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High School

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Year 8 Options – The Next Steps

September 2019 - July 2022

The Next Steps

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Introduction

Dear Year 8 Student

Now is a very important time as you make decisions about the subjects you wish to study at key stage 4. You will need a great deal of information to make the right choices. To help you, we have organised the following timetable:

Thursday 31 st January	Practice run choosing options
6 th -15 th February	SLT conversations with students
Thursday 7 th March	Curriculum presentation and parents' evening
Monday 11 th March	Deadline for hand in of choices

The process is not first come first served. Instead we will take a pathways approach. This means that during the options process, members of the senior leadership team will talk to all students and go through your choices. Together we will ensure you have selected the correct options based on feedback from heads of department and your academic profile. We will endeavour to ensure that the options you are eventually assigned are in line with your academic and future aspirations.

Some of you may already have an idea of which career you eventually wish to follow, but do not worry if you are yet to make your mind up. Think of your decision in terms of a general course of study which, over the next three years, will lead to GCSEs and potentially further study.

You will realise that there are some core subjects you must study in years 9 – 11 but there is also an opportunity to choose a selection of subjects, some of which may be entirely new to you. The right choice for you is one which will bring you success in every subject at the end of key stage 4.

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Core Subjects

(these are the subjects that everyone will study)

- GCSE English Language ✓
- GCSE English Literature ✓
- GCSE Maths ✓
- GCSE Science ✓
- GCSE Philosophy and Ethics ✓
- GCSE Physical Education/BTEC Health and Social Care/Cambridge National in Sport Studies ✓

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Core subject details

English Language

You will draw upon a range of texts, reading stimulus and engage with creative contexts. You will have opportunities to develop higher-order reading and critical thinking skills that encourage genuine enquiry into different topics and themes. GCSE English language is designed on the basis that you will read and be assessed on high-quality, challenging texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

The course will ensure that you can read fluently and write effectively. You will learn to demonstrate a confident control of standard English and write grammatically correct sentences, deploying figurative language and analysing texts.

You will be assessed by 100% examination at the end of year 11, with a separate endorsement for spoken English.

English Literature

Studying English literature will encompass a wide range of texts including Shakespeare, a 19th century novel and poetry as well as modern texts.

The course will encourage you to develop knowledge and skills in reading, writing and critical thinking. Through literature, you will have a chance to develop culturally and to acquire knowledge of the best that has been thought and written. Studying GCSE English literature will also encourage you to read widely for pleasure and prepare you for studying literature at a higher level.

You will be assessed by 100% examination at the end of year 11.

GCSE Mathematics

GCSE mathematics is one of the most crucial exams you must take. The importance of a GCSE in mathematics is reflected by the fact that nearly 97% of jobs now require the you to pass GCSE in mathematics.

The [GCSE maths syllabus focuses on](#) not only imparting mathematical skills, but also enabling you to become fluent in their understanding of mathematical knowledge and concepts. It helps you apply mathematical techniques to real-world problems.

Most of the mathematical topics in GCSE maths tests revolve around the basics taught at key stage 1, 2 and 3. You will take 3 exams at the end of year 11.

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GCSE Science

The GCSE Science course will cover key topics in biology, chemistry and physics. As a result, each student will achieve 3 GCSE grades for the course. From the start of year 9, students will work towards their GCSEs, which will be assessed by examinations at the end of year 11. During the course there will be opportunities for students to carry out key practicals and observe the phenomena they have studied.

GCSE Philosophy and Ethics

You will study philosophy and ethics throughout years 9, 10 and 11 and will complete the full course GCSE following the OCR specification.

There are four units and each unit will be assessed over four papers, each an hour long. Units will be assessed at the end of year 11.

Component 1: Beliefs and teaching and practices based on Christianity and Islam

Component 2: Religion, philosophy and ethics based on Christianity

You will explore the religious, moral and social responses to these issues.

GCSE Physical Education/Health and Social Care/Cambridge National in Sport Studies

You will all complete four lessons of 'PE' each fortnight throughout years 9, 10 and 11.

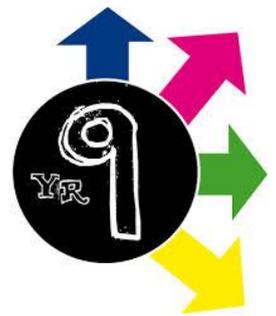
You will complete one of three qualifications:

- GCSE Physical Education
- Cambridge National in Sport Studies
- BTEC Health and Social Care

The department will work with you to ensure that you follow the most appropriate course. Each course will involve an element of practical and an element of theory based around physical education.

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GCSE Physical Education

This is a three-year course with several different elements. 40% will take the form of a practical assessment, with the remaining 60% taken from at least two final written exams.

For the practical element, you will be assessed in a variety of sports with the two most successful contributing towards your final grade. You do have the opportunity to be assessed in sports not offered through the school as long as it is agreed with your teacher in advance.

BTEC Health and Social Care

The course comprises three elements. 40% of the course will be assessed externally through an exam whilst 60% of the course will take the form of internal, coursework based assessments. There are fewer practical lessons within this course as a result of the way the course is assessed.

You will cover the following areas during the course:

Component 1: Human Lifespan Development

Component 2: Health and Social Care Services and Values

Component 3: Health and Well-Being (Externally Assessed)

Cambridge National in Sport Studies

You will complete a Level 2 Award in Sport Studies which will provide you with a broad understanding of the sport and leisure sector.

You will complete four units (see below). One unit will be an externally assessed exam, whilst the other three will be assessed internally through written assignments and practical assessments.

Component 1 (25%): Contemporary issues in Sport (Externally assessed)

Component 2 (25%): Developing sport skills

Component 3 (25%): Sport and the media

Component 4 (25%): Working in the sport industry

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Option Subjects

(these are the subjects you may choose)

- **GCSE Business Studies**
- **Level 2 Enterprise and marketing**
- **Level 2 Hospitality and Catering**
- **GCSE Computer Science**
- **GCSE Dance**
- **GCSE Drama**
- **GCSE Fine Art**
- **GCSE Art Textiles**
- **GCSE Geography**
- **GCSE Graphic Communication**
- **GCSE History**
- **GCSE Media Studies**
- **GCSE Design and Technology**
- **GCSE Music**
- **GCSE French**
- **GCSE German**
- **GCSE Spanish**

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How the options system works

You must choose **three** subjects. The options subjects are taught in three different blocks (Option X, Option Y and Option Z) and you will need to choose **one** subject from **each** block. Please be aware that there are the following conditions:

- **Everyone must choose to study history or geography.** If you want to study both of them, you will need to make sure you choose them from different blocks.
- **You can only choose one art option (fine art, graphic communications and art textiles)**

Each option will run subject to appropriate student numbers.

The following pages will inform of what you will study in each of the option subjects.

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Option subject details

GCSE Fine Art

This popular and successful course leads to a single GCSE award. It provides opportunities for personal, creative development and the development of practical art skills. You will explore a range of fine art. This could include painting, sculpture, installation, lens/light-based media, photography and the moving image, printmaking, mixed media and land art.

You will be encouraged to demonstrate skills and techniques in the context of fine art:

- Making appropriate use of colour, line, tone, texture, shape and form
- Using different approaches to recording images, such as observation, analysis, expression and imagination
- Developing an understanding of the conventions of representational and abstract/non-representational imagery and genres
- Investigating different ways of working, as appropriate to the chosen area of study within fine art
- Providing evidence of an understanding of spatial qualities, composition, rhythm, scale and structure.

Unit 1: Portfolio of work

96 marks – 60%

You will select a portfolio from work undertaken during course of study. Recent projects include natural forms, coastal environment, fragmented portraits, German expressionism, architecture and assembled objects.

Unit 2: External examination

96 marks – 40%

10 hour exam over a two day period.

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GCSE Graphic Communication

This popular and successful course provides opportunities to develop a portfolio of work using a range of processes which develop your interests and skills. You will explore a range of graphic media including photography, illustration, advertising, packaging and animation. Work will demonstrate designing and making, and will show that you can work to a brief. You will also explore areas such as branding, package design, typography, multi-media, motion graphics, signage and exhibition graphics.

Those who are interested in using new media and technologies to develop creative ideas will find graphics exciting and stimulating.

Unit 1: Portfolio of work

96 marks – 60%

You will select a portfolio of work during the course of study. This may include transforming the look/branding of an existing shop and designing packaging and the design of a mural to go in a location of your choice.

Unit 2: External examination

96 marks – 40%

10 hour exam over a two day period.

GCSE Art Textiles

This course will show you how to produce practical work inspired by artists, looking at fashion and costume, printed and/or dyed fabrics and materials, domestic textiles, constructed and/or stitched and/or embellished textiles.

You will be learning skills and techniques in the context of their project themes looking at exploring use of colour, line, shape, texture, pattern, harmony, contrast and/or repetition. The work produced will show an understanding of process, meaning, mood, style and scale, using methods and processes appropriate for the intended audience or the purpose of their chosen aspect of textiles. You will develop skills using a variety of textile methods, such as fabric printing, tie-dye, batik, fabric construction, stitching and felting.

Unit 1: Portfolio of work

96 marks – 60%

You will select a portfolio of work from the work completed during the course ranging from costume design to design for printed textiles.

Unit 2: External examination

96 marks – 40%

10 hours exam over a two day period.

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GCSE Business

Are you destined to make millions? Could you be the next Lord Sugar?

This course investigates the way businesses operate in different environments and the challenges they face. During the course of the year you will focus on two key themes: Investigating small business and building a business. You will also get the opportunity to set up and run your own team enterprise.

This course is assessed by two exams at the end of year 11.

Theme 1: Investigating small business

Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes

50% of the qualification.

Theme 2: Building a business

Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes

50% of the qualification.

Enterprise and Marketing (OCR Cambridge Nationals Level 2 Certificate)

This qualification is designed for learners who want an introduction to enterprise and marketing that includes a vocational and hands-on element. The qualification will appeal to learners who wish to either set up their own business, move into employment or progress onto further study.

Content:

Exam Unit - R064: Enterprise and marketing concepts, Written paper, OCR-set and marked.

Marks: 60. Time: 1 hour 30 mins

Coursework unit 1 - R065: Design a business proposal, Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated.

Marks: 60. Time: 15-20 classroom hours

Coursework unit 2 - R066: Market and pitch a business proposal. Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated

Marks: 60. Time: 12-15 classroom hours

There is one exam to be taken over the three years, which is worth 33% of the overall grade. The remaining 66% is internally assessed through project work.

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WJEC Level 2 Hospitality and Catering

For the attention of all future Jamie Olivers and Lorraine Pascals!

This vocational qualification is suitable for those students who have an interest in the catering industry and who want a broad background in this area. It would also be a good foundation for those who wish to progress to further education. It will offer valuable preparation for those who may want to enter the many careers in the food industry.

If you take the WJEC Hospitality and Catering course, you will learn about and demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the following areas of study:

- Food commodities
- Principles of nutrition
- Diet and good health
- The science of food
- Where food comes from
- Cooking and food preparation.

The course is divided into two units:

- **Unit 1:** Hospitality and Catering Industry
- **Unit 2:** Hospitality and Catering in Action

One of these units will be externally assessed through an exam while the other unit will be assessed through coursework and practical lessons.

GCSE Computer Science

"Computer Science is no more about computers than astronomy is about telescopes."

— Edsger W. Dijkstra

You will gain a variety of skills if they study for our GCSE Computer Science programme. You will complete the OCR Computer Science GCSE, during which you will develop knowledge and understanding of the following areas:

- Programming and algorithm design

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- Computational thinking
- Theoretical aspects of computer science
- Network designs, protocols and security issues
- Data representation
- Ethical & legal issues surrounding computer science

Throughout the computer science course of study, you will have the opportunity to work on short projects, such as building a computer and programming autonomous robotic vehicles. These projects are designed to enhance your knowledge of particular topics of the course specification, while enabling you to have a well-rounded exposure to different aspects of computer science. You will not only learn about computer hardware and software, but also how to think logically and critically, in order to be able to develop solutions to complex problems and evaluate them against set criteria.

You will take two exams, each one worth 50% of your final GCSE grade. You will also complete a programming project, which will help you to consolidate your programming skills in a controlled, independent environment, while also providing valuable help for important components of your GCSE exam papers.

Exam 1: Computer Systems

50% of final grade

- Systems architecture
- Memory
- Storage
- Wired and wireless networks
- Network topologies, protocols and layers
- System security
- System software
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns.

Exam 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming

50% of final grade

- Algorithms
- Programming techniques
- Producing robust programs
- Computational logic
- Translators and facilities of languages
- Data representation.

Non-Examined Assessment: Programming project completed in lesson time.

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GCSE Dance

“Great dancers are not great because of their technique; they are great because of their passion” - Martha Graham

GCSE dance offers you the opportunity to express yourself through performance and choreography, as well as guiding a study of internationally renowned choreographers and dance pieces.

Dance provides the chance for you to experiment with new movements and choreographic ideas, working with others and working alone. Throughout the course you will have the opportunity to perform, take part in workshops, and see live dance to expand your knowledge and expose you to the professional world of dance. You will study relevant choreographers that are touring today and the theories behind their work, these include; Wayne McGregor, Christopher Bruce, Itzik Galili and James Cousins.

How will you be assessed?

60% practical and 40% written examination.

(Practical assessment comprises a performance of a prescribed solo, a performance in a duo/trio and a group choreography piece).

What will you gain from the course?

Dance allows you to use creativity to create work and appreciate the professional world of dance and performance. You will build strong physical and expressive skills. From building confidence to developing the ability to share ideas with others, the transferable skills which are developed through studying dance are endless. The course units are all examined during year 11, after using years 9 and 10 to develop and enhance your performance and choreographic skills.

GCSE Drama

“I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being.”- Oscar Wilde

GCSE drama allows you to explore a range of topics and themes through creative means. You will experience a highly practical curriculum which will enable you to build skills in confidence, team work, creative thinking and analysis. You will learn how to interpret texts in various ways as well as how to create new and innovative work from an idea. On this course there are opportunities to take part in professional workshops from outside companies, perform in a professional theatre and go on theatre trips.

How will you be assessed?

60% practical and 40% written examination

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Component 1: 40% Practical performance of devised work and a 2000 word portfolio

Component 2: 20% Practical performance of two set texts

Component 3: 40% Written exam: Theatre makers in practice

What will you gain from the course?

Drama encourages you to 'think outside the box' and promotes an enquiring mind as well as boosting confidence and creativity. You will build excellent team work skills and the ability to critically analyse and evaluate. Studying drama can set you up to work in the performance industry as well as give you transferrable life skills.

GCSE Music

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.” — Plato

GCSE music allows you to explore, analyse, and create through a broad range of genres. The curriculum consists of a mixture of producing, creating, performing, and appreciating music practically and theoretically. You will learn how to compose music for a given brief in a specific genre as well as perform as a soloist and in an ensemble with an instrument of your choice, including voice. There will be many opportunities for performance and exposure to a wide range of professional work from around the world and throughout history.

How will you be assessed?

60% practical and 40% written examination.

Integrated Portfolio: 30% of the GCSE which is a performance on the learner's chosen instrument and a composition to a brief set by the learner

French, German & Spanish GCSE

By taking any language at GCSE you will have amazing skills and a valuable talent that is applicable to almost everything you do - so, it is quite a handy subject really. A language GCSE at Epsom & Ewell High School builds on what you have already learnt in years 7 and 8; so you probably know more than you think! Language classes are still fun and interactive. You cover things at a slightly quicker pace, but this is good as you'll easily notice the improvements that you make in French, German or Spanish. Also by taking a language GCSE you don't just learn the language, you get to find out about the people, countries and cultures of the language you are studying, so it really is an interesting and varied subject.

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Top ten reasons why languages are a really useful GCSE:

1. English is not enough! Not everyone speaks or wants to speak English. 75% of the world's population doesn't speak any English.
2. A language will always be useful, no matter what you do. Language skills are one of the main qualities employers are looking for in candidates.
3. In class, you get to study a wide range of topics all about different people and cultures, not just the basics.
4. Languages mean business - being able to speak a language will make you really stand out later in life when you apply to college, university or jobs.
5. They're good for you! Speaking more than one language increases your brain capacity and improves your memory.
6. It's really impressive to be able to speak a foreign language. It's a real achievement that your friends will envy and employers will love.
7. Language lessons at GCSE are fun, interactive and engaging. They allow you to discover new language for yourself. It is not just a list of vocabulary.
8. You can understand and talk to lots more people when you go abroad. This opens doors to travelling the world as well as living and working in different countries.
9. Using a language at work could raise your salary by 8-20%.
10. Learning languages really improves your communication skills and your own understanding of English.

With all modern languages, the four key skill areas of language learning - listening, speaking, reading and writing - are examined separately. Each skill is equally weighted and represents 25% of the overall examination grade. Topics will be linked to identity and culture; local, national, international and global areas of interest; and current and future study and employment.

GCSE Geography

At the start of this new century, the world is facing a number of serious issues:

- 25,000 people die every day from a lack of clean water
- Mozambique spends 10 times more on debt repayments as on health
- As many as 500 million children under the age of 14 are part of the global work force
- The money needed to give everyone in the world enough food, water, housing, education and healthcare is estimated at about £50 billion a year
- Each minute, 15 hectares (about 15 football pitches) of tropical rainforest are cleared in the Amazon Basin, killing thousands of species of flora and fauna.

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What are WE going to do about them?

GCSE geography explores important global issues allowing you to become an informed citizen capable of making important and informed decisions. It takes an investigative approach to learning, exploring issues affecting the world today and how each person in the world can influence its development.

You will study three units:

1. Changing Places, changing environments and environmental challenges
2. Problem solving
3. Fieldwork.

The course is assessed through three exams.

GCSE History

Studying events and individuals of the past can give you real insight into how people live now. You can look to past events and see direct correlations with the present. Many contemporary political alliances and conflicts have their roots in the past. Therefore, history is not just an interesting topic to study but can also make you a more informed and enlightened citizen.

Germany, 1890–1945: Democracy and Dictatorship

This breadth study focuses on the development of Germany during a turbulent half-century of change. It was a period of democracy and dictatorship – the development and collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Nazism.

You will study the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. You will also look at how Hitler rose to power and how different people in Germany were affected by Nazi rule.

Conflict and Tension, 1918–1939

This depth study enables you to understand the complex and diverse interests of different individuals and states. It focuses on the causes of the Second World War and seeks to show how and why conflict occurred and why it proved difficult to resolve the issues which caused it. This study also considers the role of key individuals and groups as well as how they were affected by and influenced international relations.

Britain: Health and the People

This thematic study will enable you to gain an understanding of how medicine and public health developed in Britain over a long period of time. It considers the causes, scale, nature and consequences of short and long term developments, their impact on British society and how they were related to the key features and characteristics of the periods during which they took place.

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Although the focus of this study is the development of medicine and public health in Britain, it will draw on wider world developments that impacted on the core themes. You will have the opportunity to see how some ideas and events in the wider world affected Britain and will promote the idea that key themes did not develop in isolation; rather these ideas and events should be referenced in terms of their effects on the core theme for Britain and British people

Elizabethan England, c.1568–1603

This option allows you to study a specified historical period in depth, the last 35 years of Elizabeth I's reign. The study will focus on some major events of Elizabeth I's reign considered from the economic, religious, political, social and cultural standpoint.

Assessment will be 100% exam based at the end of year 11.

GCSE Media Studies

You will study a range of texts from different media:

- Moving image (television and film)
- Print (newspapers and magazines)
- Interactive (the internet)
- We media (media we make ourselves).

You will also learn the key concepts that always need to be considered when studying the media:

- Codes and conventions (the ingredients of a media text and their special names)
- Genre (what type of text it is)
- Representation (how the media presents and portrays things)
- Institutions (the people and organisations involved in producing and distributing the media)
- Audience (the people like you and me who consume the media).

Coursework

You will be required to submit a piece of practical coursework and a statement of intent. This will be worth 30% of the overall grade.

- Practical production of Advertising and Marketing for a chosen brief (moving image or print).

Examination

There will be an examination at the end of the course, which will account for the remaining 70%. There are two 90 minute examinations worth 35% each.

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GCSE Design and Technology

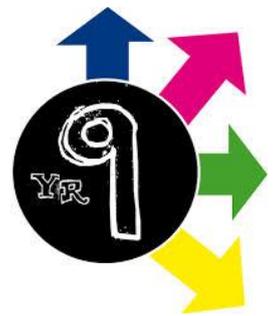
GCSE design and technology encourages you to design and make original products creatively using research, testing, drawing, modelling, evaluation and practical workshop skills. In design and technology, you will use a range of materials to respond to a design context and problem, solving challenges through the creation of a product. You will also gain knowledge of how products are manufactured in industry giving a real life context to the projects and understanding of the social, moral and environmental considerations facing designers, engineers and manufacturers.

The units of work/study are:

1. A two hour written exam of 100 marks worth 50% of the GCSE:
 - Section A involves multiple choice questions including knowledge and understanding of materials and processes associated with natural and manmade woods and boards, metals, polymers, card and paper, and textiles.
 - Section B focuses on an in depth working knowledge of the chosen material focus, including extended written answers and related maths and science based questions.
2. Non Examined Assessment (NEA) worth 50% of the GCSE total marks. The NEA for this specification is made up of a single design and make task. You will need to demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of designing and making principles in relation to investigation, primary and secondary data, environmental, social and economic challenge, the work of others, design strategies, communication of design ideas, prototype development, selection of materials and components, tolerances, material management, specialist tools and equipment and specialist techniques and processes.

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Frequently Asked Questions

I keep seeing the words 'Level 2'. What does this mean?

Level 2 is the equivalent of a GCSE grade Level 4 and above. It is the level you need to get to if you want to go on to higher education (Level 3) at the end of key stage 4. If you get five subjects at Level 2, you can apply to schools and colleges for sixth form places, although most of them will want that to include English and maths.

I don't think I am that academic. I want the chance to do well in more vocational subjects. How flexible is the curriculum?

Your curriculum has been designed to offer as wide a choice as possible, to as many students as possible. However, if you still have concerns, you should choose your option subjects as you have been asked to. There will be an opportunity to discuss any concerns with a member of SLT.

I am pretty sure I want to go on to higher education and university. What should I do now?

If you are likely to do well academically, you should keep your future as open as possible. Studying two languages is popular with good universities and will be highly regarded by any employer, as will two humanities (i.e. history and geography). You should also consider the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, which you can do as an extra-curricular activity.

I really want to do a certain subject; will I definitely get a place?

All the courses are subject to numbers. If there are not enough people interested in taking a subject then unfortunately we will not be able to run it. Equally, if there are too many people interested in a subject then not everyone will be able to take it. Whilst we do not operate a 'first come first served' system, allocation will be made according to your suitability to the subject. Therefore, to give yourself the best chance in getting the option you want, you need to consider your aptitude for the subject and how it fits in with your aspirations.

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USEFUL WEBSITES

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

This is the national careers service website. It has information on planning for your career and includes lots of useful information on different jobs - have a look at the Job Profiles.

<http://icould.com>

This careers website includes a whole section on how GCSE choices can affect your future. See the section on "Focus on Choices at 14"

<http://www.futuremorph.org>

Future Morph website is designed to show career routes that studying science, technology, engineering and maths can lead to.

<http://careersbox.co.uk>

Careersbox is a free online library of careers related film, news and information.

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Key People and Sources of Information

You have already taken in a lot of information. Now is the time to start talking! The following people have a lot of experience and many of them know you well:

At school:

- Form tutor/head of year
- Subject teachers/heads of department
- Sixth form students
- Senior leadership team

At home

- Parents/carers
- Friends/relatives

It is important to remember that this is your future. You shouldn't pick a subject just because your friend is, or because you think you are expected to. It is always a good idea to do a bit of research. Exam boards are a good place to start:

www.aqa.org.uk

www.edexcel.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

www.wjec.co.uk