



# **Key Stage 4 Preferences 2026 - 2028**



January 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

**Year 9 Parents' Consultation & Preferences Information Evening**  
**Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

In September, your son / daughter will start a two-year course leading to GCSE and potentially other qualifications. Over the next few weeks, there are important decisions to be made.

On Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> January, Year 9 students will be off timetable for an afternoon centred around Preferences. Staff will take them through the Preferences process in detail and provide them with a Preferences booklet, giving information about the courses on offer. They will need to complete the final Preferences form **online** by **Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> February**.

In addition, you are invited to visit the Preferences area on our website where you can watch the Preferences Overview and see short videos about what studying each Key Stage 4 subject is like. If you have any questions about the process following this presentation, please email [office@litchamschool.org.uk](mailto:office@litchamschool.org.uk)

This is a very important time for your child's future and we hope that you will be able to support them with their Preference choices by watching the videos suggested and making appointments for Parents Evening.

Yours sincerely



Ben Phillips  
Head of School

## **Contents**

## **Page No**

<b>How to Use the Booklet</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Courses you can study</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Curriculum &amp; Learning Support</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Core Subjects</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Careers</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Preference Subjects</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Making the Preference choices</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Useful Advice and Information</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Preferences Form for planning (not submitting)</b>	<b>32</b>

## How to Use This Booklet

This booklet contains much of the information needed to make your choice of subjects. It gives an explanation of terms you need to understand; details about the courses on offer during your last two years at Litcham School and what you have to do to make the Preference choices.

With the information provided there are questions for you to consider. These could be used as a basis for discussion between you and your parents. There are clear sections which will guide you to a final decision. The 'Preferences Form' must be completed using the online form that can be found here by **Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> February:**

[Year 9 Key Stage 4 Preference subject choices 2026 – Fill in form](#)

There is also an outline of the Preferences subjects at the end of the booklet.

Choosing the right courses will help you to be successful in your studies. Success in examinations will improve your chances of starting a good career or continuing your education, post 16.

The subjects we hope to offer are as follows:

## Preference subjects

- Art
- Child Development (OCR Cambridge National)
- Computer Science
- Design Technology
  - Food Preparation and Nutrition
  - Design Technology
- Drama
- Geography
- History
- Land Based Studies (City & Guilds Technical Award)
- Modern Foreign Languages
  - French
  - German
  - Spanish
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies

## The Courses you can study

### GCSE - General Certificate of Secondary Education

The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is an academically rigorous, internationally recognised qualification awarded in a specified subject, generally taken in a number of subjects by students in secondary education over two years or sometimes three years.

These examination courses have been through a period of major changes. From September 2019 all subjects embarked on a new specification with a new grading system with numbers replacing the familiar letters as grades. These grades range from 9 to 1 with 9 being the highest and 1 the lowest.

NEW GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE									
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U
<div><div>4 = C and above</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a grade C and above.</li><li>■ Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as achieve an A and above.</li><li>■ The bottom of grade 1 will be aligned with the bottom of grade G.</li></ul></div></div>									
CURRENT GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE									
A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	

This diagram shows how the new grades link to the old grading system.

Tiers of entry: some GCSE examinations have tiers of entry (higher or foundation) and these determine the grade ranges available to a candidate.

### Subjects you must study in Key Stage 4

The subjects shown below are subjects which all upper school students must take. These form the **core curriculum and are statutory**:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical Education
- Citizenship, Personal, Social & Health Education
- Religious Studies

Pages 8 - 12 give you details about the core curriculum subjects and explain what is expected of you. The remainder of the booklet concentrates on the Preference subjects offered.

## Curriculum and Learning Support (CLS)

The Curriculum and Learning Support department provides guidance and support for learners who experience barriers to learning at any point during their courses. Our aim is to ensure that all learners can access a broad and balanced curriculum and are supported to achieve their best. Support may include advice, classroom strategies, targeted interventions, or collaboration with subject teachers to ensure that provision meets individual needs.

### 1. Preference Choices

Members of the department are available to discuss GCSE Preference choices with learners and their caregivers. We **strongly recommend** a meeting for learners with identified special educational needs or disabilities, to ensure subjects selected are appropriate and accessible. To arrange a meeting, please contact **Mrs Thorarinsson (SENDCo) or Mr Powell (Deputy SENDCo)** on

[sendco@litchamschool.org.uk](mailto:sendco@litchamschool.org.uk) Tel: 01328 701265

During these meetings, we will review:

- current attainment and progress
- known strengths and areas of difficulty
- reasonable adjustments and support
- suitability of courses (including vocational options, where relevant)

### 2. Examination Course Guidance

CLS staff work closely with subject departments to discuss the appropriateness of different examination courses for individual learners. This helps us ensure that the demands of the course align with each learner's needs and learning profile.

### 3. Support in Lessons

Some learners may receive additional support in lessons. This may include:

- targeted classroom support
- reasonable adjustments to support access
- adapted resources
- strategies tailored to individual learner needs

Support is planned based on assessed need and available staffing.

### 4. Additional Learning Support and Homework Help

Some learners may require extra help with independent work or revision. We offer:

- Daily lunchtime support in Room 4, open to all learners for advice, organisation, or short-term help
- Guidance on study skills, revision planning, and managing workloads
- Tutor time interventions on exam-based vocabulary

### 5. Working with Parents and Caregivers

The SENDCo/Deputy SENDCo (or another member of the CLS department in their absence):

- attends Year 10 and Year 11 parents' evenings
- welcomes contact from caregivers at any time to discuss progress, concerns, or additional support
- works collaboratively with families to ensure learners are well supported throughout their GCSE years

### 6. Monitoring Progress for Learners With SEND

For learners with SEND, GCSE progress is reviewed regularly through EHCP Annual Reviews, Learning Plan reviews, and ongoing tracking by the CLS team. These reviews help us to:

- monitor academic progress across subjects

- identify emerging barriers to learning
- adjust support, strategies or interventions as needed
- ensure that GCSE subject choices remain appropriate and accessible

We work closely with subject teachers, caregivers and learners so that support is responsive and effective throughout Key Stage 4.

### **7. Access Arrangements for Examinations:**

Some learners with long-term special educational needs, disabilities, or medical needs may be eligible for formal access arrangements in examinations. These may include (where appropriate and approved):

- a reader
- a scribe
- extra time
- the use of a word processor
- supervised rest breaks
- prompt or prompter
- modified papers

Eligibility is determined by **JCQ regulations**, the learner's **normal way of working**, and **relevant specialist assessments**.

If you feel that a learner may require access arrangements, please contact **Mrs Thorarinsson or Mr Powell in the summer term of Year 9 or as early as possible in Year 10**. Early contact helps us ensure that assessments and evidence can be gathered in good time.

We work closely with staff and families to ensure access arrangements are applied for appropriately and reflect each learner's established needs.

### **8. How CLS Works With Learners Choosing their GCSEs**

To support pupils in making successful choices, CLS can help learners to:

- understand the structure and assessment style of each subject
- consider learning strengths and future aspirations
- be aware of subjects that may require high levels of literacy, numeracy, or independent organisation
- explore alternative pathways if traditional GCSEs are not the best fit

Our goal is to ensure every learner selects a combination of subjects that is ambitious, realistic, and supportive of their longer-term goals.



## Glossary

Before you read about the courses, it is important that you understand some of the words used in the descriptions. The most important terms used are:

<b>Module</b>	A unit of work, often one topic, which is the basis for a period of learning. This may range from a few weeks to several months.
<b>Coursework</b>	<p>Some subjects involve coursework. This is work which students do during Years 10 and 11. It may be marked by the teacher or the exam board and the mark counts towards the final examination award.</p> <p>Coursework tasks are a school and examination board requirement which must be completed. If a student fails to complete these, the final grade will be reduced.</p>
<b>National Curriculum</b>	<p>The subjects which the government has indicated all students must study, or at least have the opportunity to study, between the ages 5 and 16.</p> <p>The National Curriculum aims to provide a balance of subjects to give a wide range of skills to prepare for life beyond school. This is why students cannot simply drop subjects they do not like.</p>
<b>NEAs</b>	<p>NEA stands for Non-Exam Assessment. These are pieces of work that students complete during the course, rather than in a final written exam. They are designed to assess practical skills, research, or extended writing that cannot be tested in a timed exam.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Art: creating a portfolio of artwork</li><li>Food Preparation &amp; Nutrition: planning and cooking dishes</li><li>English Spoken Language: giving a presentation</li></ul> <p>NEAs count towards the final GCSE grade and must be completed under controlled conditions set by the Exam Board.</p>
<b>Tiers</b>	In some subjects, examinations are offered in different tiers, usually foundation or higher. Foundation papers usually restrict students to achieving grades 1 to 5. Higher papers offer grades 4 to 9.

# Core Subjects

## GCSE English Language and English Literature

Students will study both English Language and English Literature across Key Stage 4. The courses are run alongside each other and under the AQA exam board.

In Key Stage 3, students are taught to read and respond to texts, analyse the language used by the writer, and to write fiction and non-fiction texts for audience and purpose. In Key Stage 4, these skills are enhanced and develop students' knowledge of texts written pre-19th-century as well as modern fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama. In reading, students are assessed on identifying and interpreting information and ideas; explaining and commenting on the effect of writers' use of language and structure; comparing writer's ideas and perspectives; and evaluating texts.

In writing, students will build on what they have learned in Key Stage 3 by writing creative and transactional pieces such as articles, blogs, letters, travel writing, speeches, reports, etc. The key areas assessed for writing: effective and imaginative communication; adapting tone to suit audience and purpose; organising ideas clearly; and using sentence structures and vocabulary for effect, together with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Speaking and listening is an important aspect of the course and needs to be undertaken by every student. Students will write and present a speech on a topic of their choice to their teacher and peers. These speeches need to be filmed as they are sent on to the exam board.

**English Language:** English Language is assessed through final examination only.

**Paper 1 – Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing (1 hour 45 minutes):**

- Section A - Responding to an extract from an unseen fiction text.
- Section B - A creative writing task which is linked to the theme of the reading.

**Paper 2 – Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives (1 hour 45 minutes):**

- Section A - A comparison between two unseen non-fiction texts; a pre-19<sup>th</sup> century text and a modern text
- Section B - Transactional writing (articles, blogs, letters, travel writing, speeches, reports etc.)

**Spoken Endorsement - NEA:**

- A speech delivered by the student to achieve Pass, Merit or Distinction.

**English Literature:** English Literature is assessed through final examination only. Literature includes studying four texts (one from each section below):

- A Shakespeare play (*Macbeth*)
- A 19<sup>th</sup>-century novel (*Frankenstein*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Sign of the Four*, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*)
- A modern novel or play (*An Inspector Calls*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Animal Farm*)
- Power and Conflict Poetry Anthology or Worlds and Lives Poetry Anthology

**Paper 1 - Shakespeare and the 19<sup>th</sup>- century novel** (1 hour 45 minutes) includes questions and extracts on:

- A Shakespeare play
- A 19<sup>th</sup>-century novel

**Paper 2 – Modern Texts and Poetry** (2 hours and 15 minutes) includes questions on:

- A modern novel or play
- Power and Conflict Poetry Anthology or Worlds and Lives Poetry Anthology
- Unseen poetry

**Qualification: GCSE English Language – 8700 (AQA)**  
**GCSE English Literature – 8702 (AQA)**

## GCSE Mathematics

Students follow a linear course in GCSE Mathematics. The course is made up of three exams, two of which allow the use of a calculator and the other exam in which calculators cannot be used. Each paper will be 1 hour 30 minutes.

A student will be entered for either foundation (grades 1 to 5) or higher tier (grades 4 to 9) depending on their ability and the maths set that they are in.

The GCSE course will cover topics under three broad areas:

### **Number and algebra**

- working with numbers and the number system
- fractions, decimals and percentages
- ratio and proportion
- the language of algebra
- expressions and equations
- sequences, functions and graphs

### **Geometry and measures**

- properties of angles and shapes
- geometrical reasoning and calculation
- measures and construction
- lengths, areas, and volumes
- vectors

### **Statistics and probability**

- the data handling cycle
- data collection
- data presentation and analysis
- data interpretation
- probability

and will enable students to:

- develop knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts
- acquire and use problem-solving strategies
- select and apply mathematical techniques and methods in mathematical, everyday and real world situations
- reason mathematically, make deductions and draw conclusions
- interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.
- make connections between the topics, interpolating and extrapolating when faced with novel problems to be solved.

Each exam will contain at least three questions which assess the quality of written communication as well as the answer, meaning that there is more emphasis on the quality of communication than ever before.

**Qualification: GCSE Mathematics - 8300 (AQA)**

## GCSE (9-1) Combined Science (Double Award)

Science is the study of how the world works. It combines the language skills that you learn in English with the data skills that you learn in Maths as well as other 'Working Scientifically' skills that you have learned in KS3 Science to explain the world around you.

GCSE Science is a core subject that all students must complete. There is both a higher and a foundation level to Combined Science and over the course of Year 10 and the first part of Year 11 we will assess students' abilities and skills so that we can enter them for the most suitable tier.

There are 6 exams in total to complete, each 1hr 15min long, and broken down into 2 for each subject. Paper 1 content will be covered in Year 10 and Paper 2 will be finished by the second mock window in Year 11, allowing for time to go over the mock exams in detail as well as revise other units and build exam skills.

Module	Elements	Assessment	%
<b>Biology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cell biology</li><li>● Transport systems</li><li>● Health, disease and the development of medicines</li><li>● Coordination and control</li><li>● Photosynthesis</li><li>● Ecosystems</li><li>● Inheritance, variation and evolution</li></ul>	<b>2 x Exams Combined Science (1h15m)</b>	<b>33.3</b>
<b>Chemistry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Atomic structure and the periodic table</li><li>● Structure, bonding and the properties of matter</li><li>● Chemical changes</li><li>● Energy changes in chemistry</li><li>● The rate and extent of chemical change</li><li>● Chemical analysis</li><li>● Chemical and allied industries</li><li>● Earth and atmospheric science</li></ul>	<b>2 x Exams Combined Science (1h15m)</b>	<b>33.3</b>
<b>Physics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Energy</li><li>● Forces</li><li>● Forces and motion</li><li>● Waves in matter</li><li>● Light and electromagnetic waves</li><li>● Electricity</li><li>● Magnetism and electromagnetism</li><li>● Particle model of matter</li><li>● Atomic structure</li></ul>	<b>2 x Exams Combined Science (1h15m)</b>	<b>33.3</b>

### Grading

- Foundation tier students will be awarded between grades 1/1 – 5/5 (5/5 is the highest)
- Higher tier students will be awarded between grades 4/4- 9/9 (9/9 is the highest)

Grades in Combined Science must be concurrent, e.g. 5/4, 4/4 or 4/3, and students may only sit higher or foundation for all of their exams in this subject.

**Qualification:** GCSE (9-1) Combined Science (Double Award) (AQA 8464)

## GCSE (9-1) Separate Sciences: Biology, Chemistry and Physics

Separate Science contains all of the content of the Combined Award, but with additional material that allows each subject to be awarded its own GCSE qualification.

This route is most suited to students that wish to continue with the Sciences at A-Level, or those that just have a keen interest in how the world around them works.

All students in year 9 will be sent an expression of interest form later in the academic year, where they can indicate if they wish to be considered for this course. From this list, the final grouping will be decided based on attitude to learning throughout the year. As this qualification runs within the same allocated hours as Combined Science, only those students that have shown they are keen to work hard and engage with the subject will be given this opportunity.

The Separate Sciences will be examined through six exams. The exams will have questions based on the same content as the GCSE (9-1) Combined Science papers, with extra questions on the Separate Science topics and the required practicals the pupils have studied throughout the course.

Module	Additional Elements	Assessment	%
<b>Biology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Microorganisms</li><li>• Electrical and Chemical signals</li><li>• Genetics and Evolution</li><li>• Sustainability</li></ul>	2 x Exams (1h45m)	100
<b>Chemistry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further work on bonding</li><li>• Chemical Calculations</li><li>• Energy Changes in the world</li><li>• Further organic chemistry</li><li>• Polymers</li><li>• Using our Resources</li></ul>	2 x Exams (1h45m)	100
<b>Physics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uses of Nuclear Energy</li><li>• More Forces</li><li>• Wave Properties</li><li>• Manipulating Light</li><li>• Electromagnetism</li><li>• Space</li></ul>	2 x Exams (1h45m)	100

### Grading

- Foundation tier will be awarded between grades 1– 5(5 is the highest)
- Higher tier will be awarded between grades 4 – 9 (9 is the highest)

Students studying the separate sciences will be awarded one separate GCSE grade for each subject and will therefore be eligible to sit different tiers for each subject within the course.

**Qualification:**  
**GCSE (9-1) Biology (AQA 8461)**  
**GCSE (9-1) Chemistry (AQA 8462)**  
**GCSE (9-1) Physics (AQA 8463)**

## Careers

Before making your Preference choices for KS4, it is very important that you think about what you want to do when you leave school. Most people nowadays have several different jobs during their working lives, so it is very important to keep a wide balance of subjects at GCSE.

There are very few careers which demand the study of specific GCSEs other than English and Mathematics. All students sit the same English exams meaning they can achieve a grade 1 – 9. In Mathematics there are two tiers of entry *meaning they can achieve a grade 1-5 if they are entered for the Foundation Tier*, or if entered for Higher Tier to achieve a grade 4 – 9. Generally, Set 1 and 2 sit the Higher Tier and Set 3 and 4 will sit Foundation tier papers.

If you need help working out what the best combination of subjects for the career you want, you can research using the wide range of links on the school website or go the careers resource area in the library. The Careers Leader, Miss Byford, will always offer assistance.

In Years 10 and 11 you will continue to receive careers advice.

In Year 10 you will have the opportunity to go through the process of applying for a job, from writing a letter of application to going for a mock interview. You will also have the chance to do some networking in job sectors like construction and social care. At the end of Year 10 you will have the opportunity to undertake work experience for yourself.

In Year 11 you will have the opportunity for an individual career interview with our Careers Adviser, who can support you in choosing the right college course or apprenticeship opportunity. If you would like an earlier appointment, please contact Miss Byford.

**Thinking about your life beyond school is important.  
A little thought now might avoid disappointment and  
regret in two years' time!**

# Preference Subjects



## GCSE Fine Art

The content of GCSE art covers 4 assessment objectives which form the basis of your lessons. I will help you to develop a broad range of skills while identifying your own preferred artistic style that you will refine.

**A01** – studying the work of other artists & wider sources to influence your own work.

**A02** – select and experiment with materials, media, techniques & processes.

**A03** – use the sketchbook to record your artistic progression through experiments & annotation.

**A04** – present a final artwork that reflects your journey, personal style and demonstrates refinement in artistic intent.



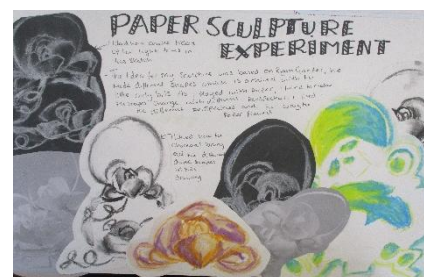
### NEA component – 60%

The sketchbook and associated work completed in lessons, from the start of Year 10 to Christmas in Year 11, makes up 60% of your GCSE grade. You will develop skills and techniques including drawing, printing, painting, sculpture & artist studies. The course is designed to enable learners to create their own pathway and show an artist journey relevant to their skills and interests. On average, there is an hour's homework a week to further refine ideas and reflect on learning. Keeping your sketchbook up to date is essential to show your personal development as an artist.



### Exam component – 40%

You select one title set by the exam board and spend 12 weeks working exploring your own response through: artist research, photography, drawing, mixed media & compositional studies. This journey is presented in your exam sketchbook. You then have a 2-day (10 hour) exam where you produce the final artwork. There is no written exam.



### Cost involved

There is a gallery trip scheduled and you need art supplies that can be purchased from school at a discounted rate. Several students supplement the basic kit with extra materials to enable them to explore techniques at home. Funding support is available, if necessary, where a student is in receipt of pupil premium.



## Child Development

### ***What is Child Development?***

This Cambridge National Certificate in Child Development focuses on child development from conception to the age of five. It is designed to develop knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and the social and environmental influences which affect their development in a contemporary, changing and diverse society. Through external and internal assessments, students have the opportunity to develop their research, planning, observation and evaluation skills.

### ***Topics we will be studying:***

- Reproduction and the roles and responsibilities of parenthood
- Antenatal care and preparation for birth
- Postnatal checks, postnatal provision and conditions for development
- Recognise, manage and prevent childhood illnesses
- Child safety
- Equipment for babies and children from birth to five years
- Nutrition and feeding solutions for children from birth to five years
- The physical, intellectual and social developmental norms from birth to five years
- Learning through play

### ***How will you be assessed:***

Unit	Assessment method	% of GCSE
R057: Health and well-being for child development	Written examination 1 hour and 15 minutes	40
R058: Create a safe environment and understand the nutritional needs of children from birth to five years	Centre assessed task, OCR moderated 7-10 hours	30
R059: Understand the development of a child from one to five years	Centre assessed task, OCR moderated 7-10 hours	30

### ***Who is this subject for?***

This qualification is for students who wish to develop applied knowledge and practical skills in child development. It is designed with both practical and theoretical elements, which will prepare students for further qualifications in Child Care, Health and Social Care, Nursing and Social work. They may then continue their studies with the intention of pursuing careers in the caring professions e.g. primary education, nursing, midwifery and social work. Valuable life skills on how to be a good parent are also taught on this course.

### ***Grading and awarding grades:***

Distinction* at Level 2 (*2) Distinction at Level 2 (D2) Merit at Level 2 (M2) Pass at Level 2 (P2)	Distinction at Level 1 (D1) Merit at Level 1 (M1) Pass at Level 1 (P1)
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Qualification: Cambridge National Level 1 / Level. Certificate – J818 (OCR)**

# GCSE Computer Science

Computer Science is about solving problems using logic, creativity, and technology. Students learn how to think computationally, design solutions, and write software programs, as well as understand the hardware and software that make computer systems work.

With the rapid growth of mobile, web and digital technologies, there is a huge demand for people with computing skills. Students with a Computer Science background enjoy excellent job prospects, and many modern careers now require an understanding of how computer systems operate.

This GCSE provides a strong foundation for further study or careers in areas such as software development, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, data analysis, engineering, and more.

The course is split roughly 50/50 between understanding computer hardware and learning programming concepts, making it ideal for pupils who enjoy logical problem-solving or have an interest in coding.

The current OCR Computer Science curriculum encompasses:

Content Overview	Assessment Overview
<b>J277/01: Computer systems</b> This component will assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.1 Systems architecture</li><li>1.2 Memory and storage</li><li>1.3 Computer networks, connections and protocols</li><li>1.4 Network security</li><li>1.5 Systems software</li><li>1.6 Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology</li></ul>	<b>Written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes</b> <b>50% of total GCSE</b> <b>80 marks</b>  This is a non-calculator paper.  All questions are mandatory.  This paper consists of multiple choice questions, short response questions and extended response questions.
<b>J277/02: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming</b> This component will assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.1 Algorithms</li><li>2.2 Programming fundamentals</li><li>2.3 Producing robust programs</li><li>2.4 Boolean logic</li><li>2.5 Programming languages and Integrated Development Environments</li></ul>	<b>Written paper: 1 hour and 30 minutes</b> <b>50% of total GCSE</b> <b>80 marks</b>  This is a non-calculator paper.  This paper has two sections: Section A and Section B. Students must answer both sections.  All questions are mandatory.  In Section B, questions assessing students' ability to write or refine algorithms must be answered using <b>either</b> the OCR Exam Reference Language <b>or</b> the high-level programming language they are familiar with.

Students should reflect on their previous attainment at Key Stage 3 and their ability to code programs to ensure they are suited to the course, due to the academic breadth of this subject.

**Qualification: GCSE (9-1) Computer Science - J277 (OCR)**

## GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition GCSE

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition is an exciting, practical subject where students learn how to cook confidently, understand the science behind food, and make informed decisions about diet and health. The course equips learners with essential life skills while exploring the wider food industry, nutrition, and global food issues.

Students work in a structured, supportive environment and develop independence, creativity, and resilience through regular practical cooking and investigative tasks.

Students will study:

- Food Preparation Skills •Nutrition and Health •Food Safety •Food Science •Food Provenance
- Food Choice

### Year 10:

Students typically cook once a week and complete practical tasks, food experiments, and written modules designed to build strong technical knowledge, which is regularly assessed.

### Year 11:

Students focus on their two Non-Examination Assessments (**NEA**):

#### **NEA 1:** Food Science Investigation

8 hours — 15% of GCSE

Students explore the scientific principles behind food preparation through research and testing.

#### **NEA 2:** Food Preparation Assessment

12 hours, including a 3-hour practical exam — 35% of GCSE

Students plan, prepare and present a menu of dishes using a wide range of technical skills.

Practical lessons are less frequent in Year 11 due to NEA completion and exam preparation.

### **Practical Requirements:**

This is a practical course which requires students to provide their ingredients for their cooks.

### **Assessment summary:**

NEA 1: Food Science Investigation ~15% •Completed September–November

NEA 2: Food Preparation Assessment ~35% •Completed November–February

Written Exam: 1 hour 45 min ~50% •Taken in GCSE Exam window

### **Career Prospects:**

The food industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors globally, with over 20% of the top 100 British companies in food manufacturing. Careers in this field include:

- Dietitian/Nutritionist •Food Sales and Promotion •Product Development •Consumer Technologist •Chef/Baker/Caterer •Food Journalist/Food Critic •Environmental Health Officer
- Health •Food Service Management •Delicatessen/Restaurateur •Food Wholesaler •Production & Manufacturing •Quality Assurance/Standardisation •Purchaser •Store Manager •Packaging Technologist

**Qualification: GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition (Eduqas) 601/8093/6**

# GCSE Design and Technology

## Synopsis

GCSE Design and Technology is all about developing creative solutions to real-world challenges. We want students who enjoy thinking, problem-solving and inventing — learners who are willing to explore ideas, test possibilities and refine their designs to create the best outcomes.

Design & Technology brings learning to life. It is a highly cross-curricular subject, drawing on knowledge from Maths, Science, Art and Computing alongside practical and technical design skills. Students learn how to combine creativity with reasoning, designing and making prototypes that meet user needs.

Lessons are delivered through project-based tasks and challenges. Students explore a wide range of materials, processes and techniques while developing strong evaluation skills to understand how materials behave and how products can be improved. Sustainability, environmental impact and responsible design are embedded throughout the course.

## Content

The course builds on Key Stage 3 foundations and allows students to focus in more depth on areas of personal interest when completing coursework.

All learners study the core technical principles, which include:

- Design and technology in the modern world
- Smart and modern materials
- Electronic systems and programmable components
- Mechanical components and devices
- Materials: timbers, textiles, metals, polymers, papers and boards

This ensures students have a broad understanding of materials, components and systems so they can make informed choices in design work.

Students also develop two further areas of competency:

## General Design Skills

- Understanding user needs
- Writing design briefs and specifications
- Investigating design challenges
- Developing and modelling ideas
- Analysing the work of past and present designers
- Communicating design thinking
- Creating functional prototypes
- Making informed design decisions

## Hands-On Technical Skills

- Selecting and working with appropriate materials
- Accurate measuring and marking out
- Safe use of tools, equipment and machinery
- Specialist making techniques and finishing processes
- Working within tolerances and minimising waste

## Assessment

Design and Make task – approximately 35 school hours – 50% of final grade. This challenge is released in June of Year 10, so is predominately completed in the first term of Year 11.

2 hour written paper - 50% of final grade at end of Year 11. The exam has two sections: the first examining the core content and the second section looking at specialist material in more depth. There is a series of mathematical questions in the paper, within a Design Technology context.

**Qualification: WJEC Eduqas GCSE (9-1) in DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY 603/1121/6**



## GCSE Drama

GCSE Drama is a practical course that will give you the opportunity to perform, design and direct your own performances. You will work with set texts and also be able to devise your own work with full creative control. Love theatre but hate performing? Consider the design route! This allows you to complete the course with a focus on lighting, costume, set design or sound. The course is set out in three parts:

### Component One: The devised piece (40%)

As part of a group you will create and develop a piece of theatre from a stimulus you are given. This section of the course allows you to interpret the stimulus however you choose, and use the drama skills and knowledge about theatre practitioners you have learned throughout the year to inspire your final devised piece. You are assessed on both performance and the portfolio you create.

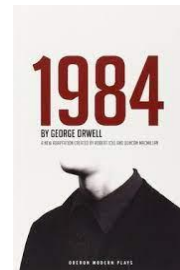
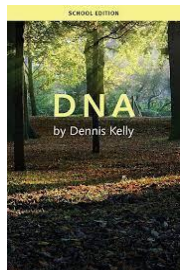
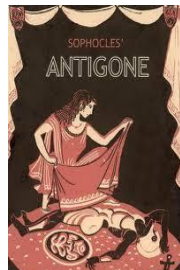
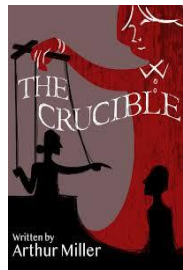
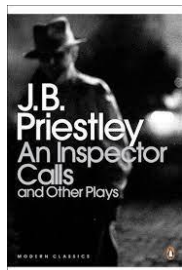
### Component Two: Performance from text (20%)

For this section of the course, you will be studying a text and performing two sections from it. This will give you the opportunity to take on the role of another person, and look at the details of how to convincingly perform as another character – an essential skill if you want to continue drama into a career or hobby. You are assessed on performance.

### Component Three: Theatre Makers in practice (40%)

This is the exam portion of the course. You will be assessed on a set text that you have explored through performance over the previous two years of the course. The second part of the exam is reviewing a live theatre production that you will see as part of the course. This is a written assessment.

#### Possible set texts:



#### Skills Drama helps you develop:

- Teamwork
- Creativity
- Communication
- Listening
- Problem-solving
- Leadership
- Public Speaking
- Confidence
- Time management
- Research

#### Where Drama GCSE could lead you:

- Continuing drama or performing arts in Post-16 education.
- Continuing drama or theatre as a hobby.
- Actor
- Arts Administrator
- Events Manager
- Digital Marketer
- Stage Manager
- Broadcast Journalism
- Script Writer

#### You might enjoy GCSE drama if...

- You have previously taken part in the school productions.
- You have worked backstage on performances.
- You have always wanted to have a go at creating your own play, performing, making costumes, building a set, or operating lights.
- You like the idea of a course that is practical and creative.

Qualification:

GCSE (9-1) Drama - 2DR0 (Pearson Edexcel)

## GCSE Geography

Geography not only helps us to understand the environment in which we live but enables us to understand other places and cultures, too.

**Geography and Careers:** Studying Geography will equip you with a wide range of valuable skills and enable you to further develop your communication and ICT skills. Combining GCSE Geography with other GCSE Preferences could lead you into jobs ranging through leisure and tourism, education, map-making, planning, forestry, personnel work, aviation, meteorology, conservation, industrial management, the armed forces, the Civil Service, retail and banking.

### **Component 1 - The Physical Environment:**

- The physical landscape of the UK
- Coastal landscapes and processes
- River landscapes and processes
- Weather hazards (e.g.: tropical cyclones and drought) and climate change
- Ecosystems (e.g., tropical rainforests) biodiversity and management.

### **Component 2 - The Human Environment:**

- Changing cities: this includes a study of a major UK city and a major city in an emerging or developing country e.g.: Mexico City.
- Global development: the causes and consequences of uneven global development. India will be studied as an example of an emerging country.
- Resource management: the global and UK distribution of food, energy and water, including the choice of either energy resource management, or water resource management.

### **Component 3 - Geographical Investigations. Fieldwork and UK Challenges:**

- Completion of 2 days of fieldwork in school time. One will be at a coastline (e.g.: Sheringham) and the second day will either be spent in a city or a town (e.g.: Kings Lynn). The fieldwork will be written up as a report and be assessed in the exam.
- UK Challenges: resource consumption, settlement, population, economic challenges, sustainable transport, migration, national parks, managing river and coastal UK flood risk. Climate Change. Being aware of what is happening in the news is very relevant for this aspect of the paper.

### **How will you be assessed?**

The exam includes multiple choice questions, short open, open response and extended writing questions. There will be **three** externally examined papers.

- **Component 1: The Physical Environment** = 1 hour and 30 minutes = 37.5% of the qualification
- **Component 2: The Human Environment** = 1 hour and 30 minutes = 37.5% of the qualification
- **Component 3: Geographical Investigations** = 1 hour and 30 minutes = 25% of the qualification

**Qualification: GCSE (9-1) Geography A – 1GA0 (Pearson Edexcel)**

## GCSE History

You may be thinking that the past is over and done with and does not matter anymore. Well, think again! It is impossible to explain any modern-day situation, e.g., the current events happening in Ukraine and Israel and Gaza, without mentioning the past. In terms of careers, any job requiring thinking, arguing and research skills, such as journalism or the Law very much value a History qualification, as will many others. Then of course as History is so fascinating, it is where Hollywood looks for a great movie plot, as does TV: think 'The Crown', '1917', 'Oppenheimer', 'Napoleon' or 'Ghosts'.

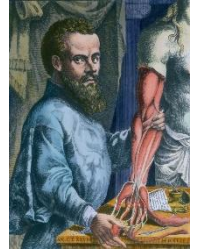
What areas will be studied?

A British Thematic Study with Historic Environment – Paper 1:

### **Medicine in Britain c.1250 to present with The British Sector of the Western Front 1914-1918: Surgery and Treatment**

By studying one aspect of peoples' lives across a long period of time, we gain an insight into so much else about a civilisation's beliefs, scientific knowledge and technological development. We also learn why it took so long to discover germs as the cause of disease; what surgery was like before anaesthetics; how the World Wars influenced major changes in Medicine and some moral dilemmas such as transplant surgery and genetics.

NB: This part of the course involves a lot of pain, blood and sewage!



A Period Study – Paper 2:

### **The American West c.1835-1895**

We study how during these years, the USA grew to be a world power whilst carrying out a systematic programme of genocide against the First Nations population.



A British Depth Study – Paper 2:



### **Anglo-Saxon and Norman England c.1060-1088**

We study in detail Anglo-Saxon society and the last years of Edward the Confessor's reign, the Norman Invasion, the resulting resistance and rebellions and the ultimate Norman Conquest of England.



A Modern Depth Study – Paper 3:



### **Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939**

We look in detail at German government and society in the years following the First World War, Hitler's rise to power, Nazi control and dictatorship, and life in Nazi Germany up until the start of the Second World War.



There are a total of 3 exams to be taken in May/June of Year 11:

**Paper 1:** Medicine in Britain c.1250 to present with The British Sector of the Western Front 1914-1918: Surgery and Treatment - 1 hour and 20 minutes, 30% of final grade

**Paper 2:** The American West c.1835-1895 AND Anglo-Saxon and Norman England c.1060-1088 - 1 hour and 50 minutes, 40% of final grade

**Paper 3:** Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939 - 1 hour and 30 minutes, 30% of final grade

**Qualification:**

**GCSE (9-1) History - 1H10 (Pearson Edexcel)**



## Land Based Studies - Technical Award

### Course content and structure:

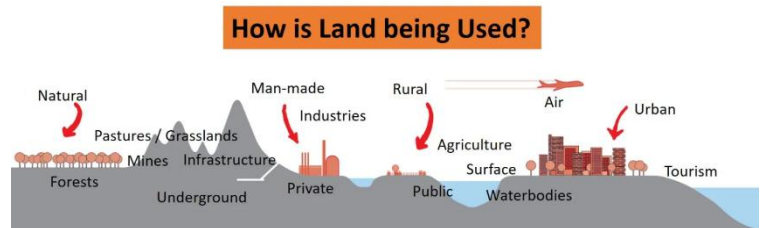
This qualification focuses on how land is used in the UK, including food and energy production, forestry, leisure, housing, and rural and urban infrastructure.



You will study how land use has changed over time, explore technological advances in land-based industries, and develop practical skills in plant and animal husbandry for potential future careers.

The course examines the shift from traditional food production to modern priorities such as sustainability,

environmental management, and public access. You will investigate the role of science in the land-based sector, including plant and crop production, animal management, biodiversity, and UK biosecurity.



This qualification has three compulsory units:

Unit 201: Exploring the use of land

Unit 202: Application of science in the land-based sector

Unit 203: Application of technology in the land-based sector

GCSEs in Science and Geography will complement this qualification.

### Knowledge and skills:

All students will develop the following knowledge, understanding and skills:

- Different uses of land and related industries
- Challenges and conflicts in land use for food production, leisure, and conservation
- How plant structure and function affect propagation and yield
- Nutritional requirements for optimal animal growth and health
- The role of technology in the land-based sector
- Technologies used in the sector, from DNA testing to drone applications
- How science and innovation drive technological developments
- Practical skills in animal and plant husbandry



### Assessment will be by:

To achieve the City & Guilds Level 2 Technical Award in Land Based Studies candidates must successfully complete both mandatory assessment components:

Theory exam: 40 % of overall grade

Synoptic assignment: 60% of overall grade

**Qualification:**

**City & Guilds Level 2 Technical Award 0170-24**

## GCSE Modern Foreign Languages

Taking a language at GCSE gives you the opportunity to extend your knowledge of the language, as well as the cultures of the countries in which the language is spoken. A GCSE in MFL is highly valued by sixth form colleges, universities and employers.

A GCSE in French, German or Spanish is important if:

- you are thinking of taking a language at A Level
- you are likely to apply to one of the universities which require a language at GCSE
- you would enjoy studying abroad
- you are interested in travelling, meeting new people and being able to communicate
- you would enjoy a career which involves international travel or working in an organisation which has international links

You can choose either or both of the languages which you are **currently studying in Year 9**.

The course is centred around a core vocabulary and grammar list. This is taught within the following themes:

- **My personal world** (family, friends, relationships and equality)
- **Lifestyle and well-being** (physical and mental well-being, food and drink, sports)
- **My neighbourhood** (places in town, shopping, the natural world and environmental issues)
- **Media and technology** (music, TV, film, social media and gaming)
- **Studying and my future** (school and future opportunities)
- **Travel and tourism** (transport, accommodation and tourist attractions)

### Skills and Knowledge

As well as being able to communicate both verbally and in writing, you will need to be self-motivated and capable of independent study. There is an expectation that you will regularly learn vocabulary alongside completing practise tasks for homework each week. You will benefit most from your language studies if you regularly participate in all activities including speaking. Each skill (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) is worth 25% of the final GCSE grade.

### Assessment

Students are entered for either Foundation or Higher tier. All four skills must be assessed at the same tier. The four skills are assessed as follows:

		<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Higher</b>
<b>Speaking</b>	<b>25%</b>	7-9 minutes (+ 15 minutes prep)	10-12 minutes (+15 minutes prep)
<b>Listening</b>	<b>25%</b>	45 minutes	60 minutes
<b>Reading</b>	<b>25%</b>	45 minutes	60 minutes
<b>Writing</b>	<b>25%</b>	1h 15 minutes	1h 20 minutes

Studying a language will equip you with the knowledge and skills to be intercultural citizens and deepen your understanding of the world.

**Qualification:** GCSE (9-1) Pearson Edexcel: French - German - Spanish -

# GCSE Music

## What areas will be studied?

Composing

Performing

Listening & Appraising

### Composing

You have to compose two pieces of music. One piece has to be based on a (very broad) brief from the exam board, the other is completely your own choice. Each composition is worth 15% of your final grade.

### Performing

- **Solo performing**

You will perform and record one piece of music of your choice on any instrument (*any style and any instrument can be used*).

- **Ensemble performing**

You will perform one piece of music of your choice as part of an ensemble. (*Ensemble can mean only two or three people*)

### Listening and appraising

You will do a listening and written exam at the end of the course focusing on certain key areas which are:

Vocal music

Instrumental music

Stage and Film music

Fusions

### MYTHBUSTING

There is **no** minimum standard to do GCSE Music and any instrument, **including singing**, can be used for performance.

You do **not** need to be able to play two instruments.

You do **not** need to be able to read music although it helps.

You do **not** need to have done any instrumental grade exams.

### HOWEVER...

You **do** need to be able to play one instrument to a reasonable standard **or** sing.

**Qualification: GCSE Music - Syllabus 2MU01 (Pearson)**

## GCSE Physical Education

A healthy body leads to a healthy mind. Physical education is important for many reasons. Physical education will help you understand how your body works and what you need to do to maintain health and improve your sports. You will work better if you are healthy. GCSE PE compliments science and will enable a student to approach A level PE and or Biology. This course will also provide entry to apprenticeships, sports, and armed forces courses.



To perform at a high level, it is important to understand how physical activity and exercise contribute to the development of body systems and structures. Lists of team and individual activities have been approved and published. At Litcham we examine all activities on candidates providing video evidence (to the exacting guidelines set out by the Exam Board). The popular activities for examination at school are Netball, Football, Basketball, Cricket, Table Tennis, Tennis, Athletics (including cross country). All of the activities mentioned have regular extra-curricular offer to enable students to improve their performance. We expect students to take these opportunities as regular practise will improve outcomes. For all the activities scan the QR code at the top of the page.

### GCSE Physical Education Assessment:

Assessment		Content	Suitable candidates must show...
Theory 60%	Paper 1 34%	Anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, training, and data.	An interest in science, in particular biology helpful. Interest in physical training and fitness.
	Paper 2 24%	Health, psychology, socio-cultural influences and use of data.	Interest in sporting behaviours that impact performance such as diet, psychology, and skill acquisition.
NEA 10%	Paper 3	1500-word essay analysing own training programme and how it improved performance.	Willingness to carry out fitness tests that challenges their understanding of their own (and others') fitness.
Practical 30%	Paper 4	3 activities from the Edexcel list. One team, one individual plus one from either.	Candidates should be playing at least one sport competitively and regularly. They should be able to commit to regular practise of others within school to ensure the best possible outcome.

**Qualification:** GCSE (9-1) Physical Education - 1PE0 (Pearson Edexcel)

## GCSE Religious Studies

Religious Studies at GCSE will give you the chance to study ethics and philosophy. You will look at different beliefs on ethical and philosophical issues, the impact beliefs have on life and evaluate the big questions these raise. For example: Are humans innately evil? Is war ever right? Should we ever take a human life? Is marriage out of date? Religious Studies will also provide an opportunity to look at world issues such as medical ethics, human relationships, humanism, atheism, poverty, wealth, war, peace, morality, prejudice and equality.

**Religious Studies and Careers:** This subject is directly useful to those of you who plan to go into nursing, medicine, social work, the police, teaching, or any job where you are offering a service to the public or working closely with people. Religious Studies is a subject which many major employers like to see on job application forms because it gives them confidence that the person has given some thought to how to connect with other people. This also shows future employers that the applicant knows how to use reason, express themselves and understand different points of view. If you enjoy considering and evaluating what really matters to you and people, then Religious Studies is the subject for you.

You will be studying:

### **Beliefs and practices:**

- Christianity - This includes topics such as the existence and nature of God, the problem of evil, creation of the world, life after death, role of Christianity in the wider world.
- Islam - This includes topics such as is the Quran relevant, Jihad, life after death, conflict and core beliefs such as the 5 pillars.

### **Religious, philosophical, and ethical studies**

- This includes topics such as the role of marriage, divorce, contraception, the role of men and women, gender equality, existence of God, religious experience, war, conflict, crime, punishment terrorism, pacifism, social justice, forgiveness, medical ethics, abortion, humanism, atheism, forced and child marriage and secular beliefs.

There are a total of two exams to be taken in May/June of Year 11.

#### **Paper 1:** Beliefs and Practices: Christianity and Islam

1.45 hour

50% of final grade

#### **Paper 2:** Religious, philosophical, and ethical studies

1.45 hours

50% of final grade

In each exam, 50% of the marks are awarded for student's subject knowledge about the beliefs and issues and 50% for the students giving their own opinion and justifying this, as well as questioning and evaluate others' opinions and beliefs. There will be a mixture of long and short style answers in the exams.

**Qualification:** GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies A (8062) AQA

# **Making the Decision**

## Making the Decision

You will have a Year 9 Preferences session with Ms Chambers on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and when you have read about all the courses, you will then be ready to start making your Preference choices. The following questions are important for you to have answered.

1. Which subjects interest me?
2. Which subjects do I like? Why do I like them?
3. Which are my best subjects? How do I know?
4. What do teachers say my strengths are?
5. In what ways are the subjects different in the upper school?

## Some Useful Advice and Information

1. You should consider the subjects **YOU THINK YOU WILL BE GOOD AT** and enjoy. If you have any definite career ideas now, give them fair consideration, but do not let them control your thinking to the extent that you take a subject which you know will be extremely difficult or uninteresting to you.
2. Remember, very few employers expect specific GCSE passes (with the exception of English, Maths and Science). However, GCSE subjects can affect your ability to study some Advanced level subjects. Check with Ms Chambers or Mr Phillips.
3. Do not reject a subject because you see it as a 'boy's subject' or a 'girl's subject'. There is no such thing! Rejecting a subject may affect job opportunities for you in the future.
4. It is not wise to choose your subjects in order to be with your friends. They may be in another group and, in any case, you may well change your friends.
5. It is not a good idea to choose a subject simply because you happen to like the teacher. He/she may not teach you next year!
6. If you are thinking of higher education at university, remember that competition is much tougher for some courses than others. For example, there are five or six good applicants for every place in veterinary science, accountancy, law and medicine. The competitive courses usually require very high grades at GCSE and Advanced level. Make sure you take the right subjects at GCSE now. Some academic universities are asking for a modern foreign language at GCSE level in order to study for a degree.

## The Preferences Forms

The Preferences Forms are online and can be found here:

[Year 9 Key Stage 4 Preference subject choices 2026 – Fill in form](#)

This must be completed by: **Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

There is also an outline of the Preferences on the last page of this booklet.

The online form indicates your final Preferences, but remember to ask for an interview if you are uncertain.

We wish you well in planning carefully for your future and every success for the courses you will be following over the next two years.

Remember also that success is largely dependent on your willingness to work hard!

**While we aim to meet students' subject preference wherever possible, it is not always possible to guarantee every choice.**





## Your Preferences



To submit your choices, you must complete the online form (link below), but a summary of each step is listed below and can be completed for your records.

To obtain a broad and balanced curriculum, all pupils must follow the core curriculum of English, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education and either Geography or History. We also strongly encourage pupils to choose a Modern Foreign Language, especially if they are intending to pursue an academic pathway to university.

**You must complete the online form to submit your Preferences.** The online form can be found here: [Year 9 Key Stage 4 Preference subject choices 2026 – Fill in form](#)

**Deadline for online submissions: Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

### 1) Select either **GEOGRAPHY** or **HISTORY**

Want to study both? Just select one for now, you can pick the other later.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>	or	History	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------------	-----------	--------------------------	----	---------	--------------------------

### 2) You now need to select **3** more preferences from the list below, plus a **Reserve** Please take care here and remember that the order of your preferences matters, so your first preference should be the subject you want to study the most.

#### Choose from:

- Art
- Child Development
- Computer Science
- Design and Technology
- Drama
- Food Preparation & Nutrition
- Geography
- History
- Land Based Studies
- MFL – French
- MFL – German
- MFL – Spanish
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies

**You cannot study both DT and Food Technology. You cannot study all three Humanities subjects (Geography, History and RS) but many pupils do study two of them. You can study two Languages.**



First preference



Second preference



Third preference

**Your Reserve preference must be a genuine choice of a subject that you would like to study in Key Stage 4 because your Reserve may be used if your other Preference combination does not fit.**



Reserve

**Although we welcome choice and do our utmost to accommodate pupils' preferences, Litcham School reserves the right to decide a pupil's suitability for a course.**

