



Birchwood
Community High School

KS4 CURRICULUM 2024-2026

ASPIRATION KNOWLEDGE KINDNESS



Birchwood
Community High School

Contents

01 Welcome and introduction

02 Your choices

03 Certification and questions to think about

04 Subject overviews

Welcome

Dear parent/carer,

Choosing options is an exciting process, though a little daunting. We have not structured the process with performance tables in mind so there is still considerable choice and we have maintained a strong offer in the arts and technology subjects. We offer a large amount of choice with many different qualifications on offer. This gives students the ability to choose courses that they enjoy and help develop their talents.

We would ask people to look seriously at our BTEC and OCR courses. In the past, people have considered these an option to suit those for whom a full curriculum of GCSEs might be too challenging. This is no longer the case. They are harder than before, still taught rather differently, and offer routes to some attractive university programmes. More broadly, both GCSEs and BTECs offer the chance to start professional life without going into further education. It may seem early, and not a traditional idea, but there are some terrific apprenticeships of all kinds on offer at 16 and 18 years of age. It would be sensible to look at these with an open mind, even at this early stage.



Welcome

The second thing to reflect upon is the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). This is a qualification comprising 5 GCSEs at grade 4 and above in English, mathematics, two sciences, history or geography and a modern foreign language. Like all schools locally, and following Government guidance, we encourage our students to study for this qualification as it is possible that university departments, certainly in the higher status universities, will regard it as a feature in selection of candidates in future.

I hope you find this booklet useful. As ever, the options process is about communication so please get in touch with the school at any time if you have questions or concerns.

Best wishes

Emma Mills, Headteacher



For the past three years, you have studied the same subjects as everyone else, with little or no choice. In year 10, there is some choice in the subjects you can study. This booklet is to help make sure you follow the right courses for your abilities, needs and interests. Selecting the right courses is important. It could affect your future.

Who chooses?

Every student has the opportunity to speak to their Form Tutor, a member of the school's Polaris or Senior Leadership Team in early March to help select the right courses. You, your parents, and your teachers all play an important part in deciding on the best courses for you. You and your parents should indicate your preferences on the options form which will be given to you in February. Once you have chosen your subjects, if your teachers feel that the courses you have selected are not the best ones for you, we will discuss them with you again and, if necessary, with your parents. We will not make any changes without discussing them with you. In the end, it is your choice. We shall do our very best to allocate students to their preferred courses fairly.

Please note, however, that:

- Some courses may become oversubscribed so that we cannot guarantee your choices.
- In the event of an option course having a very small take-up, it will not run.

All students study English, maths, science, core PE and EPR. These subjects take up the majority of lessons each week.

Option subjects take up the remaining lessons.

Both GCSE and BTEC options take the same amount of lessons a fortnight.

These are the options we offer:

- Art GCSE
- Computer Science GCSE (available for 6+ maths students)
- Dance BTEC
- Design & Technology: Food Preparation & Nutrition GCSE
- Design & Technology: Textiles GCSE
- Design & Technology: Engineering BTEC
- Drama GCSE
- Business & Enterprise BTEC
- French GCSE
- Geography GCSE
- Health and Social Care BTEC
- History GCSE
- i-Media OCR
- Music GCSE
- Physical Education GCSE
- Religious Studies GCSE
- Spanish GCSE
- Sport OCR
- Separate Sciences GCSE (available for 7+ science students)
- Textiles GCSE

Grading

The majority of courses in this booklet lead to GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) qualifications.

Please see the individual course pages for details.

Your child will be sitting the new GCSE specifications which means they will have all their subjects graded 9-1, where 9 is the highest award.

BTEC and OCR courses will continue to be graded Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction* at Level 2 or at Level 1.

Non-Exam Assessment

In most courses the final written examination will be only one part of the overall assessment, and non-exam assessment (informally known as 'coursework') will form an important part of the final grade.

In all these courses you must be prepared to complete non-exam assessments on time and to the best standard you can manage. Non-exam assessment is work undertaken in the classroom but under exam conditions. In some courses this will begin in year 10.

What subjects do I enjoy?

Only you know the answer to this. If you like a subject, you will not mind working hard at it. Hard work is essential whatever you choose.

What subjects am I good at?

As well as thinking carefully about this yourself, you should use the advice of your teachers and form tutor.

How do I enjoy working?

Some subjects will require you to do a lot of NEA work (coursework). Others will be assessed mainly by exam. Think about which way of working you prefer. If you are not confident in exams you should consider coursework based courses or BTEC/OCR courses where there may be a smaller exam element.

What do I want to do when I leave school?

You may already know exactly what career you wish to follow. If so, you should choose the subjects which may be needed as qualifications.

You should also bear in mind the 'EBacc' qualification that Ms Mills refers to in the introductory letter to this booklet.

Your Form Tutor will have information that can help decide whether this path might be most suitable for you. So if you have any questions please speak with them in the first instance.

Remember, you may change your mind about your career in the next two years and it is not possible to change your chosen subjects part of the way through a two-year course. For this reason it is best to have a balanced range of courses to keep career options open. We hope that a lot of you will stay in education at Birchwood until you are 18, however some of you will go on to study at other institutions. You may wish to consider which subjects you might go on to study or what training course you might apply for when making your year 10 choices.

Most year 9 students have no settled ideas of what they would like to do after leaving school. Again, you need a balanced set of courses from the range available. This will leave you with plenty of possible careers to choose from later on.

22 January – Y9 Options Taster Assemblies & DCP Tasters

A focus in form time for our Y9 students to think about careers and also what options mean for future careers. Also some taster sessions in the DCP faculty

8 February – Y9 FUTURES EVENING

This is an opportunity for you to find out about the KS4 curriculum and the options process. It will also be a chance for your parents to speak with your Form Tutor.

1 March

Deadline for the return of the online options form.

20 March – PSHE Drop Down Day - Careers

This is an opportunity for you to think about what you may want to do for a career

27 March onwards

You will be contacted if there is a problem with the choices.

July

Confirmation of options.

The rest of this booklet is designed to give you a flavour of the subjects we offer.

They are brief snapshots of the courses and by no means exhaustive.

Each subject specialist teacher has recorded a short video explaining their subjects. These can be found on our website.

Please use the following overviews together with the videos to choose which subjects you wish to study further at Birchwood.

If you require any more detail then please email the Head of Department at school using the email addresses listed on the subject pages.

English



Why study English Language and English Literature?

Nationally, everybody has to study English for GCSE. You will complete two GCSEs in English: one for English Language and one for English Literature. English is an incredibly important subject for your future, and you will have to re-sit English Language until the age of 18 if you don't attain at least a grade 4 at GCSE. The skills and knowledge you develop will be of benefit no matter what job or career you choose to follow. In English, you will develop your ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in your writing. You will empower yourself by acquiring an ambitious vocabulary that will enable you to engage with the adult world. You will study texts that encourage deep thinking and mature discussion. Ultimately, success in English will help you be successful in anything that you apply yourself to next, whether this is higher education or the world of work.

What will I study?

We study AQA English Language and Literature. Each of these exams are un-tiered which means we can expose all of our students to challenging texts, rich content and thoughtful ideas.

In English Language, you will analyse a range of extracts and be taught to write maturely and intelligently. You will write creatively (descriptions and narratives) and persuasively (formal letters, speeches and articles). In English Literature, you will study 'Macbeth', 'A Christmas Carol', 'An Inspector Calls', the AQA 'Power and Conflict' poetry anthology and unseen poetry. You will have to write essays about characters, themes and writers' intentions for these set texts.

How will my work be assessed?

All assessment is exam based. You will sit both exams at the end of Year 11.

In English Language, you will sit two exams. Reading and writing are assessed equally across both papers.

In English Literature, you will sit two exams:

Paper 1 – 'Macbeth' and 'A Christmas Carol'.

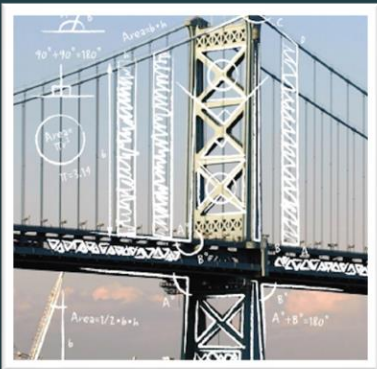
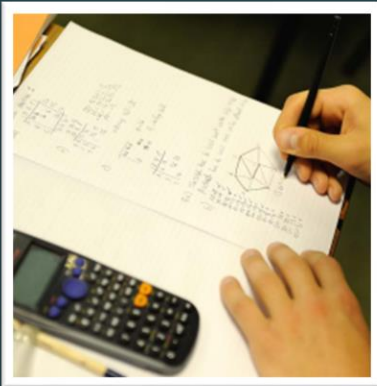
Paper 2 – 'An Inspector Calls', 'Power and conflict' poetry and unseen poetry.

HEAD OF FACULTY

Miss N. Tomkins

ntomkins@birchwoodhigh.org

Maths



HEAD OF FACULTY

Mr R Spencer-Fairbrother

rspencer@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study Maths?

Nationally, all students have to study maths until they are 18 or they achieve a Grade 4 or higher. As a faculty, we would hope that everybody would see the benefit of studying maths no matter what their future career may be, but the highest earning university graduates generally will have studied a mathematics related degree. Continuing to study mathematics at a higher level can not only be interesting it can also be very lucrative.

What will I study?

Students will begin studying GCSE Statistics in Year 9 and will take this examination in the summer of Year 10. This is an additional GCSE that contains both topics that are in the Mathematics GCSE as well as additional statistics and probability topics. A lot of these topics are based around real life context and are also useful within GCSE Geography and Science. Students will then sit the Mathematics GCSE in the summer of Year 11.

The Mathematics GCSE is split into two tiers, Foundation and Higher. Foundation Tier ranges from Grades 1 to 5. Higher Tier ranges from Grades 4 to 9. We use this flexibility to provide courses that allows you to fulfil your mathematical potential, feel as mathematically confident as possible and achieve your best possible grade. The allocations to these courses are based on performance in Year 7, 8 and 9, but they are not rigid and transfers between sets can take place in Year 10 and 11, particularly after assessments.

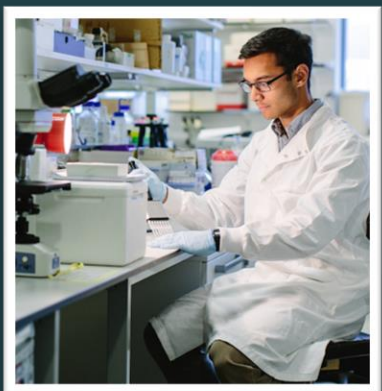
These courses build on the work done in Key Stage 3 and offer you the opportunity to acquire new mathematical knowledge, to enhance numeracy skills and to develop further your problem-solving techniques.

In addition to this, our highest achieving students will have the option of taking the Level 2 Further Maths examination in the summer of Year 11. This is an excellent stepping stone for those interested in taking A Level maths at sixth form college.

How will my work be assessed?

We study Edexcel GCSE Mathematics. The Statistics examination is two equally weighted 90 minute calculator papers. The Mathematics GCSE is three 90 minute papers also of equal weighting. One will be a non-calculator paper and the other two will be calculator papers. There is no coursework or controlled assessment in Mathematics.

Combined Sciences



HEAD OF FACULTY

Mrs. J Weaver

jweaver@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study Combined Sciences?

Nationally, everybody has to study science up to GCSE level. We strongly believe that science has something to offer for every student. GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy) is a double GCSE taken by the majority of students. It builds on the Key Stage 3 curriculum and covers the National Curriculum Programme of Study for Science at Key Stage 4. The study of science encourages students to explore, explain, theorise and model in science and develops a critical approach to scientific evidence. The knowledge and skills gained by students from GCSE Science can prepare them for A level courses, vocational courses as well many apprenticeships post 16.

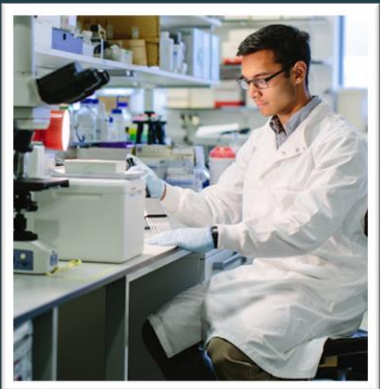
What will I study?

We follow the **AQA Trilogy GCSE Specification** for combined science. In the AQA Combined Science, you study units which cover the three different sciences – Biology, Chemistry and Physics: The Science GCSE is split into two tiers, Foundation and Higher. Foundation Tier ranges from Grades 1-1 to 5-5. Higher Tier ranges from Grades 4-3 to 9-9. All students cover the content for Higher in year 10 in order for all to have the opportunity to develop their scientific knowledge – streaming happens at the start of year 11.

How will my work be assessed?

You will be assessed at the end of Year 11. You will sit six papers of equal weighting, each 1 hour and 15 minutes long. Two will be Biology, two in Chemistry and two in Physics. This will lead to the award of two Science GCSEs. There is no coursework or controlled assessment in the combined science course.

Separate Sciences



HEAD OF FACULTY

Mrs. J Weaver

jweaver@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study Separate Sciences?

Separate Sciences support a smoother transition from GCSE to A Levels in Biology, Chemistry or Physics as the extension topics are studied again in the first units of any A Level science course. Separate science provides a more extensive range of subject matter for those students who wish to explore aspects deeply such as space in physics, using earth's resources sustainably through chemistry and genetics in biology.

Students that wish to follow careers in Medicine, Engineering, Conservation and Ecology, Marine Studies, Chemical Engineering, Physical Sciences or Astrophysics (to name but a few) should consider selecting this option if their prior attainment indicates they will cope with the demand of this challenging course.

What will I study?

We follow the **AQA GCSE Specifications** for Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Learners are taught by teachers who specialise in each of the three sciences: Biology, Chemistry and Physics in order to cover specification content in greater depth and detail. Students will have five hours of each science over the two week timetable.

How will my work be assessed?

You will be assessed at the end of Year 11. You will sit six exam papers of equal weighting each 1 hour and 45 minutes long. Two will be in Biology, two in Chemistry and two in Physics – leading to three GCSEs being awarded one in each of: Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

There is no coursework or controlled assessment in the Separate Sciences course.

Ethics, Philosophy and Religion

Why we study EPR in Birchwood

Even though religion in the UK seems to be losing its impact on daily life, globally religion and its influence is growing. British culture is heavily influenced by Christianity, in ways that we sometimes don't even notice. Music, law, holidays and even shop trading hours are all linked to our history as a Christian country. These days the UK is an increasingly diverse country with people of all faiths and those of non living in all of our communities. GCSE EPR in BCHS helps us to make sense of the world we live in and to help us develop the skills we need to respectfully question, understand and evaluate different beliefs and ideas about the world and humanity's place within it.

What will I study?

We will study three main strands;

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Ethics and Philosophy | (50%) | Two hour exam paper |
| a. Issues of Relationships | | b. Issues of life and Death |
| c. Issues of Good and Evil | | d. Issues of Human rights. |

Each of these themes are investigated from three perspectives, Christian, Sikh (as an example of a world religion) and Humanism (as an example of a non religious world view)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| 2. Christianity | (25%) | One hour exam paper |
| a. Beliefs and teachings | | b. Practices |
| 3. Sikhism | (25%) | One hour exam paper |
| a. Beliefs and teachings | | b. Practices |

How will my work be assessed?

There will be three exams in the Summer.

1. Ethics and Philosophy paper 2 hours
2. Christianity paper 1 hour
3. Sikhism paper 1 hour



HEAD OF SUBJECT

Mr D Cosgrove

dcosgrove@birchwoodhigh.org

Art & Design



Why study Art & Design?

Do you enjoy being creative? Are you totally passionate about Art? Then **GCSE Art & Design** is a great choice! Apart from being an important vehicle for self-expression, this subject will lead to many diverse opportunities particularly within the Creative Industries. Art & Design is vital for further study in fine art, art therapy, architecture, interior design, illustration, sculpture, photography, film making, teaching, jewellery, theatre and set stage design plus many more careers within the visual fields.

What will I study?

You will follow a broad course in Art & Design. You will be introduced to a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional media, techniques and processes. You will explore relevant images, artefacts and resources relating to a range of art, craft and design, from both the past and from recent times and from different cultures which will be integral to the investigating and making process. You will explore a variety of materials including 3D work, printmaking techniques and painting and drawing with different media along with lots of experimental work. You will use written annotation and appropriate specialist terminology to record your ideas, observations, insights and opinions.

How will my work be assessed?

There are 2 components that you are assessed on;

Component 1: Portfolio (60% of qualification) This comprises a major portfolio of work based on internally set themes of 2 projects.

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40% of qualification) Students respond to a chosen starting point set from the Exam board with an unlimited preparation time and 10 hours of sustained focused study.

Specialist teacher

Ms M Brennan

mbrennan@birchwoodhigh.org

Head of Faculty

Mrs J Scott

jscott@birchwoodhigh.org

BTEC Tech Award in Business and Enterprise



Specialist Teacher

Mr D Sutton

dsutton@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study BTEC Business and Enterprise?

This course enables you to understand key parts of how and why businesses are successful in our ever changing world. A qualification involving business and enterprise will prepare you to take advantages of job opportunities and the career that you want to be successful in once you move beyond school. This qualification will help you understand what makes businesses a success or failure and how you can be a part of your own successful future.

What will I study?

There are three components where you will develop your business understanding
Component 1 – Exploring enterprise. Working with local businesses you will study how small local businesses in Birchwood aim to stay successful

Component 2 – Marketing and Finance. You will find out how smaller businesses advertise and promote their products and service as well as how they manage their finances and calculate their profits.

Component 3 – Setting up a small business. You will prepare a business plan for a new business idea that you think will be successful in Birchwood. You will work with business mentors to explain the best way to get your business started.

How will my work be assessed?

Students are assessed through assignment tasks in each unit. There is a mixture of coursework and examination units that students will complete:

- Component 1 Exploring enterprise - coursework
- Component 2 Marketing and Finance – examination
- Component 2 Setting up your own business - coursework

Computer Science



HEAD OF COMPUTING & MEDIA

Mr G Keane

gkeane@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study Computer Science GCSE?

According to government figures the digital sector contributed £149 Billion to the UK economy in 2018 and IT & Computing remains one of the biggest sectors for jobs today.

Study of this subject at Key Stage 4 will provide an opportunity to explore how computers work and the practical programming skills needed to control what computers do.

This qualification is for anyone who wants to acquire technical knowledge and skills by studying programming, computer systems and how to think like a computer. Studying Computer Science will open up opportunities to progress onto further education to study BTECs or A-Levels in either IT or Computer Science but even if you choose not to continue with the subject post 16, it will demystify the digital world that we live in and give you a better understanding of the digital systems we all take for granted.

What will I study?

There are 2 exams papers in Computer Science and a practical project where you will design, create and test a program to solve a real world problem.

Paper 1 – Computer Systems – for this paper you will be expected to study systems architecture, memory, storage, networks, security, systems software and the ethical & legal issues associated with computers.

Paper 2 – Computational thinking, algorithms and programming – for this paper you will be expected to study algorithms, programming, producing robust programs, boolean logic, programming languages and Integrated Development Environments (IDEs)

The skills learned on the practical programming project will feed into knowledge for Paper 2. For the project you will create a design including flowcharts and pseudocode. You will program your solution and then use a test table to find and fix any errors just like real developers do when they are creating computer games or other types of software.

How will my work be assessed?

The 2 exams make up 100% of the assessment for this course, 50% for Paper 1 and 50% for Paper 2.

Dance



Why study Dance as part of the performing arts?

The performing arts are a major part of the creative and cultural industries in the UK. The industry contributes £3.5 billion to the UK economy. There are over 5,480 businesses and 101,593 people working in the performing arts sector. Study of dance at Key Stage 4 will provide an opportunity for practical exploration and application alongside conceptual study, leading to strong opportunities to progress post – 16. The course is versatile and allows students to perform, compose and appreciate dance through a variety of styles and professional works. This qualification is for anyone who wants to acquire the technical knowledge and skills of dance and it will broaden their experience and understanding of the varied progression options available to them.

What will I study?

Component 1: *You will study 3 pieces of professional repertoire in different styles. Coursework will then be based on one of these along with a theme that is given by the exam board. You will study the professional piece and it's choreographer in a practical and theory-based setting.*

Component 2: *You will develop your dance skills and techniques through workshops, self reflection and the reproduction and performance of professional repertoire. The assessed performance of repertoire will be linked to the theme released by the exam board.*

Component 3: *You will apply your performance skills and techniques in response to a stimulus allowing you to develop a group piece to be performed to a selected audience.*

How will my work be assessed?

Assessment is through performance based tasks and assignments, rather than written exams. Components 1 and 2 are assessed through an internal assessment process so will be marked by your teacher. Internal assessment is achieved through written assignments and practical performances. There is one external assessment, Component 3. This component builds on the learning from components 1 and 2 and involves a practical group performance and written tasks under controlled conditions.

Subject specialist

Mrs H Burrows

hburrows@birchwoodhigh.org

GCSE Drama



HEAD OF FACULTY

Mrs J Scott

jscott@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study Drama?

The performing arts are a major part of the creative and cultural industries in the UK. The industry contributes £3.5 billion to the UK economy. There are over 5,480 businesses and 101,593 people working in the performing arts sector. Study of this sector at Key Stage 4 will provide an opportunity for practical exploration and application alongside conceptual study, leading to strong opportunities to progress post – 16. This qualification is for anyone who wants to acquire technical knowledge and skills by studying Acting. And will broaden their experience and understanding of the varied progression options available to them.

What will I study and when?

Year 10 complete **Component 1 ‘Devising Theatre’** which makes up 40% of the qualification. Component 1 allows students to investigate a practitioner or genre of drama and to work collaboratively to devise and produce a piece of original theatre after studying and going to watch professional theatre. This is internally marked by your teacher.

At the beginning of year 11 students complete **Component 2 ‘Performing from a text’** which makes up 20 % of the course. Students will participate in the performance of an extract from a play text, and this is marked by a visiting examiner from the exam board.

Studied in Year 10 and Year 11 is **Component 3 ‘Interpreting Theatre’** which makes up 40 % of the qualification. Students will study a text practically as a performer, designer, and director in preparation for a written exam at the end of year 11.

As part of the components covered students will attend a live theatre performance and will work as a performer and a designer. This allows students to become informed and thoughtful audience members and enables students to develop a range of essential life skills which will help them to succeed in any career they choose.

Engineering



Specialist teacher

Mr C Walker

cwalker@birchwoodhigh.org

Head of Faculty

Mrs J Scott

jscott@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study Engineering?

Do you enjoy discovering and questioning how things are made? Does designing new buildings or bridges interest you? Are you interested in finding out how engines work or how energy is generated? Well in engineering you will learn all about how things in the modern world work. Learning happens through using brains and hands together to solve real problems with real solutions. It is valuable because of the practical learning of skills and techniques which open doors to a range of exciting and lucrative engineering related careers. **Engineering empowers people to improve the world we live in.**

“Engineering is the closest thing to magic that exists in the world” Elon Musk

What will I study?

The BTEC Tech Award explores the role an engineer has in society, including all the different careers and sectors that exist in engineering. You will learn about new manufacturing processes such as CNC prototyping, laser cutting and 3D printing, in addition to the more traditional lathe and milling skills. You will learn the different types of metals and plastics that are used to make new products while you are designing and making your own. You will develop your practical skills and have the opportunity to create and develop your own ideas.

How will my work be assessed?

You will be assessed throughout through 3 different units.

Unit 1 - Exploring Engineering Sectors and design applications

Unit 2 - An Engineered Product (Knowledge, investigation & manufacturing

Unit 3 - Responding to an engineered brief (External assessment)

Food Preparation & Nutrition



Specialist teacher

Mrs C Ikin

cikin@birchwoodhigh.org

Head of Faculty

Mrs J Scott

jscott@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study Food Preparation & Nutrition?

You will be equipped with the knowledge, understanding, skills and techniques needed to cook successfully. You will work practically whilst making informed decisions about food, food science and nutrition enabling you to be able to feed yourself and others affordably and nutritionally now and in later life. This course will equip you with the skills and knowledge to proceed on to a further food, food science or catering course. The course also provides a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study even if you do not choose to progress to further study. **Food and cooking are important life skills.**

What will I study?

How to demonstrate effective and safe cooking skills by planning, preparing and cooking a variety of foods using different cooking techniques and equipment. You will develop understanding of the functional properties and chemical characteristics of food and knowledge of the nutritional content of food and drinks. You will study the relationship between diet and nutrition and health including the physiological and psychological effects of poor diet. The economic, environmental, ethical and socio-cultural influences on food availability, production processes, diet and health choices. Students will explore ingredients and processes from different culinary traditions to inspire new ideas or modify existing recipes.

How will my work be assessed?

Two Non-examination assessments (50%) and one written exam (50%). Assessment one involves practical experimental work and written work based on a specific food commodity. Assessment two is a food preparation assessment and involves research to respond to a given brief plus planning, preparation, cooking and evaluation.

Geography



HEAD OF SUBJECT

Ms B Conner

bconner@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study MFL?

Learning a foreign language can have a great number of benefits on a personal and professional level. Studying another language is proven to increase memory function and communication skills as well as giving an insight into other cultures and ways of life. It can also be a gateway to careers in many different sectors, including education, politics, tourism, journalism and international business. Having a language qualification tells colleges and employers that you have great communication and analytical skills, and that you do not shy away from a challenge. It also allows you to compete for careers in an increasingly global economy, and hold your own against candidates from other European countries, many of whom are bilingual.

What will I study?

We study the AQA GCSE in French and Spanish. If selecting a language you must continue with the language you have studied in Year 9. The MFL GCSEs are both split into two tiers, Foundation and Higher. Foundation Tier ranges from Grades 1 to 5. Higher Tier ranges from Grades 4 to 9. A lot of the topics we cover at GCSE are ones that you have already laid the groundwork for over Years 7, 8 and 9 such as family and friends, technology, free time, customs and festivals, school life and holidays. We also cover some more advanced topics such as healthy lifestyle, the environment and charity work. This course will help you to broaden your topic-based vocabulary as well as further developing your grammar skills.

How will my work be assessed?

You will be assessed through 4 exams that will take place at the end of year 11. These exams cover listening, speaking, reading and writing and each counts for 25% of your final GCSE grade. There is no coursework or controlled assessment for languages.

Health and Social care



HEAD OF SUBJECT

Miss D O'Neill

DONeill@birchwoodhigh.org

SPECIALIST TEACHER

Mrs L Roberts

LRoberts@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study Health and Social care?

This qualification provides students with the opportunity to gain vocational experience and gain the knowledge, understanding needed when considering entering employment in the health and social care sector.

Students study topics that are based upon realistic workplace situations, activities and demands.

What will I study?

The course is broken down into eight units of work and a coursework module, which is completed in class.

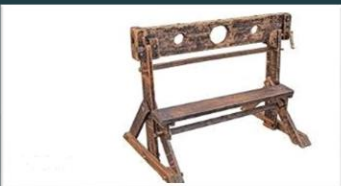
1. **Human development through the life stages** - We study how people develop emotionally, socially, physically and cognitively; from infancy right through to later adulthood.
2. **Health and social care services** – You will study the various health and social care sectors. They explore the roles and responsibilities of healthcare professionals such as doctors, nurses, carers, midwives and allied healthcare staff.
3. **Care needs**- Learning about the cognitive, sensory, physical and mental health disabilities and the specific care needs associated with them.
4. **Care planning**- Looking at how professionals create care plans that support some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Students learn how to perform a range of physiological tests, interpret the results and make recommendations to a patient based on these.

How will my work be assessed?

The tech award in Health and social care is assessed through both coursework and external assessment (examinations). The coursework is divided into 2 sections which make up 50% of the total grade. The examination unit which is assessed in the summer is also worth 50%.

History



HEAD OF FACULTY

Mr. P. Cosby

pcosby@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study History?

There are many reasons to study GCSE History. It is a fascinating subject and provides an opportunity to find out about a range of significant events, individuals and developments that have shaped our world. In addition, it will provide you with crucial skills including effective writing and communication, research and problem solving as well as being able to critically evaluate different sources of information. History is a well-regarded qualification by colleges and universities meaning that success in GCSE History opens up many opportunities in later life. Moreover, the knowledge and skills that you gain will be transferrable to a wide variety of different career paths and also help you to better understand the current state of the world.

What will I study?

We study the EdExcel GCSE History course which has four units of study. Students learn about an engaging and diverse set of topics which cover different aspects of British and global History. The four units are:

- **Crime and Punishment** from 1000 to the present day. This investigates how policing and criminal activities have changed over the last 1000 years.
- **Superpower Relations** between 1941 and 1991 which focuses on the tensions between the USA and USSR after World War II and how these two countries competed to prove that their way of life was the best.
- **Early Elizabethan England**, 1558 – 1588 . This looks at the reign of one of England's most famous rulers, Elizabeth I, and explores the challenges that she faced both at home and abroad.
- **Weimar and Nazi Germany**, 1919 – 1939 which explores how Adolf Hitler and the Nazis were able to gain control of modern, civilised country in the inter-war period.

How will my work be assessed?

There are three written exam papers, all of which are taken at the end of Year 11.

- Paper 1 - Crime and Punishment [1 hour 15 minutes]
- Paper 2 – Superpower Relations and Early Elizabethan England [1 hour and 45 minutes]
- Paper 3 – Weimar and Nazi Germany [1 hour and 20 minutes]

iMedia

Why study iMedia Cambridge National?

According to government figures the digital sector contributed £149 Billion to the UK economy in 2018 and IT & Computing remains one of the biggest sectors for jobs today.

Study of this subject at Key Stage 4 will provide an opportunity to explore how to design and create a range of **digital** media products such as Digital Videos, Graphics edited with Photoshop, Interactive kiosks like you see in shopping centres or fast food restaurants and also Digital Animations.

This qualification is for anyone who wants to acquire technical knowledge and skills by studying the knowledge and skills required to produce digital media products. Studying iMedia will open up opportunities to progress onto further education to study BTECs or A-Levels in either IT or Computer Science and is most suitable for those with a more creative mindset.

What will I study?

There are 3 units; 1 unit is an exam and 2 units are centre assessed tasks.

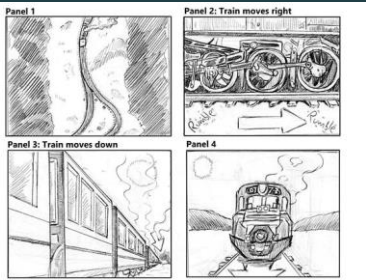
Unit 1 Pre-production skills (the Examined unit 40% of your final grade) – in this unit you will be expected to learn all the knowledge and skills required to plan and design a digital product such as interpreting a client brief, mood boards, storyboarding, script writing, properties and limitations of file formats for digital products, legal, health & safety requirements when creating digital media products.

Unit 2 Visual identity and Digital Graphics (25%) of your final grade– in this unit you will learn the skills required to design and create digital graphics using software such as Photoshop.

Unit 3 Creating interactive multimedia products (35%) – in this unit you will be expected to learn the skills and knowledge to create and effective interactive product such as an information kiosk.

How will my work be assessed?

The exam unit will be assessed via a written exam paper, the remaining 2 units are tasks carried out in class which are assessed by the teacher and then moderated. You can achieve a Level 1 or Level 2 qualification.



**HEAD OF
COMPUTING &
MEDIA**

Mr G Keane

gkeane@birchwoodhigh.org

MFL: French and Spanish

Why study MFL?

Learning a foreign language can have a great number of benefits on a personal and professional level. Studying another language is proven to increase memory function and communication skills as well as giving an insight into other cultures and ways of life. It can also be a gateway to careers in many different sectors, including education, politics, tourism, journalism and international business. Having a language qualification tells colleges and employers that you have great communication and analytical skills, and that you do not shy away from a challenge. It also allows you to compete for careers in an increasingly global economy, and hold your own against candidates from other European countries, many of whom are bilingual.

What will I study?

We study the AQA GCSE in French and Spanish. If selecting a language you must continue with the language you have studied in Year 9. The MFL GCSEs are both split into two tiers, Foundation and Higher. Foundation Tier ranges from Grades 1 to 5. Higher Tier ranges from Grades 4 to 9. A lot of the topics we cover at GCSE are ones that you have already laid the groundwork for over Years 7, 8 and 9 such as family and friends, technology, free time, customs and festivals, school life and holidays. We also cover some more advanced topics such as healthy lifestyle, the environment and charity work. This course will help you to broaden your topic-based vocabulary as well as further developing your grammar skills.

How will my work be assessed?

You will be assessed through 4 exams that will take place at the end of year 11. These exams cover listening, speaking, reading and writing and each counts for 25% of your final GCSE grade. There is no coursework or controlled assessment for languages.

HEAD OF SUBJECT

Mrs L Kellard

lkellard@birchwoodhigh.org



Music



HEAD OF FACULTY

Mrs J Scott

jscott@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study Music?

For many of us, music can provide a leisure activity which may be enjoyed throughout adult life. The obvious career opportunities in music are performing, teaching, the recording industry, television and radio. In addition to this, colleges and employers always have a high regard for anyone who has learned to play a musical instrument, as it says a lot about the person in terms of commitment and self-discipline. Therefore, for any career, music is always a positive asset. If you enjoy playing an instrument/singing and are confident doing so, then you have the opportunity to continue to use this skill to help you gain a good GCSE grade.

What will I study?

We study the Eduqas GCSE music qualification, it is not tiered, so everyone sits the same exam. It is vital that students strive to improve the standard of their performance over the two years as this provides the 'backbone' of the course. The keyboard skills and an understanding of musical theory gained in lower school continue to be used as an aid to composition and listening activities. There are three components: Performing, Composing and Listening. These components are covered as we study **western classical music** (1600- present day), **music for ensembles**, **music for film** and the **popular song**. In preparation for the listening exam, we will also analyse two set works: '*Badinerie from the orchestral suite no.2 in Bm*' by J S Bach and '*Africa*' by Toto. You will also compose your own music using music notation software.

How will my work be assessed?

Performing (30%) - You will perform two pieces (minimum total of 4 minutes), one of which must be as part of a group.

Composing (30%) – You will compose two pieces of your own (minimum total of 4 minutes), one of which must meet the brief set by Eduqas in year 11.

Listening (40%) – You will sit a written exam at the end of year 11, when you will respond to questions about extracts of music that you will hear, two of which will be from the set works.

GCSE Physical Education



HEAD OF FACULTY

Mr D Yates

dyates@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study GCSE Physical Education?

Taking this course will allow students to develop a knowledge and understanding of human performance through participation in a range of physical activities. They will be given the opportunity to acquire and develop a higher level of personal performance through participation in a variety of sports. They will be encouraged to develop an appreciation of the relationship between physical activity, general health and education for post school leisure. The course has relevance for a variety of areas of employment. For example, coaching/teaching/lecturing, physiotherapy and leisure centre management.

What will I study?

Students will study the Edexcel GCSE Physical Education syllabus. Students will study a wide range of topics including Anatomy and physiology, Sociocultural Influences and Sports Psychology during the two year course. In addition to this, students will take part in numerous practical activities which build upon knowledge and skills learned through Physical Education in the Lower School. Students will develop a deeper understanding of the rules, tactics and techniques of sports. They will also develop an understanding of the theory of Sports Science and develop and improve their personal performance.

How will my work be assessed?

Students are assessed in the following ways:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Theory of Sport Written Exam (2 exams) | 60% |
| • Course Assessment of Practical Work (3 practical activities) | 30% |
| • Personal Exercise Programme (coursework) | 10% |

Cambridge National Sports Studies



HEAD OF FACULTY

Mr D Yates

dyates@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study Cambridge National Sports Studies?

The Cambridge National in Sport Studies enables students to develop and apply knowledge of sports-related activities, with a particular focus on performance and leadership. Students will explore contemporary issues in sport, different ways of being involved in the sports industry, and the impact of sport on wider society across a number of varied units of study.

What will I study?

Students will study the OCR Cambridge National in Sports Studies syllabus. Students will study a wide range of topics including Contemporary Issues in Sport, Performance and Leadership in Sports Activities and Increasing Awareness of Outdoor Adventurous Activities. In addition to this, students will take part in numerous practical activities which build upon knowledge and skills learned through Physical Education throughout key stage 3. Students will develop a deeper understanding of the rules, tactics and techniques of sports whilst being given the opportunity to experience new activities and take on new roles such as official, coach and leader.

How will my work be assessed?

Students are assessed through 4 or 5 assignment tasks in each unit. There is a mixture of coursework, practical and examination units that students will complete:

- Contemporary Issues in Sport – Exam
- Performance and Leadership in Sports Activities
- Increasing Awareness of OAA

Textile Design



Specialist teacher

Miss Dwyer

cdwyer@birchwoodhigh.org

Head of Faculty

Mrs J Scott

jscott@birchwoodhigh.org

Why study Textiles?

Are you an original, one-of-a-kind person with a creative flair? If so, GCSE Textiles will give you the opportunity to develop core skills with the freedom of creating unique designs. You will develop your creativity and independent thought, learn to express yourself visually and let your imagination flourish.

Textiles is ideal for students who enjoy practical work such as: making and dying fabric, printing, creative stitching and constructing or personalising garments.

What will I study?

Eduqas GCSE Textiles is designed to provide engaging, challenging, coherent and meaningful learning experiences through a flexible structure that supports the development of creative practice. The course will allow you to develop your imagination and technical skills, foster creativity and promote personal and social development.

As well as nurturing an enthusiasm for Art, Craft and Design you will also develop critical, practical and theoretical skills that will enable you to develop a holistic understanding of a range of practices within Textiles.

How will my work be assessed?

There are 2 components that you are assessed on:

Component 1: Portfolio (60% of qualification)

This comprises a major portfolio of work based on internally set themes of 2 projects.

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40% of qualification)

Students respond to a chosen starting point set from the Exam board with an unlimited preparation time and 10 hours of sustained focused study.