



EMBLEY

HAMPSHIRE

GCSE
Course
Guide



2024-26





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INTRODUCTION

In this booklet, students and parents will find an outline of the GCSE courses offered at Embley. In addition, Heads of Department and subject teachers will talk to students during lesson time about their subjects at GCSE. They will tell students about the content, skills and coursework (if applicable) involved with each subject.

It is important that students think carefully about their choices. The subjects they take at GCSE will determine their options at A Level, university and even in their future careers. They should try to identify their individual strengths and match them to the requirements of the subjects on offer.

It is important for students to keep as many opportunities as possible open for the future, whilst also ensuring that the choices they make reflect their academic strengths and interests. We are all very keen for students to make the right choices so that they can get the most out of their education.

The total number of GCSE qualifications taken at Embley is usually nine, with universities and colleges placing more importance on the quality of students' GCSE grades than the number of subjects taken. They are also looking for candidates who have a commitment to interests and hobbies beyond the taught curriculum.

For students and parents who have any questions about GCSE choices, our staff are available to help. Please speak directly with subject teachers, form tutors and relevant Heads of Department or contact Mr Clare (Director of Studies).

Staff email addresses are available on our website: www.embley.org.uk/about/staff-directory/

GCSE SUBJECTS AT EMBLEY

All students study five core GCSE subjects:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Science: Students will choose between:
Combined Science (two GCSEs)
OR
Separate Sciences (three GCSEs)
Students wishing to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate subjects should select Separate Sciences as one of their options

In addition, students will normally select a further four subjects to study at GCSE from the following list:

- Art, Craft & Design
- Business Studies
- Computer Science
- Drama
- Food Preparation & Nutrition
- French
- Geography
- History
- Music
- Photography
- Physical Education
- Politics
- Religious Studies
- Separate Sciences (as detailed above)
- Spanish
- Three Dimensional Design

Students are strongly advised to select either French or Spanish as one of their choices, As part of each student's personal character development, our GCSE timetable also includes Games, Physical Education (PE) and Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) lessons.



CORE GCSES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & ENGLISH LITERATURE

The twin GCSE qualifications of English Language and English Literature offer Embley students the opportunity to investigate, construct and excel in a number of fascinating areas. As well as exploring the intricacies of Shakespeare, 19th Century literature and a range of poetry from across the ages, students produce writing in a number of forms, express themselves in a myriad of different ways, read widely and engage in close textual analysis.

The English courses at GCSE are designed to get the very best outcomes for Embley students, in terms of their broader learning, as well as their grades in both subjects. At the end of Year 11, Embley students will emerge as more intellectually curious, culturally aware and articulate individuals, ready for a richer artistic experience in life.

We teach English Language and English Literature at the same time, as the subjects are interdependent and many of the skills involved are interlinked. Everyone takes both subjects at GCSE and emerges with two distinct and valuable qualifications. We follow a strict regime of continual improvement, based on regular assessments and bench marked against students' YELLIS baseline grades, to prepare students for a closed text exam system. They cover a diverse and exciting range of texts and topics, as well as develop their presentation skills, in groups and as individuals, with Embley's Public Speaking Competition in the Spring term as a key point in the school calendar.

Assessment

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 1: Exploring creative reading and writing

Section A - Reading: students read a fictional passage and answer questions about it

Section B - Writing: students write their own piece of fiction, based on the same theme

Examples: 'Write a story set on a dark night' or 'Write a story about a time when things turned out unexpectedly'.

Paper 2: Expressing a point of view

Section A - Reading: students read two passages of non-fiction and answer questions about them.

Section B - Writing: students write to present a viewpoint.

Example: 'Parents today are over-protective. They should let their children take part in adventurous, even

risky, activities to prepare them for later life.' Write an article for a broadsheet newspaper in which you argue for or against this statement.

Students are also assessed on their Public Speaking presentation and receive a pass, merit or distinction grade for it on their exam certificate.

Examination board: AQA

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th Century novel

Section A - Students will answer a question on a Shakespeare play, starting with detailed analysis of a passage. We will study Shakespeare's great, dramatic and accessible tragedy, Macbeth.

Section B - We will study A Christmas Carol, Dickens' iconic novella, detailing the gradual redemption of the classic 19th Century miser, Scrooge.

Paper 2: Modern texts

Section A - Modern texts: students will answer a question on a text they have studied. We will enjoy Golding's iconic, futuristic novel, Lord of the Flies, designed to stimulate, enthrall, stretch and challenge our students to produce their best possible responses.

Section B - Poetry: students write answers based on poems that they have studied during the course. We have chosen the Power and Conflict poems from the AQA anthology, containing great poems by Duffy, Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, Tennyson and Heaney.

Section C - Unseen poetry: students respond to two unseen poems, testing their intelligence, flexibility and creativity when responding to something they have not prepared in advance.

Examination board: AQA

MATHEMATICS

Some of civilisation's most prized achievements are reliant on Mathematics. Planes flying seamlessly through the air, the availability of complex medicines and computers, to name a few, rely on the use and the study of numbers. Even if you don't aspire to work in a mathematical field, the skills taught in this subject enable you to approach any problem in life with logic and structure.

The key aims of GCSE Mathematics are:

- To ensure students have the numerical skills required to progress to employment
- To embed problem solving rigorously in teaching, learning and assessment
- To stretch and challenge all students
- Appropriately prepare students thoroughly for the study of A Level Mathematics

This is a three-year course that begins at the start of

Year 9. Students are taught according to attainment. This ensures that class content is well-targeted to students who may be preparing for different GCSE exam levels or advanced qualifications.

Students are entered into either a Foundation, or Higher tiered examination. Top set students have the opportunity to study Mathematics beyond GCSE in the form of the AQA Further Maths GCSE in class and as co-curricular activities. This course introduces them to the power and elegance of advanced mathematics and helps prepare them for A Level study.

Teaching is given by clear instruction with then opportunity for questioning, discussion and practice, which leads to problem solving and exam style questions. A large emphasis is placed on independent practice. Homework in Year 11 is given weekly, as a group of GCSE questions on topics that students have studied. Regular short assessments are given every two weeks to identify any areas of focus and enable the student, with the help of the teacher, to address any issues. Summative tests are given termly, which require students to recall all the facts and methods in the course up to that point. This constant practice of previous learning secures it in the long-term memory and makes revision before the GCSE exam less onerous.

Assessment

At the end of Year 11, assessment takes the form of two examination papers which may test any of the content taught. Both papers require a range of skills including: using and applying standard techniques, reasoning, interpreting and communicating mathematically and solving problems in Mathematics and in other contexts.

Examination board: IGCSE Edexcel

SEPARATE SCIENCES

Science increasingly determines the nature of our society, culture and the environment. Life at home, at school and in the work place is constantly changing to meet the new challenges of scientific change. Everyone needs to be equipped with knowledge and understanding to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise. A good understanding of Science allows effective contribution to social, medical, environmental, industrial and ethical issues.

This option gives students a greater depth of study of the topics covered in Combined Science. It is a three year course that begins in Year 9. Students are taught through the three main scientific subjects of Biology, Chemistry and Physics by specialist teachers. Following examinations in Year 11, students are awarded three Science GCSE grades in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Topics studied are outlined here:

Biology:

- Cell biology
- Organisation
- Infection and response
- Bioenergetics
- Homeostasis and response
- Inheritance, variation and evolution
- Ecology

Chemistry:

- Atomic structure and the periodic table
- Bonding, structure and properties of matter
- Quantitative chemistry
- Chemical changes
- Energy changes
- The rate of chemical change
- Organic chemistry
- Chemical analysis
- Chemistry of the atmosphere
- Using resources

Physics:

- Energy
- Electricity
- Particle model of matter
- Atomic Structure
- Forces
- Waves
- Magnetism and electromagnetism
- Space Physics

Assessment

Practical work is at the heart of Science. All students carry out 28 required practicals across the three Sciences during the GCSE course. The practical skills are assessed in the written papers. These questions account for 15% of the overall marks for the qualification. There are six exam papers, two in each subject. The papers include multiple choice, short answer and open response questions.

Examination board: AQA

COMBINED SCIENCE

GCSE Combined Science follows the same course structure as Separate Sciences. Students study the same topics as Separate Sciences, with the exception of Space Physics. All topics are covered in slightly less detail in Combined Science. Assessment also follows the same format. However, students taking GCSE Combined Science carry out 21 required practicals across the three Sciences during the GCSE course. Following examinations in Year 11, students are awarded two GCSEs.

Examination board: AQA

GCSE OPTIONS

ART, CRAFT & DESIGN

Art, Craft & Design is an ideal GCSE for students with broad artistic skills, interests and ambitions. Art and Design is a way of seeing things and making sense of the world. The course is 100% practical and students develop knowledge, skills and understanding through hands on experimentation and exploration. Painting and drawing form the foundations of the course but students also have the option of exploring printmaking, photography, digital editing, textiles and/or 3D.

By working with a variety of techniques, materials and resources, students produce a broad and diverse portfolio of practical work. They will also develop an understanding and appreciation of the work of artists, designers, craftspeople and cultures to inform and inspire their work.

Art, Craft & Design develops a variety of transferrable skills including problem solving, creative thinking, investigation, research, communication and the ability to develop, refine and present ideas. Employers and universities regard these skills highly. There are a huge variety of career paths that require the knowledge and skills developed in art ranging from fashion to interior design, animation to theatre design, and the creative industries. If a student enjoys being creative, wants to increase their practical skills as well as their analytical, communication and research abilities then Art, Craft and Design is a great choice.

Assessment

This course comprises two coursework projects known as 'Component 1: Portfolio', which is worth 60% of the GCSE. These projects are completed from September of Year 10 to January of Year 11. After a period of skills building in Year 10, students become increasingly independent and responsible for generating their own ideas and determining the direction of their own projects, during which time they receive individual support with the skills they wish to explore further.

The final 40% of GCSE marks come from 'Component 2: Externally Set Assignment' which is completed from January to May in Year 11. This is another practical project set by the exam board. It features seven tasks and students will have to choose which to complete within a set time period.

Examination board: AQA

BUSINESS STUDIES

Business Studies teaches students to develop as enterprising individuals with a practical set of skills, including problem solving, decision making and interpreting and analysing data. Students acquire knowledge and develop life skills that enable them to become financially and commercially aware.

Students gain a practical insight into the commercial world as the course uses a variety of real business case studies and examples to consider issues and challenges facing entrepreneurs and organisations. Students have the opportunity to work collaboratively on projects and make justified decisions using both quantitative and qualitative data. In addition, independent learning is encouraged so that students develop the ability to enquire and think critically. They develop their communication skills through debate and discussion.

At the end of Year 10, students benefit from a virtual tour organised with a local factory, giving them the opportunity to see the real-world applications of business theory.

Assessment

Paper 1: Business Activity, Marketing and People (50% of GCSE)

Business ownership - The purpose of business activity and enterprise:

- The role of business enterprise and entrepreneurship
- Business planning
- Business ownership
- Business aims and objectives
- Stakeholders in business
- Business growth

Marketing - How firms research their markets, set prices, devise advertising campaigns, design new products and decide where to sell:

- The role of marketing
- Market research
- Market segmentation
- The marketing mix

Human Resource Management - Suitable ways in which businesses might recruit, motivate and retain their staff:

- The role of human resources
- Organisational structures and different ways of working
- Communication in business
- Recruitment and selection
- Motivation and retention
- Training and development
- Employment law

Paper 2: Operations, Finance and Influences on Business (50% of GCSE)

Operations - Business operations, their role within the production of goods and the provision of services, and the role technology can play in this process:

- Production processes
- Quality of goods and services
- The sales process and customer service
- Consumer law
- Business location
- Working with suppliers

Finance - The importance of finance to a business:

- The role of the Finance function
- Sources of finance
- Revenue, costs, profit and loss
- Break-even
- Cash and cash flow

Influences on business - The importance of external influences on business:

- Ethical and environmental considerations
- The economic climate
- Globalisation

Examination board: OCR

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computer Science is a practical subject, in which students apply the academic principles and skills learned in the classroom to real-world problems in an exciting and engaging way.

The course puts computational thinking at its core, helping students develop the skills to solve problems, design systems and understand human and machine intelligence. These skills are the best preparation for students who want to go on to study Computer Science at A Level and can lead to jobs in web design, app and game development, analytics, software design and engineering. The qualification also provides a good grounding for other subject areas that require computational thinking and analytical skills.

Assessment

Component 1: Computer systems (50% of GCSE, examined unit)

- Systems architecture
- Memory and storage
- Computer networks, connections and protocols
- Network security
- Systems software
- Ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology

Component 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming (50% of GCSE, examined unit)

- Algorithms
- Programming techniques
- Producing robust programs
- Boolean logic
- Programming languages and Integrated Development environments

Component 3: Practical programming

All students are given the opportunity to undertake a programming task(s), either to a specification or to solve a problem (or problems), during the course.

Examination board: OCR

DRAMA

Drama gives students the opportunity to get out from behind their desks, make their own creative decisions and exercise their imaginations. They develop self-confidence, presentation skills and teamwork skills. They study plays and theatre practitioners, learn about the history of theatre, see a range of live performances and develop their performance and technical theatre skills.

We believe that providing our students with performance opportunities is an important aspect of developing their performance craft and understanding of drama and theatre. Students have the chance to perform in showcases and the opportunity to audition for other school events and productions throughout the year.

Assessment

Component 1: Devising theatre (40% of GCSE)

This course starts with a knowledge and skills-building unit of work in which students will explore the roles of the director, actor and designer. They then study a range of practitioners and theatrical styles and choose to apply what they have learnt about one practitioner or style to the creation of an entirely original piece of drama, in response to a stimulus issued by the exam board. To prepare for assessment, students are required to:

- Develop a portfolio of supporting evidence
- Prepare and perform their piece of devised theatre
- Write an evaluation of the final performance.

This component is completed in Year 10. Students are assessed individually by their teachers and the work is externally moderated. There is an option for students to select design instead of acting as their chosen skill for the performance.

Component 2: Performing from a text (20% of GCSE)

With guidance from their teacher, students select and study two extracts from a published play and present it for formal performance to an audience. They work in small groups and are assessed either as actors or as designers. A visiting examiner assesses

the work; again, students are marked individually. This component is completed in Year 11.

Component 3: Interpreting theatre (40% of GCSE)

Throughout the two-year course, students prepare for both sections of this component, which is assessed in a written examination of 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Section A: Set Text. Students study one set text and are expected to answer questions on this play from the perspective of an actor, director and designer. The text is studied both theoretically and practically, with a strong emphasis on students developing their own staging concept and performance ideas for the play.

Section B: Live Theatre Review. Students are required to analyse and evaluate aspects of a live theatre production seen during the course. A range of suitable trips are organised to support the study of this aspect of Component 3. Students are also given the opportunity to watch pre-recorded productions in lessons to practise their evaluation skills.

A number of theatre trips are organised to support and inspire GCSE Drama students' work. We also welcome visiting practitioners to school to lead specialist workshops.

Examination board: WJEC

FOOD PREPARATION & NUTRITION

The AQA Food Preparation & Nutrition course offers students a comprehensive exploration of food science, nutrition and practical culinary skills. The course covers a diverse range of topics, providing students with a robust foundation in the fundamental principles of food preparation and nutrition.

The curriculum places a significant emphasis on comprehending the chemical, physical and nutritional properties of ingredients, as well as understanding how these properties transform during cooking processes. As part of the course, students immerse themselves in the science of nutrition, investigating the functions of various nutrients, understanding dietary requirements and exploring the broader impact of food choices on health. To complement their theoretical understanding, practical cooking skills are honed. These activities serve as a bridge, allowing students to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom to real-world culinary scenarios.

Knowledge and skills are integrated into five core food topics:

- Nutrition and health
- Science
- Safety

- Choice
- Provenance

Assessment is 50% coursework and 50% exam, all completed in Year 11.

Examination board: AQA

FRENCH

Studying French at GCSE enables students to:

Communicate when travelling around the world;

- Learn more about the country where the language is spoken, its people and their context from the perspective of a culture that is not the student's own;
- Add an international dimension to GCSE subject choices, which is sought after by many future employers and higher education providers;
- Learn many skills which are useful in a wide range of careers, such as the ability to communicate clearly, being confident about speaking in public and using problem solving strategies; and
- Create greater opportunities to work abroad or for companies in the UK with international links. Many employers look for people who are able to speak a foreign language.

Students are strongly encouraged to continue the language they have studied in Year 9 to GCSE. By the end of Year 9, students have already covered many of the topics from the GCSE specification and therefore already know a lot of the vocabulary and grammar needed at GCSE level. They build on these topics as well as move onto new ones, whilst further developing their ability to understand and communicate in French.

There are three themes that are divided into different topic areas.

Theme 1: People and lifestyle:

- Identity and relationships with others
- Healthy living and lifestyle
- Education and work

Theme 2: Popular culture:

- Free-time activities
- Customs, festivals and celebrations
- Celebrity culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us:

- Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Media and technology
- The environment and where people live

Assessment

Students are assessed in listening, speaking, reading and writing, with each skill worth 25% of the final GCSE examination. There are final examinations in all four skills taken at the end of Year 11. The speaking

examination is conducted and recorded by each language teacher and then sent to the examination board for marking.

Examination board: AQA

GEOGRAPHY

This course offers students the chance to study an engaging and dynamic subject which focuses on the world around them. They study how physical processes can produce diverse and dynamic landscapes that change over time, and look at how humans interact with the physical world.

Geography teaches students to become critical and reflective thinkers by engaging them actively in the enquiry process and by encouraging them to pose geographical questions of their own. Combining this with the knowledge and understanding they will gain of the human-physical world and the interactions between the two aspects of geography, students have the ability to become globally and environmentally informed and thoughtful, enquiring citizens.

Numerous transferable skills are developed throughout the course, including the ability to interpret from a variety of sources such as photographs, satellite images and maps. Students learn a wide range of graphical, numerical and statistical skills, which are assessed in all three written exams. In addition, students develop their communication skills through debate and discussion, learning to express their ideas logically whilst taking on board the opinions of others.

Fieldwork is an essential aspect of a geographical education, bringing the subject content alive. Students visit a coastal landscape to facilitate understanding of coastal landforms, cliff collapse and coastal management. In addition, they study a contrasting landscape such as an urban environment with the knowledge and understanding gained from both pieces of fieldwork being used as part of the geographical applications paper.

Finally, a residential to Iceland, 'The Land of Fire and Ice', is offered. This is not a compulsory element of the course but will provide students with an excellent opportunity to witness the processes of tectonics, glaciation and coasts first hand.

Assessment

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment (35% of GCSE)

Section A - The challenge of natural hazards (tectonic hazards, weather hazards, climate change)

Section B - The living world (ecosystems in the UK, tropical rainforests, cold environments)

Section C - Physical landscapes in the UK (coastal landscapes in the UK, glacial landscapes in the UK)

Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment (35% of GCSE)

Section A - Urban issues and challenges (global pattern of urban change, a case study of a major city in a low income country (LIC) or newly emerging economy (NEE), a case study of a major city in the UK, sustainable urban living)

Section B - The changing economic world (global variations in economic development and quality of life, strategies for reducing the global development gap, changes in the economy of the UK)

Section C - The challenge of resource management (the changing demand and provision of resources in the UK - food, water, energy; global issues relating to food resources)

Paper 3: Geographical applications (30% of GCSE)

Section A - Issue evaluation: Assessment consists of a series of questions related to a contemporary geography issue(s) leading to a more extended piece of writing which involves an evaluative judgement. A resource booklet is available before the exam so that students can become familiar with the material.

Section B - Fieldwork: Students undertake two geographical enquiries, each of which must include the use of primary data, collected as part of a fieldwork exercise. The two enquiries must take place in contrasting environments and show an understanding of both physical and human geography.

Examination board: AQA

HISTORY

Students develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the past which helps them explain the world in which we live today.

Students who have opted for GCSE History in the past have found that they have experienced a very interesting, informative, thought-provoking and enjoyable two-year course. Furthermore, they have developed a broad range of skills, such as critical and analytical thinking skills and the ability to construct supported arguments. These transferable skills are invaluable in many different situations and for many careers. This qualification enables students to:

- Develop and extend their knowledge and understanding of specified key events, periods and societies in history, and of the wide diversity of human experience;
- Engage in historical enquiry to develop as independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers;

- Develop the ability to ask relevant questions about the past, to investigate issues critically and to make valid historical claims by using a range of sources in their historical context;
- Develop an awareness that different people, events and developments have been accorded historical significance and how and why different interpretations have been constructed about them; and
- Organise and communicate their historical knowledge and understanding in different ways and reach substantiated conclusions.

Students learn through historical enquiry. They are set questions to investigate and are required to ask and answer their own questions about the past. This enquiry-based approach requires the ability to conduct comprehensive research and use evidence critically in order to draw conclusions. Students are expected to read widely and learn how to write in a historical style. Learning is supported by a broad range of resources and source materials. Regular classroom discussions are used to allow students to engage in historical debate and form their own reasoned judgements.

The course covers the following four key aspects:

Depth study - Germany: Development of dictatorship (1918–45):

- The establishment of the Weimar Republic and its early problems
- The recovery of Germany (1924–29)
- The rise of Hitler and the Nazis to January 1933
- Nazi Germany (1933–39)
- Germany and the occupied territories during the Second World War

Depth study - A divided union: Civil Rights in the USA (1945–74):

- The Red Scare and McCarthyism
- Civil rights in the 1950s
- The impact of civil rights protests (1960–74)
- Other protest movements: students, women, anti-Vietnam
- Nixon and Watergate

Investigation Study - The origins and course of the First World War (1905–18):

- The alliance system and international rivalry (1905–14)
- The growth of tension in Europe (1905–14)
- The Schlieffen Plan and deadlock on the Western Front
- The war at sea and Gallipoli
- The defeat of Germany

Breadth study - Changes in medicine (c1848-c1948):

- Changes in medical treatment and in understanding the cause of illness

- Improvements in public health provision
- Changes in surgery
- The changing role of women in medicine
- The impact of war and science and technology on medicine

Assessment

The course is assessed in two exams, both taken at the end of Year 11.

Examination board: Edexcel International GCSE (IGCSE)

MUSIC

This course focusses on making and listening to music and covers performing, composing and appraising in a wide variety of musical styles: instrumental music 1700-1820, vocal music, music for stage and screen, and fusion music. Students interested in music technology may use computer sequencers, multi-track recorders, digital recording and sampling in the preparation and presentation of compositions.

This course is essential preparation for further musical study and a solid foundation for A Levels in Music and Music Technology. Students may wish to take GCSE Music for its own sake, perhaps to form the basis of a future interest. Alternatively, they may wish to go into a profession in which it is useful to have had experience of music or in which it is beneficial to use some of the skills developed during this course. These might include careers in the music industry, publishing, entertainment and teaching or any job that involves communication and expressive skills.

Assessment

Listening (40% of GCSE):

This is based on four areas of study:

- Instrumental music (1700–1820)
- Vocal music
- Music for stage and screen
- Fusions

In each of these areas, students study two set works in terms of analysis and historical/social background. They are expected to have developed some aural skills, as well as a thorough knowledge of the eight set works.

Composition (30% of GCSE):

This is completed as coursework. Initially in Year 10, students compose many short practice tasks, learning to apply the knowledge they have gained from the set works. In Year 11, they begin work on two compositions they hand in under controlled conditions. One of these compositions needs to draw its stimulus from a board set brief and the other is a free composition. The composition tasks can be

created using music technology or practically on students own instrument.

Performance (30% of GCSE):

It is assumed that students have instrumental/vocal lessons to help prepare for the final recorded performance; in class lessons there are occasional workshops and practice performances. Students prepare one solo and one ensemble performance; their best recorded performances will be submitted.

Students are assessed in a variety of ways throughout the course. They are asked to perform regularly at school and external events. Homework consists of a mixture of written work, based on knowledge of the set works and also music theory activities and composition tasks.

Examination board: Edexcel

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography is an ideal course for students with an interest in media and digital technology. Digital photography is used extensively in the creative industries and media, and there are a wealth of career paths that involve the skills acquired during this course.

Students have the opportunity to explore location photography, studio photography, experimental imagery, documentary photography, moving image and fashion photography. The course is based around a series of broadly themed projects, such as viewpoints and identity. The interpretation of these themes is intentionally broad to enable the direction of the project to be tailored around a student's individual interests and ambitions. Throughout the course students develop an understanding and appreciation the work of artists, designers and cultures to inform and inspire their work.

After a term of skill-building in Year 10, including an introduction to ISO, aperture, depth of field, composition, lighting, photoshop and digital editing, students become increasingly independent and responsible for the direction of their projects, receiving individual support with the skills they wish to explore further. Access to a DSLR camera at home is recommended as students work using manual camera settings rather than automatic.

Assessment

The course is practical with 60% of the grades being awarded from 'Component 1: Portfolio' and 40% from 'Component 2: Externally set assignment'.

Examination board: AQA

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education will appeal to those who have a keen interest in sport and recreation and who want to follow a course that develops their knowledge and understanding of sport through classroom lessons and practical involvement. Students learn to develop knowledge and practical skills in a range of physical activities, examine the effects of exercise and see how training can improve performance. They also gain an understanding of the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle and the benefits of promoting sport for all.

In studying this subject, students can expect interactive lessons in the classroom that will further their understanding of sports and performance on the field. Students find themselves using mobile applications to explore the human body, creating virtual reality skeletons within the classroom so that they can explore the different muscles, cut into a computerised heart and travel through the respiratory system. They receive first-hand experience of how a performer learns skills and how coaches can respond in order to get the most from their players.

Assessment

Component 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport (30% of GCSE, examined unit):

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Movement analysis
- Physical training
- Use of data

Component 2: Socio-cultural influences and wellbeing in physical activity and sport (30% of GCSE, examined unit):

- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Health, fitness and well-being
- Use of data

Component 3.1: Practical performance (30% of GCSE):

Students are assessed in three practical sports, chosen by the student from a list supplied by AQA. It is important to note that students are not able to perform in the same sport twice for both individual and team games, for example, badminton singles and doubles. It is generally expected that students perform competitively at school or club level in all three chosen sports.

Component 3.2: Personal exercise programme (10% of GCSE):

Students produce a personal exercise programme and analyse and evaluate their performance. This is a

written piece of coursework that is completed in the first term of Year 11.

Examination board: AQA

POLITICS

This exciting course enables students to understand the political institutions and ideas of the UK, leading to a GCSE in Citizenship Studies. The course supports students to critically explore how power is distributed, the foundations of democracy, the rule of law and the nature of tolerance and diversity in the UK. It is an academically challenging course that inspires students to engage with the historical and contemporary themes that run through British political life.

It will equip students with the political literacy and analytical skills to engage in debating the issues behind the headlines. Lessons are taught through a stimulating mix of investigation, debate, analysis of documents, articles and films and they are supported by a rich range of textbooks and digital resources.

The course is divided into five core themes.

Theme A: Living together in the UK

How have communities developed in the UK? What is identity? What are democratic values and where do they come from? How does local democracy work?

Theme B: Democracy at work in the UK

Who runs the country? How does Parliament work? How is power shared between Westminster and the devolved administrations? How does government manage public money?

Theme C: Law and justice

What is the law for and how does it affect us? How does the justice system work? Is crime increasing in society?

Theme D: Power and influence

What power and influence can citizens have? What role and influence should the media have? Does the UK have power and influence in the wider world?

Theme E: Taking citizenship action

An important dimension of this course is that students must carry out an in-depth, critical investigation leading to citizenship action. The investigation and action should be designed to have an impact locally, nationally or globally. Their learning from this is assessed within the examination.

Assessment

Assessment is taken in two written exams at the end of Year 11, each comprising 50% of the total grade.

Examination board: Edexcel

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Students are encouraged to develop and understand their personal values and beliefs, with an emphasis on critical analysis and the ability to construct balanced and informed arguments within the context of religious, philosophical and ethical awareness. In particular, students will:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and sources of wisdom and authority;
- Develop the ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments;
- Engage with questions of belief, value, meaning, purpose, truth and their influence on human life;
- Reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes in light of what they have learned and contribute to their preparation for adult life in a pluralistic society and global community;
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of two religions; and
- Understand the influence of religion on individuals, communities and societies, and understand significant common and divergent views within religions and beliefs.

Beliefs, teachings and practices - students study key concepts within Christianity and one other religious view (Islam, Judaism or Buddhism, depending upon the interests of the GCSE group), to develop knowledge and understanding of the basis of teachings, beliefs and practices. As part of the study, they recognise and consider the existence and importance of common and divergent views.

They learn about the sources of authority and wisdom that underpin and connect teachings, belief and practices and are able to refer to them in responses. Students will also have the opportunity to develop skills to explain, analyse and evaluate topics, in order to be able to offer reasoned and supported arguments in discussions about key issues.

Four of the following six themes will be studied, dependent upon the students' interest:

Component A: Religious teachings about the nature and purpose of families in the 21st Century (sex, marriage, cohabitation and divorce) - Issues related to the nature and purpose of families, roles of men and women, equality, gender prejudice and discrimination.

Component B: Religion and life - The origins and value of the universe, use and abuse of animals and the environment, sanctity of life and quality of life, abortion and ethical arguments relating to euthanasia, death and the afterlife.

Component C: The existence of God and revelation

- Gods and ultimate reality and ways in which God, Gods or ultimate reality might be understood through revelation, visions, miracles or enlightenment.

Component D: Religion, peace and conflict - Violence, war, pacifism, terrorism, just war theory, holy war; the role of religion and belief in 21st Century conflict and peace making; the concepts of justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Component E: Religion, crime and punishment - Religious views, crime and the causes of crime and punishment, including reasons for crime, the law and opposition to unjust law, aims of punishment and treatment of criminals, forgiveness, the death penalty and ethical arguments relating to the principle of utility and sanctity of life.

Component F: Religion, human rights and social justice - human rights and social justice including prejudice and discrimination regarding women, homosexuals, freedom of religion and expression, racial discrimination and justice, wealth, poverty and exploitation of the law, people trafficking and religion and a responsibility for charity.

This course aims to develop students' analytical skills and to provide a grounding in ethical and philosophical argument, both as a basis for further study in the subject to A Level and as a valuable qualification and support for further study in other Humanities subjects and the Sciences.

Assessment

Students are assessed in two examinations (1 hour 45 minutes each) which are taken at the end of Year 11.

Examination board: AQA

SPANISH

Studying Spanish at GCSE enables students to:

- Communicate when travelling around the world,
- Learn more about the country where the language is spoken, its people and their context from the perspective of a culture that is not the student's own;
- Add an international dimension to GCSE subject choices, which is sought after by many future employers and higher education providers;
- Learn many skills which are useful in a wide range of careers, such as the ability to communicate clearly, being confident about speaking in public and using problem solving strategies; and
- Create greater opportunities to work abroad or for companies in the UK with international links. Many employers look for people who are able to speak a foreign language.

Students are strongly encouraged to continue the language they have studied in Year 9 to GCSE. By

the end of Year 9, students have already covered many of the topics from the GCSE specification and therefore already know a lot of the vocabulary and grammar needed at GCSE level. They build on these topics as well as move onto new ones, whilst further developing their ability to understand and communicate in Spanish.

There are three themes that are divided into different topic areas.

Theme 1: People and lifestyle:

- Identity and relationships with others
- Healthy living and lifestyle
- Education and work

Theme 2: Popular culture:

- Free-time activities
- Customs, festivals and celebrations
- Celebrity culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us:

- Travel and tourism, including places of interest
- Media and technology
- The environment and where people live

Assessment

Students are assessed in listening, speaking, reading and writing, with each skill worth 25% of the final GCSE examination. There are final examinations in all four skills taken at the end of Year 11. The speaking examination is conducted and recorded by each language teacher and then sent to the examination board for marking.

Examination board: AQA

THREE DIMENSIONAL DESIGN

This course is for students with aspirations to become an architect, engineer or designer. 3D Design combines all the elements of Art and Design with exciting and tangible results. It is 100% coursework with no written exam, however students are required to evaluate and reflect on their work throughout the course.

After a term of initial skill-building in Year 10, students continue to develop the formal elements of design (shape, line, texture, tone, colour and form) and combine this with the introduction of more complex workshop processes.

Assessment

Students begin their final project for Component 1 (60% of the final grade) by exploring the needs and wants of those around them. They investigate existing products and the work of other designers both local and well known. Once they have determined their

own individual pathway, students explore different ideas through multimedia prototyping including both digital and physical modelling. By including STEM aspects within their projects, students can design and develop ideas that are both functional and environmentally sustainable. After they have developed their ideas using a range of different techniques, students are free to manufacture their design using all the tools and equipment available within the workshop. Throughout their portfolio, students evaluate their work and progress which allows them to explain and justify decisions through thoughtful insight and reflection.

Component 2 (40% of the final grade) is an externally set assignment. The preparation period follows a similar structure to Component 1, however this culminates in a final assessed 10 hour practical examination where students show an outcome from the work that they have prepared.

This course is recognised as the first steps to a career in the design, creative and engineering industries.

Examination board: AQA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do I need to choose my GCSE options now?

It may seem to be quite early to be thinking about which subjects students would like to study next September. However, a lot of planning needs to take place so that we can build a timetable to accommodate the range of choices students make.

What happens after I've submitted my GCSE options?

Your choices will be cross-referenced with your attainment and our teachers' knowledge of you. If we believe your choices are not in your best interest, your tutor will offer guidance. On the rare occasion that it is not possible to accommodate certain option combinations, Mr Clare (Director of Studies) will have a conversation with you to identify a solution.

We will write to all parents at Easter to confirm your choices.

Can I change my mind about my option choices later?

Yes, students can change their options after the submission of their option choices. However, once they have made their initial choices in February, we will take those choices, devise the option blocks and build the timetable around them. If a student subsequently decides to change their mind about their options, they may find either that the

combination of subjects they wish to study is not possible or that one or more of their subject choices is already full. This would obviously be disappointing, so it is in their best interests to think very carefully and consult as many people as possible now, so that they are as confident as they can be when they fill in the form, that those are the best choices for them and their future.

How will I be graded at the end of the GCSE courses?

All reformed GCSE subjects will be graded on a scale of 9-1 (9 being the highest). This replaces the A*- G grading system.

What should I do if I need help choosing?

We hope that this booklet, together with the time that subject teachers and form tutors spend with students discussing their options, will enable them to make informed, intelligent choices. However, if students need further help, then they should make sure that they ask the relevant staff. These are likely to be subject teachers, form tutors, relevant Heads of Department and Mr Clare (Director of Studies).

I want to keep my university and career options as open as possible. What should I choose?

It's almost impossible to avoid closing some doors at this stage (students cannot, for example, pick up a language for A Level study if they haven't chosen to continue with it at GCSE). The core subjects followed by all students at Embley should, however, help to maintain a satisfactory breadth for many possibilities in the future.



EMBLEY

HAMPSHIRE

Embley, Embley Park, Romsey, Hampshire
SENIOR SCHOOL SO51 6ZE PREP SCHOOL SO51 6ZA
TEL +44 (0)1794 512206

www.embley.org.uk