



BOOTHAM
SCHOOL

GCSE Curriculum



The GCSE Curriculum 2026

At Bootham, students are encouraged to be adventurous and challenging in their search for knowledge, develop a thirst for learning, enjoy learning for its own sake and continue learning after they leave school.

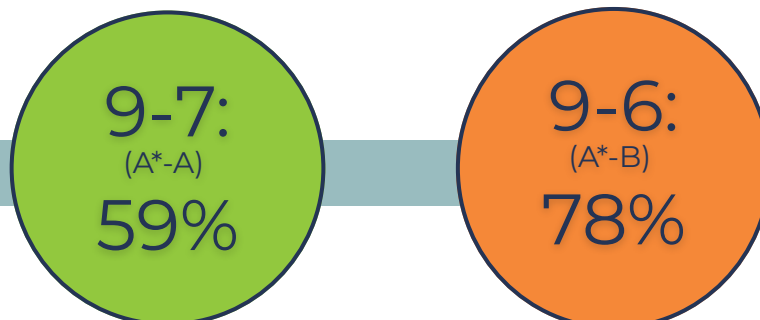
A Broad and Balanced Curriculum

The aim at Bootham during the Senior years is to provide both depth and breadth; students will study their academic subjects alongside a wealth of curricular enrichment opportunities. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, affording students a range of experiences through which they can learn, make progress and be successful. This learning experience is paramount; students achieve highly in their GCSEs as a result of engaging fully with each discipline.

Our students gain qualifications of recognised academic value and rigour and which give them experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, aesthetic and creative exploration; we want them to learn about spiritual, moral and cultural matters. Our aim is that students leaving Bootham will be articulate, confident, grounded, and comfortable with themselves. We aim to develop creative, independent, skilled and collaborative learners who continue to engage with the world through a range of disciplinary approaches.

The academic courses at Bootham broadly follow the National Curriculum (students will, for example, acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills) but the school is free to modify this and does so to produce a well rounded and balanced programme. Being a Quaker school, the care and nurture of the individual is seen as a high priority. This philosophy means that classes are small, classrooms are positive and productive and there are many opportunities to find ways to meet the needs of individuals. It also means that, whilst there is a standard programme of GCSEs, we have a range of options to support our students.

2025 GCSE Results



2025 saw a 100% pass rate across a broad range of subjects - including English Literature, Art, Music, Drama, Computer Science, Chemistry, French, Further Mathematics and Latin - ensuring that every student, whatever their interest, had a solid foundation to build on in College. Bootham's outstanding academic results in 2025 earned the school a place in The Sunday Times Parent Power Guide as one of the 'Top 10 Independent Secondary Schools in the North'.

THE GCSE CURRICULUM

Finding the Right GCSE Programme

Most students have the opportunity to study nine subjects in Lower and Upper Senior (Year 10 and 11). Students follow IGCSE/GCSE courses in English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Science. In addition, options are chosen from Languages, Humanities, and the Creative and Practical subjects. Non-examined PSHE and Physical Education are compulsory.

Of course, all young people are different, and therefore we offer alternatives to our standard nine GCSE programme. For some students, Curriculum Support or EAL lessons are also available as an option instead of a GCSE course, meaning that your child would take seven or eight GCSEs alongside Curriculum Support and EAL, which should be chosen in discussion with the Head of Learning Support and the Head of EAL. There are also a number of ways in which your child can elect to take more than nine GCSEs, which will be discussed with those students already performing at a high level.

We place a great emphasis on meeting the needs of the individual student and to help in this, we offer a broad choice of options, so that their academic programme can be closely tailored to their needs, interests and abilities. However, we must recognise that it may be impossible to achieve the programme that everyone would ideally like. We ask you to let us know which subject combination you would prefer, but also to accept that we may have to recommend an alteration in some programmes when the choices and their implications for timetabling are worked through.

Students will be asked to make their choices from the Option Blocks on page 10 of this booklet. In addition to the core subjects; these choices should include at least one subject from each of the 'Creative and Practical', 'Humanities' and 'Languages' categories below:

Core Subjects:		
• English Language • English Literature • Mathematics • Science (Dual Award or Accelerated Triple Science)		
Creative and Practical: • Art • Computer Science • Design & Technology • Drama • Music	Humanities: • Classical Civilisation • Geography • History • Theology & Philosophy	Languages: • French • German • Latin • Spanish

The Bootham Challenge

At Bootham, learning does not just take place in the classroom in preparation for exams. Alongside lessons students choose extracurricular activities from a wide and varied programme. A full sample programme is available on the website, but they include sports, music, drama, art, cooking, volunteering and fantastic opportunities that are hard to categorise such as 'Just Dance', 'Dungeons and Dragons' and 'Bikes in Need'!

All these activities and anything students do outside school count towards their Bootham Challenge Gold Award. To achieve the award students need to collect credits across at least six of the following categories: Physical, Cultural, Creative, Skills, Volunteering and Service, Global Citizenship and Leadership.

Physical Education

Physical Education is a compulsory part of the curriculum throughout the School. During Lower Senior we hope to refine and consolidate the work covered in the foundation years and then give students the opportunity to study activities in greater depth. Much of our work in Lower Senior is based on team games and we organise a full and varied fixture list in a wide variety of team games including: Athletics, Basketball, Cricket, Football, Netball, Rounders, Swimming, and Tennis. We also include a fitness element to the programme using our own fitness suite which our older students are able to make use of in their free time.

We hope that our students will develop an understanding of the spirit and the rules of the games we play as well as engendering a competitive approach. We also wish to encourage a positive attitude to physical activity and a life long desire to enjoy an active and healthy lifestyle.

In Upper Senior (Year 11) students choose from a list of options which include team games and other activities such as Badminton, Fitness and Swimming. It is hoped that those who have already represented the school in a team game will continue to do so. Whatever their choice, we expect all students will show a determination to work hard, a commitment to support their chosen activity and a desire to be fit and healthy. All our activities are well staffed and our teams competitive and highly motivated.

Personal, Social and Health Education

PSHE is led by the Head of Wellbeing, and teaching and pastoral staff and is taught in groups as part of the timetabled curriculum. During this time, they explore three major themes across the course of each year: Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Sex Education and Living in the Wider World (which includes planning for the future and Careers Education). Our aim in all areas of PSHE is to help our young people to fulfil their potential, navigate their time at school in ways that are happy and healthy, and flourish as adults. We equip our maturing students to make considered choices so that they can respond to the opportunities of today's society while managing the risks. PSHE education is a subject through which students develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to keep themselves healthy, safe and prepared for life and work. As part of this they will learn about their own personal values and the impact that their decisions might have on their health, their wellbeing, their society and the wider world.

THE GCSE CURRICULUM

Careers

Careers is an integral part of the PSHE and 'Let Your Life Speak' curricula. In Lower Senior (Year 10) there are taught lessons as part of each programme. This continues in Upper Senior (Year 11) in PSHE. These lessons will enable students to plan for their futures, identify their skills and ambitions, prepare for job applications and the world of work, and understand employment law. Students will also explore the challenges and rewards of working in a variety of sectors and understand what qualifications and experiences will help them to move towards the areas of work that they wish to pursue. As part of this students will be helped to understand different types of work and to identify the range of experiences that may include study or paid and voluntary work in this country and abroad. The lessons deal with topics such as decision making, problem solving, communication, teamwork, research, leadership and presentation skills. The subject is non-examined.

Service and Outreach

We are keen for all students within school to have the opportunity to improve their community through direct involvement in voluntary service. Service plays an integral part of the activities programme, with our Worldshapers group working on humanitarian and charity projects, and our BEAST team actioning sustainability work in school.

Students can sign up for a variety of additional volunteering opportunities with the support of our Head of Social Action, including visiting local care homes, fundraising for charity and working with children in primary schools across the city. They may also choose to use this for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Our annual Volunteering Fair takes place every June and we invite organisations from across the voluntary sector who meet with students face-to-face and showcase their opportunities.

Let Your Life Speak

All students take part in the 'Let Your Life Speak' programme during Lower Senior. This course, which takes place in one lesson a week, focuses on the Quaker value of making a positive impact on the world. Students are asked: if your life could speak, what would you like it to say about you? The course consists of a series of talks about Quaker or Quaker-inspired organisations and developments, taster sessions in Psychology, Business and Economics and Politics, careers and study skills sessions, social action work, and culminates in a student led project, based on what they have learned over the course of the year.

ISSP

There are opportunities for students in Lower Senior to participate in ISSP courses, run in collaboration with state and independent schools across York. Subjects on offer vary from year to year and further information will be shared in due course.



HEADS OF YEAR

For Lower and Upper Senior



Andy Quarrell

Current Head of
Lower Senior

Kathryn Buchard

Current Head of
Upper Senior



Layla, Lower Senior

What is your favourite thing about studying GCSEs at Bootham?

There is lots of support from teachers in classes to help me understand the content I'm learning. Teachers are more than happy to go back over specifics when I need to but they also push me to be an independent thinker in my subjects.

What's different about the move to GCSEs?

I love specialising in the subjects that I am most interested in. For example, in Music I am learning about composing for the course content but it means I can compose my own pieces as well - my studies feel tailored to the things I enjoy most.

Tell us about the 'Let Your Life Speak' programme.

So far we've had the opportunity to listen to talks from external organisations such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and The Retreat, and we've also been able to have a taster of other subjects we might like to study at A Level such as, Politics, Business and Psychology.

How is Bootham helping to prepare you for further study after your GCSEs?

There are a range of different lunchtime and afterschool support sessions for different subjects that my friends and I attend. This means we have access to support in smaller groups if there are certain areas we'd like to improve on.



SUBJECT CHOICES

"There is a well-planned and structured curriculum throughout the school, which provides pupils with a wide variety of learning opportunities across the required subject areas. Additional programmes of study included in the curriculum are planned to provide pupils with skills for life beyond the school."

~ ISI Inspection Report, 2025.

GCSE Option Blocks

Students will usually study nine GCSEs. However, as explained earlier in this booklet, there are a number of pathways available to support each individual student. These can be discussed at option choice time. Students will study the core subjects (which equates to four GCSEs) and **five** further subjects (choosing at least one subject from each of the Creative and Practical', 'Humanities' and 'Languages' categories).

Block A	Block B	Blocks C & D	Block E	Block F	Block G	Block H
Maths	EAL	Triple Science	Curriculum Support	Classical Civilisation	Art	Geography
	English	Dual Science	Latin	Geography	Computer Science	History
			French	History	Design & Technology	Art
			German	Theology & Philosophy	Theology & Philosophy	Design & Technology
			Spanish	Music	Spanish	Drama

If there is a particular combination of subjects that is not available via the option blocks, please let us know via the Options form. Where practical, we will endeavour to meet students preferences. However, we ask that you understand that not every combination of subjects will be possible.

How to Choose Your Subjects

There are some important factors to consider. Students should ask themselves:

- Which subjects do I enjoy?
- Which subjects am I interested in?
- Which subjects am I good at?
- What do I need to take for A Levels?
- What do I need for my career?
- Is there a balance of coursework and exams?

Students are the best judges of some of these questions. Subject teachers will expect to be asked about GCSE choices but, they will not exert any pressure for a student to take a particular subject.

Tutors, the Head of Year, the Deputy Head (Academic), and Careers and PSHE departments should be asked for advice concerning A Levels, career entry and constructing a balanced programme. Once started on their chosen GCSE subjects, students are expected to complete the course through to the GCSE examination.

On the standard programme, most students will take Dual Award Science. This is excellent preparation for a range of future choices, including A Level Sciences. Some students will be invited to join the Triple Science course. This is an accelerated course whereby all three sciences are taught in two option blocks plus two additional periods. Triple Science students have two fewer PE lessons each fortnight.

A Level linguists would benefit from having taken two GCSE languages, and must have studied their A Level language of choice at GCSE.

Please note that it is especially important not to choose a subject simply because of the teacher. Staffing will not be known until after the options are chosen. If you have any questions, particularly regarding the specific needs of your child, please contact the Deputy Head (Academic).

Decision Timetable

The timetable for making decisions concerning GCSE options involves an Options Morning, class discussions and tutor interviews from December:

- Thursday 8th January: Tutors launch option choice discussions - students will be given a copy of the GCSE Curriculum booklet during Tutor Time.
- Saturday 10th January: GCSE Options Morning.
- Monday 12th - Friday 16th January: Teachers to discuss GCSE courses as part of lessons.
- Friday 6th February: Final option choices submitted via an online form.

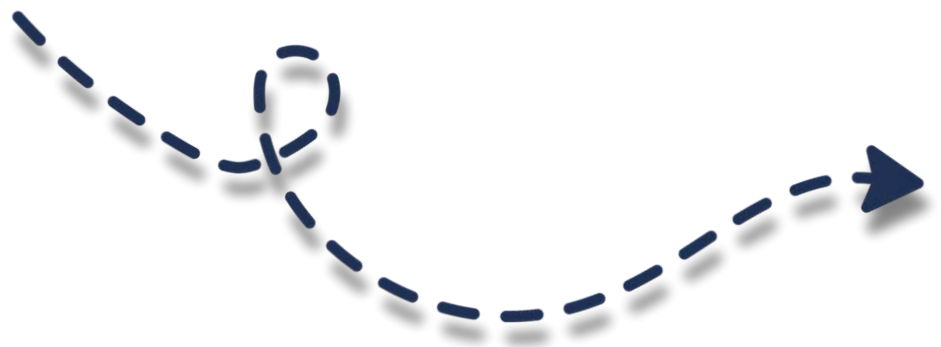
It may be possible to make changes after choices have been submitted, but this depends on option block structure and size of classes.

Students joining Bootham at the start of their GCSEs will receive information about subject choices and the above dates via the Admissions Team.

Subject Information

GCSE Subjects:

- English Language and Literature
- Mathematics
- Science (Dual Award)
- Science (Accelerated Triple)
- Art
- Computer Science
- Design & Technology
- Drama
- Music
- Classical Civilisation
- Geography
- History
- Theology & Philosophy
- French
- German
- Spanish
- Latin



Bootham follows the CIE IGCSE specification for English Language and the Edexcel IGCSE for English Literature.

Course Content

IGCSE English Language (CIE)

This course allows students to demonstrate their ability to use English in real life contexts, encouraging them to develop their investigative, inferential, critical and analytical skills in responding to and producing a range of media and non-literary texts. During the course, students will explore and apply the structural and linguistic features of non-literary texts as varied as newspaper reports, magazine articles, formal reports, journals, letters and interviews, as well as exploring and producing different examples of narrative and descriptive writing. Students study two components:

Paper 1: Reading (examined unit) (50%)

Coursework: Directed Writing and Composition (50%)

IGCSE English Literature (Edexcel)

This course requires students to explore texts from a personal perspective, offering an experience of both modern literature and the literary heritage in a variety of prose, drama and poetry. In addition to developing a greater appreciation of the techniques employed by writers to create meaning, students are encouraged to gain a deeper understanding of the social, historical and cultural contexts in which the texts were written and received. Students study two units:

Paper 1: Poetry and Modern Prose (closed text exam): 2 hours (60%)

- Section A: Unseen Poetry
- Section B: Anthology Poetry
- Section C: Of mice and Men

Coursework: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage texts: two essays (40%)

Students will submit two assignments: One will be in response to a Modern Drama text, most likely 'An Inspector Calls' by J. B. Priestley. The second assignment will be in response to a Literary Heritage text, most likely 'Romeo and Juliet' by William Shakespeare. Each assignment needs to be about 800 words.



Mathematics is part of the core curriculum and is therefore studied by every student until the end of Upper Senior (Year 11). The Mathematics IGCSE gives every student the opportunity to experience Mathematics as both a tool as well as a stimulating and worthwhile discipline in its own right. We deliver the Edexcel IGCSE (Specification A) (4MAO).

Tiers of Entry

The new IGCSE is available at Higher Tier (grades 9 to 4) and Foundation (grades 5 to 1). We envisage entering the majority of students for the Higher Tier, although there is the option to sit the Foundation Level if this would allow the student to feel more confident about securing his or her grade. The final decision will be made during the course, either in the Lower Senior year or after the Upper Senior mock exams, in consultation with the student, parents and Mathematics teacher.

Examination

The exams are broken down into two papers, each two hours long. The total number of marks for each paper is 100. Each paper will assess the full range of targeted grades. There is no coursework in IGCSE Mathematics.

Enrichment

The Mathematics department offers a wide array of enrichment to complement the GCSE programme. Students who wish to, may sit the Intermediate Mathematics Challenge organised by the UK Maths Trust and we also host and enter a team into the Lower Senior (Year 10) Team Maths Challenge.

Level 2 Further Maths

Alongside the IGCSE, we currently offer AQA's Further Maths GCSE to some students. This course builds on the subject content of the IGCSE as well as introducing new concepts that are very useful for further mathematical or related study. Students who have taken this course feel that it better prepares them for the higher end IGCSE questions as well as for A Level.

The assessment for Further Maths comprises of two exams, usually at the very end of the exam programme.

DUAL AWARD SCIENCE (AQA)

AQA Combined Science (Dual Award) is designed to give every student the chance to explore science in a meaningful and engaging way. It covers the core content of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, including practical experiments, problem-solving, and scientific thinking. Students complete one course that awards two GCSEs, providing a solid foundation for further study in science or related subjects. This course will be taught by separate specialist Biology, Chemistry and Physics teachers over 10 periods a fortnight.

Course Content

Biology

Biology is the study of life, from cells and organs to ecosystems. You will learn how humans affect the environment, how living things grow and adapt, and how biology connects to real-world issues. Skills you will develop: carrying out experiments, analysing data, testing hypotheses, and linking science to everyday life.

Chemistry

Chemistry helps explain how substances interact and change, from fuels and materials to chemical reactions. You'll explore real-world problems like pollution, energy, and sustainability. Skills you will develop: logical thinking, practical investigation, problem-solving, and using maths in science

Physics

Physics explores forces, energy, electricity, waves, and the universe. You will learn how things work and develop skills to solve complex problems and think critically. Skills you'll develop: analytical thinking, mathematical reasoning, experimentation, and applying science to technology.

Benefits of Studying Combined Science:

- Covers all the core topics from Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.
- Involves practical experiments that develop real scientific skills.
- Builds critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills useful in all subjects.
- Great preparation for A Level Sciences or further study in STEM fields.
- Offers a strong foundation for future careers in medicine, engineering, environmental science, technology, and more.



Triple Science follows the same core topics as the AQA Combined Science (Dual Award) course but takes your learning further and deeper. You will study Biology, Chemistry and Physics as three separate GCSEs, gaining more detail, extra practical work, and a stronger foundation for A Levels. It's perfect for students who enjoy science, like a challenge, and are curious about how the world works. This course will be taught by separate specialist Biology, Chemistry and Physics teachers over 12 periods a fortnight. The Accelerated Triple science course is aimed at students with strong academic interest and ability across all three sciences.

Course Content

Biology

Biology is all about living things - how they function, grow and interact with their environment. You'll explore the human body, genetics, health, and the environment, just like in Dual Award Science, but with extra topics such as the brain, biotechnology and ecosystems in more detail. Skills you will develop include forming hypotheses, carrying out experiments, analysing data and drawing scientific conclusions. Future pathways may include A Level Biology, Medicine, Nursing, Veterinary Science, Marine Biology, Psychology and Environmental Science.

Chemistry

Chemistry explains what everything is made of and how substances interact. You will cover the same key ideas as in the Dual Award - atomic structure, bonding, reactions and energy changes - but with additional topics like chemical analysis, fuel cells and further organic chemistry. Skills you will develop include problem-solving, logical thinking and practical investigation.

Future pathways may include A Level Chemistry, Forensics, Engineering, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Environmental Science.

Physics

Physics explores the forces and laws that shape the universe. You will study topics like energy, forces, waves, and electricity - plus extra content such as space physics and more advanced applications of motion and forces. Skills you will develop include analytical thinking, mathematical reasoning and data interpretation. Future pathways may include A Level Physics, Engineering, Computer Science, Architecture and Finance

Benefits of Studying Accelerated Triple Science:

- Covers all AQA Combined Science topics plus additional content in every subject.
- Leads to three separate GCSEs (Biology, Chemistry and Physics).
- Involves more practical experiments, helping you develop real scientific skills.
- Excellent preparation for A Level Sciences and future STEM careers.
- Builds confidence, curiosity and critical thinking - skills useful for any future path.

ART AND DESIGN (EDEXCEL)

GCSE Art and Design is an extremely rewarding course of study for those with a genuine enthusiasm for expressing themselves and communicating ideas in visual form. The aim of the course is to encourage creativity, expand awareness of visual art and develop a language which deals with the experience of both inner and outer worlds. The skills and abilities taught in GCSE Art are an important preparation for any future study of A Level Art as well as a range of degree subjects including Fine Art, Illustration, Fashion, Textile Design, Interior Design, Animation, Architecture and many others.

What Kind of Work Will I Make?

The Senior years are the commencement of a more reflective and sustained process of creative investigation. The principles of playful experimentation and individuality remain central to the experience of Senior students. In addition, there is also a need to practise a more progressive, sequential development of ideas. In this way, students are encouraged to view their creative output as part of a continual personal project.

It is expected that an increased formal understanding of the subject, together with thorough critical study of the work of relevant artists, will lead to a unique, articulate body of work for assessment. Teaching is flexible to allow students to find their own areas of strength within the subject and therefore fulfil their personal artistic aims through the work they create. For example, some students may prefer to specialize in drawing and painting, whilst others may find they have more of an affinity with photography or three-dimensional work. The curriculum is structured to offer support for this diverse range of possibilities.

Course Content

Lower Senior students follow a programme of learning that introduces them to the processes of observation, research, analysis, experimentation and development. During the year, students compile a portfolio of increasingly personal work that provides a platform for Component 1 of the GCSE submission.

Upper Senior students are usually issued with a new theme at the start of the autumn term to guide the development of their project. They then build upon the most successful moments from their Lower Senior portfolio to create a highly individual and personal project that culminates in a major piece of work, made during the mock exam in January. The absolute deadline for Component 1 is not until after Easter, allowing for some leeway in the revision and remedial improvement of work.

The project brief for Component 2 is issued to students at the beginning of February, with a period of ten hours controlled study taking place around the beginning of the summer term. During the final ten hour period students are required to create a major outcome stemming from their preceding research and development without aid or intervention from their teachers.

Component 1: Personal Portfolio (60%)

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40%)

Computer Science is a lot more than just programming or using a computer! In this course you will study both the theory and the practicalities of how computers work. You will develop problem solving skills that will enable you to take a real life problem and create a computerised solution.

Component 1: Computer Systems. This component will focus on the hardware and software that makes up a computer system with extra enhancements of looking at: networks, what malware are and how to defend against it, the ethics around computer science, software development life cycles, and much more. Unit 1.2 does require mathematical skills within lessons and the exam.

Component 2: Computational Thinking, Algorithms, and Programming. This component looks at the practical side of computer science where you have the opportunity to create programs and develop an understanding of different types of programming language and how they are translated. In this unit you will look at; how to think like a programmer in industry, program a coded solution to given briefs, and how to perform the common algorithms such as the bubble sort and merge sort. Unit 2.4 requires mathematical skills in lessons and the exam.

Course Content

Unit	Assessment
Component 1: Computer Systems 1.1 Systems Architecture 1.2 Memory and Storage 1.3 Computer networks, connections, and protocols 1.4 Network Security 1.5 Systems Software 1.6 Ethical, Legal, Moral, Cultural, and Environmental issues	Computer Systems 80 Marks 1h 30mins Non-calculator 50% of GCSE
Component 2: Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming 2.1 Algorithms 2.2 Programming Fundamentals 2.3 Producing Robust Programs 2.4 Boolean Logic 2.5 Translators and Facilities of Language	Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming 80 Marks 1h 30mins Non-calculator 50% of GCSE

Formal Requirement: Practical Programming

You will be given the opportunity to solve a larger in size programming task to help consolidate learning from component 2 of the GCSE.

Product Design

This course involves designing and making, using a range of materials to solve design problems. Design and Technology is a multi-faceted subject and covers a variety of disciplines. It is an exciting field of study which has a great deal to offer students as manufacturers, consumers and citizens. Students at Bootham have gone on to have careers in a wide range of areas such as Engineering, Product Design, Interior Design and Architecture.

The Russell Group universities recommend Design and Technology as a “useful advanced level” qualification for careers such as Architecture, Art and Design, General Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science.

Course Content

Non-exam assessment (50% of the GCSE):

A Design and Make challenge (30–35 hours)

The contextual challenges are released annually by the examination board on 1st June in Lower Senior. Students choose one challenge. The challenge is split into four sections:

- Investigating
- Designing
- Making
- Analysing and Evaluating

Students will produce a working prototype and a portfolio of evidence (max 20 pages). Work will be marked by teachers and moderated by AQA.

Written exam: 2 hours (50% of the GCSE):

Topics will include:

- New and emerging technologies
- Energy storage and generation
- Modern and smart materials
- Mechanical devices
- Forces and stresses
- Materials and their working properties
- Ecological and social footprints

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (AQA) CONT...

Students will be required to demonstrate the use of Maths and Science in their work. This will include:

- Numerical computations
- Data handling
- Graphs
- Geometry and trigonometry
- Use of scientific vocabulary

The written paper will be split into three sections:

Section A

Core technical principles (20 marks): a mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions assessing a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding.

Section B

Specialist technical principles (30 marks): several short answer questions (2–5 marks) and one extended response to assess a more in-depth knowledge of technical principles.

Section C

Designing and making principles (50 marks): a mixture of short answer and extended response questions including a 12 mark design question.



DRAMA (OCR)

GCSE Drama is an exciting course that encourages students to develop their skills in theatre, and to use these skills to help communicate and express ideas.

The emphasis in Drama is on practical work (used to explore themes, issues and ideas found in both the students' own work and in the work of other directors, playwrights and theatre companies). Students develop a range of performance and technical design skills. Trips are organised to theatres and performances around the country. Students are required to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the department to see theatrical productions; these visits form the basis of discussion, written evaluations and exercises. Experiencing live theatre is also important for its ability to influence and shape the students' own practical performances.

Drama as a subject is intended not only for aspiring actors, directors and designers but for anyone interested in theatre and who has imagination, intelligence and a sense of humour. The subject demands self-discipline, as it involves working independently of others and as part of a team – students should be prepared for anything!

Course Content

The course (OCR) consists of the following components:

Component 1/2: Devising Drama (30%)

Students will research and explore a stimulus, work collaboratively and create their own devised drama.

This is a practical component where students will practically explore a chosen theatre practitioner which will influence their own practical ideas for an original devised performance, inspired by a stimulus provided by the exam board.

Students will be required to widely research their chosen stimulus to help shape and form their original performance ideas. They will have to work collaboratively with others to create an ensemble performance for a practical performance exam which will take place at the end of the first year of the course.

Students will also create a devising portfolio which will track the full devising process. This will include initial research, the improvements made during the rehearsal process and final evaluation.

This component is internally assessed and moderated by OCR.

Component 3: Presenting and Performing Texts (30%)

Students develop and apply theatrical skills in acting or design by presenting a showcase of two extracts from a performance text.

This is a practical component where students will practically explore and analyse the characters and plot of a selected performance text. They will need to work collaboratively in a group to explore context and playwright intentions to enable them to create their own artistic vision of two extracts from that performance text.

Students will practically study the full performance text before creating a fully realised performance of two extracts for their practical exam.

The component is externally assessed by a visiting examiner from OCR.

Component 4: Performance & Response (40%)

Students will explore practically a performance text to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of Drama. Students will analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance. The written exam in Drama will take place at the end of the course. The exam is separated into two sections.

- Section A - Study of a set text

Students will practically explore the plot, context, genre and characters of a performance text. Students will be required to understand how a production of their set text would be put on from the perspective of a range of theatre makers. Students will need to know how a range of scenes could be performed from the perspective of an actor, director, designer and what effects practical decisions would have on the audience.

- Section B - Live Theatre Evaluation

All students will see a range of Live Theatre over the duration of the course. As a class we will select one theatre production we have seen and learn to respond to an essay question where students will be required to critically evaluate all elements that bring together a live piece of theatre.

Although assessed as a written exam, the preparation for this component remains very practical.



MUSIC (EDEXCEL)

GCSE Music consists of one externally examined paper and two non-examined assessments. Students must submit their non-examined assessments and complete the exam in May/June in any single year.

Course Content

Component 1: Performing (30%)

Content overview

- Solo performing
- Ensemble performing

Assessment overview

- Students perform one solo and one ensemble for at least four minutes' combined duration.
- Solo performance: this must be of at least one minute in duration, and may comprise one or more pieces.
- Ensemble performance: this must be of at least one minute in duration, and may comprise one or more pieces.
- Internally marked and externally moderated.

Component 2: Composing (30%)

Content overview

- Developing musical ideas.
- Compositional techniques and strategies.
- Ensuring technical control and coherence.
- Methods of notating composition scores.

Assessment overview

- Students compose two compositions, of at least three minutes' combined duration.
- One composition to a brief set by Edexcel, of at least one minute in duration.
- One free composition set by the student, of at least one minute in duration.
- Internally marked and externally moderated.

Component 3: Appraising (40%)

Content overview

- Musical elements, musical contexts and musical language.
- Areas of study: Instrumental Music (1700-1820); Vocal Music; Music for Stage and Screen; Fusions.

Assessment overview

- Written examination of 1 hour 45 minutes.

The ability to read staff notation is desirable. The ability to play an instrument is essential. Pupils should be Grade 3 or above at the start of the course.

GCSE Music is supported by the wider musical life of the school, and pupils are expected to participate where appropriate – be it orchestra or rock band, flute group or a chamber ensemble, etc. All pupils are expected to sing in Senior Choir. In addition to learning performance craft, exploring music through the voice exposes pupils to a wide range of repertoire which, in turn, informs their own compositions. Aural skills are also an essential part of GCSE Music, and choral music is widely regarded as the best vehicle to develop inner hearing.



CLASSICAL CIVILISATION (OCR)

For those with a love of history, mythology, and stories that have shaped the world we live in, Classical Civilisation is a brilliant subject choice. If you'd like to journey into the fascinating and sometimes outrageous world of the ancient Greeks and Romans, this is the subject for you.

You'll explore big questions such as:

- What does it mean to worship gods with superhuman powers but all-too-human flaws?
- Why did great empires trace their origins back to mythical heroes and monsters?
- What were the sights, sounds, and smells of a bustling Roman city?
- How much fun would a Roman funeral club really be?
- Where would you have been allowed to sit in the Colosseum?

Studying Classical Civilisation combines the best of English and History. You'll read ancient literature in translation, examine art and artefacts, and analyse the myths, politics, and daily lives of people who lived thousands of years ago, but whose ideas still shape our world today. Much of the course is taught through visual material, offering a vivid and hands-on insight into the ancient world. It also provides an excellent introduction to Ancient History and Archaeology.

We have a long and successful tradition of teaching this subject at A Level, and many of our students go on to study Classics and related disciplines at university. Graduates in Classical subjects are among the most employable in the arts, thanks to their strong analytical, communication and critical-thinking skills.

The course is divided into two components, both assessed by written examination at the end of Upper Senior.

Component 1	Component 2
Thematic study which involves a comparative study of ancient Greece and Rome and combines literary and visual sources. Topic of study: Myth and Religion including gods, temples, festivals, heroes like Hercules and Theseus, death and burial, the underworld.	Literature and Culture which involves an in-depth cultural study and the reading of related literature. Topic of study: Roman City Life including Roman houses and flats, Gladiators, Chariot racing, slavery, dinner parties.

In the exams, students will answer comprehension and essay questions on ancient source material studied throughout the course. You'll learn to interpret and evaluate a wide range of evidence and to present your own thoughtful arguments with clarity and confidence.

After the GCSE, we have a long and successful tradition of teaching this subject at A Level, and many of our students go on to study Classics and related disciplines at university. Graduates in Classical subjects are among the most employable in the arts, thanks to their strong analytical, communication and critical-thinking skills.

GEOGRAPHY (AQA)

The study of Geography promotes better understanding of not only how the Earth has evolved, but also the way in which people interact with their environment, so that you will develop more fully "a sense of place". It helps you form a view of the world, and gives you the information to understand what is happening in other countries around the globe.

Geography also gives insights into other ways of life. As people effect change on their surroundings - through pollution caused by over-use of the car, for example - Geography can foster an awareness of and respect for the environment. The course also has a moral element, as it promotes a better understanding of how social injustice occurs and the policies needed to improve matters.

Geography requires an even balance between literacy and numeracy and should also make the connections which help you to better understand other subjects. ICT, map work and field-work are all needed for the Geographical Applications exam. All these skills are transferable and will serve you well in the world of employment way beyond your school life at Bootham.

There will be a field trip to the Lake District in the summer term of Lower Senior.

Course Content

Living with the physical environment:

- **Section A:** The Challenge of Natural Hazards includes tectonic hazards, tropical storms and extreme weather in the UK and climate change.
- **Section B:** Physical Landscapes in the UK - includes rivers and glaciation.
- **Section C:** The Living World includes ecosystems, tropical rainforests and cold environments.

Challenges to the human environment:

- **Section A:** Urban Issues and Challenges.
- **Section B:** The Changing Economic World.
- **Section C:** The Challenge of Resource Management, including a focus on food.

Geographic applications:

- **Section A:** Issue evaluation.
- **Section B:** Fieldwork.

Assessments

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment - The Challenge of Natural Hazards, Physical Landscapes in the UK, the Living World and Geographical Skills.

How it's Assessed: Written exam - 1 hour 30 minutes - 88 marks (including 3 marks for spelling, punctuation, grammar and specialist terminology). 35% of the GCSE.

- Section A: answer all questions (33 marks)
- Section B: answer all questions (25 marks)
- Section C: answer 2 questions from questions 3, 4 or 5 (30 marks)
- Question types: multiple choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose.

Paper 2: Challenges in the Human Environment - Urban Issues and Challenges. The Changing Economic World. The Challenge of Resource Management. Geographical Skills.

How it's Assessed: Written exam 1 hour 30 minutes - 88 marks (including 3 marks for spelling, punctuation, grammar and specialist terminology). 35% of the GCSE.

- Section A: answer all questions (33 marks)
- Section B: answer all questions (30 marks)
- Section C: answer question 3 and one from questions 4, 5 or 6 (25 marks)
- Question types: multiple choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose.

Paper 3: Geographical Applications - Issue evaluation. Fieldwork. Geographical Skills.

How it's assessed: Written exam 1 hour 30 minutes - 76 marks (including 6 marks for spelling, punctuation, grammar and specialist terminology). 30% of the GCSE. Pre-release resources made available from late March in the year of the exam.

- Section A: answer all questions (37 marks)
- Section B: answer all questions (39 marks)
- Question types: multiple choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose.

Relevance for Your Future

Interests of those following Geography courses remain many and varied. Recent career paths of Bootham Old Scholars with geographical training include:

- Key roles in charities like Oxfam
- Agriculture
- Careers in IT/Business
- Tourism/Financial Services
- Management Consultancy
- Journalism
- Estate Agency/Surveying/Housing and Planning
- Travel Writing/Reporting/Photography



HISTORY (CIE)

History is both an enjoyable and exciting option. Students will develop critical skills which are recognised and valued in the world of work; these include analysing different types of sources, distinguishing between fact and opinion, debating and developing coherent arguments based on evidence. History is interesting in its own right, but it also allows students to develop a more balanced sense of their place in the wider world. Studying different cultures and individuals encourages students to think critically, to be more tolerant and thoughtful. An ability to write fluent English is required; however, anyone with an interest in History should find the course fulfilling and rewarding.

Course Content

Depth Study: United States of America, 1919 - 1941:

America between the wars was a period of economic boom and bust, flappers, organised crime, racism and depression. This course looks at the development of modern America, how and why it was brought to a halt by the Wall Street Crash and how the government tried to solve these problems. Students will also study the influence of gangsters, racist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and the rise of Hollywood.

International Relations since 1919:

The course begins by looking at the nature of the Treaty of Versailles following the First World War, asking whether it was fair to Germany, before moving on to look at the role of the League of Nations, the forerunner of the United Nations, and why international peace had collapsed by 1939. Students will then study who was to blame for the Cold War which meant that, for almost 50 years, the world feared a Third World War. Students analyse how effectively the USA contained the spread of Communism, through looking at events such as the Cuban Missiles Crisis and the Vietnam War, together with the reasons for the rise and fall of the USSR's control of Eastern Europe from 1948-1989.

Coursework: Russia, 1905 - 1941:

In 1917 Tsarist Russia was engulfed in revolution and the ruling Romanov family was replaced by a committed group of revolutionaries who then set out to transform Russia into a communist utopia. Students will look at how and why Tsarist Russia collapsed, the nature of the Bolshevik takeover and how Stalin transformed the country through his rule of terror. Students produce an extended piece of writing of up to 2,000 words.

Assessment

- **Unit 1:** International Relations since 1919 & Depth Study USA (40%)
- **Unit 2:** International Relations since 1919 (30%)
- **Coursework (2000 words):** Russia, 1905 - 1941 (30%)

THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY (IGCSE)

Exploring the World Through Philosophy, Ethics and Theology

What does it mean to live well in a global community? How do we decide what is right in a world of competing values and beliefs? Can one person really make a difference? These are the kinds of questions at the heart of Theology and Philosophy - a course that encourages students to explore the world's most pressing issues through philosophical, ethical and theological lenses. In an age of globalisation, digital communication and cultural diversity, it has never been more important for young people to learn not what to think, but how to think.

As the philosopher Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Students are challenged to examine not only their own assumptions, but also those of others - engaging with the beliefs, worldviews and moral systems that shape societies across the globe. They learn to approach global issues critically and compassionately, using reason, reflection and evidence to reach balanced conclusions.

Why Study Theology & Philosophy?

Theology & Philosophy invites students to explore how humanity makes sense of the world - through science, philosophy, religion and culture - and to understand how these perspectives interact, clash and combine. It encourages curiosity, empathy and intellectual independence. Students will engage with challenging questions such as:

- Is progress always a good thing?
- What responsibilities do humans have towards the planet?
- Are human rights universal or culturally relative?
- Can faith and reason work together for the common good?
- What does justice mean in a global context?

Through discussion, research and reflection, students begin to see that behind every political, environmental or social issue lie deeper philosophical and theological questions about truth, purpose and moral responsibility.

Skills for Study, Work and Life

Theology and Philosophy helps students to develop the skills that define rigorous philosophical and theological thinking:

- Critical thinking – questioning assumptions, analysing reasoning and evaluating evidence.
- Ethical reasoning – exploring moral dilemmas and constructing well-justified arguments.
- Theological reflection – considering how belief systems shape personal and collective responses to global challenges.
- Collaboration and communication – researching, debating and presenting ideas clearly as part of a team.
- Independent enquiry – planning, researching and synthesising information to reach balanced conclusions.

These are skills for life - valuable in further study of theology, philosophy, politics, geography and law, as well as in leadership, communication and problem-solving beyond school.

Course Content

Component 1: Individual Report (30%) Students choose a theological or philosophical global issue - such as climate ethics, digital freedom, or the meaning of human rights - and explore it through multiple moral, cultural and religious perspectives. They evaluate arguments, consider evidence and present a reasoned conclusion supported by reflection on their own values.

Component 2: Team Project (35%) Students collaborate to design and deliver a project addressing a chosen global issue. They explore how differing philosophical, ethical and theological worldviews might influence responses, and reflect on the process, outcomes and personal learning.

Component 3: Written Examination (35%) The final component assesses students' ability to analyse and interpret information, evaluate reasoning and consider multiple perspectives. The paper rewards thinking, not memorisation - testing the quality of argument, analysis and reflection.

In Summary

Theology & Philosophy connects the challenges of the modern world with questions that have shaped human thought for centuries. It develops reflective, compassionate and articulate thinkers who can engage intelligently and ethically with the complexities of global life.

"Behind every global issue lie deep questions about truth, justice, and human purpose. Theology & Philosophy helps students not only understand the world - but think about how we might live well within it."

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (AQA)

French, German and Spanish GCSE

French, German and Spanish are taught at Bootham. All students should choose at least one language at GCSE Level; some students will wish to take two. If students are uncertain, they should discuss their choice with their language teachers and/or the Head of Modern Languages. Each language will only run if there is a viable class size, so please be aware of this. A second choice might then need to be made. Students have a weekly supplementary oral session with the French “Assistante” and/or the German “Assistent/Assistentin” and/or the Spanish “Lectora” for three terms during the two-year course.

The four Language skills are weighted equally: (25% for each skill)

Unit 1: Listening 25% **Unit 2:** Reading 25% **Unit 3:** Speaking 25% **Unit 4:** Writing 25%

There are three topics to study:

People and Lifestyles	Popular Culture	Community and the World
Theme 1 covers the following three topics: • Topic 1: Identity and relationships with others • Topic 2: Healthy living and lifestyle • Topic 3: Education and work	Theme 2 covers the following three topics: • Topic 1: Free-time activities • Topic 2: Customs, festivals and celebrations • Topic 3: Celebrity culture	Theme 3 covers the following three topics: • Topic 1: Travel and tourism, including places of interest • Topic 2: Media and technology • Topic 3: The environment and where people live

Examinations

The four skills are examined separately. Candidates can be entered for higher or foundation tier in listening, speaking, reading and writing and these decisions will be made after the mock GCSE exams, in consultation with the student, parents and MFL teacher. All skills are tested under examination conditions and marked externally, however, Speaking is a non exam (NEA). There is no coursework or controlled assessments. Able students can expect to be extended beyond GCSE requirements to prepare them for further language study. In recent years Modern Foreign Languages have been combined successfully with a variety of subjects at A Level.

Language Learning

Studying a foreign language allows you to achieve a degree of academic rigour whereby at the same time developing key interpersonal, cognitive and communication skills. Having some knowledge of a different language is likely to be valued by employers and give you a competitive advantage, especially since Brexit. In addition, it can open up more opportunities to work in an international environment in a range of settings, including, sales, marketing, engineering, science and technology.

It is increasingly popular to combine a modern foreign language as a module or a “minor” in a variety of degree subjects with the option of studying abroad for a year. Some careers require knowledge of a language such as teaching, translation and interpreting, tourism, retail and hospitality sectors as well as international relations, business or finance. Knowledge of a language can also lead to the ab initio study of other world languages like Portuguese, Arabic, Mandarin or Japanese.

LATIN (EDUQAS)

The GCSE Latin course consists of a mixture of Latin Language and the option of learning about Roman Civilisation. There are three exam papers.

Course Content

Latin Language 50%

This paper requires students to use their knowledge of Latin grammar and vocabulary (440 words, to be learned in the Lower Senior year) to translate and answer questions on an unseen Latin story. In addition, a small part of this paper requires students to translate short sentences from English into Latin or analyse some grammatical points. The course equips students with a sensitive and analytical approach to language generally and an awareness of the influence of Latin on languages today.

Latin Literature and Sources (Themes) 30%

For this paper, students study a range of original Latin texts and other related source material on a given theme, e.g. 'Superstition and Magic'. This theme-oriented approach allows students to get to know a broad variety of writers and ancient sources.

Either: Latin Literature (Narratives) 20%

This paper offers candidates the opportunity for close reading of one particular narrative of a given author, like Virgil. The narratives are chosen for their richness in content and style, and provide a sense of an ancient writer's voice.

We study all set texts thoroughly and make sure students have accurate translations. They are continuously examined using passages from the selection, with comprehension questions and a small amount of translation. Knowledge of the style of the language will also be tested.

or: Roman Civilization 20%

Students learn about an aspect of Roman life such as 'Daily Life in a Roman Town' and answer questions in English about this topic in the exam. This gives students an excellent opportunity to build up background knowledge of the Roman world which perfectly complements their study of the language and literature.

The skills developed are complex, but Latin is widely held to promote an eye for detail, logical thought and a high level of language and social understanding. A government document refers to classicists as 'clever and open-minded'. Classical subjects in general, and Latin in particular, still have a high status with employers. Latin may serve as a language qualification for entry into university courses and is especially welcomed for English, History, and also for courses in Law or Medicine.

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NOTES



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