



Year 9 Options Guidance Booklet Academic Pathway



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The Options Process: Information for Parents

Dear Parent/Carer,

In September 2024, your son or daughter will be starting Key Stage 4 and will begin a two-year programme of study which will lead to a range of nationally recognised qualifications.

This booklet will give you information about the subjects that will make up this two-year programme of study. The separate subject booklet contains information about the different types of qualification which are on offer and the core subjects that all pupils must study.

Parents, pupils and school staff all play a part in choosing options. We advise parents and carers to take time to sit and discuss the information in this booklet with their child to make sure that the most appropriate choices are made.

The Y9 Options Evening in January will allow you to discuss possible Options choices and to meet teachers and course leaders from the option areas; including the vocational courses that take place off the school site.

The key dates and deadlines for the Options process are as follows:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Week beginning Monday 18 December 2023 | <i>Options Booklets issued</i> |
| • Tues 9 January 2024 | <i>Y9 Options Interviews begin</i> |
| • Tues 16 January 2024 (4-6pm) | <i>Y9 Options Evening (more details to follow)</i> |
| • Thurs 01 February 2024 | <i>Deadline to return Options Forms</i> |

We do our best to ensure that each pupil is allocated their choice of options but this depends on the numbers opting for each subject and the availability of teaching staff. *Please note, we are unable to run groups that are too large to teach or too small to be viable (the minimum group size has been set at 15 and the maximum at 25).*

Should any problems arise with the choices made by your son or daughter we will contact you to discuss this and suggest possible solutions.

If at any time you have questions about Key Stage 4 courses, or the options process, please contact us and we will do our best to help you.

Yours sincerely,

Miss K Grapes
Assistant Headteacher

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Advice for Pupils about Option Choices

Why the Academic Pathway?

The Academic Pathway has been designed for pupils who are interested in a combination of humanities, literacy-based and some practical subjects. It recognises the preferred GCSE qualifications for Post-16 and Higher Education progression including Level 3, A-level and University study.

Good information is the key to making successful choices:

- You need to think very carefully about which subjects you enjoy and which ones you are good at.
- You need to get as much information as you can and ask for advice from your parents, teachers and friends.
- You need to think about your future career and your longer-term plans. Use the Careers Hub to help research which subjects are best for your chosen career.
- We hope that everyone will be able to take his or her chosen courses though we cannot, of course, guarantee this.

Please choose subjects because:

- You have thought clearly about everything.
- You have done your research, especially about new subjects and qualifications.
- You know what the subject and assessment process involves.
- You are good at the subject; you like it or have a talent for it.
- You have considered your best way of working (or learning style). Some pupils prefer practical work or work-related learning, some prefer end of course exams, and others prefer regular continuous assessments.

Please do not choose subjects because:

- You like or dislike a teacher.
- Your friends are doing it.
- You think that it will be an easy subject.

The Options Evening on **Tuesday 16 January 2024** will explain the Options process in more detail and help familiarise you with some of the new subjects.

If in doubt, ask for help and support from your subject teachers, your Form Tutor or a member of the pupil support team.

During the Options process you may receive a personal interview with a senior member of staff. Here you will have an opportunity to discuss your future plans and to look at what your current results predict about your future chances in certain subjects.

PLEASE NOTE: All courses, particularly those included in the GCSE and Vocational Options sections are subject to change as a direct result of governmental reforms. In addition all courses are subject to a minimum number for viability; a minimum of 15 students is needed in order for a group to run.

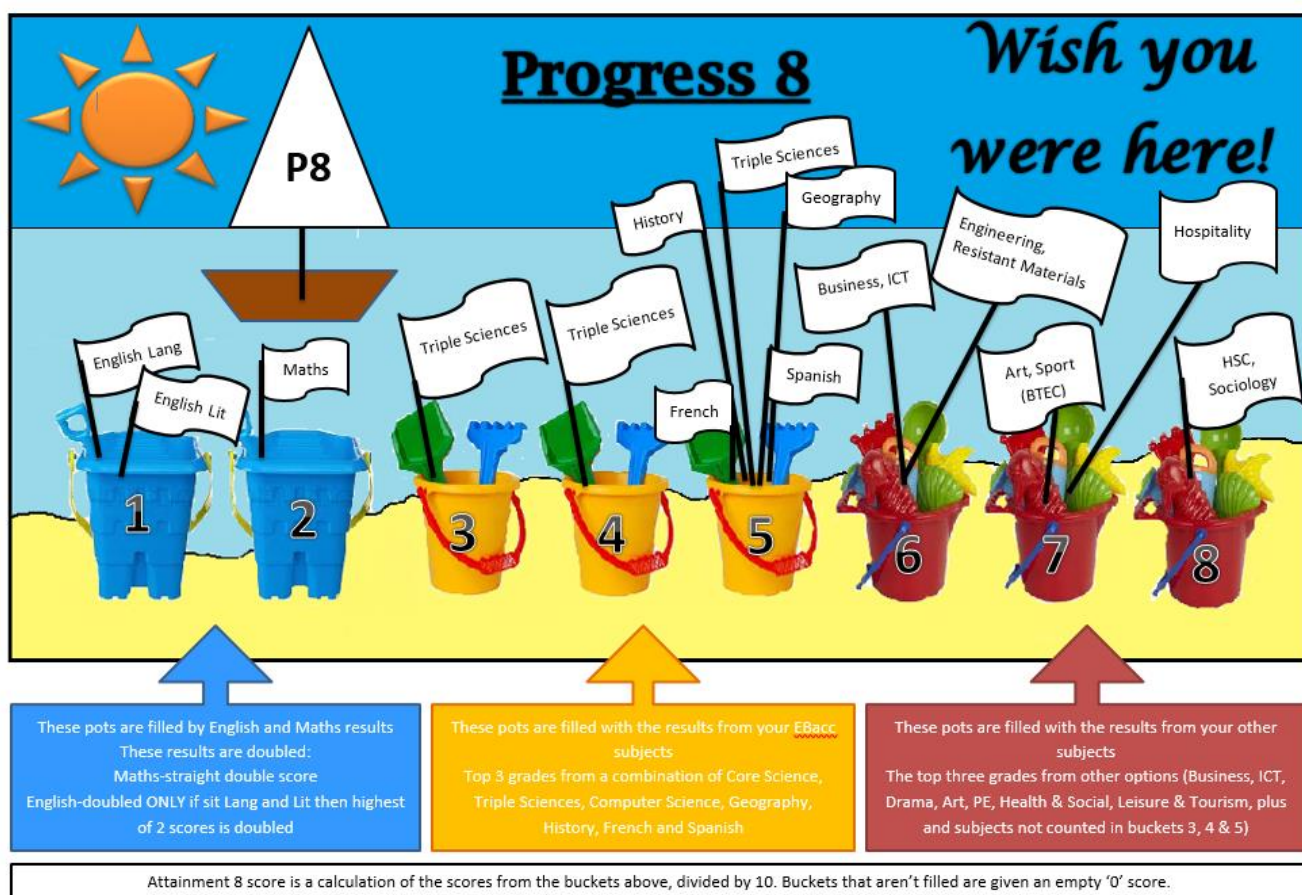
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GCSEs – The New Progress Measure Explained

When your child leaves school in 2026 the old progress measure of 5 A*-C grades including English and maths will no longer be the sole progress measure. A new progress measure, called Progress 8 will be in place as well. Progress 8 will measure the progress students make over their best 8 subjects studied at Key Stage 4. Pupils will leave school with a Progress 8 and Attainment 8 score.

In order to ensure maximum attainment for all of our pupils we have designed our curriculum so that it meets the Government requirements for Progress 8, for which there are 8 'Pots' to fill with 8 individual subjects. All students will therefore study English Language and Literature to fill Pot 1, Maths to fill Pot 2 and Triple Science for Pots 3, 4 and 5. Pots 6, 7 and 8 will then be filled with other subjects including 2 additional option choices as well as qualifications including BTEC Sport and ICT. The lower of the two English grades and 'unused' EBacc qualifications can also fill these pots.

A visual representation of this is given below:



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Compulsory Core Subjects

All pupils on the Academic pathway are required to study the following compulsory core subjects:

- English Language & Literature
- Mathematics
- Chemistry, Biology and Physics
- Core PE
- RE and Citizenship

All students will study Triple Science as part of their core curriculum.

Option Subjects

The table below highlights the range of option choices available for students in addition to the compulsory core subjects.

Pupils should pick ONE choice from Block 1, THREE from Block 2

Choose 1 from Block 1:	Choose 3 from Block 2:
<p><u>GCSEs:</u> Geography History Spanish Computer Science *</p>	<p><u>GCSEs:</u> Art & Design Computer Science* Design Technology Drama Food and Nutrition Geography History Music Sociology Spanish Religious Studies Design Technology Textiles</p> <p><u>BTECs/Vocational:</u> Health & Social Care Engineering Digital Information Technology Enterprise Sport</p>

**In order to choose this option, you must get approval from your ICT teacher first.*

Once you have read the information in the Subject Information booklet and made your choices, please submit the online Options Form by Thursday 01 February 2024.

N.B If you wish to choose both humanities and a language, please see Miss Grapes to be moved on to the EBacc pathway.

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Qualifications and Courses Explained

The qualifications offered at Key Stage 4 will give all young people the opportunity to choose a mix of learning which motivates and challenges them, and which gives them the knowledge, skills and experience they need to succeed in education, work, and life. To achieve this, a variety of qualifications are offered which have different demands in terms of how things are learned and how they are assessed. All qualifications fit into a national framework understood by colleges and employers.

GCSE (General Certificate of Education)

GCSEs generally involve studying the theory of a subject which is assessed through an exam at the end of Year 11. Some GCSEs, however, may be a combination of coursework and practical assessments.

For students beginning their GCSE courses in September 2023 the numerical grading system applies. The table below shows the new numerical grades against old letter grades for comparison.

<u>Previous GCSE Grades</u>	<u>New Equivalent Grade for GCSE</u>
A*	9
	8
A	7
B	6
C	5
	4
D	3
E	2
F	1
G	

BTEC

BTEC qualifications are vocationally related qualifications which cover various work areas. These courses are mainly coursework based but will include some element of external assessment e.g. an on screen test.

BTEC Level 2 qualifications are graded at Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction* which are broadly equivalent to GCSE grades 9-4. However, some pupils may be selected to work towards a BTEC at Level 1, according to their ability.

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Who Can Help Me with My Choices?

There are lots of people who can help you with the decisions you need to make. Your aim at the end of this process is to have chosen a programme of study that includes a variety of subjects relevant to your future aims and aspirations.

Remember to look at subjects that you will enjoy and have the potential to do well in. If you have strong career interests at this stage you will need to research what subjects you will need to enter that career. If you haven't considered careers yet, you will need to make choices that do not limit your career choices later on.

Subject Teachers

Once you have read through this booklet you could talk to the teachers of the subjects you are interested in and use the internet to research the careers and subjects you are interested in. They will be able to give you more specific information about the courses you are interested in. You will find all of these staff at the Options Evening Tuesday 17 January 2023.

Careers Leaders

Mrs Lake and Miss Grapes can help you to find useful sources of information on courses and careers in school.

Careers Advisor

The Careers Advisor in school can give you more details about Post-16 pathways that you may be interested in and advise you on appropriate option choices.

The Careers Hub also includes a wide range of reference material to help you make the right choices.

Post-16 Career Progression

You may or may not have started to consider the career pathways you are interested in. The following information may be helpful if you are interested in planning towards a particular career.

As the competition for Post-16, Sixth Form and University places increases the option choices you make for your GCSEs can influence the options you are able to access later on in education.

The pathway table pulls together combinations of Post-16 subjects that are most sought after for particular university courses (as researched by The Sheffield College). You will find recommended GCSE course options linked to each pathway to help guide you in your selections. The UCAS website also provides useful information regarding career paths and higher education pathways and the subjects required from GCSE and Post-16 level.

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Progression Pathways

The table below highlights some of the recommended subject choices for different career pathways. The recommendations are based on The Sheffield College career guidance. They should be considered in conjunction with research into university and employment routes. Students will be able to gain more knowledge of career routes and relevant subject choices during their options interviews and at Options Evening.

	Progression Pathways	Post-16 Subjects You Need	Other Suggested Subjects	Recommended GCSE and Level 2 BTEC Course Choices
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) (Any students wishing to pursue medical, veterinary or dentistry routes must complete Triple Science)	Engineering	Maths, Physics	Chemistry, Computing, Electronics, Further Maths, Product Design	Triple Science Engineering ICT
	Medicine & Dentistry	Biology, Chemistry	Maths, Physics, Psychology	Triple Science Health and Social Care
	Veterinary	Biology, Chemistry	Maths, Physics, Psychology	Triple Science
	Allied Medical Professions		Biology, Chemistry, Health & Social Care, Philosophy & Ethics, Psychology, Sociology, Sport / Sport & Exercise Science	Triple Science PE Health and Social Care
Business & Legal Professions	Business & Accounts		Accounts, Business, IT, Maths	ICT Business Communications
	Law & Politics		Business, English Language, Govt & Pol, History, Philosophy & Ethics, Psychology, Sociology	History Business Communications
	Retail & Marketing		Accounts, Business, IT, Maths, Psychology	Business Communications ICT
	Events Staging & Management		Business, Electronics, Media, Theatre Studies, Travel and Tourism	Drama/Music Business Art
Professional Studies / Social Sciences	Teaching	Select at least one National Curriculum Subject	Biology, English, Geography, Health & Social Care, History, Maths, Sociology	Health and Social Care Science History Geography PE
	Geography & Environmental	Geography	Biology, Chemistry, Govt & Pol, Product Design, Sociology	Geography Engineering
	Journalism, English & Media	English Language	English Lit, Film Studies, Govt & Pol, History, Media, Photography, Theatre Studies	History Business Communications Drama/Music
	Research		English, Geography, History, Philosophy & Ethics, Sociology	Geography History Health and Social Care ICT
	Psychology, Criminology & Forensics	Chemistry and /or Psychology	Biology, Health & Social Care, Sociology	Triple Science Health and Social Care
Creative Arts & Digital Media	Creative and Performing Arts		Dance, History, English, Film Studies, Media, Textiles, Theatre Studies	Drama/Music Art History
	Creative & Digital Media		Art / Graphics or Photography, English, IT, Media, Textiles	Art ICT

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