



GCSE Options Choices

2026-2028

The Core Curriculum

This document outlines the content of the 'core' subjects that all students will study throughout Years 10 and 11. A separate guide covering the 'options' subjects that students can choose from is available separately on the School website. This guide covers:

English Language

English Literature

Mathematics

Science

Spanish

Careers

Personal Development

Physical Education



Stephen Brown
Deputy Headteacher

You can read more about both core and options subjects on the [Subject pages](#) of the School website.

If you have any subject-specific questions, please email gcseoptions@bourne-grammar.lincs.sch.uk for assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'S. Brown', written in a cursive style.

GCSE English Language (Edexcel 1EN0)

Our aim in English Language is for students to experience a range literary and literary non-fiction texts from the 19th century to the present day. Lessons are focused on understanding and responding to these texts with students developing their critical written style as they progress. Language includes a focus on writing too and students should, by the end of studying the course, be able to communicate in an effective, mature and informed way with clarity, accuracy and precision.

Mrs A Bolitho, Faculty Leader for English & Media

Paper 1 (1hr45m, 40% of the final grade)

Section A – Reading: questions on an unseen 19th-century fiction extract.

- Study selections from a range of prose fiction.
- Develop skills to analyse and evaluate 19th-century fiction extracts.

Section B – A choice of two imaginative writing tasks, linked by theme to the reading extract.

- Develop imaginative writing skills to engage and entertain the reader.
- Use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately and effectively.

Paper 2 (2h5m, 60% of the final grade)

Section A - Reading: questions on two literary non-fiction extracts.

- Study a range of 20th and 21st century non-fiction texts written for different purpose and audiences
- Develop skills to analyse, evaluate and compare non-fiction extracts.

Section B – Writing: a choice of two writing tasks. The tasks are linked by a theme to the reading extracts

- Develop transactional writing skills for a variety of forms, purposes and audiences.
- Use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately and effectively

Spoken Language Endorsement (0% of the final grade)

This is classed as a separate qualification. Students must pass this component in order to be accredited with their English Language GCSE qualification. This component is internally assessed under controlled conditions.

Candidates must deliver a prepared spoken presentation on a specific topic of their choice in a formal setting. They must listen and respond to questions and use Standard Spoken English effectively.

Students are awarded a grade: Pass, Merit or Distinction.

GCSE English Literature (Edexcel 1ET0)

This course is focused on the study of literary texts written in different forms and historical periods, from Shakespeare to the modern day. It is assessed entirely 'Closed Book', meaning no texts are allowed in the exam room.

Paper 1 (1h45m, 50% of the final grade)

Shakespeare and Post 19th Century Literature: this paper assesses students' knowledge and understanding of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' and either Tanika Gupta's 'The Empress' or J.B. Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls'.

Candidates answer three questions on two texts: two on Shakespeare (one extract based, one general essay on the whole play, which may focus on a character, theme or setting), and one on Post 19th Century Literature (The Empress or An Inspector Calls) where there will be a choice between two general essay questions which will focus on a character, theme or setting.

Paper 2 (2h15m, 50% of the final grade)

Pre-19th Century Novel and Poetry. In Section A, candidates answer two questions on 'A Christmas Carol' OR 'Jekyll and Hyde' (one extract based, one on the whole novel). Section B is focused on poetry and asks candidates to answer a comparative question on two unseen, contemporary poems both related by theme. This is followed by a comparative analysis question on a named poem from the 'Conflict' Anthology, with students choosing another poem from that collection to allow for comparison by theme.

NOTE: Both GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature are not tiered; all students take the same examinations and so can achieve all grades. Texts choices for literature will be made by the class teacher based on what they deem to be most suitable for the class.

"Challenging but enjoyable."

"I learned a lot about life and myself through the texts we studied."

"I can totally see how English is relevant to later life; I never really got that before."

GCSE Mathematics (AQA/8300)

Mathematics is for everyone. It is diverse, engaging and essential in equipping students with the right skills to reach their future destination, whatever that may be. It is also by its nature demanding and challenging. Consequently, students often feel that because they find Mathematics difficult, they must be doing something wrong: not so. All students will on occasion find aspects of Mathematics less than straightforward, but if they work with us, we will help them to succeed. We endeavour to put students in sets that will help them to achieve their potential and so they should expect to be stretched. Please note that set 1 is typically 31 students, but set 5 could be as few as 10, giving students who need the most help the most individual teacher time.

Mr S Calver, Faculty Leader for Mathematics & Statistics

All topics broadly come under one of the strands below. Topics are studied in a logical sequence that builds an understanding and equips students to solve ever-more-complex problems.

1. Number
2. Algebra
3. Ratio, proportion and rates of change
4. Geometry and measures
5. Probability
6. Statistics

Detail of the topics that are taught can be found on the department website, available [here](#).

The course is linear which means that topics can be found in any or all of the examination papers and examinations are taken at the end of the course. The examination will consist of three 1 hour 30 minutes written papers, the first of which is a non-calculator paper. There is no coursework or controlled assessment element.

It is expected that all students will start by studying the Higher Tier syllabus. The grades attainable in the Higher Tier are 9 to 3 (and fail).

However, we may enter a small number of students for the Foundation Tier, if after assessment in the Year 11 mock examinations and consultation within the department we feel this is their best opportunity to achieve a pass in Mathematics GCSE (currently set at a 4). The grades attainable in the Foundation Tier are 5 to 1.

GCSE Science (AQA)

All students study Science for twelve periods per fortnight: four Biology lessons, four Chemistry lessons and four Physics lessons. All students are taught by subject specialists. Initially all students follow the AQA Combined Science Trilogy specification, which results in two GCSE grades (Combined Science 1 and Combined Science 2).

Students who can demonstrate a sufficient aptitude for Science in Year 10 and who perform sufficiently well in the Year 10 mock Science exams, will transfer from the Combined Science to the Triple Award course where they will study the extension modules, resulting in three separate GCSE grades (in Biology, Chemistry and Physics).

There are no controlled assessments at GCSE. The assessment of practical skills involves 8 mandatory experiments in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics which take place in lessons. The knowledge and understanding of practical skills are assessed in the terminal examinations. Such questions will count for at least 15% of the overall marks for each qualification.

Mrs K A Woolf, Faculty Leader for Science

2 GCSE Awards: AQA GCSE Combined Science Trilogy (8464)

3 GCSE Awards: AQA GCSE Biology (8461), AQA GCSE Chemistry (8462) & AQA GCSE Physics (8463)

Biology	Chemistry	Physics
Cell biology Principles of organisation Infection and response Bioenergetics Homeostasis and response Inheritance, variation and evolution Ecology	Atomic structure and the periodic table Bonding, structure and properties of matter Quantitative chemistry Chemical changes Energy changes The rate and extent of chemical change Organic chemistry Chemical analysis Chemistry of the atmosphere Using resources	Forces Energy Waves Electricity Magnetism and electromagnetism Particle model of matter Atomic structure Space physics

Students who follow the Combined Science course will take six Science exams in total at the end of Year 11: two each in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Each paper contributes 16.7% to the overall GCSE grade. The results are merged into two GCSE grades, in Combined Science, graded on a 17-point scale: 1-1 to 9-9, where 9-9 is the best grade. Most students take the Higher Tier assessments and are awarded grades within the range of 4-4 to 9-9.

Students following the Triple Award course will also take six exams at the end of Year 11 (two exams in each discipline). Each paper covers the material contained in the Combined Science exams, as well as extension content in each of the subjects. Both papers in each subject (each contributing 50%) will be combined to give one GCSE grade in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. All students studying the Triple Award take the Higher Tier assessments and are awarded a grade within the range of 4 to 9.

GCSE Spanish (Edexcel 1Sp1)

The aim of the [GCSE Spanish](#) course is to enable students to communicate effectively and to develop an awareness of cultural differences in Spanish-speaking countries. Students are encouraged to build their understanding and knowledge of the language across a range of contexts. In addition, developing linguistic knowledge, understanding and skills will support students in taking their place in a multilingual global society and provide a strong foundation for further study, allowing them to make informed decisions about future education and career choices.

Mrs S Clark, Subject Leader for Spanish

The course covers the following topic areas, delivered over five one-hour lessons per fortnight:

- My personal world
- Lifestyle and wellbeing
- My neighbourhood
- Media and technology
- Studying and my future
- Travel and tourism

During the course, students learn the vocabulary and the grammar needed to understand authentic material. Students will be expected to provide information and opinions about the topics relating to their own experiences and those of other people. All four skills (Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing) are assessed at the end of Year 11. Students are entered to either Foundation or the Higher Tier papers.

Paper 1 – Listening (25% of the final grade)

Understanding and responding to spoken extracts comprising the defined vocabulary and grammar for each tier. Dictation of short, spoken extracts.

Paper 2 – Speaking (25% of the final grade)

The exam is conducted and recorded by the teacher and then marked by an external examiner. Students are assessed on their ability to speak using clear and comprehensible language for a range of audiences and purposes, in different contexts, which are relevant to their current and future needs and interests.

Paper 3 – Reading (25% of the final grade)

Understanding and responding to written texts which focus predominantly on the vocabulary and grammar at each tier, and translating from Spanish into English.

Paper 4 – Writing (25% of the final grade)

Communicating effectively in writing for a variety of purposes, and translating from English into Spanish.

Visit [CareerPilot](#) to learn more about the different careers that choosing languages may lead to.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

CEIAG in Year 9 focuses on the decisions and choices to be made at this stage with regard to GCSE option choices, and on looking at initial plans for the future. As students progress into Key Stage 4, they will look at and research all available options open to them at the end of Year 11 and beyond.

All students and parents have received information on how to access an online interactive Careers Guidance programme which the School uses called *Unifrog*. If you need further information on accessing *Unifrog* please contact the school's Careers Lead, Mrs Elliot at careers@bourne-grammar.lincs.sch.uk.

Using *Unifrog*, students can investigate careers, universities and degree courses around the world, search for apprenticeship opportunities, undertake online courses and record their own activities and competencies. They can also take a personality quiz and research suggested career areas for their personality type. There is also an excellent CV-builder tool that will be of use to all students.

Students in Year 11 are encouraged to begin researching higher education opportunities and to develop their own career ideas, so that they are able to make informed choices with regard to the various post-16 options available. Each student will attend at least one meeting with a qualified Careers Advisor during Year 11. Students wanting further advice on GCSE options are welcome to visit the Careers Office on the ground floor of the Turing Centre at lunchtimes for independent, impartial guidance.

Personal Development

The aim of our Personal Development curriculum is to enable students to develop the knowledge, understanding, attributes, attitudes, and skills required to keep themselves safe, healthy, happy, and well; to develop healthy, nurturing relationships; to manage the opportunities and challenges they face now and in the future, and to become active and valuable members of a diverse, ever-changing society.

Through our thematic approach we cover six key themes. These are revisited as students progress through the school, allowing them to consolidate prior learning but also to continue developing their understanding in line with their increasing maturity.

- Rights, Responsibilities & British Values
- Celebrating Diversity & Equality
- Relationships & Sex Education
- Staying Safe Online & Offline
- Health & Wellbeing
- Life Beyond School

The Personal Development programme is taught through a range of teaching methods, based on active engagement in learning. Students are given opportunities to consider and clarify their values and beliefs, as well as to build their enquiry and interpersonal skills.

Personal Development is delivered via the tutor programme and through timetabled lessons. In Year 10 these fortnightly sessions will also cover elements of Religious Education. Teaching RE at KS4 is part of our statutory duty to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education of students and nurtures their understanding of today's multicultural and multi-faith society.

Compulsory PE

All Students receive one period of compulsory PE per week whether or not they choose GCSE PE as an option subject. During Year 10, students will study up to 4 activities, approximately half of which will be games-based. In each activity, students will:

- Be taught to develop their skills in isolation and game play
- Experience progressive practices to challenge all members of the group
- Have the opportunity to plan and lead a skills practice of their choosing, appropriate to the ability of the group
- Be taught to provide critical, yet constructive feedback regarding the performance of the leader and how they may be able to improve their Leadership skills further
- Be taught the importance of co-operation with others and a sensitivity to those less able when planning set pieces or refining skills.

Following the Easter break, students will follow an activity from Athletics, Cricket, Tennis and Rounders.

For personal development, students will also have the opportunity to develop leadership skills, undertaking a Unit of work in either Sport, Dance or Fitness. These practical and theoretical courses, offer students the chance to gain experience in leading activities. The emphasis is to enable students to take greater responsibility for their own learning and improve skills such as planning, communication, organisation and confidence in their chosen area. Many also have the opportunity to work with local primary schools, leading and officiating in a wide variety of sports.

Students will be assessed in their sport-specific or Leadership groups in Year 10 according to their performance and engagement in the unit of work.

In Year 11, all lessons are option-based. Optional activity choices may include:

Basketball, Football, Netball, Lacrosse, Hockey, Fitness, Table Tennis, Badminton, Golf, Volleyball, Rugby, Cricket, Tennis, Softball, Rounders, Handball, Playground games, and walking to Bourne Woods.

In addition to their compulsory involvement, all students are given the opportunity to extend their skills/knowledge of the game *via* extracurricular clubs.