



Dane Court Grammar School

Year 9 GCSE Options

2026

This booklet contains information about the options process and details of the GCSE curriculum.



Dane Court Grammar School – Options 2026

Heads of Department for the Key Stage Four Curriculum

Art and Design	D Brooks
Biology	T Howard
Business	C Edwards
Computing	A Gale
Drama	B Birkitt
English	N Underwood
Food Preparation and Nutrition	J Baker; E Towse
Geography	M Hutchings
German	G Green
History	A McGinn
Mathematics and Statistics	H Brissenden
Modern Languages and French	A Radix
Music	C Jones
Physical Education	G Bolt
Physics	R Wade
Religious Studies and Philosophy	G Richardson
Sciences and Chemistry	M Green
Spanish	C Howard-Lubendo



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Introduction

This document has been prepared for year 9 students at Dane Court Grammar School and their parents as a practical guide to the subjects that may be studied for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).

In their first three years at the school, students follow a very broad course, designed to give them access to as wide an educational experience as possible. As they move into their GCSE years, students have the opportunity to specialise by choosing courses that reflect individual strengths and interests. The curriculum in years 10 and 11 has been planned so that all students follow a sound educational programme. This is balanced, and offers an appropriate breadth of study for a caring, open-minded and principled citizen of the future. In our sixth form, students will keep a very wide variety of elite future pathways open by studying the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme or the International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme.

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum

The Non-Examined Curriculum

All students will continue their timetabled lessons in PE and PSHE. Students will also benefit from an extensive academic curriculum during their mentoring sessions, which will include advice and preparation for future study and careers.

The Examined Curriculum

All students will study the following combination of courses for GCSE:

1. English Literature and Language (two GCSEs)
2. Mathematics
3. Science
Two GCSEs: GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy)
or Three GCSEs: GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry, GCSE Physics (Triple)
4. A modern language All students study **at least one** modern language (French, Spanish or German) choosing from those studied in KS3
5. **Three** additional subjects See further guidance below

Students will have the opportunity to choose their science pathway. Dane Court is a grammar school, with an exceptional track record of excellence in the sciences, and truly outstanding science results. Therefore, **Triple Science will be the right choice for the majority of students**, in order to open up the full range of science-based future pathways.



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Additional Subjects (Options)

Students will have a choice of **three** subjects from the list below.

We strongly advise all students to select History and/or Geography as one of their options in order to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, and to provide excellent preparation for sixth form and university study.

Option Subject List:

A second language (French, Spanish or German)

Art and Design: Fine Art

Art and Design: Three dimensional design

Business

Computing

Drama

Food Preparation and Nutrition

Geography

History

Music

PE and Sport

Religious Studies and Philosophy

Statistics

GCSE Courses

Heads of Department at Dane Court have selected the curriculum which is most appropriate for the needs of our students. In this pack, you will find a brief overview of each subject, which includes information about subject content and course requirements. GCSE courses are examined at the end of the two-year course.

As well as examinations at the end of year 11, non-examined assessments are also completed in some subjects during the two-year GCSE course. Marks from these non-examined assessments count towards the final GCSE grade, so it is important that students maintain high levels of effort and attendance throughout years 10 and 11.

Advice for students

Students and parents may want to discuss options choices in depth. The information contained in this document will, we hope, guide your choice. The following staff at school can also help you:

- Subject teachers can advise you about your prospects in a particular subject.
- Form mentors and Year Leads can give advice of a general nature.
- Any member of the senior leadership team can give specialist advice.
- Mrs Edwards, Careers Leader, will be available for discussions relating to higher education and/or careers advice



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The decision you make about your choices for next year is very important. It will dictate the course of your education for at least the next two years and may even influence your whole career. Please do not be afraid to ask for advice.

How do I choose?

In making your choices you should bear in mind the following points.

- The subjects you are good at.
- The subjects you like.
- The subjects that may be necessary for any future studies that you have in mind.
- Maintaining a balance so that you keep open options for future study.

When do I choose?

You have plenty of time to consider your choices before coming to a final decision. A **Google form** will be sent to your parents/carers on **Friday 16th January** and we ask that students and parents complete this together, expressing an initial interest in GCSE option subjects. You will not be committed to these option choices but they will help us to plan a fair, balanced timetable. **The window for making your final choices opens on Monday 9th March and closes on Friday 20th March** and, again, will be via a Google form. You will be allocated time in mentoring to complete this, under the guidance of your mentor and a member of the senior leadership team.

You will choose three subjects from the list of options above, and we will always aim to ensure that as many students as possible are able to study all three of their chosen options. Please note that due to timetabling restrictions, this may not always be possible, and therefore you are required to select a fourth, insurance choice.

We will always prioritise students' first and second choice subjects, so you should think carefully about the subjects you list as first, second and third choice on the options form. You must be ready to study your insurance choice subject in place of your third choice subject, so please consider this carefully. Please also be aware that a subject will only run if a minimum of fifteen students opt to study it.

It is important to note that changes past the March deadline will not always be possible: some courses will already be full, and some combinations of courses may not be possible once the timetable has been written.

Course Information

In order to help you with your choice, you will find brief descriptions on the following pages of all the courses that you might follow next year.



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Art and Design: Fine Art

Exam Board: EDUQAS
Exam Weighting: 40%

Specification Code: C651QS
Weighting for Non-examined Assessment: 60%

GCSE Art and Design is about having an adventurous and enquiring approach to learning where you will develop the skills and confidence to express your own ideas.

Studying art and design is not only about becoming an artist. Being creative is essential for many careers. Imaginative, innovative, intuitive people are highly sought after in business, media, engineering, science, teaching and many other careers.

As a Dane Court GCSE Art and Design student you will become a more independent individual: you will be able to take risks, make mistakes and learn from them. You will learn to communicate effectively in writing, verbally and visually. You will be able to manage and deliver long term projects.

At Dane Court we offer a multidisciplinary course with two distinct pathways and many possible areas of exploration. Our two paths are GCSE Art and Design: Fine Art or GCSE Art and Design: Three dimensional design.

GCSE Art and Design: Fine Art

The course we deliver is based on an art and design college foundation model where students who opt for either of the art and design courses will rotate on a two week carousel, learning skills and processes, working with a range of materials and exploring drawing systems for different functions. In the autumn term students will complete short projects in sculpture, textiles, painting, photography, printing and drawing. At the end of these introductory lessons students will start to specialise, choosing two of the disciplines in a six week project that combines the two approaches before opting for a material in which they will gain expertise . At this point each student will be allotted an art and design tutor who will lead them through the development and completion of their own art and design pieces. Students will build up lively sketchbooks full of ideas, material investigations and visual resources through which they will prepare for making a series of studio art or design pieces.

The Art and Design GCSE is assessed as two units of work.

1) A personal portfolio of art and design work in the form of sketchbooks, studio and workshop made pieces. The personal portfolio contains all of the work produced from September of year 10 to December of year 11. The personal portfolio is worth 60% of the GCSE.

2) An externally set assignment is a 10 week project (running from January to May of year 11) in which students explore a set theme, question or brief and produce a body of preparatory and completed art and design pieces which culminates in a 10 hour controlled assessment. The externally set assignment is worth the remaining 40% of the GCSE.

If you are interested in art, craft or design and enjoy drawing or making things; if you have an aptitude or, more importantly, the attitude for being creative, independent of spirit and motivated to produce exciting, thoughtful and beautiful things, we will help you to realise your potential.



Dane Court Grammar School – Options 2026

Art and Design: Three dimensional design

Exam Board: EDUQAS

Exam Weighting: 40%

Specification Code: C655QS

Weighting for Non-examined Assessment: 60%

GCSE Art and Design is about having an adventurous and enquiring approach to learning where you will develop the skills and confidence to express your own ideas.

Studying art and design is not only about becoming an artist or designer. Being creative is essential for many careers. Imaginative, innovative, intuitive people are highly sought after in business, media, engineering, science, teaching and many other careers.

As a Dane Court GCSE Art and Design student you will become a more independent individual: you will be able to take risks, make mistakes and learn from them. You will learn to communicate effectively in writing, verbally and visually. You will be able to manage and deliver long term projects.

At Dane Court we offer a multidisciplinary course with two distinct pathways and many possible areas of exploration. Our two paths are GCSE Art and Design: Fine Art or GCSE Art and Design: Three dimensional design.

GCSE Art and Design: Three dimensional design

The three dimensional design course focuses on making works of design using resistant materials. Working in the design technology workshop students will work with wood, plastics and metal, using hand and computer aided design processes to create beautiful and functional objects, models and maquettes. We will study the work of architects, product designers and furniture makers, using these as inspiration students will build up lively sketchbooks full of ideas, material investigations and visual resources preparing for making a series of design pieces. Through this process of conceptual and material experimentation, refinement and reflection students will learn how to be designers.

The Art and Design GCSE is assessed as two units of work.

1) A personal portfolio of art and design work in the form of sketchbooks and workshop made pieces. The personal portfolio contains all of the work produced from September of year 10 to December of year 11. The personal portfolio is worth 60% of the GCSE.

2) An externally set assignment is a 10 week project (running from January to May of year 11) in which students explore a set theme, question or brief and produce a body of preparatory and completed art and design pieces which culminates in a 10 hour controlled assessment. The externally set assignment is worth the remaining 40% of the GCSE.

If you are interested in making things; if you have an aptitude or, more importantly, the attitude for being creative, independent of spirit and motivated to produce exciting, thoughtful and beautiful things, we will help you to realise your potential.



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Business

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification Code: 1BS0

Exam weighting: 100%

The Business Department equips students with business knowledge and understanding that they can effectively apply in real world settings to improve their career growth and success, whether as an entrepreneur or a proactively contributing employee.

The Business GCSE is an exciting course written in response to feedback from the business subject community, including business owners and managers, teachers, professional bodies and higher education. It is delivered by teachers with several years of business experience, to give engaging and inspiring lessons that reflect modern and evolving business. You will develop key knowledge and skills through discussion, research and investigation, and practical tasks, alongside exam preparation. This qualification enables students to develop as commercially minded and enterprising individuals and provides learning that is highly relevant to most career pathways. The course is structured in two themes.

Theme 1: Investigating small business - through the lens of an entrepreneur, students will be introduced to local and national business contexts, behaviours and decisions.

1. **Enterprise and entrepreneurship** – what makes a good business idea, the risks and rewards of business and the role of entrepreneurs.
2. **Spotting a business opportunity** – how new and small businesses identify opportunities through understanding customer needs, market research and competitor analysis.
3. **Putting a business idea into practice** – making a business idea happen through identifying aims and objectives and concentrating on the financial aspects.
4. **Making the business effective** – students will explore a range of factors that impact on the success of the business, including location, the marketing mix and the business plan.
5. **Understanding external influences on business** – responding to changes and development in technology, legal, politics and the economic climate.

Theme 2: Building a business covers how to run an effective business and how businesses grow and develop into productive and popular, international brands.

1. **Growing the business** – methods of growth, how businesses evolve and the impact of globalisation and ethical and environmental consideration.
2. **Making marketing decisions** – applying the marketing mix, covering promotion and advertising, product design, pricing and distribution choices.
3. **Making operational decisions** – this topic focuses on meeting customer needs through the design, supply, quality and sales decisions a business makes.
4. **Making financial decisions** – students will explore the tools a business has to support financial decision making, including ratio analysis, profit margins and basic accounting.
5. **Making human resource decisions** – how to recruit, train, organise and motivate staff.

Theme 1 is completed in year 10 and Theme 2 before Easter in year 11. This gives substantial opportunities for revision. The course is examined through two written papers in the summer of year 11. There is no coursework.



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Computing

Exam Board: OCR

Specification code: J277

Exam weighting: 100%

Introduction

In a recent skills survey over 70% of the people questioned said that using a computer was essential to their job. This number has increased by 20% in the last 10 years (more than double the rise of any other skill).

Recent speeches from Google, Microsoft and other leading technology companies have stressed the need for all students to have an understanding of computing, especially with the drive towards a new UK job market based around high level computing skills such as programming and cyber security.

The computing (9-1) GCSE offered at Dane Court is new and designed to meet these challenges. It is a course that expands on the knowledge students have gained over the years, providing the perfect foundation for students who are looking for any career with a computing element.

The course itself is split into two different sections; programming and computing theory - both are assessed by external examination at the end of the course.

Exam one - Computer systems

Students learn about the theory of a computer, looking at questions such as what different parts are used to make a computer and how they link together. They explore topics on the theory behind the hardware and how computers use data to store information.

This section is worth 50% of the final GCSE and involves a 1 hour 30 minute examination.

Exam two - Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

Students learn critical computational thinking and problem solving skills which in turn gives them the tools to understand computer programming. Students are challenged with coding problems that they have to solve and must be able to write programs spontaneously.

This section is worth 50% of the final GCSE and involves a 1 hour 30 minute examination.



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Drama

Exam Board: WJEC/EDUQAS

Specification Code: C690QS

Written Exam Weighting: 40%

Practical Exam Weighting: 20%

Weighting for Non-examined Assessment: 40%

At its core Drama is a subject centered around the study of character and story. This is underpinned by a knowledge of the stage and the roles and responsibilities of the wide range of creative professionals that bring the action to life. Students studying Drama at GCSE explore a range of plays, practitioners and styles through practical performance and academic study. GCSE Drama is about working collaboratively and harnessing the skills required not only to create performance, but to contribute to, lead and thrive in a group environment. This empowers students with exceptional communication skills that are suited to a vast pool of future careers both within and outside of the creative arts.

The course consists of three units.

Component 1: Devising Theatre – 40% of GCSE

Non-examined assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated.

Learners will be assessed on **either** acting **or** design.

Learners participate in the creation, development and performance of a piece of devised theatre using **either** the techniques of an influential theatre practitioner **or** a genre, in response to a stimulus set by the exam board.

Learners must produce:

- a realisation of their piece of devised theatre
- a portfolio of supporting evidence
- an evaluation of the final performance or design.

Component 2: Performing from a Text – 20% of GCSE

Practical exam: externally assessed by a visiting examiner.

Learners will be assessed on **either** acting **or** design.

Learners study **two** extracts from the **same** performance text chosen by the centre.

Learners participate in **one** performance using sections of text from **both** extracts.

Component 3: Interpreting Theatre – 40% of GCSE

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes.

Section A: Set Text

A series of questions on **one** set text from a choice of five.

Section B: Live Theatre Review

One question, from a choice of two that requires analysis and evaluation of a given aspect of a live theatre production seen during the course.



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English Language

Exam Board: AQA

Specification Code: 8700

Exam Weighting: 100%

Aims:

Throughout the two year course, students will develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing, necessary to communicate with others confidently, effectively, precisely and appropriately. We aim to foster students' ability to express themselves creatively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting their speech and writing to different situations and audiences. They will become critical readers of a range of texts, using reading to develop their own skills as writers.

Paper 1

Section A Reading	Section B Writing
One literature fiction text followed by a series of questions worth a total of 40 marks (25% of GCSE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One short form question (1 x 4 marks) ● Two longer form questions (2 x 8 marks) ● One extended question (1 x 20 marks) 	Descriptive or narrative writing worth a total of 40 marks (25% of GCSE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One extended writing question from a choice of two (24 marks for content, 16 marks for technical accuracy)
Assessed by Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 80 marks 50% of GCSE	

Paper 2

Section A Reading	Section B Writing
One non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text followed by a series of questions worth a total of 40 marks (25% of GCSE). Texts are linked by theme; one is taken from the 19 th century. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● one short form question (1 x 4 marks) ● two longer form questions (1 x 8, 1 x 12 marks) ● one extended question (1 x 16 marks) 	Writing to present a viewpoint worth a total of 40 marks (25% of GCSE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One extended writing question (24 marks for content, 16 for technical accuracy)
Assessed by Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 80 marks 50% of GCSE	



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English Literature

Exam Board: AQA

Specification Code: 8702

Exam Weighting: 100%

Aims:

Throughout the two year course, students will engage with many texts from the English Literary Heritage that have been influential and significant over time. They will explore how texts from different eras may reflect or influence values, assumptions and sense of identity. Students will be encouraged to connect ideas, themes and issues, drawing on a range of perspectives, thereby becoming sensitive and critical readers of fiction prose, poetry and drama.

Paper 1

Section A Shakespeare	Section B Nineteenth Century Novel
Students will answer one question on the play studied in class. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the play and then to write about the play as a whole.	Students will answer one question on the novel studied in class. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the novel and then to write about the novel as a whole.
Assessed by Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes 64 marks 40% of GCSE	

Paper 2

Section A Modern Texts	Section B Poetry Anthology	Section C Unseen Poetry
Students will answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied modern prose or drama text.	Students will answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster.	Students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.
Assessed by Written exam: 2 hours 15 minutes 96 marks 60% of GCSE		



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Food Preparation and Nutrition

Exam Board: AQA

Specification Code: 8585

Written Examination 50%

Two Non-examined Assessments 50%

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition is an enjoyable course that will build students' practical skills and increase their knowledge and understanding of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. This qualification is an excellent foundation for further study of food in the sixth form IB programme where it is taught as one of the Group 4 sciences. Food Preparation and Nutrition will encourage students to make informed decisions about food and nutrition in order to feed themselves and others affordably and healthily. It enables students to understand the challenges that are faced globally to supply the world with nutritious and safe food.

Fifty per cent of the course is non examined assessment (NEA). This comprises two tasks which are summarised below:

Non-examined Assessment: Task 1: Food investigation – An investigative assessment worth 15%. You will produce a 1500-2000 word report including photographic evidence of a practical investigation, showing your understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients.

Non-examined Assessment: Task 2: Food preparation assessment – A food preparation assessment worth 35%. You will prepare, cook and present a final menu of three dishes within three hours, planning in advance how this will be achieved. There is a choice from three possible scenarios such as the cuisine from another country or a specific dietary need, for example vegetarianism. It is expected that students will cook every week in order to develop their practical skills and to produce a wide range of high quality dishes.

Areas of Content

- 1. Food commodities, nutrition and health:** Students will work with a varied range of commodities, learn about the nutrients, their sources, function and deficiency diseases and will discover how to make informed choices for a varied and balanced diet.
- 2. The science of food:** Students learn about heat transfer and cooking methods, as well as the functional and chemical properties of ingredients and raising agents.
- 3. Food safety:** Students learn to recognise and prevent food spoilage and contamination. They study microorganisms and enzymes and the principles of food safety including buying and storing food.
- 4. Food choice:** The course looks at cultural, medical, ethical and religious influences on food choice, British and international cuisine, sensory evaluation and food labelling and marketing.
- 5. Food provenance:** Students are made aware of environmental impact and sustainability of food, where and how ingredients are grown, reared and caught and food processing and production.
- 6. Food preparation and cooking techniques:** Twelve practical skill groups integrated throughout the course.

The course is useful for many different career routes such as medicine, nursing, dietetics, nutrition, teaching, food science, food technology or new product development. To be able to cook and to have a good knowledge of food sourcing and food choice is a useful skill for anyone. This subject links well with Science, Geography, Business Studies, Sport, Art and Design and many other subjects in the curriculum.



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Geography

Exam Board: OCR

Specification Code: J384 (Geography B)

Exam Weighting: 100%

Updated specification for 2025

The ‘**Geography for Enquiring Minds**’ syllabus enables learners to build on their key stage 3 knowledge and skills to:

- Develop and extend their knowledge of locations, places, environments and processes, and of different scales including global; and of social, political and cultural contexts
- Gain understanding of the interactions between people and environments, change in places and processes over space and time, and the inter-relationship between geographical phenomena at different scales and in different contexts
- Develop and extend their competence in a range of skills including those used in fieldwork. Human and physical geography fieldwork will be undertaken in the local area during the course.

Key areas of study are:

- **Our Natural World (01)** – learners will gain an appreciation of the natural world around them including tectonic and weather hazards, climate change, the UK’s distinctive landscapes and the global ecosystems which support life on the planet.
- **People and Society (02)** – Learners will explore the complexities of People and Society through studying why more than half of the world’s population live in urban areas, the dynamic nature of development, the UK in the 21st century and human reliance on key resources for survival and economic gain.
- **Geographical Exploration (03)** – The links, connections and ideas within the eight topics of Our Natural World (01) and People and Society (02) will be brought together for a Geographical Exploration (03). Application of knowledge, understanding and skills will be important in learners questioning and developing arguments, and a decision making exercise will allow learners to become critical thinkers.

Content Overview	Assessment Overview (TBC)	
Global Hazards Changing Climate Dynamic Landscapes Sustaining Ecosystems Fieldwork Geographical Skills	Our Natural World (01) 70 Marks 1 hour 30 minutes written paper	35% of total GCSE
Urban Futures Dynamic Development UK in the 21st Century Resource Reliance Fieldwork Geographical Skills	People and Society (02) 70 Marks 1 hour 30 minutes written paper	35% of total GCSE
Geographical Skills Decision Making Exercise	Geographical Exploration (03)* 60 Marks 1 hour 30 minutes written paper	30% of total GCSE



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History

Exam Board: AQA

Specification Code: 8145

Exam Weighting: 100%

An exciting course has been selected for those taking GCSE History. Students will take two papers. The first is entitled 'Understanding the modern world'. In this students will study Germany 1890-1945 (including Hitler) and conflict and tension in Asia 1950-75 (including the Vietnam War). Paper 2 is called 'Shaping the Nation' and has two parts: firstly 'Migration, Empires and the People c790 to the present day' which starts with the Viking invasions and ends up in the twentieth century; secondly, there is a depth study on Elizabethan England.

Germany 1890-1945 covers the difficulties faced by the German Kaiser (Emperor) at the end of the nineteenth century, the impact of the First World War, the problems that Germany had in the 1920s, Hitler's rise to power and his rule of Nazi Germany up to the end of World War Two.

Conflict and Tension in Asia 1950-75 covers some of the Cold War and focuses on both the Korean War and the Vietnam War. The causes, events and end of both wars are looked at, including the growing protest movements towards the Vietnam War in the USA.

Migration, Empires and the People c750 to the present day is a thematic study which will help students understand how Britain has been shaped by the wider world. It starts off with the Viking invasions and England's relationship with France (including the Normans and the Hundred Years' War). It then moves on to the start of the British Empire including the development of the slave trade and the colonisation of North America, expansion into India (the role of Robert Clive) and Africa (including the second Boer War). Finally it looks at the end of Britain's empire (including the role of Gandhi and also the Suez Crisis), the aftermath of empire, such as migration from Asia and Africa, the Falklands War and Britain's relationship with the European Union including European and non-European migration.

Elizabethan England 1568-1603 looks at the last 35 years of Elizabeth I's reign: her character and court, life in Elizabethan times, rebellions and plots, Mary Queen of Scots, Drake's circumnavigation of the world and the Spanish Armada. It also has a major focus on a site study which is chosen by the exam board each year. This will look at the site and its relationship with historical events and developments as well as giving understanding of how people lived at the time, their beliefs and values.

Students may benefit from the chance to attend a GCSE conference. The study of History should be both enjoyable and informative. Whilst the skills it teaches have often been seen as particularly appropriate for Law, Education and Management, the training it gives means that it is valued as a subject by most employers. History teaches students to think, analyse and present information clearly, as well as informing them about the world they live in. As the Historical Association says, "History can give the skills most employers want, whatever the job you have in mind".



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Mathematics

Exam Board: EDEXCEL

Specification Code: 1MA1

Exam Weighting: 100%

The study of mathematics is an essential part of secondary education and a compulsory subject.

It is the aim of the department to develop a positive attitude to mathematics, including confidence, enjoyment and perseverance such that students have the ability to use their skills in other areas of the curriculum and as a firm foundation for appropriate further study. This will include a willingness to work independently and cooperatively as well as the ability to communicate mathematical ideas in a variety of ways.

All students will follow a pathway over the two years that will lead to an Edexcel GCSE (9 – 1) in Mathematics qualification.

The aims and objectives of this qualification is to enable students to develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts and acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems. It also expects students to be able to reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences, and draw conclusions from their findings.

It is our intention to enter the majority of students for the Higher Tier exam (leading to GCSE grades 9 – 4), however, it may be necessary for a small number to enter at Foundation Tier (leading to GCSE grades 5 – 1). This is to provide those students with as positive experience as possible, along with giving them the best chance of attaining a grade 5. Whichever tier they sit they will be required to complete three exam papers; one non-calculator and two calculator papers, each of 1 hour and 30 minutes.

The Mathematics GCSE demands a deep and broad mathematical understanding. It will provide all students with greater coverage of key areas such as ratio, proportion and rates of change and will require them to apply their knowledge and reasoning to provide clear mathematical arguments. It focuses on ensuring that every student masters the fundamental mathematics that is required for further education and future careers whilst providing a greater challenge for the most able students by thoroughly testing their understanding of the mathematical knowledge needed for higher level study and careers in mathematics, the sciences and computing.

A number of students may also be given the opportunity to sit an AQA qualification in Level 2 Further Mathematics in Year 11 if we feel it would be advantageous to the next level of their education.

All students will need their own scientific calculator as well as mathematical drawing equipment so that the key operations are learnt and embedded before any external examination is undertaken.



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Modern Languages: French, Spanish and German

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification Codes: French 1FR1, German: 1GN1, Spanish: 1SP1

Exam weighting: 100%

Overview

The Edexcel GCSE course aims to open students' eyes to other cultures and for them to learn how to communicate about subjects that interest them. The qualification is focused on the important ways that languages foster communication, broaden perspectives, introduce new cultures and develop students into global citizens.

More than words - the GCSE course promotes culture, communication and connection. From the design of the speaking tasks, where communication is privileged, through to the use of images to provide cultural context, students will learn that words are a springboard to discovering much more, equipping them for life and careers in a global setting.

Language learning for today's world – the course vocabulary and assessment content have been carefully selected to reflect and represent diverse student experiences, so that all students feel included and will be able to speak and write about the things that interest them most.

Thematic contexts - the vocabulary in this qualification enables students to communicate across a range of engaging and relatable themes which are relevant to their current and future needs. The course will cover the following 6 thematic contexts:

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

Assessment

- Three externally examined papers assessing: listening, reading and writing.
- One speaking assessment set by Edexcel and conducted by the class teacher.

Facilities - all language classrooms are fitted with interactive whiteboards and the department has its own set of chromebooks. We subscribe to a number of websites such as Quizlet and we encourage students to work independently using a range of language websites. Students also have the opportunity to practise their speaking skills with sixth form IB students and our French language assistant.

Broadening the horizon – beyond the curriculum

The French department organises a trip for year 10 to Le Château de Warsy in northern France. Year 10 German students have the opportunity to visit Hellenthal activity centre and Year 10 Spanish students have the opportunity to visit Andalucía in Spain. We also take part in national competitions such as the Anthea Bell Translation competition and the German Olympiad, both run by the University of Oxford.



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Music

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification Code: 1MU0

Exam Weighting: 40%

Weighting for Non-examined Assessment: 60% (30% performance and 30% composition)

Choosing GCSE Music is a fantastic choice for cultivating your creativity and personal expression through performance, listening, and composing. The course will equip you with invaluable lifelong skills such as active listening, collaboration, communication, commitment and discipline to practice, and ensemble skills.

Music GCSE is also a great springboard for onward study, such as the HL Music course at IB, a range of university courses and careers thereafter. The GCSE course offers a rigorous yet rewarding exploration of diverse musical traditions and techniques, helping you develop analytical thinking and self-discipline essential for academic and professional success.

Component 1: Performing – 30% of total GCSE

You will submit two final performances: one solo performance (15%) and one ensemble performance (15%). Performance recitals take place throughout the course where your performances are recorded, and the best quality performances are selected from your portfolio of recordings at the end of the course.

You can perform in any style or genre, on your preferred instrument or voice. You should aim for a standard of approximately Grade 4 by Christmas of Year 11 to access the full range of marks available; it is necessary for you to have instrumental lessons in Year 10 and Year 11 if you are not already at this standard at the start of the course. With practice and commitment, it is still possible to do well at the performance element as a beginner. You can perform in a duet, trio, band, or a larger group such as a wind band, orchestra, or choir for the ensemble performances.

Component 2: Composing – 30% of total GCSE

You will compose two pieces in any style or genre to best reflect your skills, strengths, and interests. You will learn how to compose in different styles and genres throughout the course and practice composing using different mediums, such as Sibelius notation software and Logic Pro X - our Digital Audio Workstation (DAW). The advantages of using this software mean that you can compose for any instrument, without having to actually know how to play it. Your first composition is free choice and can be in any style or genre; the second is to a brief from a selection of four, released at the start of Year 11.

Component 3: Appraising – 40% of total GCSE

You will focus on four areas of study, which encourages you to understand music across a variety of styles and genres. Each area of study includes two set works that are studied in more detail, as well as a range of wider listening. In the exam, you will answer questions about the set works and one question on an unfamiliar piece of music. You will also answer an essay-style question, comparing a set work to a contrasting, unfamiliar piece.



Dane Court Grammar School – Options 2026

Physical Education– Examined

Exam Board: AQA

Specification Code: 4892

Exam Weighting: 60%

Coursework weighting 10%

Weighting for practical performance: 30%

Why choose GCSE PE?

The AQA GCSE Physical Education specification offers an inspiring and comprehensive introduction to a wide range of sports science topics. Covering both contemporary and traditional areas, the course helps engaged students who enjoy sport to develop a balanced skill set in both theoretical and practical aspects of PE. It also provides a strong foundation for further studies in the IB programme.

How will the course be assessed?

Students will follow a linear course that is split into four areas:

- The human body and movement in physical activity and sport (Exam 30%)
- Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport (Exam 30%)
- Coursework analysing your strengths and areas for improvement within a sport (10%)
- Practical performance in physical activity and sport (Practical 30% made up of three sports - 1 must be an individual sport, 1 must be a team sport and the last sport can be either of the two)

Practical Assessment Areas Include:

Team	Individual
Football	Athletics (2 different events)
Rugby (league and union)	Golf
Cricket	Swimming
Handball	Table Tennis
Basketball	Squash
Tennis (doubles)	Rock Climbing
Badminton (doubles)	Badminton
Netball	Tennis
Volleyball	Dance
Field Hockey	Amateur boxing
Table tennis (doubles)	Gymnastics/trampolining
Rowing	Equestrian
Squash (doubles)	Snow skiing/ Snowboarding

Is it right for me?

GCSE PE is an engaging and dynamic course that not only enhances your knowledge and performance but also provides the opportunity to thrive in a challenging and rewarding environment. It requires you to develop leadership skills, take responsibility for your progress, and commit to working hard both in and out of school. You'll be expected to push yourself to excel across all areas of the subject. We strongly recommend that students considering this course are already actively participating in at least two sports to a high level outside of school.



Dane Court Grammar School – Options 2026

Religious Studies and Philosophy

Exam Board: AQA

Specification Code: 8062

Exam Weighting: 100%

The course aims to:

- Develop an understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and practices.
- Critically evaluate the source of these beliefs and the impact they can have on world views and events.
- Help students to develop their own views on relevant and meaningful questions such as the meaning and purpose of life and how to live moral and ethical lives in modern times.
- Develop debating and reasoning skills, an ability to construct well informed and balanced arguments and express these clearly.

A GCSE in Philosophy and Religious Studies is useful for a variety of careers, from journalism and the media to law, medicine, social work, politics, education and the criminal justice system.

The course consists of two exams:

1. The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices
This paper explores the fundamental beliefs of both Christianity and Buddhism – exploring concepts such as the Holy Trinity, the crucifixion and resurrection, Karma and the 4 Noble Truths. We then investigate how these beliefs influence religious rituals and practices. This knowledge lays the foundations to explore the issues discussed in paper 2.
2. Philosophical and ethical studies
This paper explores prevalent and topical philosophical issues, developing understanding of religious responses whilst also helping students to reflect on and develop their own viewpoints and ideas relating to these issues. In this paper we look at:
 - Religion and Life (abortion/euthanasia)
 - Religion and Family
 - Peace and Conflict
 - Human Rights and Social Justice

Both of these units are designed to give students the opportunity to philosophically assess the issues raised within the topics. They will discuss and debate their views and critically question the views of others – from classmates to those of religions and philosophers – and draw reasoned conclusions.

Students are encouraged to challenge ‘common sense thinking’ and use a greater and wider knowledge of beliefs and practices to fully engage in some very current and important questions and discussions.

The skills developed in a GCSE in Philosophy and Religious Studies – such as critical thinking, developing arguments, problem solving and analysis – are excellent preparation for studying the IB and higher education.



Dane Court Grammar School – Options 2026

Science

Exam Board: AQA

Exam Weighting: 100%

Specification Code:

**Triple Science: Biology 8461, Chemistry 8462, Physics 8463
or Trilogy (Combined) Science: 8464**

Science is a compulsory core subject at Key Stage 4. All students will study biology, chemistry and physics in separate lessons taught by subject specialists. However, students must choose to study either **triple** science which means that three separate science GCSEs are awarded, or **trilogy** (combined) science which results in two science GCSE grades being awarded.

Option 1: Triple Science

Students that choose to study triple science will be awarded three GCSEs, one each in biology, chemistry and physics. These courses emphasise explaining, theorising and modelling in science.

The additional content will provide an excellent foundation to students that intend to study a science at KS5 at either IB standard level or IB higher level. We anticipate that a majority of students will choose to undertake the triple science course.

The content of each course is similar to the trilogy course (see below), but some topics are studied in greater depth:

GCSE Biology – cell biology, organisation, infection and response, bioenergetics, homeostasis and response, inheritance, variation and evolution, ecology.

GCSE Chemistry – atomic structure and periodicity, bonding, structure and the properties of matter, chemical changes, rates, energy changes in reactions, quantitative chemistry, chemical analysis, organic chemistry, chemistry of the atmosphere and using our resources.

GCSE Physics – forces, energy, waves, electricity, magnetism, electromagnetism, particle model of matter and atomic structure, space physics.

There is no coursework or internal assessment. The specification sets out the apparatus and techniques students should use and develop while doing practical work. These skills and knowledge are taught within the context of specified practicals for each subject; 10 for biology, 8 for chemistry and 10 for physics. Students are required to undertake these practicals during the course and will face questions on them in the exam at the end of the course. These questions will count for at least 15% of the overall marks for each of the qualifications. This course will provide a very firm foundation for IB Standard and Higher Biology, Chemistry and Physics, as well as IB Standard Environmental Systems, and for a wide range of science-based degree courses at top universities and subsequent careers.



Dane Court Grammar School – Options 2026

Science *continued*

Option 2: Trilogy (Combined) Science

Like triple science, the three sciences will be taught in separate lessons by subject specialists, but will lead to two GCSE grades being awarded. The course covers the fundamentals of biology, chemistry and physics and students will learn key scientific skills such as presenting, explaining and evaluating experimental data, the use of scientific models, as well as procedural and technical knowledge of science practice.

The course content is:

Biology – cell biology, organisation, infection, bioenergetics, homeostasis, evolution, ecology.

Chemistry – atomic structure, the periodic table, bonding and structure, chemical changes, rates, energy changes in reaction, quantitative chemistry, organic chemistry and using our resources.

Physics – forces, energy, waves, electricity, magnetism, particle model and atomic structure.

There is no coursework or internal assessment. The specification sets out the apparatus and techniques students should use and develop while doing practical work. These skills and knowledge are taught within the context of 21 specified practicals. Students are required to undertake these practicals during the course and will face questions on them in the exam at the end of the course. These questions will count for at least 15% of the overall marks for the qualification.

This course will provide a foundation for IB Standard and Higher Biology, Chemistry and Physics, as well as IB Standard Environmental Systems although students are recommended to choose **triple** science if they wish to continue studying sciences at KS5.



Dane Court Grammar School – Options 2026

Statistics

Exam Board: EDEXCEL

Specification Code: 1STO

Exam Weighting: 100%

The Statistics GCSE gives students a chance to learn key application skills that not only will be needed and in fact be crucial with any IB qualification, but also to develop many analytical skills that are currently needed in so many employment situations. There is no coursework element to this qualification and these types of skills normally learnt from this type of component have been embedded into the examination papers.

If you choose the Statistics qualification you will be entered for the Higher Tier exam (leading to GCSE grades 9 – 4). This qualification will mean the necessity to complete two exam papers; both are calculator papers, each of 1 hour and 30 minutes.

The three main elements of the qualification are:

- The collection of data.
- Processing, representing and analysing data.
- Probability.

GCSE Statistics helps to develop transferable skills – students are introduced to the skills of statistical enquiry, and practise the underpinning statistical calculations and interpretation using real world data and authentic contexts.

The aims and objectives of this qualification are to enable students to develop statistical fluency and understanding through:

- 1) The use of statistical techniques in a variety of authentic investigations, using real-world data in contexts such as, but not limited to, populations, climate, sales etc.
- 2) Identifying trends through carrying out appropriate calculations and data visualisation.
- 3) The application of statistical techniques across the curriculum, in subjects such as the sciences, social sciences, computing, geography, business and economics, and outside the classroom in the world in general.
- 4) Critically evaluating data, calculations and evaluations that would be commonly encountered in their studies and in everyday life.
- 5) Understanding how technology has enabled the collection, visualisation and analysis of large quantities of data to inform decision-making processes in public, commercial and academic sectors, including how technology can be used to assist with this.
- 6) Understand ways that data can be organised, processed and presented, including statistical measures to compare data, understanding the advantages of using technology to automate processing.
- 7) Applying appropriate mathematical and statistical formulae, and building on prior knowledge.



Dane Court Grammar School – Options 2026

Non-Examined Curriculum

PSHE/SRE

Personal social health and economic education and sex and relationships education are an integral element of our students' personal development programme. Partly this is a statutory requirement of the secondary school curriculum. Taught in a discrete lesson once every two weeks, a wide range of topics are covered. Students will spend time on the transition from KS3-KS4 and their emotional well being, how to recognise any issues with their mental health and how to seek appropriate support. They will become financially literate by focusing on reputable ways to borrow money, mortgage advice, being aware of fraud and avoiding scams and gambling. Online safety is reiterated and how to develop safe and healthy relationships, including understanding of consent is taught. Gang culture is covered, along with preventing radicalisation and challenging extremism. Whilst this list is not exhaustive, we aim to educate our students and help them to make informed choices and be able to seek appropriate guidance, both in and out of school.

Physical Education

KS4, students build on the skills and knowledge acquired in KS3 by refining their abilities in familiar sports and exploring new activities. The programme also introduces lifelong leisure pursuits aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle. The curriculum advances from applying complex tactics and adaptability in 10 to specific skill mastery in Year 11, where students specialise in preferred options to prepare for lifelong physical activity.

Throughout the course, students work on improving their own performance, evaluating their own and others' efforts, coaching peers, expanding their understanding of rules, and officiating matches. Students are expected to maintain high standards by wearing the correct PE kit for every lesson. Replacement items can be purchased from the school shop or Ambition Sport at any time.

Careers

Dane Court's Futures programme is structured to provide inspiration to students during Key Stage 3, giving them confidence in their skills, knowledge about industries and roles available to them locally, nationally and globally. During Key Stage 4 it is time for students to plan their pathways for progression after school, whether this is via higher education at university, or higher/degree level apprenticeships; it is crucial that students understand the many opportunities available to them and how to align their studies in order to ensure they are able to progress onto them.

Students in Year 9 have already completed their Business of Enterprise project in Year 8 and attended their 'For me or not for me' day in Year 9, as well as receiving information through their subjects about the career opportunities in relevant fields. During Year 10 they will attend an employability day gaining experience of a workplace at Discovery Park, attend our inspirational speaker series as part of the extra-curricular offer, as well as attend trips and hear from external speakers during their subject lessons.

Key Stage 4 also gives students the opportunity to start preparing for sixth form applications in law, medicine, veterinary, engineering, and applications to the University of Oxford and Cambridge. Providing visits to campuses and enjoying visits from outreach representatives from these universities and professions.

Dane Court's Futures programme aims to support all our students - impartial independent advice and guidance is available through meetings and careers fairs.