 hour 45 mins Section A: Questions on set text Section B: Live Theatre Evaluation <b>40%</b>

### Who do I see for more information?

Please see Mrs. Tomo (Subject Leader) or Ms Parsons. We will also be running taster sessions. Check the Drama notice board for details.

# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## Food Preparation and Nutrition

### What are the areas I will study?

This GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition will equip students with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. The six main topics cover: Food, Nutrition and Health, Food Science, Food Safety, Food Choice, Food Provenance plus Food Preparation and Cooking Skills.

### What activities will I take part in?

This is a practical subject in which you will be given the opportunity to select, prepare and cook a wide range of dishes. You will develop your practical and experimental skills alongside report writing and data analysis. Your investigations will involve tasting, testing, functions of ingredients and comparisons. You will work both in groups and individually to assess nutritional value of dishes and learn how they can be adapted to suit different dietary needs.

Tasks will include nutritional analyses, the relationship between diet and nutrition, the relationship between nutrition and health, manufacturing processes, the uses of appropriate equipment, environmental and sustainability issues, and how to produce high skilled dishes.

### What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?

Food Preparation and Nutrition is about the knowledge, understanding and skills required when cooking to properly apply the principles of food science, nutrition, healthy eating and modifying recipes.

You will gain knowledge through theory and practical situations. You will develop an understanding of what happens when food is cooked, how to select, prepare and store foods, and how to work hygienically and safely to provide a balanced diet for yourself and others.

You will develop your practical skills and confidence in the kitchen through a variety of assignments. You will explore a range of culinary traditions, ingredients, and techniques including traditional British and also those from across the globe to inspire new ideas and create your own recipes. You will also learn to evaluate and analyse existing products and modify and improve them.

### How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed through two Non-Exam Assessments (NEAs) worth 50% of your final grade. **Task 1** is a Food Investigation – investigating the functional and nutritional properties of ingredients (worth 15%) which is usually between 6-8 pages including graphs and photographs. **Task 2** is a Food Preparation Task which includes planning, preparing and presenting 3 dishes relating to a set task. The task will refer to an age range, dietary need, or culinary tradition (worth 35%). This includes a 3 hour practical assessment to make the dishes. This is usually around 20 pages including photographs. Both of these tasks will be completed within lessons. There is also a **Final written paper** worth 50% completed at the end of the course.

### Who do I see for more information?

Please see Miss Bennett



# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029



## French

### Why should I be considering doing GCSE French?

Learning a language is a key skill in the modern world. Many Europeans of your age will speak a number of languages and are quite likely to speak English to a high standard. As one of the world's largest economies and a leading destination for foreign investment, France is a key economic partner. French is both a working language and an official language of the United Nations, the European Union, UNESCO, NATO, the International Olympic Committee, the International Red Cross and international courts. Knowledge of and proficiency in French increases your job opportunities with French companies in your own country and abroad, and with employers in Britain with global business connections. France is home to many global players, such as AXA Insurance, Orange, Renault, Peugeot, Christian Dior and L'Oréal, and French is spoken by more than 300 million people across 29 countries and five continents.

### How might it tie in with my other subjects?

French ties in well with **Business Studies**, where knowing the language of your French business partners improves your working relations and therefore your chances of success. Developments in **Media, Science, Information and Communication Technology** have also increased the need for multilingual communicators. **Tourism** is a huge industry in France, which is the most visited country in the world. Finally, **Literature, Music, Art and Food**: France is famous throughout the world for its rich cultural heritage. But really, French fits well with any other subject as part of a broad and balanced set of GCSE courses.

### What are the areas I will study?

We follow the Edexcel GCSE exam syllabus. The French course focuses on the study of practical everyday situations including identity and culture, local area, holiday and travel, school, work, future plans and international and global areas of interest including environmental problems. All these topics are rooted specifically in France and you will learn aspects of culture, geography and history as part of the course. Support for these areas can be found on specific websites and the relevant Google Classroom platform where we post extra material, revision notes, presentations and study videos.

### What activities will I take part in? What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?

A GCSE in French will prepare you for the next phase of your life and with the unpredictability of post-Brexit Europe, it is essential that as students at the Piggott School, you have the required skills to keep you ahead of your contemporaries in terms of employability. It will also provide you with the communication skills and resilience to compete in an ever-changing world, as well as the opportunity to pursue a career or further study in Europe and beyond.

As well as classroom lessons, we will take advantage of our new Chromebooks, to practise key language and grammar using a series of specific MFL apps such as **Quizlet, Memrise, Duolingo, This is Language and The Language Gym** which will allow you to work more independently both in and outside the classroom. These lessons will be timetabled fortnightly and will be integral to all three years of the GCSE course. In classroom lessons you will be given expert teaching in how to expand your knowledge in the four language skills as well as developing a cultural awareness of France and Francophone countries. Nearer the exams, we will offer bespoke revision and exam skills practice to ensure that you achieve the highest grade possible.

Look out for the exchange trip to France, where you and your friends will be able to put your language skills to the test in real life situations!

### How will I be assessed?

The final GCSE grade will be split equally between the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Final assessment will be graded from 1-9.

<b>Listening Test 25%</b>
<b>Speaking assessment 25%</b>
<b>Reading Test 25%</b>
<b>Written assessment 25%</b>

### Who do I see for more information?

If you wish to know more, please talk to your French teacher or Mr Hersent, Subject Leader for French or Mr Connor, Head of MFL.



# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## *Further Mathematics and Statistics*

### **What areas will I study?**

This course is designed for students who are likely to achieve grade 8 or 9 in GCSE Mathematics and who are highly likely to progress to A-level study in Mathematics and possibly Further Mathematics.

Teaching and learning will be fast-paced with intentional daily demand.

Two courses would be studied within this one option block: Level 2 Further Mathematics and GCSE Statistics.

Studying Level 2 Further Mathematics would allow suitable students to broaden and deepen their knowledge. There will be an emphasis both on additional content and on higher order technical proficiency, rigorous argument and mathematical problem-solving skills. For example students will deploy numerical skills in an abstract mathematical way and also in context in real-life situations. They will make increasing use of algebra as well as calculus in order to set up and solve problems and they will learn to model situations with exponential functions and rates of change. Topic areas will also include functions and indices, trigonometry, matrices and proof.

Alongside this, by studying GCSE Statistics students would be expanding their ability to make sense of data. This is clearly a very useful skill for working life and full citizenship in our modern society. For instance one area of focus will be data collection, in terms of the planning of investigations, suitable design constraints, populations and sampling, controlling variables, minimising distortion, cleaning data and acknowledging sources. Students will learn to use technical statistical terminology and symbolism including formal notation for probability. They will be given the opportunity during the course to use computer-based tools to collect, understand, analyse and report on real-life datasets.

### **How will I be assessed?**

Assessment for Level 2 Further Mathematics involves two written examinations.

Assessment for GCSE Statistics also consists of two written exams.

### **Who do I see for more information?**

Miss Forrest, Head of Mathematics

Please note that to study Mathematics at A-level it will not have been essential to take this option in Key Stage 4. For many students with strengths and interests in a variety of subject areas, it may well be more appropriate to make GCSE options choices which prioritise breadth rather than early specialisation.



# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## Geography

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GCSE Geography offers students an exciting journey into understanding the world, preparing them for both academic success and a wide range of future careers. Studying geography at Piggott enables students to be engaged, active and global citizens, enhancing knowledge of both the natural and human world, and equipping students with essential life skills. This subject is highly valued by universities and employers for the critical thinking, data analysis, and communication skills it builds, opening pathways to careers in fields such as urban planning, environmental consultancy within businesses, international development, and meteorology.

### What will I study?

#### 1. Living with the Physical Environment (1 1/2 hour exam, 35% of grade)

- *The Challenge of Natural Hazards:* Understanding natural disasters, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and extreme weather events, and how societies can prepare for and mitigate these hazards.
- *Physical Landscapes in the UK:* Exploring diverse landscapes across the UK, from coastlines to river systems, and the physical processes that shape them.
- *The Living World:* Investigating ecosystems such as tropical rainforests and hot deserts, as well as issues relating to biodiversity and conservation.

#### 2. Challenges in the Human Environment (1 1/2 hour exam, 35% of grade)

- *Urban Issues and Challenges:* Studying the growth and challenges of urban areas, including megacities and urban regeneration projects.
- *The Changing Economic World:* Examining global development disparities and how economies change over time, focusing on factors influencing economic growth.
- *The Challenge of Resource Management:* Focusing on the critical issues of managing resources such as water, food, and energy to sustain a growing global population.

#### 3. Geographical Applications (1 1/2 hour exam, 30% of grade)

- *Issue Evaluation:* Applying geographical knowledge to real-world issues, assessing possible solutions and outcomes.
- *Fieldwork:* Conducting field investigations to gather, analyse, and evaluate data in a real-world context.
- *Geographical Skills:* Developing skills in map reading, interpreting graphs, and using data, essential for higher studies and career opportunities.

### What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?

In studying GCSE Geography, students gain a deep understanding of physical processes shaping landscapes, how human actions affect the environment, and global socio-economic issues. They learn to interpret data, identify patterns, evaluate evidence, and make informed judgments on complex issues. Fieldwork provides hands-on experience in data collection and analysis, fostering teamwork, and real-world problem-solving skills. Geography encourages empathy and cultural awareness by exploring diverse places, people, and global issues. This helps students develop respect for the environment and a commitment to sustainable living. Studying GCSE Geography empowers students with critical insights and skills relevant to addressing future challenges in our rapidly changing world. The analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills gained open doors to rewarding careers in diverse fields and make them informed global citizens.

**Ask Mrs Bird or your geography teacher for more information.**



# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## History

### What areas will I study?

In Year 9 students complete their study of The World Since 1901 focusing on the issue of persecution through case studies such as Bosnia, Rwanda and Cambodia and the struggle for independence in India and against apartheid in South Africa

Students then follow the Edexcel History course. The main topics are:

1. The USA, 1954-75: conflict at home and abroad—the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War
2. Early Elizabethan England, 1558-88
3. The American West, c1835-1895
4. Crime and punishment through time, c1000-present. Including an in-depth study of the Ripper murders of 1888

### What activities will I take part in?

In GCSE History we focus on interactive learning which makes the topics covered exciting and engaging. Students are provided with all of the notes they need regarding content so that lessons can focus on developing understanding and skills through activities as diverse as model building to designing board games to re-creating a US newsroom at the time of the Civil Rights Movement.

### What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?

You will learn how to think clearly and to select and analyse information. You will develop an understanding of how and why events occurred, and how people lived and thought in the past. You will learn how to communicate effectively and to debate contentious issues confidently. History is one of the few subjects which teaches the essential skill of thinking critically and also supports other GCSE subjects, particularly English.

### How will I be assessed?

All four units will be assessed through examinations at the end of the GCSE course using a combination of short answers, slightly longer structured responses and the use of sources and interpretations.

### Who do I see for more information?

Please ask any of the History teachers – Miss Curtis, Miss Lunn, Mrs Bird or Miss Sharma



# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## *Media Studies*

Media Studies is based around four key concepts: representation, audiences, industries and media language.

This means you will be learning about how different groups or individuals are represented in the media; how and why audiences consume different media texts; the different organisations that make and control the media products we consume and the ways in which they are produced.

There is a particular focus on how different social groups are represented in a range of media products so if you want to address some of the injustices surrounding race, gender, sexuality or social class, then this is the course for you!

### **What activities will I take part in?**

You will take part in discussion and written analysis of media texts, such as TV and radio programmes, films, adverts, newspapers, magazines, video games and more.

You will also work independently on practical productions, including making either an audio-visual piece or a print piece for your GCSE coursework. This may result in your creating a few pages of your own magazine or a music video to a track by your favourite artist.

### **What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?**

You will become informed about the four key media concepts and their relevance to a whole range of media topics, including print media, television and film, radio and digital media. You will be writing essays about these issues which require similar skills to those used in English. You will be trained in how to use media-specific technology, including image and video-editing software.

Above all, you will be encouraged to think and talk critically about the media and not to take things at face value.

### **How will I be assessed?**

The Media Studies GCSE is a combination of two written exams (70% in total) and coursework (30%).

It must be stressed that media is not a mainly practical subject; it is a rigorous, academic GCSE with less than half of the course dedicated to practical work.

### **Who do I see for more information?**

Ms Humphrey, Head of Media Studies



# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## Music

### What are the areas I will study?

You will perform, compose and listen and appraise following the Edexcel syllabus. This will involve being able to:

- play and/or sing an individual part with technical control, expression, interpretation and, where appropriate, a sense of ensemble (performing).
- create and develop musical ideas in relation to a set of detailed instructions (composing).
- analyse and evaluate music using musical terminology (appraising).

### What activities will I take part in?

As well as making the most of your own musical interests you will be introduced to new styles of music. The world you live in contains many different cultures. Your GCSE course aims to reflect this so you will study various kinds of music, including two set works from each of the following Areas of Study:

- **Instrumental Music 1700-1820**
- **Vocal Music**
- **Music for Stage and Screen**
- **Fusions**

You are expected to support the Music Department by participating in and being committed to extra-curricular activities. There are a number of different groups that you are welcome to join. You should also be undertaking instrumental or vocal lessons with an instrumental/singing teacher as these specific skills are not taught as part of the GCSE.

### What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?

You will:

- understand a range of different kinds of music.
- make judgements about musical quality.
- think creatively and critically.
- work individually as well as in groups to enhance independent and team skills.
- gain confidence in presentations and be aware of how to manage your time and deadlines.

### How will I be assessed?

#### Performing accounts for 30% of your GCSE

- |                            |  |            |
|----------------------------|--|------------|
| a) Solo performance(s)     | You will perform as a soloist for at least one minute.   | <b>15%</b> |
| b) Ensemble performance(s) | You will perform as part of an ensemble for at least one minute.<br>The total duration of all the performances is at least four minutes. | <b>15%</b> |

#### Composing accounts for 30% of your GCSE

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| a) Composition 1 | One composition written to a set brief, based on one of the four Areas of Study. |
| b) Composition 2 | One free composition.  |

#### Listening and appraising accounts for 40% of your GCSE      1hr 45mins

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Listening Paper | A listening paper containing questions based on all four Areas of Study, as well as unfamiliar works and dictation exercises. |
|-----------------|---|

### Who do I see for more information?

Mrs Thompson and Miss Fontan

Also, talk to Music students currently in Years 9, 10 and 11.



# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## *Photography : lens-based and light-based media*

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### **What are the areas I will study?**

The Art department offers AQA, GCSE Photography.

### **What activities will I take part in?**

This course offers each student the opportunity to explore a range of lens-based and light-based media, techniques and processes, including traditional and new technologies.

In Year 9 we will begin with a series of foundation projects that introduce students to skills and techniques that are necessary to successfully complete the course. In years 10 and 11 they will complete a selection of projects of which the initial themes will be set by their class teacher. These projects will then form their coursework portfolio.

The themes and materials covered on this course are very wide ranging and include areas of portraiture, still life photography, graphic design and new media practice such as computer manipulated photography.

### **What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?**

Students will be encouraged to develop knowledge, skills and values which will help them to express their own ideas, thoughts and feelings. They should gain an understanding of viewpoints, composition, focus control, depth of field, movement and narrative as well as an understanding of the formal elements; line, form, colour, tone, pattern, texture.

Students will also develop the skills to evaluate their own work and the work of other artists. They will be required to discuss their work and ideas with other members of the class as well as their teacher.

### **How will I be assessed?**

Coursework completed in class accounts for 60% of the final grade. The remaining 40% is an externally set project which culminates in a 10 hour practical exam on a theme for which students have carefully researched and prepared ideas.

### **Who do I see for more information?**

For more information, students can speak to their individual Art teacher or come and talk to Mrs Franklin (Room 10).



# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## Physical Education Examination Courses

### What are the areas I will study?

The department will offer AQA GCSE PE course.

### What activities will I take part in?

In this course you will study; the theory of physical activity and sport, how the body works, factors affecting performance, diet and drugs, the organisation of sport and issues relating to sport and the community. You will also take part in a number of different practical activities. You will need to be a competent sports person, competing and participating in a range of different sports regularly in and outside of school.

### What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?

Students will be inspired, motivated and challenged, and enable them to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career pathways. They will develop knowledge, understanding, skills and values to develop and maintain their performance in physical activities and understand the benefits to health, fitness and wellbeing. In addition students will develop theoretical knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin physical activity and sport and use this knowledge to improve performance.

You will be expected to bring a folder to each theory lesson to store your theory notes. You will bring kit for all practical lessons, if you are excused you will still be expected to get changed and take on a different role such as coach, leader or official in the lessons. There is also an expectation that you attend extra-curricular clubs to help improve your skill level further. Students choosing GCSE PE are expected to be regularly competing in at least 1–2 sports outside of school to support their practical assessment and overall progress.

Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport (30% of GCSE)

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Movement analysis
- Physical training
- Use of data

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport (30% of GCSE)

- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Health, fitness and well-being
- Use of data

Non-exam assessment: Practical performance in physical activity and sport (40% of GCSE)

Practical performance in three different physical activities

- **One** in a team activity,
- **One** in an individual activity
- **One** in either a team or in an individual activity
- Analysis and evaluation of performance

### Who do I see for more information?

If you would like more information, see a member of the Physical Education Department.



# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

Spanish



## Why should I be considering doing a Spanish GCSE?

Learning a language is a key skill in the modern world of work. Many Europeans of your age will speak a number of languages, including having an extremely high level of English. We don't want you to be disadvantaged, so having a level of fluency at GCSE Spanish level will be imperative and will allow you to communicate with 85% of the world.

Spanish GCSE will prepare you linguistically for the next phase of study but will also prepare you to be able to work, study and live in Spain or any of the 20 Spanish Speaking countries in the world.

## What are the areas I will study?

We follow the Edexcel GCSE exam syllabus. The Spanish course is tailored to the study of practical everyday situations including Identity and culture, Local area, holiday and travel, School, Work, Future plans and international and global areas of interest including Environmental Problems. All these topics are rooted specifically in the customs of Spanish speaking countries and you will absorb aspects of culture, geography, music, traditions and history as part of the course.



The **examined four skill areas** are as follows: listening, reading, speaking and writing.

Support for these areas can be found on specific websites and the relevant Google Classroom platform where we post extra material, revision notes, presentations and study videos. See QR code to 'Improving your language to GCSE Spanish standard' which will give you more ideas of content and ideas for making the most of your Spanish.

## What activities will I take part in? What knowledge, understanding, skills and values will I develop?

A GCSE in a Modern Foreign Language will prepare you for the next phase of your life and with the unpredictability of post-Brexit Europe, it is essential that as students of Spanish at the Piggott School, you have the required skills to keep you ahead of your contemporaries in terms of employability. It will also provide you the communication skills and resilience to compete in an ever changing world. You can be a real speaker of Spanish upon leaving the Piggott and at every juncture of the languages learning journey you will find your own success that you will take on to the next phase.

As well as classroom lessons, we will use our new Chromebooks to practise key language and grammar structures using a series of specific MFL apps such as **Quizlet, Memrise, Duolingo, This is Language** which will allow you to work more independently both in and outside the classroom. These lessons will also be timetabled fortnightly across the timetable and will be integral in all three years of the GCSE Spanish course not only in your language learning, but also in broadening your understanding of other cultures. In classroom lessons you will be given expert teaching in how to expand your knowledge in the four language skills as well as developing a cultural and linguistic understanding pertinent to the language you are studying. Nearer the exams, we will offer weekly bespoke revision and exam skills practice as well as specific revision classes to ensure that you achieve the very highest grade.

Look out for the exchange trip to Madrid which runs in Y10 where you and your friends will be able to put your language skills to the test in real life situations. As part of this process, we dedicate an entire module at the start of the GCSE course to contextualise the trip and to practise the language required to have success living in Spain for a week.

## How will I be assessed?

The final GCSE grade will be split equally between the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Final assessment will be graded from 1-9

<b>Listening Test 25%</b>
<b>Speaking assessment 25%</b>
<b>Reading Test 25%</b>
<b>Written assessment 25%</b>

## Who do I see for more information?

If you wish to know more, please talk to Mr Connor, Miss Bradshaw, Mrs Penson or Miss Reynolds.

# Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029

## *What Happens Next?*

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- **Virtual Options Evening and Options Preference Form**

On January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026, an updated section on the school's website will be launched. This will include a prerecorded PowerPoint presentation for all subjects and a form where any questions from students or parents can be submitted to the Head of Department.

- **Options Form Deadline**

January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Please ensure the completed form is returned to the school by this date. A link to this form will be provided after the updated GCSE options information part of the website has been launched on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026. The form will be completed via a portal – log in details will be sent directly to student email addresses.

- **One-to-one meeting with a member of the Pastoral or Senior Leadership Team**

Starting in early March 2026, each pupil will be invited to a one-to-one interview to discuss their options choices.

- **Confirmation Letter**

This will be sent to parents by the end of the summer term to confirm the selection.

**ALL ONLINE OPTION FORMS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY  
FRIDAY 30th JANUARY 2026**

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The school endeavours to provide students with all of their option choices and, unlike many schools, we offer a free choice to all. The option blocks are built after students have made their choices rather than before. This gives students more choice and it is usually possible to give the majority of students all their option choices. However, staffing issues and class size constraints mean that students will need to select an alternative reserve full GCSE option which can replace one of their other choices if their initial choice combination is not possible. This reserve choice is to be included on the return slip. Please see the accompanying letter for more detail.

## **Key Stage 4 Options 2026-2029**

### *Options Timeline*

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<b>Thursday 15th January</b>	<b>Year 8 Careers Website goes live</b>
<b>Friday 30th January</b>	<b>Deadline for option choices on Applica</b>
<b>Early March</b>	<b>Options discussions begins with Senior Leaders</b>
<b>End of Summer Term</b>	<b>Subjects confirmed</b>