



Core pathway
GCSE Options Booklet
Fitzharrys School

You should have been informed by email of the pathway that applies to you. If you are unsure, please ask your tutor.

Dear Parents and Carers,

The options process marks an important stage in a child's education; a decision that helps to move them further towards a successful and happy future. At Fitzharrys School we aim to support all students to ensure that they study subjects that will provide them with enjoyment, challenge, and success.

This booklet contains information about the **Core pathway**. This pathway ensures a broad and balanced curriculum.

We hope that the booklet provides all the information you need but our curriculum and pastoral teams are on hand to provide advice and support throughout the process. There will be opportunities in the next few weeks for students to talk to form tutors and subject teachers – and the parents evening on 29th January will also provide the chance for parents to talk to teachers. Students will also be taking part in the options week taster lessons w/c 19th of January along with a number of activities to support them thinking about their future pathways.

Wishing you good luck with the options process.

Kind regards,

Mrs A Twyford

Assistant Head Attainment & Assessment

The Key Stage 4 options timeline

WC 19 th of January	Options week – Students participate in careers activities and taster lessons
WC 12 th of January	Parents' evening bookings go live on E-Praise. Please try to prioritise your non-core bookings with teachers of subjects that your student is considering for option choices. Options forms will be given out as you sign in to parents evening. If you do not attend parents evening, they will be available from student's tutors.
Thursday 29 th of January	Year 9 Parents' evening at Fitzharrys – Options application forms distributed
Friday 13 th of February	Deadline for completed option application forms

Core subjects

All students will take the following core subjects:

- English Literature and Language
- Maths
- Science either:
 - Separate sciences in Biology, Chemistry and Physics (3 GCSEs)
 - Combined Science (2 GCSEs covering all 3 disciplines)
- Core Physical Education (non-examined)

Students will also continue to study PHSE (non-examined)

In addition to the core subjects C pathway students must study

A modern foreign language or a humanity

A choice of language: French or Spanish or Either (for those who would like to study one language but do not have a strong preference for either)
or

A choice of humanity (either Geography or History)

Three subjects from the full range of open **options** available

Students will be asked to select 5 subjects in preference order from all those available but will study three of them. Some combinations of subjects will not be available when the option blocks are constructed from the database of all the applications made. Some subjects may not run if there is insufficient demand. Students may select a second language or humanity here.

Art, craft and design	Music practice (BTEC)
Business studies	Performing arts (BTEC)
Computer science	Physical education
Design and technology	Religious studies
French	Sociology
Food preparation and nutrition	Spanish
Geography	Statistics
History	Textiles

Core pathway summary

Core	Language or Humanity	Open options (3)
English Language English Literature Maths Science	French or Spanish or Either (no preference) or Geography or History	Choose five in preference order. Study three. (list of subjects in table above)

Please note that students who have been selected for the Core with study skills pathway will take one fewer GCSE but still need to choose five open options in order of preference as above.

Core Subjects Information

English Language

English Literature

Maths

Science – Biology, Chemistry and Physics

**For details of the option subjects please see the Option
Subjects Information Booklet**

English Language

What will I learn in this subject?

In this compulsory subject, you will learn how writers craft their texts – both fiction and non-fiction – to influence their readers. You will do this through the reading and exploration of a wide range of texts from the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and through creative and non-fiction writing of your own. Throughout the course, which is integrated with the teaching of English Literature, you will develop your knowledge and skills in critical thinking, analytical writing, evaluation, debate, comparison, creative writing, opinion writing, vocabulary, grammatical and linguistic convention. Above all, you will think deeply about communication: how to do it effectively, and how the texts you read and watch have been crafted to influence you.

How will I be assessed?

Paper 1 (50%):

- Reading analysis of one fiction text
- Descriptive or narrative writing

Paper 2 (50%):

- Reading analysis of two non-fiction texts
- Writing to present a viewpoint

In both papers, you will receive marks for:

- your ability to interpret information and ideas from texts
- your ability to analyse the language, structure and form used by a writer to create effects
- your ability to compare writers' ideas and perspectives, across texts
- your ability to communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively
- the accuracy and effectiveness of your written communication

There is also a separate certificate for Spoken Language, which is assessed through a short speaking exam.

Where could this subject take me?

Success in English Language, as in English Literature, is an advantage when you apply for any future course or employment opportunity. Specialist careers include those in the fields of journalism, law, media, publishing, recruitment and HR and marketing and advertising.

What equipment would I need?

To participate fully in English Language lessons, you will need:

- a pen
- several highlighters of different colours

Further information

If you have further questions, please contact the Subject Lead teacher: Mrs R Taylor

GCSE specification: [AQA \(8700\)](#)

English Literature

What will I learn in this subject?

In this subject, which is taught concurrently with English Language, you will experience a range of literary texts – novels, drama and poetry – and will know them in depth. Your lessons will focus on your development as a critical reader and writer, and you will acquire cultural, contextual and technical knowledge alongside the skill of responding analytically to literature. This course will equip you to read widely and with pleasure, and is a fantastic gateway to English Literature at A Level.

How will I be assessed?

Paper 1 (40%):

- *Romeo and Juliet*, William Shakespeare
- *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson

Paper 2 (60%):

- *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding
- Anthology Poetry
- Unseen Poetry

In both papers, you will receive marks for:

- your ability to articulate, and provide evidence for, interpretations of texts
- your ability to analyse the language, structure and form used by a writer to create effects
- your understanding of the relationship between a text and its context
- your written communication.

Where could this subject take me?

Success in English Literature, as in English Language, is an advantage when you apply for any future course or employment opportunity. Specialist careers include those in the fields of journalism, law, media, publishing, recruitment and HR and marketing and advertising.

What equipment would I need?

To participate fully in English Language lessons, you will need:

- a pen
- several highlighters of different colours
- copies of your set texts

Further information

If you have further questions, please contact the Subject Lead teacher: Miss C Hartley

GCSE specification: [AQA \(8702\)](#)

Mathematics

What will I learn in this subject?

The course is designed to develop the skills you learnt in Key Stage 3 alongside learning new skills that will enable you to become successful not only in Mathematics, but also in your other subjects.

You have already begun your GCSE studies from the start of Year 9, so throughout your 3 years of Maths at Fitzharrys you will study a range of Maths that will help you develop a firm foundation for appropriate further study. The content of your Maths GCSE is detailed in your Blue Book – the revision guide that you have been creating each lesson since the beginning of year 9. Reviewing this and the related skills little and often are key for retaining and maximising your knowledge.

Mathematics at GCSE looks at 3 main skills:

- Mathematical fluency – can you recall knowledge?
- Mathematical reasoning – can you say why something mathematical has happened?
- Problem solving – break a problem down into bits to find a solution.

You will become confident in your use of mathematics and develop the confidence to use mathematics to tackle problems in the workplace and everyday life.

How will I be assessed?

You will take three exams at the end of Year 11. Each exam counts for one third of your overall mark. The first paper is done without a calculator.

During the course you and your teacher will decide which tier of examination is best for you. There are 2 tiers: Foundation and Higher. Higher Tier covers grades 9,8,7,6,5,4,3, whilst Foundation tier covers grades 5,4,3,2,1.

Where could this subject take me?

A grade 4 or 5 in maths will be seen by many employers and course providers as a minimum requirement and numerous careers such as science and engineering need specific advanced mathematical skills. A number of A-level subjects have Maths requirements and rely on these skills, so it really is an investment in your future! In addition, there are many more jobs where you will need to be numerate to quite a high standard. Success in maths GCSE will help you progress with your future career regardless of the area of work or study.

What equipment would I need?

We recommend CASIO scientific calculators. These are available in most supermarkets to purchase or online here:

- [CASIO GCSE calculator](#)

You will also need a Protractor and a Pair of Compasses alongside your standard school equipment. These can be hired from student services for 50p each.



Further information

If you have further questions, please contact the Subject Lead teacher: Mr T Smytheman

GCSE specification: [AQA 8300](#)

Science

What will I learn in this subject?

Science is a core subject, so all students will continue to study Science at GCSE level. We offer two different pathways at GCSE for science, and we will recommend the most appropriate pathway for each student based upon assessment data and our knowledge of the student. The majority of students will study the Separate Science route and will be awarded three grades at GCSE. Those chosen for the Combined Science (Trilogy) route will continue to study all three science subjects, but with a reduced curriculum content for each discipline and will be awarded two GCSE grades. Both pathways allow students to access the full range of grades at GCSE.

Biology Topics:

1. Cell Biology **2.** Organisation **3.** Infection and response **4.** Bioenergetics
5. Homeostasis and response **6.** Inheritance, variation, and evolution **7.** Ecology

Chemistry Topics:

1. Atomic structure and the periodic table **2.** Bonding, structure and properties of matter
3. Quantitative chemistry **4.** Chemical changes **5.** Energy changes **6.** The rate of chemical change
7. Organic chemistry **8.** Chemical analysis **9.** Chemistry of the atmosphere **10.** Using Earth's resources

Physics Topics:

1. Energy **2.** Electricity **3.** Particle model of matter **4.** Atomic structure **5.** Forces
6. Magnetism and electromagnetism **7.** Space physics

In addition to investigative work that your teacher chooses to give you as part of your learning there are required practical activities in each subject which are completed throughout the courses.

How will I be assessed?

These are linear qualifications which means that all exams are taken at the end of the course in Year 11. There will be two exams for each of the GCSE science subjects studied and these are each either 1 hour and 45 minutes long for the Separate Sciences or 1 hour 15 minutes long for the Combined Sciences. There is no controlled assessment or coursework in Science, but the required practical element will help develop skills that are tested extensively within the exams.

Where could this subject take me?

Science qualifications are vital for many careers. All medically based careers require Science. Other careers vary from engineering through to hairdressing. There are many opportunities in the local area to work in scientific industries and businesses. This course provides an excellent foundation for both further study and training.

What equipment would I need?

Normal stationary (pens, pencil, ruler, rubber) and a scientific calculator.

Further information

If you have further questions, please contact the Subject Lead teacher: Mr A Easton

GCSE specification: [AQA GCSE Biology](#), [AQA GCSE Chemistry](#), [AQA GCSE Physics](#). [GCSE Combined Science](#)