

# GCSE Options

September 2025



RENDCOMB  
COLLEGE  
NURSERY • JUNIOR • SENIOR

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“This is an important moment to give serious thought to your interests and talents.”

Welcome to the Year 9 Options Booklet.

You are about to make one of the most important decisions of your educational career.

Picking Key Stage 4 courses that are right for you will make a big difference to the next two years and beyond. The right choices now will put you on a pathway to a powerful set of qualifications and give you the best chance to realise your future aspirations.

You should choose subjects that you inspire you and will prepare you for further study in the areas that you wish to pursue. You should also be aiming to maintain breadth in your choices so that doors remain open in the future. Choosing the right subjects is a partnership between you, your parents and your teachers.

Make sure you discuss your choices and listen carefully to all of the advice you will receive. You are very welcome to make an appointment to speak to me or the Head of Careers too.

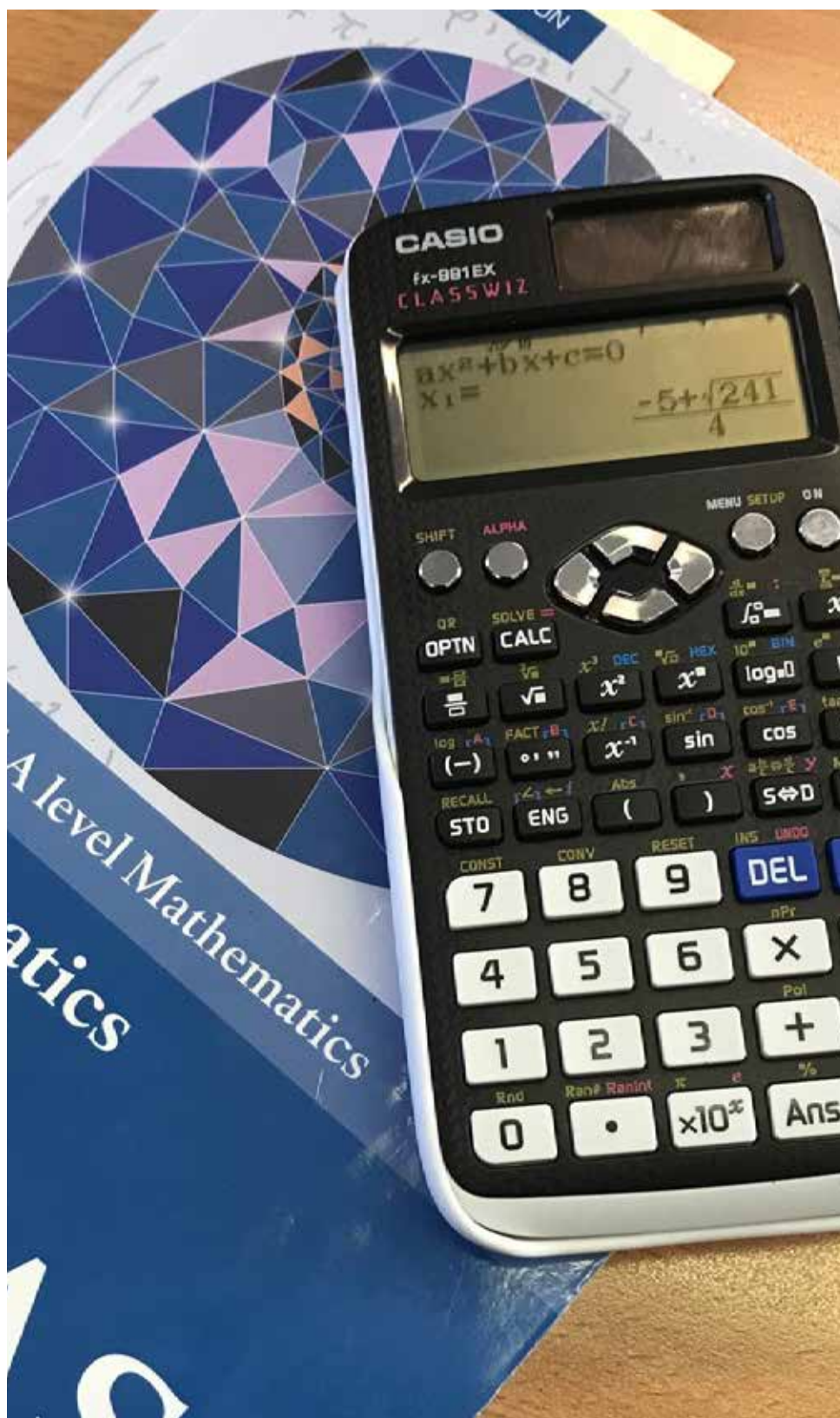
Doing your own research is an important step to take and this booklet will tell you more about the subjects we offer and where they might lead you. You will see that each subject page includes the email address of the Head of Department and they will be very happy to answer any questions that you might have.

I will write to you again after the Year 9 parents evening to explain the how we will collect your option choices.

With best wishes

Mr Cox

# Mathematics



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

Mathematics is an essential discipline in today's world. It is a powerful tool for understanding the world around us and our perspective on the important issues facing us as individuals, families, businesses, and nations. Maths surrounds us; we see and use maths skills and capabilities every day –from balancing our finances to advertising agencies to doctors; from retailers to builders, lawyers and accountants. Everyone needs some level of specific mathematics knowledge. Most professions use maths to perform their job better and to get ahead in the world.

Pupils are taught in sets and the teachers use a range of resources, including Sparx, MyMaths (both of which pupils are given logins for), and the Pearson Edexcel GCSE Maths Student Book, of which pupils are provided with an online version. Pupils start the GCSE Maths course in September of Year 9, with the Michaelmas term being a pre – GCSE preparation period.

The Higher Tier leads to a grade in the range 9 to 4; the Foundation Tier leads to a grade in the range 5 to 1. The majority of Rendcomb pupils are prepared with the intention of entering for the Higher Tier and the final decision will be made during Year 11. The final decision is made after consulting with pupils, staff and parents.

**Exam Board: Edexcel**  
**Spec code: 1MA1**

# Core Subject



## How will my work be assessed?

The assessment is carried out over three papers, each lasting for 1 hour and 30 minutes. The papers have equal weighting and contribute 33.3% to the overall results. There is one non-calculator paper and 2 calculator papers.

## What will I study?

The National Curriculum covers a wide range of mathematical topics and these are assessed in written examinations. Pupils are entered for either the Higher or Foundation Tier. The Foundation Tier omits certain more challenging topics from the Higher Tier syllabus.

## Enrichment opportunities

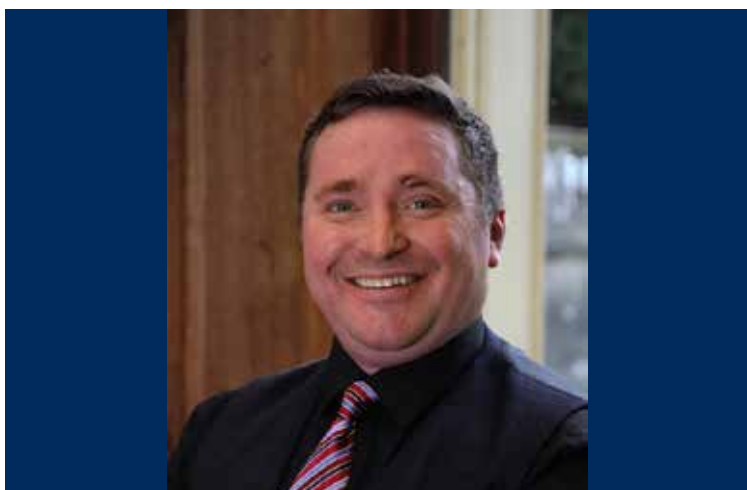
Pupils in the top set will be offered the opportunity to study for the AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Maths, which is designed to stretch and challenge high-achieving mathematicians who are expected to achieve the top grades in GCSE Mathematics or are likely to progress to study A-Level Mathematics and possibly Further Mathematics. Pupils are introduced to A Level topics that will help them develop skills in algebra, geometry, calculus, matrices, trigonometry, functions and graphs.

High-achieving pupils in Years 10 and 11 are entered for the UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge. To recognise the highest performers in the Challenge the top-scoring 40% nationally of participants are awarded Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates in a ratio of 3:2:1. In addition around 1500 of the very highest performers are invited to take part in the Intermediate Mathematical Olympiad and around 8000 to take part in the Intermediate Kangaroo.

All year groups are offered Maths based enrichment activities, including Chess, Maths Challenge and revision.

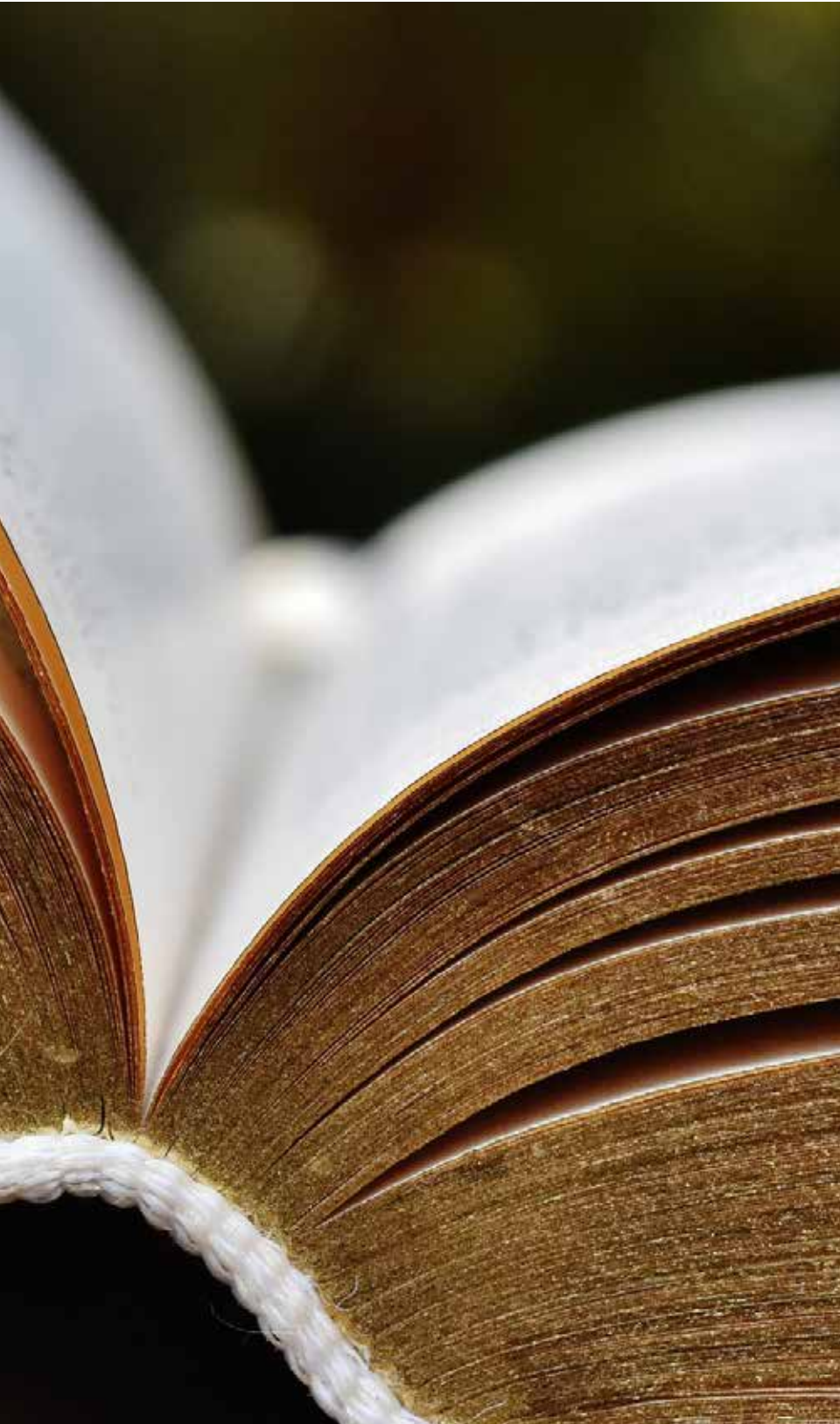


**United Kingdom  
Mathematics Trust**



**Head of Mathematics**  
**Mr Ben Ford**  
**FordB@rendcombcollge.org.uk**

# English Language



English Language and English Literature are two distinct subjects assessed separately and awarded individual grades.

Students will have 4 hours per week of English teaching. The two subjects are delivered as a joint course as the English Language topics will support and enhance their study of the Literature texts. However, they will be prepared for separate examinations for English Language and English Literature at the end of Year 11. GCSE pathway choices will be decided after the Year 11 Michaelmas examinations, students will take either: GCSE Language or GCSE Language and Literature.

What will I gain from studying this subject?

Skills:

- Analyse and compare writers' stylistic techniques,
- Understand grammatical structures and analyse the effects,
- Explore and evaluate different viewpoints and perspectives.

Based on your studies of other writers you will develop your own:

- creative writing
- narrative story writing
- descriptive writing

**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Spec code: 8700**

# Core Subject



## How will my work be assessed?

All assessments will be through examination at the end of Year 11.

Paper 1: Explorations in creative reading and writing

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 80 marks
- 50% of GCSE

Paper 2: Writer's viewpoints and perspectives

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 80 marks
- 50% of GCSE

## What will I study?

A wide range of short literary fiction prose texts from the 20th and 21st Century - extracts from novels and short stories.

Non-fiction prose texts from the 19th to 21st Centuries - high-quality journalism, articles, reports, essays, travel writing, accounts, sketches, letters, diaries, autobiographies and biographical passages

## Spoken Language Study:

This is a compulsory element of the course but does not contribute to the final English Language grade. A separate grade of either pass, merit or distinction will be awarded for this.

You will give a formal presentation to a group of students and a teacher on a given topic. You will then be asked to respond to questions on your presentation topic. The presentation may be recorded, and sample recordings will be requested by the examination board.

**THE TIMES**  
**THE SUNDAY TIMES**  
**CHELTHENHAM**  
**Literature**  
**Festival**



**Head of English**  
**Mrs Jessamy Toms**  
**TomsJ@rendcombcollege.org.uk**

# English Literature



English Language and English Literature are two distinct subjects assessed separately and awarded individual grades.

Students will have 4 hours per week of English teaching. The two subjects are delivered as a joint course as the English Language topics will support and enhance their study of the Literature texts. However, they will be prepared for separate examinations for English Language and English Literature at the end of Year 11. GCSE pathway choices will be decided after the Year 11 Michaelmas examinations, students will take either: GCSE Language or GCSE Language and Literature.

What will I gain from studying this subject?

- exploring aspects of plot, characterisation, events and settings,
- critical reading,
- evaluation of a writer's choice of vocabulary, grammatical and structural features,
- comparing texts.



**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Spec code: 8702**

# Core Subject

*“Double, double toil and trouble”*

## How will my work be assessed?

All assessments will be through examination at the end of Year 11.

Paper 1: Shakespeare and 19th Century Novel

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 64 marks
- 40% of Grade

Paper 2: Modern Texts and Poetry

- Written exam: 2 hours 15 minutes
- 96 marks
- 60% of Grade

## What will I study?

Shakespeare: Macbeth

Modern Text: An Inspector Calls by J.B. Priestley

Poetry: a collection of 15 poems, thematically linked and written between 1789 and the present day.

19th Century novel: A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

## Enrichment Opportunities

Opportunities are available for both Language and Literature GCSE and are as follows: trips to the Cheltenham Literature Festival, workshops on studied texts during the Lent term, trips to the theatre to watch performances of studied texts and creative writing competitions throughout the academic year.

**THE  TIMES**  
**THE SUNDAY TIMES**  
**CHELTENHAM**  
**Literature Festival**



**Head of English**  
**Mrs Jessamy Toms**  
**TomsJ@rendcombcollege.org.uk**

# Biology



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

“It has become part of the accepted wisdom to say that the twentieth century was the century of physics and the twenty-first century will be the century of biology.” Freeman Dyson

Never before has the study of Biology been more important and relevant to the choices we will make about our future, not only as individuals but as a species. Nothing will be more important in our lives than the health and wellbeing of our families. We are entering the sixth mass extinction of our planet; feeding every member of our species will become a more pressing issue every decade. Our students are walking, talking biological organisms and our objective is to produce biologically aware adults who are equipped to deal with these challenges. The AQA Triple Biology GCSE is aimed at all students who are aiming for the highest grades with the potential to continue to the A-Level.

## How will my work be assessed?

This is a linear course and is assessed by two written papers at the end of the course.

Those taking the Triple AQA Biology will sit two written papers, both of 1¾ hours in length (each accounting for 50% of the marks). Questions are varied being multiple choice, structured, closed short answers and open response. There is no coursework component, but there are ten Required Practicals which are covered through the course, knowledge of which may be assessed in the written paper.

**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Spec code: 8461**

# Core Subject



## What will I study?

By the end of Year 11, students have a solid foundation in Biological Science, with the ultimate aim of building on our excellent exam results and allowing the students to enter university or pursue careers with a biological emphasis. As a department, we aim to make students in all years more biologically and environmentally aware beyond the learning boundaries dictated by GCSE. This results in individuals who have a greater sense of the possibilities the subject holds in our age of Biotechnology and the role they play in the maintenance and future survival of our species.

The course will cover:

- cell biology
- organisation
- infection and response
- bioenergetics
- homeostasis and response
- inheritance, variation and evolution
- ecology
- key ideas

The emphasis during the course is on understanding concepts through experimental work and the new AQA GCSE specifications include a minimum number of Required Practicals through which pupils will demonstrate their practical competencies.

## Enrichment Opportunities

Activities that are biologically based are Dissection, Marine Biology and MedVet. We practise an 'Open Door' policy for any student who feels unsure and needs extra help: they only need to arrange a mutually convenient time with their Biology teacher for a 1-to-1 session to iron out any issues. Students are entered for national competitions such as The Biology Challenge and The Olympiad, both run by the Royal Society of Biology.

**Head of Biology**  
**Mrs Freya Thomson**  
**[ThomsonF@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:ThomsonF@rendcombcollege.org.uk)**



# Chemistry



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

Chemistry is the study of matter and energy and the interaction between them. There are many reasons to study Chemistry, even if you aren't pursuing a career in science.

Chemistry is everywhere in the world around you. It's in the food you eat, clothes you wear, the water you drink, medicines, air, cleaners... you name it. Chemistry is sometimes called the "central science" because it connects other sciences to each other, such as Biology, Physics, Geology, and Environmental Science. In a rapidly changing world chemists will be at the forefront, tackling some of the greatest problems of our time, from energy security to ensuring a growing global population has enough to eat.

## How will my work be assessed?

There are two, 1 hour 45 minute papers at foundation or higher tier. Each paper is worth 50%.

**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Spec code: 8462**

# Core Subject



## What will I study?

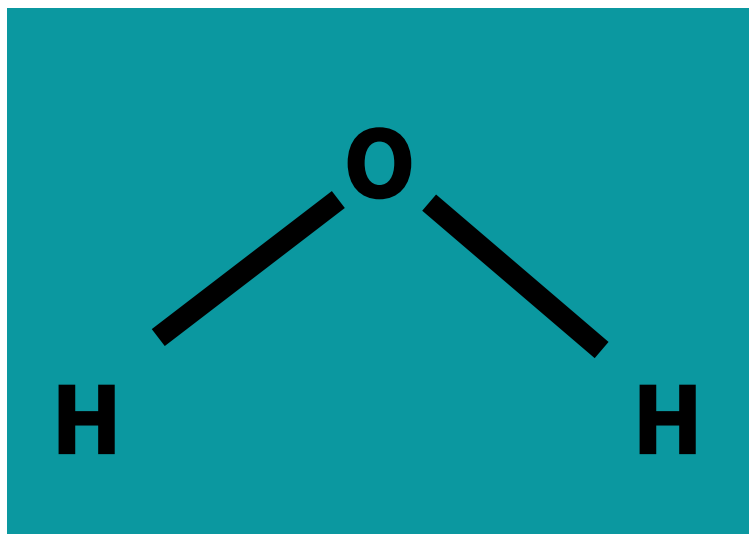
- Atomic structure and the periodic table
- Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter
- Quantitative chemistry
- Chemical changes
- Energy changes
- The rate and extent of chemical change
- Organic chemistry
- Chemical analysis
- Chemistry of the atmosphere
- Using resources

## Enrichment Opportunities

Students have the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities to help their progress or to work beyond the GCSE curriculum. Chemistry Clinic in activities time enables students to pick an investigation in an area of chemistry of interest and work towards recognition by achieving a Crest Award for their laboratory work and report. The department will arrange for students to visit Bristol University's chemistry teaching laboratories, using state-of-the-art equipment to conduct experiments. We also organise a visit to GCSE Science Live.

Lessons routinely include ideas from beyond the confines of the specification and open-ended practical work allows the development of a deeper understanding of scientific methodology.

Chemistry Clinic takes place every Thursday activity time, where small groups of students are offered additional support with key concepts and practical skills.



**Head of Chemistry**  
**Mr Andrew Niven**  
**[NivenA@rendcombcollge.org.uk](mailto:NivenA@rendcombcollge.org.uk)**

# Physics



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

This course will enable you to:

- learn and apply knowledge and understanding of Physics facts, terminology, concepts, principles and practical techniques.
- develop analytical and practical skills by applying an understanding of scientific concepts and principles to a range of familiar and unfamiliar situations.
- prepare for more advanced courses in Physics and for other courses that require knowledge of Physics.

## How will my work be assessed?

The GCSE Physics course is assessed by two exam papers, both 1 hour and 45 minutes long, and each worth 50% of the final mark. The papers consist of a mixture of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open response questions.

There is no coursework but there are required practical activities which will be completed throughout the course and understanding of these will be assessed in the written papers.

**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Spec code: 8463**

# Core Subject



## What will I study?

The topics covered are:

- Energy and energy resources: energy transfers, thermal energy, electricity generation
- Particles at work: Electricity, density, gas laws, radioactivity
- Forces in action: Forces and motion, momentum, pressure
- Waves, electromagnetism and space.

## Enrichment Opportunities

- British Physics Olympiad Year 10 challenge – accessible to all students
- British Physics Olympiad GCSE Challenge – for more able year 11 students
- Physics Plus – revision activity for Year 11



**Head of Physics**  
**Dr Linda Bakker**  
**[BakkerL@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:BakkerL@rendcombcollege.org.uk)**

# GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy)



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

This qualification is aimed at those students who do not intend to follow the separate sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) at GCSE. Students have different reasons for choosing this course; they may feel that their interests lie elsewhere or it may be felt that they are more likely to achieve two better grades in Combined Science than the three they may achieve in the separate sciences. It is normal to delay a decision regarding the choice of pathway until several months into the course. All of our students begin on the separate sciences pathway. The decision to switch to the Combined Science pathway is made on a case-by-case basis, usually part way through Year 10.

Each of the three sciences is given equal weighting and students attend Biology, Chemistry and Physics lessons in the same way separate science students do. They do not, however, study all of the content from the separate science courses. The reduction in content reduces the demand of the course. The Science course is not an easy option and many demanding topics need to be mastered. Progress to the A-Level sciences is possible with good grades in Science, although any student considering A-Level sciences is advised to follow the separate science pathway.

## How will my work be assessed?

There are two exams in each of the three sciences. Each exam is 1 hour and 15 minutes long and contributes to 16.7% of the overall mark for combined science. Students can be entered for foundation or higher tier. Higher tier students can achieve grades from 9-9 to 4-4. Students entered for foundation tier can achieve grades from 5-5 to 1-1.



**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Spec code: 8464**

# Core Subject



## What will I study?

Biology 33.3%

- Cell biology
- Organisation
- Infection and response
- Bioenergetics
- Homeostasis and response
- Inheritance, variation and evolution
- Ecology

Chemistry 33.3%

- Atomic structure and the periodic table
- Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter
- Quantitative chemistry
- Chemical changes
- Energy changes
- The rate and extent of chemical change
- Organic chemistry
- Chemical analysis
- Chemistry of the atmosphere
- Using resources

Physics 33.3%

- Energy
- Electricity
- Particle model of matter
- Atomic structure
- Forces
- Waves
- Magnetism and electromagnetism



## Enrichment Opportunities

The enrichment opportunities described on the Biology, Chemistry and Physics pages are open to all Combined Science students too.

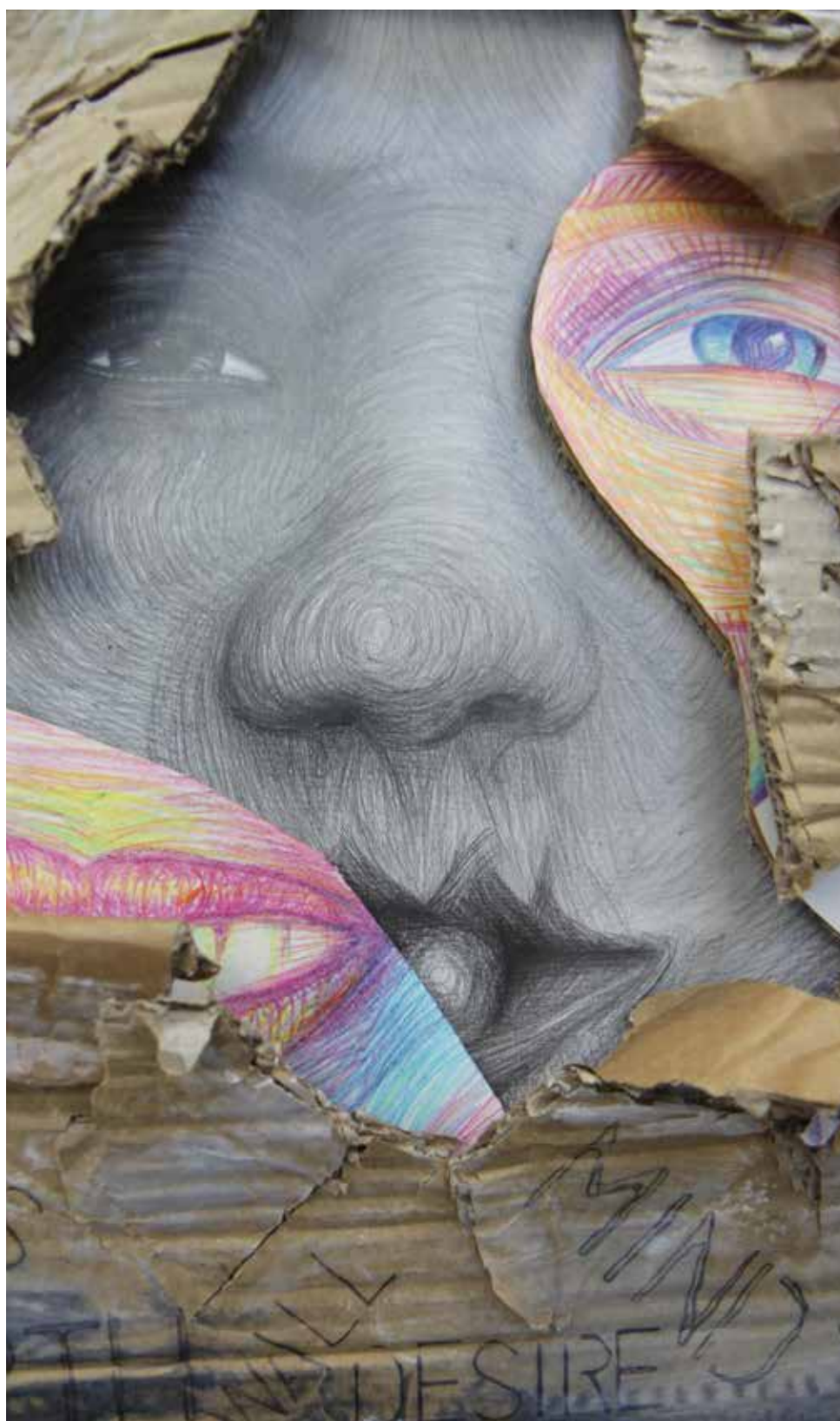
**Head of Biology Mrs Freya Thomson**  
[ThomsonF@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:ThomsonF@rendcombcollege.org.uk)

**Head of Chemistry Mr Andrew Niven**  
[NivenA@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:NivenA@rendcombcollege.org.uk)

**Head of Physics Dr Linda Bakker**  
[BakkerL@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:BakkerL@rendcombcollege.org.uk)



# Art



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

Students will gain the autonomy to decide for themselves what their personal interests are and how they use creativity to express an academic and valued opinion. Students will learn to navigate a wealth of visual language to support an independent approach, taking responsibility for their own learning and fuelling the College's growth mindset.

Our students develop their skills in thinking laterally and solving subjective tasks using unconventional solutions. We consistently encourage students to ask themselves growth mindset questions like "Is it getting me where I want to go?", "How else could I be doing this?", "What am I doing now?", "What worked, what didn't work?"



**Exam Board: OCR**  
**Spec code: Art and Design: Fine Art (J171)**

# Option Subject



## How will my work be assessed?

Portfolio (01) 60% of total GCSE - 120 marks (Internally assessed and externally moderated)

Externally set task (02) - 40% of total GCSE - 80 marks  
10 hour exam over two days (Internally assessed and externally moderated)

## What will I study?

During the first term of Year 10, students will complete two teacher led projects that are designed to resemble the structure of a coursework project whilst introducing students to new skills and techniques and solidifying existing knowledge.

In January of Year 10 students start Component 01: A portfolio of practical work showing a personal response to a student and teacher collaboratively generated starting point.

In January of Year 11 students start Component 02: Externally set task with starting points released by OCR in January. The paper will be issued on 2 January each year and will provide learners with five themes, each with a range of written and visual starting points and stimuli. A response by our students should be based on one of these options.

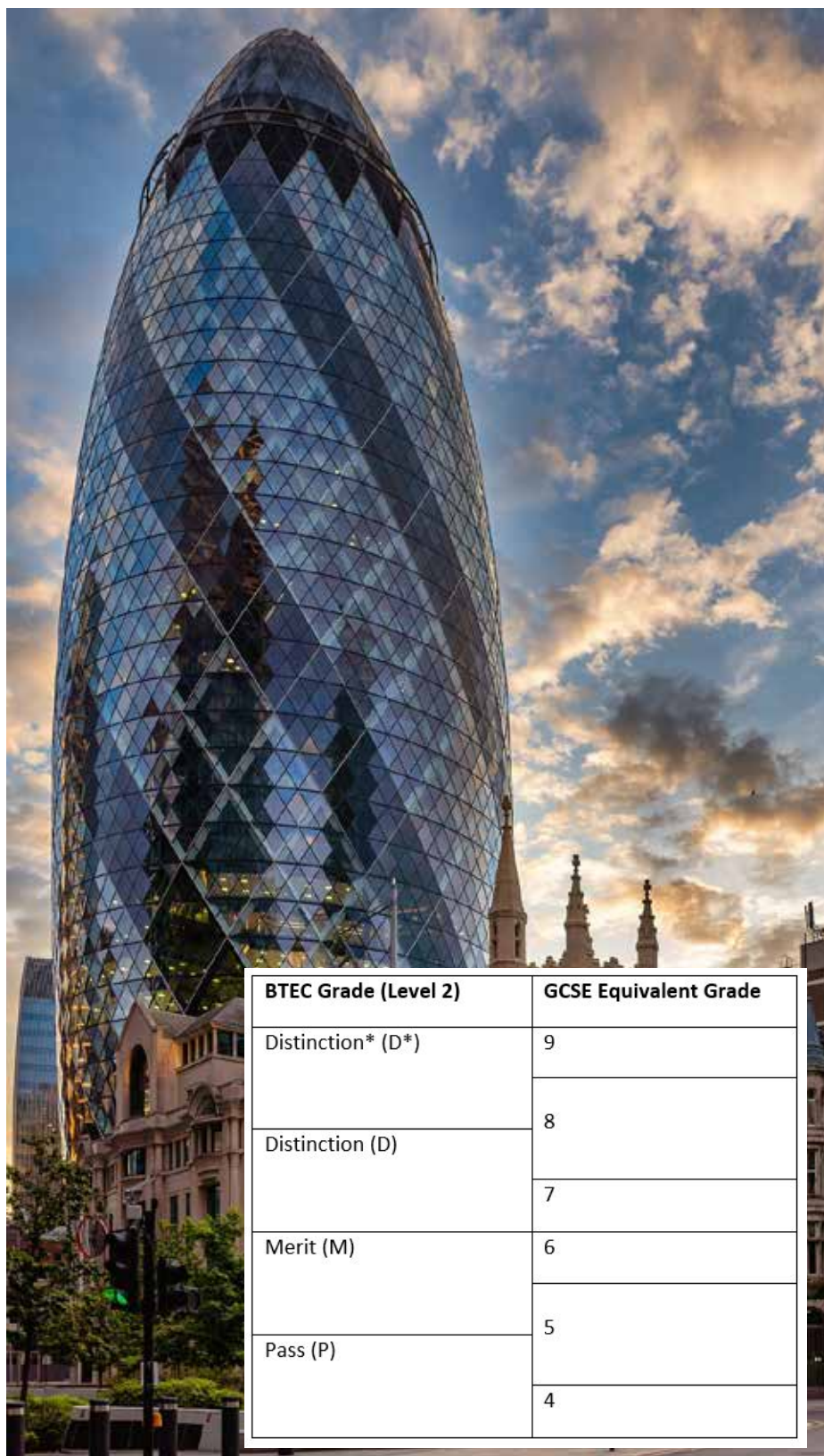
## Enrichment Opportunities

- Trips to Art Galleries
- Workshops with Artists
- National Art Competitions
- Saturday tuition opportunities throughout the year
- Evening Activities to support the curriculum
- Founder's Day pop-in Exhibition, showing the results of two years of our students' hard work



**Head of Art and Photography**  
**Mr James Buckley**  
**[BuckleyJ@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:BuckleyJ@rendcombcollege.org.uk)**

# Business Studies BTEC



BTEC Grade (Level 2)	GCSE Equivalent Grade
Distinction* (D*)	9
	8
Distinction (D)	7
	6
Merit (M)	5
	4
Pass (P)	

## What will I gain from studying this subject?

Business Studies opens your eyes to the inner workings of the business world. Business is all around us and influences us all daily in many different ways. Some of you may wish to run your own business one day or may already be interested in how some firms have become so big their revenues are bigger than some countries' GDP.

Whatever your future career goals, business will undoubtedly play a role to some degree. We work closely with local and national businesses to bring you real-world experiences which breathe life into business theory.

BTEC courses are very well respected and both employers and schools and colleges accept them. There are some subjects, like Business Studies, which benefit considerably from being assessed in a vocational way as you can gain real-world skills.

## How will my work be assessed?

One of the benefits of the BTEC course is that you have a slightly different assessment schedule than traditional GCSEs. Over the two years you study four units. Three of these units are all assessed through coursework. The remaining unit is assessed through an examination. The National Award is the equivalent of one GCSE.

On a BTEC course you are assessed in year 10 as well as year 11. By the end of year 10, you will have completed 50% of your grade (if you are successful in your assessments) which means you can keep on track towards your target grades very easily.

Exam Board: Edexcel BTEC  
Spec code: 600/4786/0

# Option Subject



## What will I study?

There are three mandatory units to be completed and we pick the fourth unit from a choice of three:

Mandatory units:

- Unit 1: Introduction to Business (coursework)
- Unit 2: Finance for Business (External, exam assessment)
- Unit 3: Enterprise in the Business World (Coursework)

Optional units – pick 1 (all coursework)

- Unit 4: Promoting a Brand
- Unit 5: Principles of Customer Service
- Unit 6: Recruitment, Selection and Employment.

As you can see from the topics we cover a variety of aspects of business such as starting a business, marketing, sales, finance and human resources. We have a big network of business contacts and this means you will often learn directly from these business people.

## Enrichment Opportunities:

Extra-curricular clubs are offered for business students and budding future entrepreneurs.

There is an annual trip to local and national businesses to gain an insight into the world of work.

Guest speakers throughout the year from various realms of business both online and in-person.



**Head of Business Studies and Economics**  
**Fiona Banks**  
[BanksF@rendcomcollege.org.uk](mailto:BanksF@rendcomcollege.org.uk)

# Computer Science



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

A deeper insight into the subject that continues to revolutionise all that we do in society, industry and education. Technology is embedded in every sector and employers need workers that understand not only how to use technology, but how to create and manipulate it. You will learn to develop algorithms and recognize what's important and how to break down and solve complex tasks, all whilst developing your logical thinking skills and attention to detail. These are highly desirable and transferable skills that can be applied to any field of study or employment. You will also develop an appreciation of current and emerging computing technologies and the benefits of their use, along with the ethical issues and potential risks when using computers.

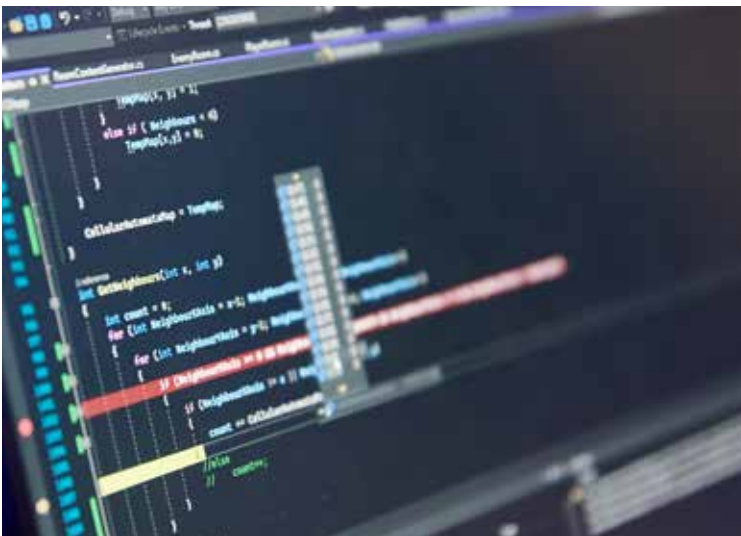
## What will I study?

The course is a mixture of programming, problem solving and theory. Topics that are studied include:

- Fundamentals of programming and problem solving (using C#, pseudocode and flow charts)
- Fundamentals of data representation (including binary, hexadecimal, images, sound and video)
- Fundamentals of communication and Internet technologies (including types of data transmission, how the Internet and WWW works, and HTML and CSS)
- Fundamentals of hardware and software (such as computer architecture, operating systems and memory storage devices)
- Fundamentals of how we store and manipulate data using databases
- Fundamentals of cyber security and digital currencies
- Fundamentals of automated and emerging technologies

**Exam Board: CIE**  
**Spec code: IGCSE 0984**

# Option Subject



## How will my work be assessed?

Candidates take 2 written papers which are externally assessed:

- Paper 1: Computer Systems (1 hour 45 minutes)
- Paper 2: Algorithms, Programming and Logic (1 hour 45 minutes)

You are also continually assessed throughout the course with regular submissions of program code and written theory work.

## Enrichment Opportunities

The department offers a wealth of opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom. We offer enrichment through a range of after-school activities such as Digital Creations, Cyber Security, Coding Club, and more recently, Gaming Club, utilising our eSport ready suite of computers. The department is also regularly open during break for you to pursue your interests - we'll help you wherever we can.

Students also regularly participate in a range of national competitions including the Perse coding team challenge, the Bebras computing challenge, the PA Raspberry Pi competition, and others. We have placed in the top 20 nationally in the Perse coding challenge, reached the regional finals of the girls CyberFirst competition and in the not too distant past 3 girls won the inaugural Longitude Explorer Prize developing an app using mobile technology and satellite tracking to tackle homelessness. The opportunities will be there for you.

**Computer Science Teacher**  
**Mrs Marian James**  
**[JamesM@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:JamesM@rendcombcollege.org.uk)**

# Hospitality and Catering



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

The WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Award in Hospitality and Catering is an exciting and creative course focusing on practical cooking skills as well as an understanding of the hospitality and catering industry.

According to the British Hospitality Association, hospitality and catering is Britain's fourth largest industry and accounts for around 10% of the total workforce. Since 2010, over 25% of all new jobs have been within the hospitality and catering sector. Alongside knowledge of the catering industry, pupils on the course will develop transferable skills such as problem-solving, organisation and time management, planning and communication. The WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Award in Hospitality and Catering is equivalent to a GCSE, for which you can be awarded a pass, merit or distinction.

## What will I study?

Unit 1 deals with questions such as: What types of establishments provide hospitality and catering services? What job opportunities are there in the industry? How do caterers ensure they are working safely? How can food poisoning be prevented? What laws need to be considered when providing hospitality and catering? How do providers meet customers' needs? When opening a new outlet, what factors need to be considered? Pupils on the course will gain an understanding of issues important to hospitality and catering providers; how they operate and what makes them successful. Nutrition and food safety are central to hospitality and catering operations, and there is the opportunity to learn about these in detail.

In Unit 2 pupils will learn to safely plan, prepare, cook and present nutritional dishes.



**Exam Board: WJEC**  
**Spec code: 603/7022/1**

# Option Subject



## How will my work be assessed?

Unit 1 is externally examined and makes up 40% of the qualification. It is tested by a 90 minute on-screen, e-assessment, requiring both short and extended responses.

Unit 2 is internally assessed, largely practical, and is worth 60% of the overall grade. In this unit pupils will be given an assignment brief and will need to research, plan and prepare appropriate dishes.

## Enrichment Opportunities

Living in an area like the Cotswolds means that we have an excellent range of professional hospitality providers to give our pupils a wide range of examples, ranging from event caterers to fast food outlets.

We also hope to be able to draw on trips to shopping centres, residential homes and, of course, our own school caterers for inspiration and advice.



**Head of Food and Nutrition**  
**Mrs Rachel Fielding**  
**[FieldingR@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:FieldingR@rendcombcollege.org.uk)**

# Design and Technology



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

Design and Technology is the fusion of art and science, learning how to create and prototype new products for the commercial world. Product Designers and Design Engineers are the people who have the ability to manage often conflicting factors and lead by good design.

By studying this subject you will be giving yourself the opportunity to take part in shaping the world and solving problems such as climate change through responsible and innovative design.

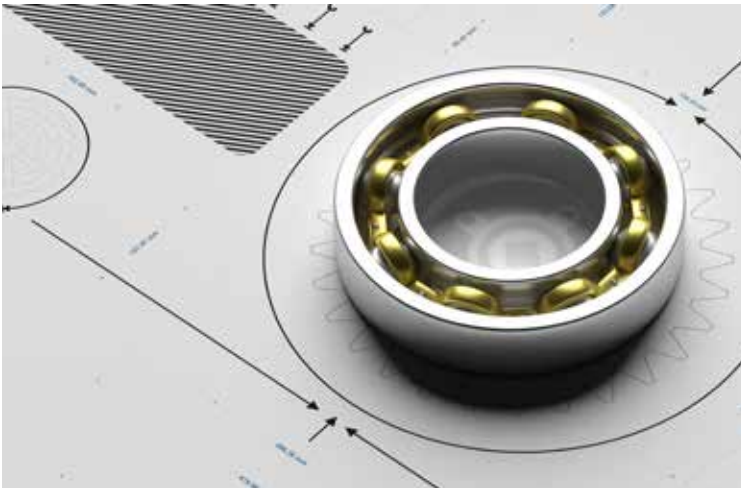
You will increase your creative and technical skills whilst understanding how businesses, including the manufacturing sector, operate. You will give yourself a head start in being better prepared to enter into that business world by having project management experience.

## How will my work be assessed?

50% of the work will be assessed through an NEA, which is a 6 month design and prototyping project. The other 50% is assessed through an exam that is a mixture of multiple choice, short and long answer questions.

**Exam board: AQA**  
**Spec code: 8552**

# Option Subject



## What will I study?

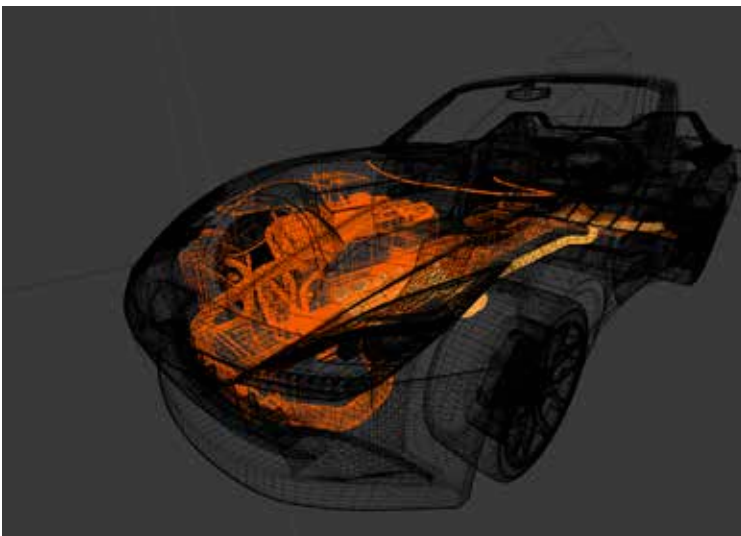
The core modules you will study are:

- New and Emerging Technologies
- Energy Generation and Storage
- Developments in New Materials
- Systems Approach to Designing
- Mechanical Devices
- Materials and their Working Properties
- Specialist Technical Principles
- Applied Design Strategies

## Enrichment Opportunities

There are a range of enrichment activities associated with the subject that include:

- Green Car challenge – We have won a bid to get involved with the Green Car Challenge. This involves assembling, designing, prototyping, modifying, testing and racing the car at different circuits around the UK. There are regional races which, if we're fast enough, will eventually lead to a national final race. The opportunities to be involved are numerous, from design & engineering, trackside strategy and support, to being one of the racing drivers. This really will be a great way to put your creativity and problem-solving ability into a real-life context
- Innovation Society - a think tank to explore innovative concepts and ideas with a view to developing some ideas for future enterprise schemes.



**Head of Design and Technology**  
**Mr Marc Silverthorn**  
**[SilverthornM@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:SilverthornM@rendcombcollege.org.uk)**

# Drama



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

If you are considering a career in performing arts, the media, or even law, medicine and business, then Drama will help you build confidence, develop strong communication skills and bolster your team and leadership skills. It is a demanding course in which you will need to use your energy, ideas and enthusiasm to respond to a variety of creative challenges and meet practical and written deadlines head-on.

## How will my work be assessed?

Your course breaks down into 3 components:

**Component 1: Devising**  
Internally assessed externally moderated: 60 marks = 40% of your total GCSE.

- As a group, you will devise a piece of original theatre based on up to 3 stimuli. You will perform this to an audience and it will be filmed and marked by your teacher before being sent to the exam board for moderation.
- You will create a written portfolio of 2000 words to accompany your work, analysing and evaluating how you created, refined and performed your piece as a part of your group and as an individual.

**Exam board: Edexcel Spec  
Code: 1DR0**

# Option Subject



## Component 2: Performance from Text

Externally examined: 48 marks = 20% of your total GCSE

- You will perform 2 key extracts from a play.
- You will prepare 200 words per character played explaining your intentions for the performance.
- Your two performance pieces will be marked by a visiting examiner.

## Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice

Written Exam – 1 hour 45 minutes: 60 marks = 40% of your total GCSE

- Section A: Bringing Texts to Life – The Crucible
- This section consists of one question broken into six parts (short and extended responses) based on an unseen extract from The Crucible.
- Section B: Live Theatre Evaluation.
- This section consists of 2 questions which will ask you to analyse and evaluate a piece of live theatre you have seen. You will have 500 words of notes which you will take into the exam as a prompt.

## Enrichment Opportunities

As part of the course, you will visit the theatre and have the opportunity to participate in specialist workshops on Berkoff and with Frantic Assembly who come into College. You also have the option of joining our London Drama Tour: a residential trip which takes in West End shows, a workshop with professional actors and backstage tours of the Globe and National Theatres.

**Head of Drama**

**Ms Sarah Stokes**

**[StokesS@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:StokesS@rendcombcollege.org.uk)**

# English as a Second Language



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

This is a course for International Students only, who do not consider English to be their first language. Students will be given the opportunity to obtain an internationally recognised Cambridge English Certificate and an IGCSE (the latter only if they complete their full Year 11 studies at Rendcomb).

## How will my work be assessed?

Preparation work will be assessed regularly through exam-style questions in class and prep. Students will work towards their Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE) during Year 10 using CEFR grades C1-A2, and then focus on their IGCSE English as a Second Language (ESL) in Year 11 using IGCSE grades 9-1.

## Exam board: Edexcel Spec Code: 4ES1

# Option Subject

### What will I study?

Y10 Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE):

Paper	Content	Marks (% of total)	Purpose
Reading & Use of English (1 hour 15 mins)	7 parts/52 questions	40%	Shows you can deal confidently with different types of text, such as fiction, newspapers and magazines. Tests your use of English with tasks that show how well you can control your grammar and vocabulary.
Writing (1 hour 20 mins)	2 parts/2 questions	20%	Requires you to be able to produce two different pieces of writing, such as letters, reports, reviews and essays.
Listening	4 parts/30 questions	20%	Requires you to be able to follow and understand a range of spoken materials, such as news programmes, presentations and everyday conversations.
Speaking	4 parts	20%	Tests your ability to communicate effectively in face-to-face situations. You will take the Speaking test with one or two other candidates.

Y11 IGCSE English as a Second Language (ESL):

Paper	Content	Marks (% of total)	Purpose
Reading and Writing (2 hours)	3 parts /50 marks available	33.33%	Understand and respond in writing to a range of English texts.
	3 parts /50 marks available	33.33%	Write clear, relevant texts in English on a range of subjects.
Listening (50 minutes)	4 parts /40 marks available	33.33%	Understand a wide range of recorded material spoken at normal speed.



**Head of EAL**  
**Mrs Julia Edgeworth-Simmonds**  
**EdgeworthSimmondsJ@rendcombcollge.org.uk**

# French



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

At Rendcomb College we are passionate about languages and the benefits that learning a language can bring. Learning French goes far beyond studying a language in the classroom. The gastronomy, history, arts, literature and technology France has to offer will culturally enrich anyone who wants to stand out not only at university or the world of work but also on a social level.

Understanding and speaking a language are impressive skills and open up a lot of doors as far as careers, travel and personal growth are concerned. Technology, globalisation and ease of international travel are bringing more of the world within our reach and foreign language skills make you very valuable in the marketplace. When pupils study French they are intellectually stimulated; they become more tolerant and inclusive; broaden their cultural horizons; develop a skill for life; increase their knowledge of English and have fun learning experiences.

All pupils are strongly encouraged to study at least one language at GCSE and students who wish to take two languages can opt to take both languages that they studied in Year 9. Therefore, a student could study French alongside another language.



**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Spec code: 8652**

# Option Subject



## How will my work be assessed?

The four language skills, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, will be assessed with equal weighting (25% each), at either Foundation or Higher level. All examinations will be taken at the end of Year 11. The speaking examination will be conducted by your own language teacher.

## What will I study?

Students study all of the following themes on which the assessments are based:

- Theme 1: Identity and culture (Me, my family and friends; Technology in everyday life; Free-time activities; Customs and festivals)
- Theme 2: Local, national, international and global areas of interest (Home, town, neighbourhood and region; Social issues; Global issues; Travel and tourism)
- Theme 3: Current and future study and employment.

Students will have already met many of these topics in Key Stage 3. They will now be extended and developed to increase the range of expression and understanding.

## Enrichment Opportunities

The thriving French Department has long-established contacts in France and runs regular events as well as cultural trips and exchanges. We also offer clubs and activities which help pupils develop strong communication skills and achieve consistently high standards in public examinations.

**Head of French**  
**Mrs Emma Lulham**  
**[LulhamE@rendcombcollege.org.uk](mailto:LulhamE@rendcombcollege.org.uk)**

# Geography



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

Geography helps you to make sense of the world around you. It is hands-on, it is relevant and it is interesting. Our GCSE course offers a good mix of topics such as urban issues, world development, extreme environments, coasts and hazards – to name but a few. The course will give you the chance to get to grips with some of the big questions which affect our world and understand the social, economic and physical forces and processes which shape and change our world.

Geography is a broad-based academic subject which will open up options for you in the future. Future employers and universities see Geography as a robust academic subject rich in skills, knowledge and understanding. As a subject linking the arts and the sciences, it is highly flexible in terms of what you can combine it with. If you choose to take Geography on to A level and then university there are literally hundreds of courses to choose from and there is a huge range of career areas accessed by graduates of Geography from town planners to geology and even volcanologists! Many of these careers offer the chance to travel.

There are so many ways of learning in Geography. It is very practical, with opportunities to learn new skills such as modern computer-based mapping (called GIS), map skills, interpreting photographs, fieldwork skills, presenting, role play and debating techniques. You will improve your literacy through your report writing and written work and make practical use of your numeracy skills when you interpret data and construct graphs.

**Exam Board: Edexcel  
Spec: 4GE1**

# Option Subject



At Rendcomb we have an environment that really helps in the teaching of Geography and we try and get outside of the classroom and use our extensive grounds as much as we can, especially when the weather is nice!

## How will my work be assessed?

The course consists of two exams at the end of Year 11.

## What will I study?

You will have the opportunity to study a mix of human and physical Geography, this includes looking at global and urban development as well as natural hazards and coastal processes.



Fieldwork, or working outside the classroom, is a really important part of Geography and we spend a day in Year 10 studying urban issues in Gloucester while in Year 11 we travel down to Dorset to spend a night away looking at coastal processes and management techniques in Lulworth Cove and Chesil Beach. This is an excellent opportunity to experience some of the things you have learnt about in class.



**Head of Geography  
Mr Rhodri James  
James R@rendcombcollege.org.uk**

# History



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

A study of History at GCSE gives candidates an opportunity to:

- Explore history from a diversity of perspectives, including social, economic, cultural and political;
- Develop an interest in and an enthusiasm for History, and acquire a sound basis for further historical study;
- Explore historical concepts such as cause and consequence, change and continuity, and similarity and difference;
- Develop the ability to ask relevant questions about the past, to investigate issues critically and to make valid historical claims by using a range of sources in their historical context;
- Gain a greater understanding of international issues and inter-relationships;
- Learn how to present clear, logical arguments.

## How will my work be assessed?

Paper One: Depth Studies. Students study two depth studies which are assessed in this 1 hr 30 mins paper. It accounts for 50% of the final grade.

Paper Two: Investigation and Breadth Studies. Students study one historical investigation and one breadth study, which are assessed in this 1 hr 30 mins paper. It accounts for 50% of the final grade.

**Exam Board: Pearson IGCSE**  
**Spec code: 4HI1**

# Option Subject



## What will I study?

### Year 10

Examined in Paper Two:

- Historical Investigation: The Origins and Course of the First World War, 1905-1918

Examined in Paper One:

- Depth Study: A World Divided: Superpower Relations, 1943-1972
- Depth Study: A Divided Union: Civil Rights in the USA, 1945-1974

### Year 11

Examined in Paper Two:

- Breadth Study: China: Conflict, Crisis and Change, 1900-1989



## Enrichment Opportunities

History help lines are offered during activity time at particular points of the course. Numbers permitting, a trip to the Battlefields sites of WW1 to deepen understanding of the WW1 depth study.



**Head of History**  
**Mr Ryan Castle**  
**[CastleR@rendcombcollge.org.uk](mailto:CastleR@rendcombcollge.org.uk)**

# Learning Development



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

Studying Learning Development at KS4 can offer a range of valuable skills and learning habits which support the wider GCSE curriculum. Taking Learning Development as an option allows you to have one lesson each week with a specialist teacher (additional charge) in addition to several study periods each week within the Learning Development Study Centre. The study periods allow time for over-learning key concepts and practising exam questions, or completing prep.

## What will I study?

- 1. Assistive Technology Skills:** You will learn to effectively use assistive technology, which can be crucial in today's digital age and is a valuable skill in various fields. This may consist of using mind-mapping software, Immersive Reader, or apps such as 'Shakespeare in Bits'.
- 2. Memory Techniques:** The focus on strategies to embed learning into working memory, such as using OneNote, mind-mapping, and creating audio and visual memory prompts, can significantly improve memory retention and recall abilities. Time will be spent finding the best and most effective way to revise.
- 3. Exam Preparation:** You will gain insights into exam techniques and attention to pre-learning examination vocabulary. This preparation not only boosts your confidence in exams but also equips you with transferable skills for any future assessments or challenges as you move into Sixth Form.

# Option Subject



4. **Core Subject Focus:** The focus on English Language and English Literature GCSE provides a strong foundation that can be applied to various subject areas. Analysing texts and mastering essay structures are skills that can benefit you in multiple academic contexts. Other subjects across the curriculum are also covered.

5. **Mathematical Skills:** Addressing misconceptions in mathematics and practicing and rehearsing processes helps build a solid foundation for on-going study. Much time is given to memorising formulae and strategies that assist the working memory.

7. **Prep and Time Management :** The emphasis on organising prep and workload is very important. Something as simple as organising a file, or being disciplined about when revision should take place through writing a revision timetable makes a huge difference. Time management is essential skill for academic success.

8. **Critical Thinking:** The analysis of texts and development of essay structures encourage critical thinking skills. These skills are valuable for understanding complex issues, making informed decisions, and expressing ideas effectively.

9. **Confidence Building:** As you gain more independence using a range of strategies, you will build confidence in your academic abilities.

10. **Preparation for Sixth Form:** The combination of technical skills, study techniques, and subject-specific knowledge provides a well-rounded preparation for Sixth Form studies.

**College SENDCo**  
**Mrs Kayleigh Leese**  
**[LeeseK@rendcombcollge.org.uk](mailto:LeeseK@rendcombcollge.org.uk)**

# Music



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

If you can play an instrument or sing to at least the equivalent of grade 3 then you could consider studying Music for GCSE. The course will encourage you to develop your musical skills and interest; there is a highly practical element so you will spend much of your time performing, composing and listening.

## What will I study?

You will learn four Study Pieces in each year of Study:

- Mozart *Clarinet Concerto in A major*, 3rd movement, Rondo (AoS1)
- Three tracks from *The Little Shop of Horrors* (AoS2)
- Three tracks from Paul Simon *Graceland* (AoS3)
- Zoltán Kodály: *Battle and Defeat of Napoleon and Intermezzo* from Háy János (AoS4)

Section B of the exam will ask questions on the Study Pieces: AoS1 (Mozart) is compulsory, and you will need to choose one other Study Piece to write about from AoS 2, 3, or 4.

## How will my work be assessed?

Performance = 30% of your final mark. Performance skills are an integral part of the course. You have to perform twice, once as a soloist and once as part of an ensemble or group, and your combined performances must last a minimum of four minutes in total. At least one minute of this should be your ensemble piece. Your performances will be recorded onto a CD and marked by your teacher. They will then be sent for assessment to an AQA moderator.

Composing = 30% of your final mark. You will compose two different pieces of music. One will be written in response to a brief sent out by AQA during the September of your final year of the GCSE course. There will be four briefs to choose from. The second piece is a free composition.



**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Spec Code: 8271**

# Option Subject



The two pieces together must last no less than three minutes. Your compositions will be marked by your teacher and then sent to an AQA moderator.

Understanding music = 40% of your final mark and is divided into two sections. The first section (Section A: Listening) contains questions linked to unfamiliar musical excerpts. The second (Section B: Contextual understanding) contains questions on the study pieces. The examination is 1 hour 30 minutes and the paper is marked by AQA examiners.

You will experience a wide range of musical styles, which will allow you to increase your understanding and appreciation of a range of different kinds of music from four Areas of Study.

AoS1 – Western Classical Tradition 1650-1910

AoS2 – Popular Music

AoS3 – Traditional Music

AoS4 – Western Classical Tradition since 1910

## Enrichment Opportunities

The Music Department at Rendcomb is an exciting and rewarding place with which to be involved. Some of the ensembles and opportunities the department runs include:

Choir, Chamber Choir, Acapella group, Schola Cantorum, Choral Society, College Orchestra, String Ensemble, Woodwind Ensemble, Classical Guitar Ensemble, Senior Piano Duet, Rock Group, Sibelius and Logic Composition Club, ABRSM Theory Club, ABRSM Aural training and regular performance opportunities.

The Music Department stages weekly informal Coffee Concerts, half-termly evening Pupils' Concert in the splendour of the Reading Room, and annual showcase concerts which include: the Carol Service in Cirencester Parish Church, the Choral Society and Concerto concert in the Lent Term, the Rock Concert and the Founders' Day Concert in May.



**Director of Music**  
**Dr Tom Edwards**  
[EdwardsT@rendcombcollge.org.uk](mailto:EdwardsT@rendcombcollge.org.uk)

# Sport BTEC



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

The BTEC Sport Level 2 course follows on from the Key Stage 3 programme of study by providing pupils with exciting opportunities to lead a healthy lifestyle. The course is designed to provide a route into further study in Physical Education as well as related careers such as physiotherapist, PE Teacher, Nutritionist & Journalism.

Students are able to access the different units within the course through both practical ability and theory. It is not solely based on their sporting ability and it also allows them to gain and improve leadership skills.

You will be assessed through a combination of Externally Assessed Examinations and Internally Assessed Assignments.

## How will my work be assessed?

This is a BTEC qualification which means that it is a vocational course which allows students to study the world of sport. It is equivalent to a GCSE qualification. A BTEC course is made up of a mixture of internal assessment (coursework) and an examination.

In BTEC FIRST AWARD in Sport the internal assessments are units 2,3 and 6 which totals 75% of the course.

Unit 1 is the external examination which is worth 25% of their overall grade.

**Exam Board: Pearson  
Spec Code: 603/7068/3**

# Option Subject



## What will I study?

### Year 10

#### Unit 2 Practical Sport

Research 2 sports and explain as much information as possible about them, then take part in those sports and self-evaluate suggesting ways to improve.

#### Unit 1 Exam Unit

Understand components of fitness, principles of training, heart rate, training zones, fitness tests, FITT, methods of training and stretching and take an online exam.

### Year 11

#### Unit 3 Applying the principles of personal training

Perform a variety of fitness tests and design a 6-week training programme, perform tests again and evaluate results.

#### Unit 6 Leading sports activities

Compare successful sports leaders, design sports sessions and implement the sessions with the rest of the class. Review sessions and explain and justify targets for the future.

## Enrichment Opportunities

- Fitness Assessing at Birmingham City University
- A-Level and GCSE Revision Days
- Athlete Development Pathway Activity
- Revision Activity

### Head of PE

**Mrs Karen Coups**

**[CoupsK@rendcombcollge.org.uk](mailto:CoupsK@rendcombcollge.org.uk)**

# Spanish



## What will I gain from studying this subject?

Spanish is a thriving language and its importance on the world stage continues to rise, so much so that in the British Council's 'Languages for the Future' reports, Spanish consistently tops the list as the most important language to the UK. Spanish is the official language of more than twenty countries worldwide and is second only to Chinese in terms of the number of native speakers. The number of students opting for Spanish at GCSE reflects this with more students studying it now than ever before. The rich and stimulating curriculum on offer at Rendcomb College mirrors the vibrant and exciting Spanish-speaking world and our aim is to immerse students in Hispanic culture as well as equip them with the grammatical and linguistic skills they need to flourish at GCSE and beyond.

All pupils are strongly encouraged to study at least one language at GCSE and it is possible to take two languages at GCSE if they have studied them in Year 9.

Languages are a valuable skill for life and at Rendcomb College we are passionate about the benefits that learning another language can bring. It is not only an immensely enjoyable and rewarding experience but with increasing levels of globalisation and the ease of international travel, more of the world is at our fingertips and foreign language skills are the key to the current marketplace.

**Exam Board: AQA**  
**Spec Code: 8692**

# Option Subject



## How will my work be assessed?

The four language skills, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, will be assessed with equal weighting, at either Foundation or Higher level. All examinations will be taken at the end of Year 11. The speaking examination will be conducted by your own language teacher.

## What will I study?

Students study all of the following themes on which the assessments are based:

- Theme 1: Identity and culture (Me, my family and friends; Technology in everyday life; Free-time activities; Customs and festivals)
- Theme 2: Local, national, international and global areas of interest (Home, town, neighbourhood and region; Social issues; Global issues; Travel and tourism)
- Theme 3: Current and future study and employment.

Students will have already met many of these topics in Key Stage 3. They will now be extended and developed to increase the range of expression and understanding.

## Enrichment Opportunities

The Spanish Department is a lively department within the College. Pupils achieve consistently high standards in public examinations and get the opportunity to take part in regular enrichment events, including cultural trips and excursions.



**Head of Spanish**  
**Mr George Toms**  
**TomsG@rendcombcollege.org.uk**