

GCSE OPTIONS 2010

DOWNSIDE SCHOOL

CONTENTS

THE GCSE COURSE 2

NON-GCSE COURSES 5

Physical Education 5

English as an Additional Language 5

Learning Support 6

Careers Education and Guidance 6

GCSE COURSES 8

Art 8

Classical Greek 10

Design and Technology (Product Design) 11

Design and Technology (Resistant Materials) 14

English Language 18

English Literature 20

Geography 21

History 24

Latin 26

Mathematics 27

Modern Languages 29

(French, German, and Spanish)

Music 31

Religious Studies 33

Science 35

Double Award Science 36

THE GCSE COURSE

Pupils in the Third Form follow a broad curriculum in order to help them determine where their strengths and weaknesses lie, before they embark upon their GCSE courses in the Fourth Form. Most pupils will follow courses leading to the award of nine or ten GCSEs at the end of the Fifth Form.

THE GCSE CURRICULUM

A large part of the curriculum is compulsory. All pupils will study Religious Studies, English, Mathematics and Science (for most, Triple Award), with the majority of pupils also being prepared for the GCSE in English Literature. Pupils are placed in sets by ability for all core subjects.

In addition each pupil must choose one subject from each of four option blocks. The option blocks change slightly from year-to-year to reflect the choices of each individual year group. For September 2009 the final blocking was:

Block A Classical Greek, Design, French, History, Spanish (2 sets).

Block B Design, French (2 sets), German (2 sets), Music.

Block C Art, Geography, Latin (2 sets).

Block D Art, Geography, History (2 sets).

For September 2010 the final blocking will be determined once the members of the current Third Form have indicated their preferred choices.

ARE THERE CONSTRAINTS ON THE SUBJECTS THAT MAY BE CHOSEN?

At Downside we believe that it is important that pupils follow a balanced curriculum. We require each pupil to study at least one language in addition to English and to study either Geography or History (or both). The language must be one of the languages that has been studied in the Third Form. It is not possible to start a new language in the Fourth Form.

It is important that all pupils consult their current teachers, who will be able to suggest their likely GCSE potential, before a final decision about option choices is made.

WHEN DO I MAKE A DECISION ABOUT MY GCSE CHOICES?

Tutors will begin to discuss the options with their tutees in the first half of the Lent Term following a briefing given by the Director of Studies. Pupils will then make a provisional choice of subjects, which they are expected to discuss with their parents during the half term in the Lent Term prior to the Third Form Conference. The final choice is then made just before the end of the Lent Term.

CAN I CHANGE MY MIND?

Although pupils are encouraged to make final choices as soon as possible, changes can be made up to the beginning of the Michaelmas Term, as long as the Director of Studies approves them. It is important, however, for pupils to choose their subjects carefully in the Lent Term. Once the choices are processed and the option blocks are fixed, the remaining options in terms of changing subject are much reduced. Once the GCSE course has started, changes are only rarely approved, after careful consultation; any changes need to be made early on in the Michaelmas Term, if pupils are not to be disadvantaged. Pupils are not allowed to give up subjects that they have committed themselves to studying, unless there are very good reasons for doing so.

WILL I SIT ANY OF MY GCSE EXAMINATIONS EARLY?

It is not current policy for pupils to sit GCSE examinations before the end of the Fifth Form. It is important that all pupils aim to achieve the highest grades possible and in most subjects pupils produce more mature work once they are in the Fifth Form.

In a few subjects (Design and Religious Studies, for example), pupils may be entered for one or modules in the Fourth Form as part of their GCSE assessment. Whatever the subject, the policy at Downside is to ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to fulfil their potential and are encouraged to work beyond the confines of GCSE.

Pupils who are fluent in a modern foreign language because they are bilingual are not allowed to take up that subject as one of their official GCSE choices, but they will be encouraged to sit the GCSE at the end of the Fourth Form. However, it is important that a pupil who is hoping to do this seeks the approval and advice of the Head of Modern Languages.

HOW ARE GCSE QUALIFICATIONS GRADED?

GCSE qualifications are graded on a scale of A*, A, B, C, D, E, F, G and U (ungraded). Grades A*-C are recognised as matriculation passes for the purpose of entry to a university. The examinations in most subjects are tiered. This means that the grades that a candidate can achieve depend upon the level of papers for which the candidate is entered.

Usually there are two tiers which are referred to as:

Higher Tier: Lowest achievable grade D, highest achievable grade A*

Foundation Tier: Lowest achievable grade G, highest achievable grade C

Failure to achieve the lowest grade possible in a particular tier results in a candidate being classified as ungraded in that subject.

NON-GCSE COURSES

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education is a compulsory subject for all pupils in the Fourth and Fifth Forms. One period each week is allocated to this for every pupil. Physical Education provides a balance between the academic and competitive sporting life of the School. The course is aimed at developing the individual's physical motor skills through a variety of activities and sports. Maximum participation and enjoyment is encouraged through a carefully constructed programme which has been revised in the light of the National Curriculum and which could lead to the CCPR Sports Leader's Award.

Pupils will have the opportunity to:

- develop physical competence and promote physical development,
- become more proficient in a range of psycho-motor skills,
- develop problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills and personal qualities such as self-esteem, self-confidence, tolerance and empathy,
- understand how physical education encourages participation in physical activities in school and throughout life,
- participate in the CCPR Sports Leaders Award Course.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Normally all pupils who enter the Fourth Form, will study with the native speakers for the IGCSE in English Language, which is a matriculation qualification necessary for entry to a British University.

However those students for whom English is not their mother tongue and who need additional assistance in improving their English language skills, may receive lessons from the EAL department in one of the option blocks, for which an additional termly charge is made. The lessons will be aimed at improving the pupils' ability to use English competently in their academic subjects and to communicate fully in an English speaking environment.

LEARNING SUPPORT

When pupils are seen to experience conditions such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, the School seeks to be supportive in a holistic way across the curriculum.

This means that pupils in particular need of Learning Support are integrated into ordinary classes where the teacher will be made aware of particular needs as they apply to individual pupils. There is the facility within this context to accommodate special learning needs to a degree, for example the department runs a 'drop-in' clinic on a number of days each week.

Additional provision may also be offered on a one-to-one basis. Lessons such as these are usually timetabled as one per week and are taught by staff with qualifications and experience in the area of Learning Support.

Assessment is initially carried out within the department, and may also include a consultation with a local educational psychologist, or one of parents' choice.

In order to address the special needs of pupils, Extra English and Extra Mathematics classes are provided within the option scheme and those who we believe may benefit from these classes will be notified by the Director of Studies. One-to-one tutorials with one of the Learning Support teachers are also available by arrangement with the Head of Learning Support, but are charged as extra to the curriculum.

CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE

The CEG programme in the two GCSE years focuses on increasing the awareness of the options open to each individual. This includes broadening pupils' knowledge of various careers as well as helping them to choose their A Level subjects. To this end, they are encouraged to continue with individual research started in the Third Form and the further development of their personal careers file.

The main guidance is given in the Fifth Form. All pupils do the Cambridge Profile Test (a psychometric aptitude and ability test). This generates various possible careers to be considered by each individual and is followed up by a personal interview with a careers adviser from Cambridge Occupational Analysts.

Careers talks are held regularly at the school and cover a broad range of careers and career-related topics.

Every member of the Fifth Form is encouraged to arrange their own work experience after completion of the GCSE examinations in June or early July.

ART

EXAMINING BOARD

OCR

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

J160 Art and Design

ASSESSMENT

This is made up of two units:

A110 Art and Design Portfolio

A portfolio of work that is produced under controlled assessment conditions over a period of forty-five hours contributing 60% to the final award.

A120 Art and Design OCR-set Task

A set task project undertaken at the end of the second year, with a final piece of work completed under examination conditions contributing 40% to the final award.

COURSEWORK

In both units it is necessary for there to be evidence that:

- you are able to record from what you see using drawing, painting and photography,
- you understand the context in which art (and in particular art or craft that might relate to your own project) was made,
- you show that you can develop and evaluate your own ideas,
- you are able to produce a thoughtful and skilful final piece of work.

THE COURSE

Art and Design at GCSE aims to:

- develop creative and imaginative powers, and the practical skills for communicating and expressing ideas,
- develop investigative, analytical, experimental and interpretative capabilities, aesthetic understanding and critical skills,
- develop an understanding of the codes and conventions that are and have been used in art, craft and design and an awareness of the contexts in which they operate.

- develop knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design in contemporary societies and in other times and cultures.

You will be expected to work in sketchbooks throughout the course and these will be used as evidence for much of your thinking, recording, developing and evaluating of your ideas. You will be expected to use the internet and the Art and Petre libraries for research, and Adobe Photoshop for image manipulation.

To achieve a high grade in Art and Design demands a degree of independent motivation and a high level of interest. Art is a fascinating subject in which creative skills should flourish. The increased understanding of other artists' work can be both educative and a real support to the work that is created as part of the GCSE course.

CLASSICAL GREEK

EXAMINING BOARD

OCR

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

J291 Classical Greek

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is through four written examination papers, equally weighted, and each of 1 hour duration:

Paper 1 Greek Language 1 (Mythology and domestic life: comprehension/translation)

Paper 2 Greek Language 2 (History: comprehension/translation)

Paper 3 Greek Prose Literature

Paper 4 Greek Verse Literature

There is a single tier of assessment.

THE COURSE

The course is a traditional one, based on the study of the language in depth and the reading of literature, starting with works of ancient authors at a surprisingly early stage. The specification centres on the skills of understanding and translation, using works of verse and poetry. The authors for examination in 2012 have not yet been prescribed. For 2011 they include writers such as Homer, Euripides, Herodotus, Xenophon and Plato.

Greek has a reputation for being difficult, and it is true that the initial stages are demanding. However, once the elements are grasped, it presents no more problems than Latin, and in some respects is easier. A pupil should consider Greek if he or she:

- is aiming at high academic standards;
- likes history, myth, archaeology or legend;
- likes a written and literary approach to a language;
- wants to do something unusual and intellectually challenging, which will be much more difficult to start at a later stage.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (PRODUCT DESIGN)

EXAMINING BOARD

OCR

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

J305 Design and Technology:
Product Design

Although it is intended to offer two courses in Design and Technology (Product Design and Resistant Materials) for students entering the Fourth Form, it is unlikely that all students will be able to freely choose between the two courses as availability will depend upon the other subject choices that they make.

ASSESSMENT

Candidates are assessed on four units:

A551 Developing and Applying Design Skills

For this unit candidates produce a design portfolio, which is internally marked and externally moderated.

A552 Designing and Making Innovation Challenge

This unit is assessed through an externally set and marked test, lasting six hours, set by the examining board and undertaken in two 3-hour sessions.

A553 Making, Testing and Marketing Products

This controlled assessment unit is internally marked and externally moderated.

A554 Designing Influences (1 hour 30 minutes)

This unit is assessed by a written examination paper containing five compulsory questions and divided into two sections. The questions in both sections are knowledge and application based, and require students to demonstrate their understanding through the use of single words, short sentences, annotated sketches and diagrams.

THE COURSE

Unit A551

This unit requires the candidate, working within a context set by a client, the candidate, or the department, to produce a design portfolio. The context can be linked to a candidate's own interests, current trends, a particular era or designer. The portfolio must demonstrate capabilities in a wide range of design skills and must include the use of ICT. Candidates provide a detailed description of the design need, identify the range of users and the market for which the product is intended before developing an appropriate and detailed design brief. Candidates identify and collect relevant data and research information before drawing up a detailed design specification. Candidates develop a number of design proposals using a range of graphical techniques and ICT software packages, evaluating and appraising each, before developing a final design and its associated manufacturing specification.

Unit A552

This unit, the Innovation Challenge, will assess the candidate's ability to be innovative, demonstrate flair, work with materials and apply knowledge gained throughout the course.

Unit A553

This unit requires the candidate either to develop further the work undertaken in either Unit A551 or Unit A552, or to develop an existing product or a new product of the candidate's choosing.

Candidates produce:

- A 3D artefact in the form of a prototype product that can be evaluated.
- A production log fully detailing the manufacture of the prototype product.
- Details of testing by the user/users against the specification.
- Suggested modifications/improvements to the prototype.
- A marketing presentation.

Unit A554

Section A addresses the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the influence upon design of social, moral, and cultural issues, environmental factors, ergonomics and anthropometrics, consumer law, globalisation of design and manufacturing, energy, health and safety, computer-aided design and manufacturing, marketing and advertising, and the design potential and impact of new and emerging technologies. Section B focuses upon iconic products, trends and trend setters from a range of eras and design movements.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (RESISTANT MATERIALS)

EXAMINING BOARD

OCR

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

J306 Design and Technology:

Resistant Materials

Although it is intended to offer two courses in Design and Technology (Product Design and Resistant Materials) for students entering the Fourth Form, it is unlikely that all students will be able to freely choose between the two courses as availability will depend upon the other subject choices that they make.

ASSESSMENT

Candidates are assessed on four units:

A561 Introduction to designing and making

This controlled assessment unit is internally marked and externally moderated.

A562 Sustainable design (1 hour)

This unit is assessed by a written examination paper divided into two sections. Section A consists of 15 short answer questions. Section B consists of three questions requiring answers that may involve sketching, annotation, short sentences or more extended writing.

A563 Making quality products

This controlled assessment unit is internally marked and externally moderated.

A564 Technical aspects of designing and making (1 hour 15 minutes)

This unit is assessed by a written examination paper consisting of five questions that focus on technical aspects of designing and making. It is divided into two sections. Section A focuses on the technical aspects of working with materials, tools and equipment. Section B focuses on the design of products reflecting the wider aspects of sustainability and human use.

THE COURSE

Unit A561

This unit aims to give candidates an introduction to Designing and Making in resistant materials.

Candidates must select one of the published themes as a starting point for this coursework unit. The candidate will then need to identify a specific product or starting point that is associated with the theme. For example, if the chosen theme is "Travel" a candidate may decide to design and model a prototype hand held game which can be used "on the move".

Candidates undertake research associated with the specific product before establishing their own design brief and detailed specification for an improved or similarly functioning product. They develop their design and use modelling before making and testing their prototype product. Throughout the process, the candidate will record research and design developments using a portfolio to include photographs and other digital media.

Unit A562

This unit aims to develop a candidate's knowledge and understanding of sustainability, environmental concerns, cultural, moral, and social issues. Candidates will look at how Design and Technology has evolved through examination of products from the past and present. Candidates need to consider how future designs will impact on the world in which we live.

Candidates will study examples of both old and new products in order that they might gain awareness and understanding of trends and innovations in design and manufacture, labelling, packaging and the impact that the design of such products is having on the environment, society and the economy.

Unit A563

In this unit candidates will be expected to further develop skills and abilities gained while undertaking Unit A561 in order to design and make a fully functioning product. Candidates will be encouraged to consider their own needs/requirements or those of an identified user group, as well as the situation in which the product will be used.

Candidates will be required to consider the focus of the design brief before developing a design specification. Candidates need to demonstrate their ability to plan, to develop creative and original design ideas and to carry out a range of practical activities.

Candidates will be expected to critically evaluate their ideas against the design specification to identify, with reasons, the chosen design proposal for product development. As a result of product development, candidates will be expected to give reasoned decisions for the materials and equipment required for the production of the final product. Throughout the task, the candidate will record, research, design developments and production using a portfolio to include photographs and other digital media. Candidates will be expected to test and critically evaluate their final product against a product specification.

Unit A564

This unit focuses on the knowledge, skills and understanding underpinning the design and manufacture of products made from Resistant Materials.

Candidates will need to have a working knowledge and understanding of:

- Designing and making quality products.
- Planning production with consideration of use of time and resources.
- Performance characteristics of different materials including “smart” and modern.
- Tools and equipment used to make quality manufactured products, including industrial methods and production.
- The impact made by new technologies on the design and manufacture of products.

- Processes and techniques used to make quality products that are both decorative and functional.
- The impact that the use of Resistant Materials has on the environment
- Health and Safety issues.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

EXAMINING BOARD

University of Cambridge
International Examinations

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

0500 English Language (First Language)
(IGCSE)

ASSESSMENT

The terminal examination contributes either 50% or 100% to the final mark, depending on whether a portfolio of written coursework is submitted in place of a second written examination.

Candidates sit either:

Paper 1 Reading Passage (Core)

This paper is of 1 hour 45 minutes duration and candidates answer two questions on one passage of 700-800 words (50%).

or

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended)

This paper is of 2 hours duration and candidates answer three questions on two passages of 600-700 words, linked by a common theme (50%).

and either sit

Paper 3 Directed Writing and Composition

This paper is of 2 hours duration and consists of two sections. In Section 1, candidates will read one or more short texts and then develop the given information in another format. In Section 2, candidates will write one composition in response to set argumentative/discursive, descriptive and narrative titles (50%).

or submit

Component 4 Coursework Portfolio

This contributes 50% to the final mark and consists of written coursework. Candidates submit three directed writing and composition assignments, each of 500-800 words (50%).

THE COURSE

This is a compulsory two-year course for all members of the Fourth and Fifth Forms. The scheme of work will involve the study and analysis of literary as well as non-literary texts. It leads to an IGCSE in English Language.

A C grade or above in GCSE or IGCSE English or English Language is a requirement for entry into a British university for someone whose first language is English.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

EXAMINING BOARD

University of Cambridge
International Examinations

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

0486 English Literature (IGCSE)

ASSESSMENT

The terminal examination contributes either 75% or 100% to the final mark, depending on whether a portfolio of written coursework is submitted in place of a second written examination.

Candidates sit:

Paper 1 Set Texts - Open Books (Pre-Released Material)

This paper assesses candidates on poetry, on a prose text and on a drama text. All of these texts are canonical works of literature (75%).

and either submit

Paper 2 Coursework Portfolio

This contributes 25% to the final mark and comprises essays on two texts: a Shakespeare drama and a nineteenth or twentieth century prose fiction.

or sit

Paper 3 Unseen

This contributes 25% to the final mark and contains two questions, each requiring a critical commentary and appreciation of previously unseen writing. Students must answer one question.

THE COURSE

This is a two-year course for those members of the Fourth and Fifth Forms who, in the opinion of their teachers, will benefit from taking a specialist literature course in addition to their compulsory First Language English IGCSE. The course leads to an IGCSE in English Literature.

GEOGRAPHY

EXAMINING BOARD

AQA

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

4032 Geography A

ASSESSMENT

Unit 1 Physical Geography (1 hour 30 minutes)

This unit is assessed by a written examination paper, worth 75 marks and contributing 37 1/2% of the final mark. Candidates answer three questions, one from Section A and one from Section B plus free choice of one other.

Unit 2 Human Geography (1 hour 30 minutes)

This unit is assessed by a written examination paper, worth 75 marks and contributing 37 1/2% of the final mark. Candidates answer three questions, one from Section A and one from Section B plus free choice of one other.

Unit 3 Local Fieldwork Investigation

This takes the form of a controlled assessment, internally marked and externally moderated, worth 60 marks and contributing 25% of the final mark.

THE COURSE

This specification highlights the critical importance of Geography for understanding the world and for stimulating an interest in places. It will inspire pupils to become global citizens by exploring their place in the world, their values and responsibilities to other people and to the environment.

The content focuses on current issues and key ideas and debates such as climate change, globalisation, economic progress, urban regeneration and management of world resources.

The main focus is an understanding of physical processes and factors that produce diverse and dynamic landscapes that change over time. This includes the interdependence of physical environments and the interaction between people and the environment as well as an understanding of the need for sustainable management of both physical and human environments.

Controlled assessment will encourage questioning, investigation and critical thinking about issues affecting the world and people's lives. Pupils will use varied resources including maps and visual media as well as complex technologies such as GIS and remote sensing, to obtain, present and analyse information. Pupils will develop essential skills such as problem solving, decision making, synthesizing ideas, identifying issues and communicating findings through the undertaking of a fieldwork investigation, individually and as part of a team. The subject has strong links with other subjects, including citizenship and ICT, and areas of the curriculum such as science which focus on sustainability and the global dimension.

SUMMARY OF CONTENT

Unit 1 Physical Geography

Section A: The Restless Earth (Plate tectonics); Rocks, Resources and Scenery; Challenge of Weather and Climate; Living World (Ecosystems/biomes).
Section B: Water on the Land; Ice on the Land; The Coastal Zone.

Unit 2 Human Geography

Section A: Population Change; Changing Urban Environments; Changing Rural Environments.
Section B: The Development Gap; Globalisation; Tourism.

Unit 3 Fieldwork

Fieldwork plays a crucial role in allowing the geographer to study the environment of a variety of areas at first hand. It is thus an integral part of the course and an examination requirement. Normally, a day length field trip takes place during the Summer Term of the Fourth Form to Exmoor or the Quantock Hills to make observations and to collect data for a fieldwork investigation.

A task/investigation from a choice of 11 provided by AQA, is selected two years prior to submission. Local fieldwork is also carried out.

The fieldwork investigation culminates in a controlled six hour write-up under direct supervision takes place with the maximum word guidance of 2000 words.

HISTORY

EXAMINING BOARD

University of Cambridge
International Examinations

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

0470 History (IGCSE)

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is through two written examination papers and coursework. Together the papers and the coursework have a mixture of questions which test knowledge, understanding and the evaluation and interpretation of historical sources.

Paper 1 (2 hours).

This paper is worth 40% of the final mark and focuses on short answers and essays. The paper is divided into two Sections, A and B. Section A focuses on the Core Content of International History from 1919 to c. 1989: pupils attempt two questions from a choice of three. Section B looks at the Depth Study of Germany, 1918-1945, where pupils get a choice of one question from two.

Paper 2 (2 hours).

This paper is worth 33% of the final mark and is an in-depth source paper with a number of questions that progressively get more rigorous. The topic for Paper 2, still to be confirmed by the Board for 2012, will be on one of the Core Content topics from the period 1919 to c. 1989 and therefore will not appear in Paper 1 in that year.

COURSEWORK

The coursework is worth 27% of the final mark, and will consist of two assignments of a maximum of 1500 words in total. Both will be on the First World War and one will be a source exercise and the other a short essay.

THE COURSE

The content covered for the examination papers is as follows:

Paper 1

The Core Content: the Peace Treaties of 1919-23, the League of Nations, the causes of the Second World War, and the causes and development of the Cold War up to 1949, The USA's policy of containment specifically focusing on Cuba in the early 1960s and Vietnam, the rise and fall of the Soviet Empire in Eastern Europe to c. 1989 specifically looking at Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the final topic of the United Nations with particular reference to Korea in the early 1950s and the Congo in the 1960s.

The Depth Study: Germany, 1918 to 1945 including a detailed look at Weimar Germany, 1918-34; the rise of the Nazis, 1918-33; and the Nazi Regime, 1933-45.

Paper 2

This is to be confirmed by the Examination Board for the summer of 2012, but it will be on one of the Core Content topics listed for Paper 1. When it is announced it will not be examined in Paper 1 in that examination session.

We encourage all pupils seriously to consider choosing History for GCSE, although it is expected that they should do well in the summer term examination in the Third Form. Not only does the course give an historical perspective on some of the main issues facing the contemporary world, but the subject helps to develop skills of analysis and evaluation, which are invaluable in a wide range of careers.

The Department will run a First World War Battlefields Trip in the Lent half term of the Fifth Form to Belgium and France, to support this very popular and highly successful course.

LATIN

EXAMINING BOARD

OCR

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

J281 Latin

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is through four written examination papers, equally weighted, and each of 1 hour duration:

Paper 1 Latin Language 1 (Mythology and domestic life: comprehension/translation)

Paper 2 Latin Language 2 (History: comprehension/translation)

Paper 3 Latin Prose Literature

Paper 4 Latin Verse Literature

There are two tiers of assessment: Foundation and Higher. Pupils at Downside are usually entered for Higher-Tier.

THE COURSE

This is a traditional course that involves both language and literature.

In the Fourth Form the second and third volumes of *So you really want to learn Latin* (Oulton N) are followed as a preparation for the study of the set books in the Fifth Form. Authors for examination in 2012 have not yet been prescribed. For 2011 they include Virgil, Ovid, Catullus, Horace, Cicero and Tacitus. Fluency in reading the language is the chief aim, along with an appreciation of the cultural background.

The chief skills offered by the Latin course are linguistic. To study it means to gain a new understanding of language and meaning, which acts not only as a base for other linguistic studies, but also as a powerful help in the use of the English language. For even the moderate achiever, the course initiates a lifelong habit of accuracy in the use of words.

MATHEMATICS

EXAMINING BOARD

Edexcel

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

4MA0 Mathematics A (IGCSE)

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is through two terminal written examination papers. Each paper is worth 50% of the final total for the qualification and is of 2 hours duration.

The majority of students will sit the two Higher-Tier papers (3H and 4H) which are targeted at grades A*-D. A few students who find the subject more challenging may be invited to sit the papers at the Foundation level (1F and 2F) which are targeted at grades C-G. Each paper will assess the full range of targeted grades with approximately equal marks available for each of the targeted grades.

Both papers will contain questions on number, geometry, algebra and statistics. A calculator may be used in both papers.

COURSEWORK

There is no coursework or controlled assessment component for the GCSE in Mathematics.

THE COURSE

The specification states the key subject aims as:

- to develop a knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and techniques
- to give students a foundation in mathematical skills for further study in the subject or related areas
- to enable students to enjoy using and applying mathematical techniques and concepts, and become confident in using mathematics to solve problems
- to give students an appreciation of the importance of mathematics in society, employment and study.

Mathematics is a core subject, studied by all pupils in the Fourth and Fifth Forms. Those pupils in the top set will be expected to take their course of studies beyond that required for IGCSE, as a preparation for A level.

Pupils wishing to study Mathematics or a Mathematics-based subject at A level need to have studied the material for the Higher Tier of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES: FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH

EXAMINING BOARD

AQA

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

4658 French

4668 German

4698 Spanish

ASSESSMENT

The GCSE courses in Modern Languages are comprised of four units:

Unit 1 Listening

Unit 2 Reading

Unit 3 Speaking

Unit 4 Writing

Assessment is through written examination for the Reading (30 or 50 minutes) and Listening (30 or 40 minutes) components, for which there are two tiers (Foundation [Grades C-G] and Higher [Grades A*-D]). Students may be entered for either Foundation or Higher in each of the two skills, for example Foundation Listening combined with Higher Reading. Questions and answers in the Reading and Listening tests will be in English, and students may sit these tests either in January or June, with the option of re-sitting each skill area once before certification.

Speaking and Writing are untiered, and differentiation is by outcome, not by task. There is no terminal examination for the Speaking and Writing components. Instead, students will submit two controlled assessments for each of the two skill areas during the course. These will generally be completed during normal class time. Students will have access to a dictionary in the preparation of the Writing tasks.

THE COURSE

The new GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages have been designed to provide much more flexibility, allowing schools to set their own tasks for the Speaking and Writing assessments, and allowing assessments to be staggered or

taken at the end of the course. Indeed, students may choose their own context for these tasks. The rationale behind this is partly to reduce the stress felt by many students, particularly in respect of the traditional oral exam. The four topic areas studied – Lifestyle, Leisure, Home and Environment and Work and Education – have been designed to be more relevant to students and to allow pursuit of individual interests.

The aim of the course is to equip candidates to communicate in a range of situations that they may encounter in countries where the language is spoken and to foster an awareness of, and interest in, the culture and life of those countries.

Whilst it is true that for the more able candidates the GCSE specification is not always very challenging, the course we follow allows for considerable development, and we are committed to stretching the most able students, whilst providing all possible support to those with less linguistic aptitude.

DICTIONARIES

Students will need their own dictionary at the start of the course. The department recommends the Collins Easy Learning Dictionary.

MUSIC

EXAMINING BOARD

OCR

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

J535 Music

ASSESSMENT

Candidates are assessed on four units:

B351 Integrated Tasks

Assessment consists of a performance, a composition and a commentary, all related to Area of Study 1, and counts for 30% of the overall assessment. This module may be assessed at the end of the Fourth Form.

B352 Practical Portfolio

Assessment is based on a portfolio containing a group performance relating to Area of Study 2, a composition relating to Area of Study 2, 3 or 4 and a log and commentary, and counts for 30% of the overall assessment.

B353 Creative Task (45 minutes)

Assessment is through a timed task drawing on understanding gained from an area of study, in which candidates develop a short piece and communicate it, based on a stimulus. This counts for 15% of the overall assessment.

B354 Listening Test (1 hour 30 minutes)

Assessment is through a written examination paper, with CD, assessing knowledge and understanding of Areas of Study 2, 3 and 4, and counts for 25% of the overall assessment.

THE COURSE

It is expected that students opting for this subject will already be established players of melodic instruments or singers, who have taken and passed at least Grade 3.

Music Scholars and Exhibitioners are expected to study GCSE Music as one of their options.

The specification requires candidates to develop their ability in performing/realising and composing, and to develop their listening and appraising skills. It contains four Areas of Study, which define the subject content, through which candidates develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- The use of musical elements, devices, tonalities and structures.
- The use of resources, conventions, processes, music technology and relevant notations, including staff notation.
- The contextual influences that affect the way music is created, performed and heard including the effect of different intentions, uses, venues, occasions, available resources and the cultural environment.

Across the Areas of Study, students will study music from the past and present, from the western tradition and other world cultures. The areas of study also provide opportunities for candidates to further their understanding of musical styles of their own choosing.

The Areas of Study are:

Area of Study 1: My Music

Area of Study 2: Shared Music

Area of Study 3: Dance Music

Area of Study 4: Descriptive Music

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

EXAMINING BOARD

Edexcel

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

2RS01 Religious Studies

ASSESSMENT

This is a modular course. Candidates are prepared for two modules:

Unit 3 Religion and Life based on a study of Roman Catholic Christianity

Unit 10 Roman Catholic Christianity

Assessment of each module is through a written examination of 1 hour 30 minutes duration. It is intended that all candidates sit the first module at the end of the Fourth Form and the second at the end of the Fifth Form.

COURSEWORK

There is no coursework or controlled assessment component for the GCSE in Religious Studies.

THE COURSE

Religious Studies is a compulsory subject at GCSE and is an important part of the formation in the Roman Catholic faith provided by the School. The specification is specifically designed to meet this demand, but is also accessible to those of other denominations and traditions. Each unit is composed of four sections with marks given for the quality of written communication in one question in each section. The skills of recalling, selecting, organising and deploying knowledge, explaining and analysing the relevance and application of a religion and evaluation of different responses to religious and moral issues using relevant argument, are all assessed in both modules. Evaluation of arguments now plays a key role in the questions.

Unit 3 Section 3.1 Believing in God

Arguments for the existence of God; the problem of evil and suffering.

Section 3.2 Matters of Life and Death

Resurrection, immortality of the soul; sanctity of life issues: abortion, euthanasia, poverty.

Section 3.3 Marriage and Family

Marriage and family life and its values; contraception; homosexuality.

Section 3.4 Religion and community cohesion

Prejudice, discrimination, gender roles, religious pluralism, community cohesion.

Unit 10 Section 10.1 Beliefs and Values

The nature of God and Christ as expressed in the Creeds; sin, salvation and love of God and others.

Section 10.2 Community and Tradition

The Church; authority and ministry.

Section 10.3 Worship and Celebration

The sacraments of baptism, confirmation, reconciliation and anointing of the sick; the Mass; the major seasons and festivals.

Section 10.4 Living the Christian Life

Ten Commandments, Sermon on the Mount; exemplary Christians of the 20th century; vocation; charity work.

SCIENCE

EXAMINING BOARD

Edexcel (IGCSE Triple Award)

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

4BI0 Biology

4CHO Chemistry

4PH0 Physics

ASSESSMENT

Candidates sit two written papers in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The papers are of 2 hours and 1 hour duration respectively and contribute 662/3% and 331/3% respectively to the overall assessment for each subject.

COURSEWORK

There is no coursework or controlled assessment component for the IGCSE in Science. Students will be taught practical skills as part of their study of the Sciences and these will be tested as part of the written examination papers.

THE COURSE

Science is taught as three separate subjects and students will be awarded a separate IGCSE qualification in each of the three sciences. Science is a core subject studied by all pupils in the Fourth and Fifth Forms. All students will have started their study of the IGCSE course in the Third Form. There is only one tier of paper in each Science for the IGCSE, with questions that range from grade G standard to A* standard.

DOUBLE AWARD SCIENCE

EXAMINING BOARD

Edexcel

SUBJECT ENTRY CODE

(IGCSE Double Award) 4SC0 Science

With recent changes to the Science specifications, the Science Faculty is reviewing all of the available options within the IGCSE scheme. It is possible that some students will find the Double Award to be a more appropriate pathway to follow. The Double Award course is the same as the Triple Award, but students would only be required to sit Paper 1 in each subject, of 2 hours duration, and would be awarded a single qualification in Science that would carry the weight of two GCSE subjects, graded and certificated on a 15-grade scale: A*A*, A*A, AA, AB, ...FG, GG.

The obvious vital importance of a solid grounding in Science at GCSE is widely recognised; Science GCSEs are essential for almost any career or field of employment. Pupils hoping to attempt the A Level Sciences necessary for careers in engineering or medicine should be aiming for strong grades in Triple Award Sciences.

Downside School Stratton-on-the-Fosse Radstock Bath BA3 4RJ
Tel 01761 235100 **Fax** 01761 235105 **Email** admin@downside.co.uk
www.downside.co.uk