

Year 9 Options Booklet 2026



NATIONAL
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ACADEMY

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'I can do all things
through Christ who
strengthens me'
(Philippians 4:13)

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Introduction

Throughout the first three years at National Church of England Academy, all students follow the subjects of the national curriculum. This provides them with a foundation for further study in the next two years and beyond.

This booklet describes the curriculum for the next two years of compulsory education (key stage 4) and provides details of the curriculum and how the choices operate.

We want our students, parents and guardians to be involved fully in the Options process. We encourage students to find opportunities to discuss their future aspirations with their parents, subject teachers, and personal tutor.

We hope you will find this information of interest and value to you as you plan for the next two years.

Mrs K Boothroyd - Deputy Headteacher



KEY STAGE 4

During key stage 4 students work towards nationally recognised qualifications - such as GCSEs and BTECS - to prepare them for the wider world.

Key dates

March 2026

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

There will be Options assemblies for some subjects (such as science and modern foreign languages) which students will be invited to.

- **Wednesday 4th March 2026- Options evening** (look out for further updates via ParentMail)
- **Friday 20th March 2026-** deadline for return of Options choices form

Choosing your Options



Consider subjects that you enjoy studying

Think about subjects that you are good at

Speak to parents, guardians and your teachers for advice and guidance

Choose subjects that align to what you may want to do for a career in the future

Subjects that make up an EBacc (English Baccalaureate) combination are recommended as this keeps young people's options open for further study and future careers.

All students will ...

All students in key stage 4 will study the following courses, leading to qualifications in:

- English Language and English Literature
- Mathematics, and
- An appropriate Science course,
- Religious Studies

As well as non-examined Physical Education and Personal Development to support physical development and wellbeing.

Guidance - 'pathways'

The key stage 4 curriculum Option programme is supported by three pathways. These pathways are designed to ensure that the curriculum offered to students is appropriate to their needs and abilities.

Students will be identified for pathways on the basis of AMP review data and advice from teachers. Within each pathway, there will be choices to be made.

Pathway 1 - supported

- Students are encouraged to select a mix of subjects including some that are more practical
- We recommend that students select a technology subject as one of their options

Pathway 2 - expected

- Students will follow a programme designed to challenge them academically
- We expect that students study a humanities subject and a modern foreign language

Pathway 3 - stretch

- An enhanced programme designed for academic challenge, including triple science
- We expect that students study a humanities subject and a modern foreign language

We will always do our best to ensure that students choices are met, but there can be no absolute guarantee that a particular combination of subjects can be satisfied. We will work with students and parents to ensure that students are appropriately challenged and supported.

Options Evening 2026

Wednesday 4th March 2026 at 6pm

Options Evening will consist of a formal presentation, where details of curriculum choices will be outlined, and advice on supporting students in choosing their subjects will be offered. The second part of the evening will provide you with the opportunity to talk to subject teachers about the content and requirements of each course.

Subject guide

In the following pages you will gain an overview of all the courses offered at key stage 4 at National.

What will I study?

An overview of what you will be studying in each subject, including key themes and topics.

What skills will I develop?

Key stage 4 is about more than just 'knowing things'. Students will develop skills, both academic and practical, which they can apply across their studies, to become an effective and independent learner.

How will I be assessed?

All courses differ and most offer a combination of assessment methods. Common assessments include examinations, coursework, and practical performance.

What will be my next steps?

Our broad curriculum offers a wide range of subjects to cater for all interests and support your future aspirations. In this section, you'll find out what exciting next steps you could take both at post-16 and in the wider world.

Art

'Art is too important not to share' Romero Britto

What will I study?

This course incorporates many different kinds of art in both 2D and 3D, from pencil drawing to painting and printing to sculpture. The course is broadly skills based to allow students the ability to express themselves in a variety of ways over an extended period of time.

Students will develop themes from a wide range of sources enabling them to produce work that is a truly personal response. Examples of themes are natural forms and distorted figures and portraits.

What skills will I develop?

Students are expected to develop a unit of coursework for assessment. It is a sketchbook based project, with an emphasis on independent learning to motivate students to develop work that reflects their strengths. Students can use a variety of media to produce work in drawing and painting, print, photography and 3D. This also involves working out of the sketchbook on larger pieces such as sculptures and their final pieces. Students are expected to regularly take their own photos and research relevant artists to help develop their own ideas.

What will be my next steps?

Students can progress from GCSE Art and Design to study a more advanced course, for example A level Art, Fine Art, Graphics, Textiles and Photography at college or sixth form. Alternatively students could progress to art college and study a Level 3 BTEC course in order to access degree level qualification.



How will I be assessed?

Coursework (60%)

Examination (40%) –
ten hour exam completed
over two days



Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
Fine art	AQA	1FAo	www.qualifications.pearson.com

Head of Faculty: Mr. L Gregory
lgregory@nationalacademy.org.uk

Business

‘If you look closely, most overnight successes took a long time’ - Steve Jobs

What will I study?

Business Studies will be new to you in Key Stage 4 but you will be very familiar with many key terms and ideas through TV programmes such as Dragons Den and The Apprentice. You will investigate how businesses are set up, how they expand, why they sometimes fail and how they adapt to a changing environment. We look at how different businesses market their products, how they organise and treat their workers and whether they behave ethically. Throughout the course we will use real businesses as examples to help you learn new topics such as how Lidl and Aldi have affected the grocery market or how Amazon and ASOS have embraced e-commerce.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop your understanding of business concepts, business terminology, business objectives, the integrated nature of business activity and the impact of business on individuals and wider society.

You will be able to apply knowledge and understanding to contemporary business issues and to different types and sizes of businesses in local, national and global contexts.

You will develop as enterprising individuals with the ability to think commercially and creatively to demonstrate business acumen, and draw on evidence to make informed business decisions and solve business problems.

What will be my next steps?

A good grade at GCSE will help you move on to any A level course. If you enjoyed your Business Studies GCSE, you might want to continue with Business Studies at 6th form or College or study a related area such as Economics.



How will I be assessed?

- 2 Exams
- Both written exams: 1 hour 45 minutes
- 90 marks
- 50% of GCSE each

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
GCSE Business	AQA	8132	www.qualhub.co.uk

Head of Faculty: Miss. B Surgey
bsurgey@nationalacademy.org.uk

Computer Science

'A person who has never made a mistake has never learnt anything' - Albert Einstein

What will I study?

The computer science course is predominantly theoretical, although the programming and algorithms component does provide a practical element to the subject.

Topics include:

- computer hardware • computer software • data representation • logic • computer networks • system security • legal, moral and ethical issues
- algorithms and programming.

The emphasis is placed firmly on how computers work, computational thinking and problem solving.



What skills will I develop?

You will develop knowledge and understanding of computer technology and apply this to a range of issues, including contemporary computing issues such as environmental and ethical matters. There is one dedicated programming lesson per week which will equip students with the skills and knowledge to design, code and test solutions to computational problems using a variety of programming techniques.

What will be my next steps?

A level Computer Science

How will I be assessed?

- Examinations

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
Computer Science	OCR	J277	www.ocr.org.uk

Head of Faculty: Mrs K Marshall
kmarshall@nationalacademy.org.uk

Design – (OCR)

‘Design begins with thinking about what more an object can do.’ – James Dyson

What will I study?

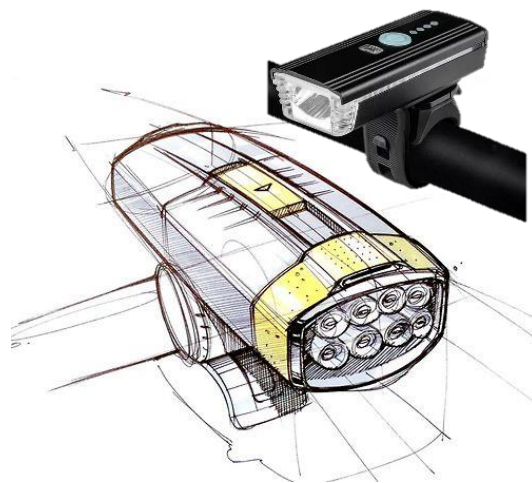
This course is aimed at students with an interest in the design and making of products. You will explore how designers develop the products and components we rely on every day. The course takes you through the full design process: understanding a client’s needs, developing design solutions, creating detailed drawings and models, and evaluating how well your ideas perform. You’ll learn how products are made, why materials and processes are chosen, and how modern tools like CAD are used across the industry. The course combines practical design work with focused theory so you can see the link between Design and real-world applications.

What skills will I develop?

You will build strong problem-solving, creativity and technical design skills. You’ll learn to communicate ideas through sketches, technical drawings and CAD modelling. You’ll gain confidence in analysis of products, selecting suitable materials and applying design and manufacturing principles to improve a product. Accuracy, attention to detail and project planning are central to the course, along with the ability to reflect on your work and refine it. These skills are transferable to any technical or design-based pathway.

What will be my next steps?

This course prepares you well for Level 3 pathways and apprenticeships in engineering, manufacturing, product design, architecture, construction and other technical careers. Many students progress to courses such as A-Level Product Design, BTEC Engineering or T-Level Engineering. The problem-solving and design thinking you develop also support routes into STEM careers more widely. If you enjoy designing, making, or improving how things work, this course is a strong foundation for your future.



How will I be assessed?

- **2 separate units of coursework**

(one in year 10 and one in year 11)

- Designing - (30%)
- Prototyping (Practical) - (30%)

Examination in year 11 (40%)

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
OCR Cambridge National Engineering design	OCR	J822	www.ocr.org.uk
Head of Faculty: Mr. L Gregory lgregory@nationalacademy.org.uk			

Drama

'We must all do drama to find out who we are, and discover who we could become' Augusto Boal

What will I study?

Throughout the drama course students will engage with the world of theatre. They will get the opportunity to perform scripted pieces together with devising drama, studying the work of a variety of practitioners, and will watch and review live theatre. The course is practical and centres around the ability to respond to stimuli imaginatively, create exciting plays, work with a variety of people and play a number of roles including director, performer and technician. Students will explore the technical side of theatre such as sound, lighting, set and stage design. There is a written element (including a written exam) as well as the practical exploration, making it a varied and challenging course. Students are invited to use the drama room as a rehearsal space during lunchtimes. Homework is relevant to the wider learning of the students and often relies on research tasks, visiting the theatre and rehearsing.



What skills will I develop?

Drama teaches lifelong skills such as communication, teamwork, confidence and leadership, all of which are transferable into the work place. The skills learned on the course will also allow students to pursue careers in theatre, TV and possibly film, as well as public services and social work.

What will be my next steps?

The course leads into drama at A level, a recognised subject within the entry requirements of top universities such as Oxford and Cambridge.

How will I be assessed?

- Devising (30%)
- Performance (30%)
- Examination (40%)

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
Drama GCSE	OCR	J316	www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/drama
Head of Faculty: Mrs M Jones marandajones@nationalacademy.org.uk			

Engineering

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

What will I study?

You will study a whole range of engineer manufacturing methods and techniques on this vocational course which is equivalent in value to a GCSE. You will be trained through written and practical lessons to operate tools and equipment used to make products from the requirements of a design specification, as well as use relevant computer applications such as CAD/ CAM, and CNC equipment. You will need to have a good grasp of basic maths and measuring skills. A passion for engineering is a must for this course.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop your knowledge of the processes involved in manufacturing engineered products from a range of materials. You will develop a whole range of making skills, technical knowledge and product understanding, as well as transferable skills such as problem solving and time management. You will be expected to revise topics and complete theory lessons which will help extend your knowledge beyond simple practical skills.

How will I be supported in my learning?

In the engineering workshop you will be given the opportunity to develop your confidence and skills using a range of tools, equipment and machines. You will be trained to use the manual metal lathe and CNC lathe and you will demonstrate your developed skills in the coursework unit.

Coursework clinic sessions will be held during year 10/11 for students to attend and get advice on how to improve their controlled assessment. Half termly assessed homework and tests will be used to monitor your progress and to make sure that you fully understand your learning. You will be given access to a bespoke website that will have a vast amount of resources to support you in and out of the classroom.

What will be my next steps?

Students can progress to study a L3 course in Design Technology at our sixth form or choose to study a Level 3 course elsewhere in order to access degree level qualifications in Engineering. Alternatively students may wish to go into apprenticeships in the field of Engineering following their L2 studies upon leaving school in year 11.



How will I be assessed?

- Coursework (60%)
 - one practical and written unit (30%)
 - one fully written unit (30%)
- Examination (40%)

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
Cambridge Nationals—Engineering Manufacture	OCR	J842	www.ocr.org.uk
Head of Faculty: Mr. L Gregory lgregory@nationalacademy.org.uk			

English Language

'Write to be understood, speak to be heard and read to grow' - Lawrence Clark Powell

What will I study?

You will study how different writers adapt form, structure and language in their texts to suit different purposes and audiences. The texts you will study will be a range of fiction and non-fiction taken from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

You will adapt form, structure and language for different purposes and audiences, by writing extracts for non-fiction and fiction purposes. Students will also learn how to adapt spoken language to communicate clearly and effectively in a modern world.

What skills will I develop?

You will read fluently, and with good understanding, a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

You will read and evaluate texts critically and make comparisons between texts.

You will summarise and synthesise information or ideas from texts.

You will write effectively and coherently using accurate Standard English, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

You will listen to others and communicate using Standard English effectively.

What will be my next steps?

English language will ensure you have access to all college courses and could be used to begin further study in English Language and media.



How will I be assessed?

100% examination with 2 exams

- Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing (Fiction paper)
- Paper 2 Writer's viewpoints and perspectives (Non-fiction paper)

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
English Language	AQA	8700	Aqa.org.uk

Head of Faculty: Miss C Hunt

chunt@nationalacademy.org.uk

English Literature

“Real courage is when you know you’re licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what.” - Harper Lee *To Kill a Mockingbird*

What will I study?

You will study a range of fiction texts that are regarded as important and influential examples of English literature. These are:

- a Shakespeare play: *Macbeth*
- a 19th century text: Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde*
- a modern play: J B Priestley’s *An Inspector Calls*
- a selection of poetry exploring the theme of power and conflict



What skills will I develop?

Throughout the course, students will develop key skills in:

- literal and inferential comprehension: understanding a word, phrase or sentence in context, distinguishing between what is stated explicitly and what is implied
- critical reading: identifying and evaluating key themes and ideas, and exploring a writers’ social, historical and cultural context
- analysing and evaluating a writer’s choice of vocabulary, grammatical and structural features
- comparing texts: comparing and contrasting texts thematically

What will be my next steps?

English Literature could lead to further academic study in literature, film or law.

How will I be assessed?

100% examination with 2 exams

Paper 1 Shakespeare and the 19th Century novel (*Macbeth* and *Jekyll and Hyde*)

Paper 2 Modern Texts and Poetry (*An Inspector Calls*, Power and Conflict poetry and Unseen Poetry)

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
English Literature	AQA	8702	Aqa.org.uk

Head of Faculty: Miss C Hunt
chunt@nationalacademy.org.uk

French

“To learn a foreign language is to have one more window from which to look at the world” Chinese proverb

What will I study?

During the French GCSE course, you will cover three themes:

- Theme 1– People and Lifestyle
- Theme 2– Popular Culture
- Theme 3– Communication and the world around us



What skills will I develop?

You will acquire knowledge of vocabulary from the above topic areas together with an extended grammatical knowledge enabling you to produce increasingly complex spoken and written language.

You will develop your communication skills on a range of issues from the environment to healthy living.

What will be my next steps?

A level language study or further vocational qualifications including a language, for example flight attendant or bilingual business qualification, teacher, interpreter/translator.

How will I be assessed?

The course is 100% examination and tests the four skills of listening, writing, reading, and speaking.

Each component is worth 25% and students take exams at the end of year 11. The speaking exam usually takes place in March or April before the other three skills. This is conducted and recorded by the class teacher.

There are 2 tiers of entry, Foundation (grades 1-5) and Higher (grades 4-9)

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
GCSE French	AQA	8652	www.aqa.org.uk

Head of Faculty: Miss C Hunt

chunt@nationalacademy.org.uk

Geography

'Geography is about understanding the complexity of our world"- Barack Obama

What will I study?

The geography course covers three key units. Firstly, living with the physical environment, including hazards and landscapes. Secondly, challenges in the human environment includes the changing economic world, resource management and urban challenges. Finally geographical applications including an issues evaluation and geographical skills. This unit also has a field work element.

What skills will I develop?

Geography supports the development of 4 main skill areas. Throughout your lessons you will build on cartographic, numerical, statistical and graphical skills. This will be woven into the knowledge you are developing throughout the different topic areas. In addition to these key skills you will also be supported in extending writing, in particular for evaluation type responses.

What will be my next steps?

The study of Geography offers you the chance to look at the world in a unique way. This holistic and balanced view; alongside the skills developed using statistics makes geographers widely employable in a range of industries from town planning to conservation and journalism. A GCSE in geography paves the way for an A-level in geography and other level 3 qualifications .



How will I be assessed?

Examinations (100%) – three separate exams

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
GCSE Geography	AQA	8035	www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/

Head of Faculty: Miss. B Surgey
bsurgey@nationalacademy.org.uk

German

“One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way.”

What will I study?

During the German GCSE course, you will cover three themes:

- Theme 1- People and Lifestyle
- Theme 2- Popular Culture
- Theme 3- Communication and the world around us

What skills will I develop?

You will acquire knowledge of vocabulary from the above topic areas together with an extended grammatical knowledge enabling you to produce increasingly complex spoken and written language.

You will develop your communication skills on a range of issues from the environment to healthy living.

What will be my next steps?

A level language study or further vocational qualifications including a language, for example air steward/stewardess or bi-lingual business qualification, teacher, interpreter/translator.



How will I be assessed?

The course is 100% examination and tests the four skills of listening, writing, reading, and speaking.

Each component is worth 25% and students take exams at the end of year 11. The speaking exam usually takes place in March or April before the other three skills. This is conducted and recorded by the class teacher.

There are 2 tiers of entry, Foundation (grades 1-5) and Higher (grades 4-9)

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
GCSE German	AQA	8662	www.aqa.org.uk

Head of Faculty: Miss C Hunt

chunt@nationalacademy.org.uk

History

“The more you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future”- Roosevelt

What will I study?

During the first year of the course, you will study the role of medical developments in shaping Britain from 1000 to the present day, as well as a more in depth module on the causes of the Second World War.

In year 11, students study America between 1920 and 1973. In addition, students study Elizabethan England between 1568 and 1603. History is not a tiered paper, so all students will enter the same exams.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop your ability to make convincing arguments and express yourself more effectively. History develops student’s critical thinking by considering cause and effect, significance and consequences. The study of different societies and cultures develops an understanding of diversity. History also enables students to use sources effectively, from extracting evidence to evaluating bias and provenance.



How will I be assessed?

Examinations (100%) – two separate papers

What will be my next steps?

A GCSE in History prepares students not only for an A level in History, but equips students with the skills to take on level 3 qualifications in subjects as broad as Politics, Business, English and the Social Sciences.

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
GCSE History	AQA	8145	www.aqa.org.uk

Head of Faculty: Miss. B Surgey
bsurgey@nationalacademy.org.uk

iMedia Cambridge Nationals Level 2

"Never before in history has innovation offered promise of so much to so many in so short a time." – Bill Gates

What will I study?

We are all now 'users of software, computers, phones, games consoles etc.' and have been for years. It is now becoming obvious that there is a void in the country for designing and making these devices and programs. As well as general computing principles, during this course students will have the opportunity to further develop their programming skills and the structures common to most programming languages. This is a course that has real relevance in our modern world. While students may no doubt already have some knowledge of computers and related areas, the course will give them an in-depth understanding of how computer technology works and a look at what goes on "behind the scenes".



What skills will I develop?

The OCR Level 1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in Creative iMedia has been designed to engage and enthuse young people with an interest in creative computing and media. For example, digital graphics, animations and interactive multimedia products. We will build on the digital skills that you developed in Key Stage 3 to equip you with the skills that will need in the new digital media job market.

How will I be assessed?

Students will complete three units: -

- one externally assessed exam worth 40%
- two coursework units worth 25% and 35% each

What will be my next steps?

The course will provide students with an essential foundation for further study in this field, especially courses specific to the use of technology in the media industry such as Cambridge Technical Level 3 Digital Media.

Possible career paths

iMedia could lead to careers such as a graphic designer, web developer, animator, photographer, video editor, social media manager, marketing manager, game developer, project manager, to name but a few.

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
Cambridge Nationals Level 2—iMedia	OCR	8206	www.ocr.org.uk

Head of Faculty: Mr. L Gregory

lgregory@nationalacademy.org.uk

Mathematics

'Mathematics is not about numbers, equations, calculations or computations, it's about understanding.'
William Paul Thurston

What will I study?

Mathematics is a compulsory subject, and students will study:

- number
- algebra
- statistics
- probability
- geometry

There are two tiers: the foundation tier covers levels 1 to 5 the higher tier covers levels 4 to 9. The tier you study will be decided based on your end of year 9 assessment, but will be reviewed at regular check points throughout years 10 and 11.



What skills will I develop?

You will develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts and acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems. You will also be able to reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences and draw conclusions alongside improving skills such as comprehending, interpreting and communicating mathematical information.

What will be my next steps?

A level Mathematics or Core Mathematics at post 16.

How will I be assessed?

- Examinations (100%) – two with calculator, one with no calculator

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
Mathematics	AQA	8300	www.aqa.org.uk

Head of Faculty: Mrs K Marshall
kmarshall@nationalacademy.org.uk

Music

"Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything" Plato

What will I study?

GCSE Music is taught through 5 Areas of Study, My Music, Concerto Through Time, Rhythms of the World, Film Music and Conventions of pop music. Students will explore each area of study learning about musical features, instruments, language and contexts from that musical area. Area of Study one, My Music is where you will learn to perform and compose music on your chosen instrument.



What skills will I develop?

AO1: Perform with technical control, expression and interpretation.

AO2: Compose and develop musical ideas with technical control and coherence.

AO3: Use appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements which demonstrate understanding of musical elements, musical contexts and musical language.

AO4: Demonstrate and apply knowledge of musical elements, musical contexts and musical language.

What will be my next steps?

Progression on to A Level Courses or Level 3 music courses.

How will I be assessed?

Unit 1 - integrated portfolio. Performance (15%)
composition (15%)

Unit 2- practical portfolio. Group performance (15%) set
brief composition (15%)

Unit 3 - listening exam (40%)

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
Music	OCR	J536	www.ocr.org.uk

Head of Faculty: Mrs M Jones
marandajones@nationalacademy.org.uk

Sport (BTEC TechAward)

“Worrying gets you nowhere. If you turn up worrying about how you’re going to perform, you’ve already lost. Train hard, turn up, run your best and the rest will take care of itself.” - Usain Bolt

What will I study?

On the BTEC physical education course, students will focus on the different types of physical activity and providers, the needs of participants, barriers to participation and ways to overcome these. Learners will develop an applied understanding of physiology and anatomy. They will learn about the components of fitness and how they are used in different types of sport, practical participation in sport and rules and regulations. They will study ways to improve practice through delivery of drills and conditioning.

What skills will I develop?

The qualification has been developed to:

- encourage personal development through practical participation and performance in a range of sports and exercise activities.
- give students a wider understanding and appreciation of health-related fitness, sports and exercise



How will I be assessed?

- Coursework 2 units - (60% of final grade)
- Examination - (40% of final grade)

What will be my next steps?

A level PE, BTEC Sport level 3 at post-16

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
BTEC First Award in Sport	Pearson	603/7068/3	www. qualifications.pearson.com

Head of Faculty: Mrs M Jones
marandajones@nationalacademy.org.uk

PE

“The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.”
— Phil Jackson

What will I study?

Students on our physical education GCSE course will study the relationship between exercise, diet, work and rest, and how, together, they contribute to a balanced healthy lifestyle. You will explore the effects of exercise on cardiovascular, respiratory, muscular and skeletal systems whilst developing practical performance in four activities.



What skills will I develop?

You will develop fluent knowledge and understanding of the theory of physical education and acquire practical skills in a number of activities such as netball, badminton, football, athletics and table tennis. You will also be able to analyse practical performance evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of a performer in order to plan for their development.

How will I be assessed?

- Examinations (60%) – two written exams
- Practical performance (30%) – based on skills during individual performance, team, and one free-choice activity
- Personal exercise programme (10%)

What will be my next steps?

A level PE, BTEC Sport level 3 at post-16

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
Edexcel GCSE Physical Education	Edexcel	Pearson edexcel level 1 / level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Physical education (1PEo)	www.pearson.com/qualifications

Head of Faculty: Mrs M Jones

marandajones@nationalacademy.org.uk

Photography

'There are no rules for good photographs, there are only good photographs' - Ansel Adams

What will I study?

Although photography is extremely interesting and fun, it is not an easy option. Students need a high level of self-discipline, a creative outlook and excellent planning skills. A willingness to experiment and try things out helps, as does the ability to work both independently and in groups.

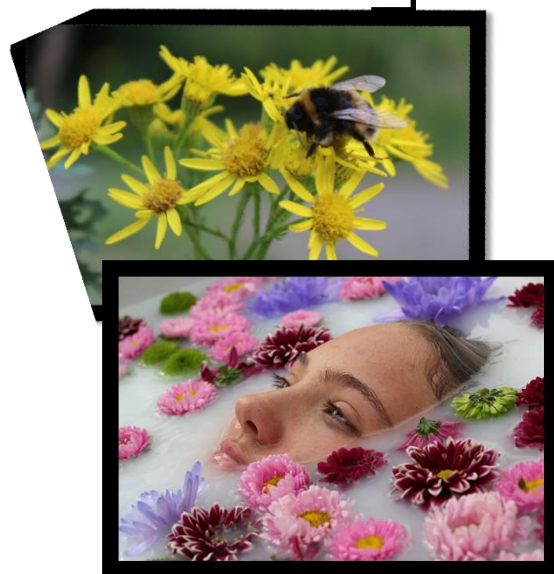
This course explores how photography is used creatively rather than the technical and commercial application of photography. Students are given opportunities to move beyond the basic application of photography – simply recording images – and really explore the creative potential of the discipline, combining good technical skills with artistic ability to communicate ideas and observations

What skills will I develop?

Students will need to be able to manipulate images using photo-editing software and should be comfortable using ICT. Part of the course will develop software specific skills. This specification provides students with a wide range of photographic understanding, showing in their work the use of viewpoint, composition, focus control, depth of field, movement and narrative. The course offers exciting and stimulating opportunities to explore their interests in photography in ways that are personally relevant and truly developmental in nature.

What will be my next steps?

Students can progress from GCSE Art and Design Photography to study a more advanced course, for example A level Art, Fine Art, Graphics, Textiles and Photography at college or sixth form. Alternatively students could progress to art college and study a Level 3 BTEC course in order to access degree level qualification.



How will I be assessed?

- Controlled assessment (60%) – two units set by the course teacher
- Examination (40%) – ten hour exam, based on a subject chosen by students eight weeks prior to the exam

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
GCSE Art & Design: Photography	AQA	8206	www.aqa.org.uk

Head of Faculty: Mr. L Gregory
lgregory@nationalacademy.org.uk

Product Design- (GCSE)

'Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.' Steve Jobs

What will I study?

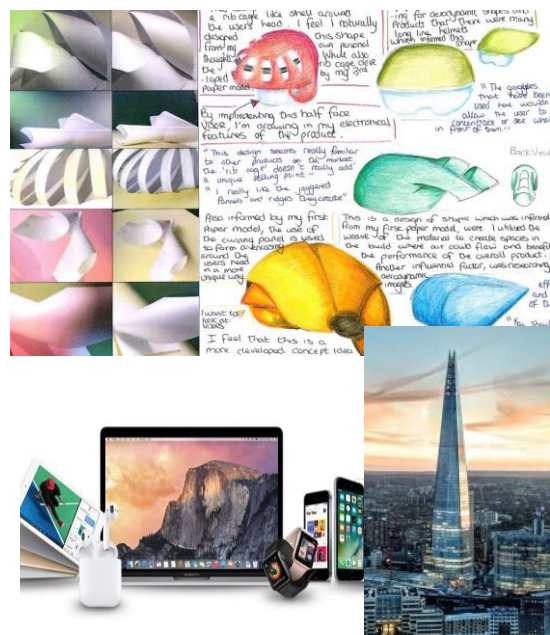
This course is aimed at students with good English and Maths skills and an interest in the highly creative design and making process. GCSE Design and Technology will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental, and economic factors. Students will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise. They will also have the opportunity to study a specialist technical principle in greater depth by specialising in either graphic products or resistant materials areas of Design and Technology.

What skills will I develop?

GCSE Design and Technology enables students to learn a wide variety of different skills such as; technical drawing, modelling, Computer Aided Design, 3D simulation and Computer Aided Manufacturing to develop innovative and creative design solutions to the contextual challenges set by the examination board. Students are also given the opportunity to use machinery and processes used in industry. The new GCSE empowers students to produce creative and bespoke outcomes, and encourages students to develop their own design style as budding young designers.

What will be my next steps?

On completion of the course, students can take their studies further at A-Level. This course provides a clear pathway to a wide range of design-related degrees and careers such as: graphic design, architecture, interior architecture, aeronautical design, vehicular design, industrial / product design, engineering, mechanical engineering, design engineering, manufacturing engineering, fashion marketing and merchandising, visual merchandise designers and more.



How will I be assessed?

- **Coursework project of 40 - 60 hours during year 11 – (50%)**
- **Examination – (50%)**

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
GCSE Product design	AQA	8552	www.aqa.org.uk
Head of Faculty: Mr. L Gregory lgregory@nationalacademy.org.uk			

Religious Studies

'Religious studies answers life's fundamental questions.' - Peter Vardy

What will I study?

Students will study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and Islam and how they apply in the modern world. They will focus on the philosophical and ethical issues of how to apply Christianity to a variety of topics.

Students will study the ethics of families and relationships, the dialogues which take place between Christians and people of other faiths and those with no religion. In religion, peace and conflict students will consider the different views for and against war and in the existence of God unit, students compare a variety of arguments about the existence or non-existence of God.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of philosophical arguments and concepts and acquire, select and apply philosophical techniques to discuss the issues mentioned above.

You will also work with others as part of a team and develop communication skills through listening, enquiry and a range of thinking skill activities.

What will be my next steps?

Studying RS GCSE can lead to careers in education, social care/work, law, journalism, research, customer services, police, nursing and medicine due to the diverse beliefs studied as well as the evaluation skills developed on the course.



How will I be assessed?

Examinations (100%)

Paper 1 Christianity: Beliefs, teachings and practices

Paper 2 Islam: Beliefs, teachings and practices

Paper 3: Philosophy and Ethics in the modern world from a Christian perspective

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
Religious Studies	OCR	J625	www.ocr.org.uk

Head of Faculty: Ms R Hale
rhale@nationalacademy.org.uk

Science

'Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, be curious' Stephen Hawking

What will I study?

You will study all three science disciplines:

- In biology you will study both human and plant biology, including how organisms interact in an ecosystem
- In chemistry you will study topics including atomic structure, organic chemistry and the environmental impact of chemistry.
- In physics you will learn about forces, energy and waves.

There are two pathways: combined science and separate sciences (sometimes called triple science). In combined science, students study all three science disciplines and receive two grades that are identical or adjacent to each other. Students who study separate sciences take two exams for each subject and are awarded one grade each, with additional material being taught including the brain and the eye, forensic chemical analysis and space.

What skills will I develop?

You will develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of scientific phenomena and concepts. You will acquire the skills to be able to justify explanations and debate topical issues as well as being able to solve problems and work collaboratively. You will also be able to comprehend, interpret and communicate scientific information.

What will be my next steps?

Science A-levels, applied science level 3 BTEC, apprenticeships.



How will I be assessed?

Combined science (two GCSEs)

- Examinations – six exams (two biology, two chemistry and two physics) each making up 16.7% of the final mark (higher and foundation tier) leading to 2 GCSE grades.

AQA – combined science (trilogy)

AQA | Science | GCSE | Combined Science: Trilogy

Separate science (three GCSEs)

- Examinations – six exams (two biology, two chemistry and two physics) each making up 50% of a GCSE, therefore three GCSEs in total

AQA biology GCSE AQA | Science | GCSE | Biology

AQA physics GCSE AQA | Science | GCSE | Chemistry

AQA chemistry GCSE AQA | Science | GCSE | Physics

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
As above	AQA	8464 / 8461 / 8462 / 8463	As above
Acting Head of Faculty: Mrs E Almeida ealmeida@nationalacademy.org.uk			

Sociology

"The difficulty, in sociology, is to manage to think in a completely astonished and disconcerted way about things you thought you had always understood." Pierre Bourdieu

What will I study?

Students study key ideas of classical sociologists including Durkheim, Marx and Weber, referencing their view of the world and their contribution to the development of the discipline.

Students will also learn how to apply various research methods to different sociological contexts. They will be introduced to sociological terms and concepts concerned with social structures, social processes and social issues.

These approaches will be studied with reference to the family, education, crime and deviance and social stratification.



What skills will I develop?

GCSE Sociology helps students to gain knowledge and understanding of key social structures, processes and issues through the study of families, education, crime and deviance and social stratification.

Students will develop their analytical, assimilation and communication skills by comparing and contrasting perspectives on a variety of social issues, constructing reasoned arguments, making substantiated judgements and drawing reasoned conclusions.

By studying sociology, students will develop transferable skills including how to: investigate facts and make deductions, develop opinions and new ideas on social issues and analyse and better understand the social world.

What will be my next steps?

A sociology GCSE can lead to a variety of careers, including social work (a common career for sociology graduates, social workers help people overcome social problems); human resources (a sociology degree can help you understand the needs of people from different backgrounds); research: (you can research market trends, public opinion, or other topics that add value to an organisation); teaching: (you can become a sociology teacher in secondary schools, sixth form colleges, or colleges of further education), Police officer, community development worker, youth worker, probation officer and public relations officer.

How will I be assessed?

The GCSE is assessed by 100% exam:

Paper 1: The Sociology of Families and Education 1hr 45 mins

Paper 2: The Sociology of Crime and Deviance and Social Stratification 1hr 45 mins

Head of Faculty: Ms R Hale

rhale@nationalacademy.org.uk

Course Title	Exam board	Specification Code	Website
Sociology	AQA	8192	https://www.aqa.org.uk

Supporting your child through Key Stage 4

From your child's AMP reports throughout key stage 3, you will be used to seeing numbered grades 1 - 3 for progress which describe how your child is performing in relation to their ability.

During key stage 4, these change slightly to reflect how your child is performing in relation to **their minimum expected grade**:

- 1 - Performing at a level which indicates you will **exceed** your minimum expected grade
- 2 - Performing at a level which indicates you will **meet** your minimum expected grade
- 3 - Performing at a level which indicates you will **not meet** your minimum expected grade
- 4 - Performing at a level which indicates you will **perform well below** your minimum expected grade

You will be invited to AMP parents' evenings in year 10 and 11 to discuss your child's progress with subject teachers. Additional opportunities for parental engagement may be offered throughout the year.

Wellbeing

As an academy we have been preparing children to transition into key stage 4 studies by offering a rounded three year key stage 3 curriculum which takes students on a journey of learning and challenges them to think independently. However, if your child does experience stress or worry at any time (not just around exam period!) there is lots of support available.

- We have a bank of resources on our website www.nationalacademy.org.uk under the 'Our Pastoral Care- Student Wellbeing- Mental Health' tab
- In school there is the Listening Service and access to a counsellor - see tutors for more details
- www.nottalone.org.uk/ offers online advice, videos and signposts to local support in Nottinghamshire for both students and parents

Parent/Guardian Guidance for post-14 Option Selection

Now that your child is approaching the final years of their school education, perhaps for the first time they will be making important decisions about their future. This can often be a challenging task, and some students will worry about the impact their choices might have on their future opportunities. However, we have put together an enhanced programme of support for students to make sure they feel confident and empowered by this process.

We also understand that this can be a worrying time for parents and guardians who want to support their child in the best ways possible. We hope the guidance below enables you to do so.

The Facts:

- Schools must, by law, ensure that all young people receive a broad education, so your child will continue to study the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. They will also continue to study Religious Education, Personal Development and core PE.
- Your child will be notified of the 'pathway' they have been allocated onto, which is essentially the group of subjects they will select from recommended by us and based upon predicted grades and performance.
- Whilst we offer a broad range of subjects additional to those in the core group, we cannot offer all subjects to all students and therefore your child may need to have alternative choices in case of any timetable issues or other challenges.

Supporting the Decisions:

We strongly encourage you to have as much conversation with your child as possible about their option choices. Below are some questions that will aid that discussion:

- What subjects are they successful in and enjoy? What do they feel they will thrive in?
- What assessment methods suit them? The majority of subjects are assessed through exams, however practical work and coursework make up a portion of some subjects.
- Do they have a particular career in mind? Have they done some research into which subjects are required for those future steps?
- If they are unsure about careers, are they choosing a broad enough range of subjects to keep as many options open as possible?
- What wider interests do they have?

Research:

It is crucial for your child to have as much information as possible about their option choices.

It is important that they attend Options Evening and make the most of the group Careers meeting with Mrs Boulton.

You may also want to access the National Careers Service for further guidance.

Examinations and assessment

The main form of assessment at the end of key stage 4 is the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations. Most of the subjects included in the curriculum of students in key stage 4 will be studied up to this standard. Some courses are GCSE equivalent courses such as BTECs and OCR Nationals. GCSE equivalent qualifications (BTECs) are graded Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction *. All of these subjects now include an examination as part of their assessment. Some subjects have elements of coursework which count towards the final result. Please see the individual subject pages for the precise breakdown for each subject.

The examinations are designed to meet the needs of our students. In some subjects different tiers of examination paper are used which are targeted on a particular range of grades. In such cases, teachers will advise as to which tier is the most appropriate for your son/daughter. This will enable students to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills at the right level. In order to prepare students well for final exams we run mock exams in an identical way to the summer GCSE exams. We have found that this helps to settle some of the anxiety that some feel when the final GCSE exams come along at the end of the courses and it also helps to sharpen the focus in the final preparation work to ensure that everyone achieves their best. Students will see earn GCSEs graded from 1 to 9.

Please see the individual subject pages for further details or speak to one of our Heads of Faculty, details of which can be found on each subject page.



Please note: the information given in this booklet is correct at the time of printing. It is possible, however, that some of the subject details and/or assessment arrangements may undergo changes as examination syllabi become known. Up to date subject information will be available from the appropriate Head of Faculty.

The National Church of England Academy
Annesley Road | Hucknall | Nottinghamshire | NG15 7DB

Phone: 0115 9635667

Email: adminoffice@nationalacademy.org.uk



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