

GCSEs



For students beginning GCSE
courses in September 2024.



Queen Margaret's
School for Girls

Escrick Park, York



Studying GCSEs at Queen Margaret's allows girls to carve their own path.

Our girls are encouraged to develop their interests and express their individuality through a breadth of academic subjects and enrichment activities.

We offer 26 GCSE courses to study, personal tutors, leadership opportunities and the freedom to plan study routines, so our girls can flourish as formidable, independent women.

An Educational Experience Second to None

Queen Margaret's outstanding GCSE results stem from our ability to deliver a motivating, girl-focused education and teaching which is of the highest quality. We encourage all girls to study a broad and balanced range of subjects at this stage of their education in order to keep options open for the Sixth Form and beyond.

During the Spring Term of Year III, girls will be asked to make decisions about the subjects they wish to study in Years IV and V. There are 26 different GCSE courses on offer and once options have been chosen, timetables are developed, where possible, around the girls' preferred subjects. Some subjects, known as core subjects, are compulsory. These are:

- Mathematics
- Science (either as three separate sciences or as a dual award)
- English Language
- English Literature
- English as a Second Language: Students whose first language is not English will study English as a Second Language instead of English Language and English Literature.

The majority of girls choose four additional subjects from the following list. Although not compulsory, we advise that this includes at least one language (Classical Greek, French, Latin or Spanish).

- Art: Fine Art
- Art: Textile Design
- Business
- Classical Civilisation
- Classical Greek
- Computer Science
- Drama
- Food Preparation and Nutrition
- French
- Geography
- Higher Project Qualification
- History
- Latin
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish

Further Mathematics is also available in Year V for our more able mathematicians.

When deciding which subjects to choose from the options list, girls need to think about; their ability and aptitude for each subject, their interests, the content of each course, their other commitments, and their future plans. It is the quality of results and not the quantity of examinations taken that really matters.

QM's outstanding and dedicated academic staff support our girls in making their choices. GCSE preparation begins with the help of tutors, and in Years IV and V girls receive personalised careers guidance including Morrisby Profiling - a specially targeted psychometric test to help them consider options for their future career direction. All girls will benefit from Sport and PSHE which form an important part of the curriculum during the GCSE years. The move to GCSE study brings new demands and expectations, and sometimes this can identify fresh challenges. The Progress, Achievement and Student Support (PASS) Department is on hand for all girls.





Home from Home

Our girls have homes in many different corners of the UK and all over the world. Many board, not because they have to, but because they want to. Our Bespoke Boarding options mean they can stay as little or as often as they need.

Warwick House

Year IV students live together in a wing of Warwick House. Girls share dorms as a year group and also have a dedicated common room. Warwick House offers a vibrant boarding community right in the heart of the school; the first year of GCSEs is a busy year and it provides a very special place for girls to call home during their time in Year IV.

Boarding in Year IV offers a greater degree of freedom than boarding lower down the school as this is the first year when girls have a choice over which boarding activities they would like to be involved in. Girls are supported in balancing their work alongside their other commitments.

Winifred Holtby House

Winifred Holtby House (affectionately known as Winnie's) is named after an Old Margaretian who was a famous journalist and author. It is situated in a scenic area of the campus surrounded by beautifully sculpted landscape, woodland and a scurry of squirrels, and is the modern purpose-built home from home for girls in Year V. Girls share spacious dorms with three others and each dorm has its own dedicated study room opposite. There is a comfortable common room with a TV and a kitchen. Each floor also has its own kitchenette for preparing that all-important mug of hot chocolate before lights out.

In Year V, girls have more freedom to structure their own preferred study routine outside lesson time. Winnie's provides the ideal environment to get suitably prepared for GCSE examinations, and girls have the opportunity to be more in control of their learning - a taster of what to expect in the Sixth Form.



Our Girls Pursue their Passions

At QM we see our girls engaging enthusiastically in a range of activities – academic, sport, extracurricular and social. No airs and graces, no frills or make-up, just girls getting stuck in, and having fun while they do it. We encourage every girl to pursue her interests confidently; girls at QM are recognised for their willingness to try everything that life has to offer them.

Whether they are interested in sport, music, drama, dance, debating or adventure, girls will find chances to shine throughout QM. Being in Year IV opens up many other enrichment opportunities, including the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award. In Year V, our girls enjoy a greater degree of flexibility with their free time and can use this to explore York.

During their GCSE years, girls have the opportunity to develop leadership skills; the roles and responsibilities available include Monitor positions.





An Amazing Start in Life

We nurture girls to become the best women they can be and give them an amazing start in life.

The excellent GCSE results our girls are awarded are reflective of their commitment to learning and provide a fantastic springboard for their future studies. In 2023, QM's Value Added Score showed that, on average, girls achieved 1.2 grades higher than their Yellis prediction in every GCSE examination they took; our girls make the most of the individual support they are given.

After completing GCSEs, the next step of the QM experience is the Sixth Form, which is truly unique. We offer a wide range of A Levels, independent living in the final year, and many enrichment and leadership opportunities to provide our girls with the best possible stepping stone to life beyond school.

Many girls are unsure of what career pathway they will take after school which is why we encourage our girls to choose a broad and balanced curriculum for their GCSEs. However, if they have a particular passion for Archaeology, Fashion Design or Engineering, for example, then they should consider how the choices made at GCSE may impact the choices they then make at A Level and beyond.

Our girls leave with outstanding A Level results and places at the country's leading universities. They thrive in a supportive and happy environment and they leave us as resilient global citizens.

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics is an enjoyable and interesting experience for girls at QM. The school aims to foster their perseverance and resourcefulness in solving problems, and to develop their ability to think logically yet creatively, leading to an affinity with the subject.

Course Overview

The Mathematics IGCSE is a three-year course at QM, which girls start at the beginning of Year III. In this course, girls will be given the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and techniques, and apply them logically and creatively to solve increasingly complex problems. Girls will be encouraged to regularly review key ideas, and to make connections between various parts of the course.

There are two tiers of entry in the examination: Foundation (grades 1-5) and Higher (grades 4-9). We would expect almost all girls to follow the Higher tier course. The course is distributed over three assessment objectives; Number and Algebra; Shape, Space and Measures; and Handling Data. The course is assessed by two 2-hour examinations taken at the end of Year V. Calculators may be used for both examinations.

Girls who are more able mathematicians will also be challenged and encouraged to take Further Mathematics at GCSE in Year V.

Assessment

Two examination papers.

Syllabus

Edexcel International GCSE

SCIENCE

All girls study Biology, Chemistry and Physics and there are two routes of study, both of which involve separate lessons in each of the three sciences.

Course Overview

Route A leads to the award of a separate GCSE in each of the three sciences. Girls with greater aptitude and ability in Science will follow this route which involves studying extra topics. Each separate science is assessed by two papers lasting one hour and 45 minutes each.

Route B leads to the award of two GCSEs through the AQA Combined Science - Trilogy course. This route is assessed terminally by two papers for each subject, each lasting one hour and 15 minutes.

Both routes will provide girls with sufficient background to follow A Level courses in any or all of the three sciences in the Sixth Form. The route followed will depend entirely on a girl's ability in Science and will be decided early in Year IV.

Assessment

Two papers for each separate subject, making six examinations in total.

Syllabus

AQA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

By studying English Language girls will develop the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively in both speech and writing.

Course Overview

Girls will learn how to employ a wide-ranging vocabulary, use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, and develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed. They will be encouraged to read widely, both for their own enjoyment and to further their awareness of the ways in which English can be used.

Girls will be assessed by two written examinations, each lasting one hour and 45 minutes. In the first paper they will answer four questions on a literary passage and produce a piece of writing to describe or narrate. In the second paper they will be tested on their comprehension of two non-fiction texts, and will produce a piece of writing to argue a point of view. Girls will also undertake a speaking and listening task, in the form of an individual presentation.

Assessment

Two written examinations and a separate spoken language assessment.

Syllabus

AQA

ENGLISH LITERATURE

This course will enable girls to read, interpret and evaluate texts through the study of literature in English.

Course Overview

English Literature will help girls to develop an understanding of literary meaning, relevant contexts, and of the deeper themes or attitudes that may be expressed. They will be encouraged to explore wide and universal issues, which will give a better understanding of themselves and of the world around them.

Girls will be assessed by two written examinations. In the first paper (one hour and 45 minutes) they will answer one question on a Shakespeare play and one on a 19th century novel. In the second paper (two hours and 15 minutes) they will answer one question on a 20th century text, one on poetry from an anthology of set poems, and two questions on previously unseen poems.

Assessment

Two written examinations.

Syllabus

AQA

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

This course will enable learners whose first language is not English to develop their ability to understand and use English in a range of contexts. This is an equivalent qualification to other GCSEs and offers an opportunity for those students for whom English is not their first language to gain a higher GCSE grade than they might when faced with the challenges of the literature-based English Language and English Literature GCSE courses. This qualification is regarded by UK universities as having equal value as the English Language GCSE qualification.

Course Overview

English as a Second Language builds learners' awareness of the nature of language and the four language-learning skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The course focuses on practical communication for everyday use, which can also form the basis for more in-depth study. English as a Second Language also prepares international students looking to attend university in the UK. From exploring fitness and wellbeing to delving into our impact on the planet, the course develops transferable skills to complement other areas of the school curriculum.

Students will be assessed by two written examinations and one oral examination. The examination exercises are similar to the exercises found in the IELTS examination. In the first paper (2 hours) they will complete six exercises, four reading and two writing assignments. The writing assignments involve the students writing one email and one report. In the second paper (50 minutes) students will complete five listening exercises. The final examination tests a student's speaking skills and lasts 15 minutes.

Assessment

Two written examinations (one reading and writing, one listening) and a separate spoken language assessment.

Syllabus

Cambridge IGCSE

ART: FINE ART

GCSE Fine Art is a broad Art course that allows students to work in a wide range of media and in a variety of different Art styles. From traditional drawing and painting, alongside three-dimensional design, printmaking, and using cutting-edge digital and photographic programmes; there is no limit to how a Fine Art student can approach their creative work. The course encourages students to grow by exploring new skills and experimenting with ideas. The work of established artists and designers is referenced throughout to embed student learning in the history of art and provide a source of inspiration.

Course Overview

The course begins with an introductory project. This is a condensed version of a full scale project, using observation through photography and drawing, artist analysis and responses, and media explorations, to build confidence in how to explore an idea. The main coursework project is based on the theme of Identity and students are encouraged to think individually on how they wish to approach this theme. Students gain more independence and personalisation in their approach as their confidence and the course develops.

The introductory and main coursework projects form Component 1 and together are worth 60% of the total marks. Component 2 is an externally set assignment where students develop their work in response to a choice of themes provided by the exam board. Following their project preparation students then complete a 10-hour practical examination. Component 2 is worth 40% of the total marks.

There is a termly charge towards the cost of quality media which will be approximately £55 per term. All students are advised to use their camera phone or a digital camera.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Being open-minded, thinking creatively, and trying new techniques. You do not need to love drawing as the subject is much more diverse than that!

Assessment

Component 1 - Coursework projects (60%)
Component 2 - Externally set assignment project and practical examination (40%).

Syllabus

AQA

ART: TEXTILE DESIGN

GCSE Textile Design is a rich creative path, using textile materials and techniques to explore visual ideas. Traditional skills such as machine stitch, hand sewing and weaving are the foundation of this course but students are also introduced to a diverse range of more contemporary approaches including image transfer, heat press, and three-dimensional design. The course encourages students to grow by exploring new skills and experimenting with ideas. The work of established artists and designers is referenced throughout to embed student learning in the history of art and design and provide a source of inspiration.

Course Overview

The course begins with an introductory coursework project. This is a condensed version of a full scale project, using observation through photography and drawing, artist analysis and responses, and textile media explorations, to build confidence in how to explore an idea. The main coursework project is based on the theme of Environment and students are encouraged to think individually on how they wish to approach this theme. Students gain more independence and personalisation in their approach as their confidence and the course develops.

The introductory and main coursework projects form Component 1 and together are worth 60% of the total marks. Component 2 is an externally set assignment where students develop their work in response to a choice of themes provided by the exam board. Following their project preparation students then complete a 10-hour practical examination. Component 2 is worth 40% of the total marks.

There is a termly charge towards the cost of quality media which will be approximately £55 per term. All students are advised to use their camera phone or a digital camera.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Thinking creatively and trying new techniques. Your interest will be in all the wondrous possibilities of fabric manipulation, it is not a fashion course!

Assessment

Component 1 - Coursework projects (60%)
Component 2 - Externally set assignment project and practical examination (40%).

Syllabus

AQA

BUSINESS

Business is a very useful and relevant GCSE which equips girls with transferable skills and helps prepare them for future study and working life.

Course Overview

Have you ever pondered why Apple charges such high prices for its latest iPhone? Or why ASOS only sells its clothes via e-commerce? Or why Primark continues to see growing sales?

The OCR GCSE in Business gives girls the skills and confidence to explore different business situations and their impact on decision-making. Girls will develop their understanding of business concepts, objectives and terminology, and the impact of internal and external issues on business operations.

In the first part of the course, girls will be introduced to business concepts and issues concerning the activities of a business. They will explore the purpose and role of a business, from spotting an opportunity through to the growth of an established business. They will also look at the role of marketing through identifying and satisfying customer needs, and the importance of good human resource management for business decision-making.

Girls will then take a closer look at the role of operations and finance in business activity. Operations includes production processes, quality of goods and services, customer service, and working with suppliers. Finance covers its role in business activity, its sources, business costs, the importance of cash flow management and profitability. This part of the course will also explore how business responds to external influences, such as ethical and environmental considerations, the economic climate and globalisation, and the interdependent nature of businesses.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Working with numbers, the course will involve financial calculations; it will also involve reading information on businesses - many of the GCSE questions are based on data response. A willingness and interest in following business news will also help you progress in GCSE Business.

Assessment

Two examination papers. Each examination will last one hour and 30 minutes and carry an equal weighting of 50%. There is no coursework element.

Syllabus

OCR

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

By studying Classical Civilisation, girls will learn about Greek and Roman civilisations from which we inherit so many of our modern customs.

Course Overview

Girls will have the chance to look at various aspects of Greek and Roman life, from very early Greece through to the Roman Empire.

The course covers a variety of topics, including ancient religion and the Olympian gods, myths of the Greek heroes, and the story of Odysseus's amazing adventures as he ventures home from the Trojan war. There are many different ways in which you can find out about the past and we will explore both textual and visual evidence. Much of what we know about the ancient world is open to interpretation so the study of Classical Civilisation is a great way for girls to explore independent thought, to decide their own view on why things were done and use the evidence to argue this.

As well as the fascinating material which the course covers, the study of Classical Civilisation at GCSE will also enable girls to develop and practise a number of key transferable skills which will be useful in many other subject areas:

- How to use evidence from art and archaeology to find out about the past
- How to research independently and form a balanced argument
- How to communicate clearly and effectively.

All the material is studied in English, there is no language requirement for this course. No prior Classical Civilisation knowledge is required.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Learning about the stories of the Greek and Roman gods and finding out about the lives of the people who believed in them.

Assessment

Two examinations of one hour and 30 minutes each.

Syllabus

OCR

CLASSICAL GREEK

Classical Greek may be the perfect course for girls with a passionate interest in the ancient world or an enthusiastic love of language.

Course Overview

Greek offers a unique introduction to the origins of modern European culture. The course gives girls the opportunity to learn the Ancient Greek language and discover the civilisation and culture of the Greeks. The pace is fast, groups are small, and girls will soon find that they have built up a good working knowledge of Greek.

The course will develop the following skills:

- To translate passages from the original language
- To read and enjoy literature in its original language
- To appreciate the relationship between Greek and modern European languages
- To improve communication skills.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Learning about words – how they work, how they fit together, and where they come from. You should also enjoy learning about the ancient Greeks and the stories of their gods.

Assessment

Three examinations; one unseen language paper of one hour and 30 minutes, and two literature papers lasting one hour each.

Syllabus

OCR

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computer Science is a creative subject that will engage learners with the modern world of computing and prepare them for many different routes, both in and outside the world of IT. Girls will learn to think innovatively, analytically, logically and critically through studying this subject.

Course Overview

This course will deepen girls' understanding of how computers work and how they are embedded into all areas of our lives.

Girls will study the following main topics:

- Computer systems, including: networks and security, computer architecture, ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology
- Computational thinking, algorithms and programming, including: programming fundamentals, producing robust programs and programming languages, and Integrated Development Environments
- Practical programming - girls will develop their programming skills by creating their own programs and software to solve real-world problems and develop something entirely new and unique.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Problem solving, applying skills creatively and learning through exploration!

Assessment

Two written examination papers, each lasting one hour and 30 minutes.

Syllabus

OCR

DRAMA

Drama is an exciting and challenging course that, through theatre and performance, explores the human condition. Girls will learn how to channel their creativity into inspirational pieces of performance, whilst analysing and evaluating the work of professional actors, directors and designers.

Course Overview

Most lessons on the Drama GCSE course are practical and involve working on plays and scripts or exploring themes and topics through the creation of devised performances. Girls will create performances and apply ideas and techniques that they have learnt during the course inspired by professional practitioners. Girls will also attend live theatre performances that will develop their artistic understanding of the theatre and allow them to analyse professional practice.

Drama is a subject that requires thoughtfulness, creative energy, an open mind and a willingness to 'have a go'. By taking this course girls will not only become prepared to study theatre at A Level, but will also develop their knowledge of drama and theatre, build self-confidence, improve communication and refine teamwork skills - preparation for life. Girls will collect a range of experiences from seeing and performing theatre that will remain with them forever.

Girls will undertake three assessments on this course: a group devised piece assessed by their teacher and moderated by the examination board, supported by a written portfolio (40%); a scripted performance assessed by a visiting examiner (20%); and a written examination exploring the creative elements of the script, *DNA*, and a live theatre experience (40%).

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

English Literature, performing to audiences, collaborative learning and analysing theatre.

Assessment

Devised performance and written portfolio (40%), scripted performance (20%), written examination (40%).

Syllabus

Edexcel

FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION

By studying the GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition girls will build upon the skills acquired during Years I - III.

Course Overview

This course will enable girls to:

- Demonstrate effective and safe cooking skills using a variety of techniques and equipment
- Explore a range of ingredients and processes from different culinary traditions (British and international)
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the functional properties and chemical characteristics of ingredients
- Understand the relationship between diet, nutrition and health
- Have an awareness of where our food comes from and the environmental, ethical and economic influences on food availability.

There is a termly charge towards the cost of ingredients which is approximately £45 per term.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Cooking, researching and experimenting.

Assessment

Examination (50%), food preparation task (35%), food investigation task (15%).

Syllabus

Eduqas

FRENCH

French is a popular choice for girls in Years IV and V. The course aims to develop their confidence in both written and spoken communication, as well as laying firm grammatical foundations for further study of this language.

Course Overview

Not only is French the language of our closest neighbour geographically, it is spoken as an official language in 33 countries across the world as well as being one of the working languages of the International Olympics Committee, the United Nations and the European Union.

The following topic areas are covered in the French course:

- Theme 1: People and Lifestyle, eg identity and relationships with others, healthy living and lifestyle, education and work.
- Theme 2: Popular Culture, eg free time activities, customs, festivals and celebrations, celebrity culture.
- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us, eg travel and tourism, media and technology, the environment and where people live.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Communicating your opinions and ideas on a range of topics in both the spoken and written form. You should also have a desire to develop your understanding of the vocabulary and grammar of the language, as well as to increase your cultural awareness of the countries where French is spoken.

Assessment

Four skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) are examined separately and carry equal weighting (25%):

- Listening: 45 minutes for the Higher Tier or 35 minutes for the Foundation Tier
- Speaking: 10-12 minutes for the Higher Tier or 7-9 minutes for the Foundation Tier
- Reading: One hour for the Higher Tier or 45 minutes for the Foundation Tier
- Writing: One hour and 15 minutes for the Higher Tier or one hour and 10 minutes for the Foundation Tier.

Syllabus

AQA

GEOGRAPHY

The AQA Geography specification gives girls the opportunity to understand more about the world, the challenges it faces and their place within it.

Course Overview

This course will deepen girls' understanding of geographical processes, illuminate the impact of change and of complex people-environment interactions, highlight the dynamic links and interrelationships between places and environments at different scales, and develop their competence in using a wide range of geographical investigative skills and approaches. Geography enables young people to become globally and environmentally informed and thoughtful, enquiring citizens. Geography is seen as an ideal link between the arts and sciences and it provides girls with a rounded and well-balanced education.

The course covers the following main topics:

- The Physical World:
 - The Challenge of Natural Hazards - Tectonics and Weather
 - The Living World - Tropical Rainforests and Hot Deserts
 - Landscapes - Coasts and Rivers
- The Human Environment
 - Urban Issues and Challenges
 - Our Changing Economic World
 - Challenge of Resources with a focus on Food
- Issues Evaluation and Fieldwork
 - Girls will study rivers or coasts and an urban or rural landscape. The experience of fieldwork will help them to develop new geographical insights into the two contrasting environments required for this qualification and to apply their geographical knowledge, understanding and skills to these environments. However, there is no formal write-up of a fieldwork report, girls are tested on their skills and understanding in a written paper. Please note, there may be a nominal charge for fieldwork.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Learning about how the world around you is changing, as well as exploring global challenges and how they can be managed for a more sustainable future. Geography will provide you with knowledge and transferable skills that will reward you personally and advance you professionally.

Assessment

Three final examination papers; two lasting 90 minutes and one lasting 75 minutes.

Syllabus

AQA

HIGHER PROJECT QUALIFICATION (HPQ)

The Higher Project Qualification is designed to complement our girls' GCSE studies. A challenging and exciting qualification, the HPQ is an excellent fit for self-motivated and independent students who enjoy 'thinking outside the box'. It is worth half a GCSE and is ideal preparation for the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) which can be taken in the Sixth Form. Project Qualifications are highly regarded by Higher Education institutions such as the Russell Group.

Course Overview

The HPQ will develop and extend an area of study, personal interest or activity beyond a girl's main academic programme. Girls will work on a project chosen by them and agreed with staff. Past projects have involved:

- Investigating the impact of social media on teenagers' mental health
- Designing and creating a website for a new make-up brand
- Investigating the pros and cons of Bitcoin and cyber currency
- Designing and creating a set model for the musical *Oliver!*

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Working independently and be capable of planning, managing and organising your own learning.

Assessment

All essential research, writing and project management techniques are covered within the HPQ taught skills programme. As there is no ongoing assessment and no final examination, girls will be responsible for planning and managing their own learning journey. To complete the HPQ girls will:

- Choose an area of personal interest
- Draft a title and aims for their project
- Plan, research and carry out the project, producing either a 2000-word research report or an artefact such as a model, film, booklet or website
- Deliver a final presentation to an invited audience
- Provide evidence of the stages of the project development and production by completing the AQA Production Log.

The HPQ is graded A*-C only (equivalent to GCSE grades 5-9). Students whose work is of a lower standard may be entered for the Foundation Project Qualification, which targets GCSE grades 1-4.

Syllabus

AQA

HISTORY

History is a subject valued by universities and employers because of the range of transferable skills it develops. Successful historians need to be able to interpret, analyse and evaluate complex and often conflicting information, creating a skill set which is valuable across a range of careers and academic subjects.

Course Overview

At QM we follow the International GCSE specification provided by Edexcel. It is just as rigorous as the British GCSE qualification, but the key characteristic of the course is the absence of any coursework or controlled assessment. It is also less content-heavy, so girls can learn about some fascinating events which have helped shape the modern world in more detail, gaining an appreciation of the superpowers whose competing ideologies shaped the 20th century. Girls will explore the two superpowers in the interwar years 1943-72, looking at Stalinism in Russia 1924-53 and the USA, Boom and Bust 1919-41. We study the breakdown in relations between the two superpowers at the end of the Second World War, exploring the Cold War 1943-72. Finally, social history is addressed through our study of the History of Medicine c1848-1948.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Investigating the causes and effects of events which have shaped our world. You should be inquisitive - the best historians love a good story but are eager to dig deeper.

Assessment

Two written examination papers lasting one hour and 30 minutes each.

Syllabus

Edexcel International GCSE

LATIN

Learning Latin gives girls a greater precision of thought and clarity of communication. It is also prized as both a foundation for understanding languages and literature, and as an intellectual discipline in its own right.

Course Overview

Latin provides a wonderful insight into the world of languages and literature. This course gives girls the opportunity to find out more about the Latin language and about the civilisation and culture of the Romans. Girls will revise and consolidate the grammar they have covered so far, and build upon this to achieve a good working knowledge of Latin.

The course will develop the following skills:

- To translate passages from the original language
- To read and enjoy literature in its original language
- To appreciate the relationship between Latin and modern European languages
- To improve communication skills.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Learning about words – how they work, how they fit together, and where they come from. You should also enjoy learning about the Romans and the stories of their gods.

Assessment

Three examinations; one unseen language paper of one hour and 30 minutes, and two literature papers lasting one hour each.

Syllabus

OCR

MUSIC

The Music GCSE course covers the three disciplines of composing, listening and performing. It offers a broad area of study in classical, popular and film music, and encourages a range of solo and ensemble work. Girls will be trained to use music technology as a compositional tool.

Course Overview

GCSE Music not only gives an excellent foundation for further study at A Level but also imparts a wealth of transferable and lifelong skills, including analytical essay writing, creativity through composition and confidence fostered through performance and ensemble projects. Students undoubtedly emerge from GCSE Music as more rounded and capable musicians. Taking instrumental and/or vocal lessons will put girls at a distinct advantage in preparation for the coursework and ideally, they should be of Grade 3 standard by the end of Year V in order to access the highest grades.

The performing and composing units are assessed by the teacher and moderated externally. Each of these units is worth 30% of the overall course.

There is one written paper, worth 40%, in which girls will need to answer questions based on four areas of study; Musical Forms and Devices, Music for Ensemble, Film Music and Popular Music.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Listening to and learning about all genres of music but most of all, creating music on your chosen instrument - the GCSE Music course will absolutely lead you to be a better musician.

Assessment

Performing (30%), composing (30%) and one written examination (40%).

Syllabus

Eduqas

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In the Physical Education GCSE course girls learn about a wide range of areas related to sport and develop and apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of Physical Education.

Course Overview

The three main topic areas of this course are:

- Applied Anatomy and Physiology: eg bones, muscles, respiration and biomechanics
- Sports Psychology: eg information processing, feedback, aggression in sport
- Socio-cultural influences: eg sponsorship, drugs in sport, nutrition, hooliganism.

The course is assessed by two written examinations lasting one hour and 15 minutes each (60%), and practical performances in three different physical activities with written coursework relating to one of the three activities (40%). One practical performance must be in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or an individual activity.

The written examinations are based on the following topics:

Paper 1 - The human body and movement in physical activity and sport.

Paper 2 - Socio-cultural influences and wellbeing in physical activity and sport.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Sport and physical activity, and you should want to follow a course that develops your knowledge and understanding of the human body and the factors that influence it. Learning is undertaken in various forms, from experiments and classroom sessions to physical testing, meeting the needs of every type of learner.

Assessment

- Two written examinations (60%)
- Practical performance in three different physical activities and written coursework relating to one of your three chosen physical activities (40%).

Syllabus

AQA

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The Religious Studies specification offers a range of faith-specific options and a variety of relevant and contemporary themes which include abortion, euthanasia, animal rights, terrorism, capital punishment and sexism. This ensures that girls will have a diverse choice of intriguing subjects to explore and discuss.

Course Overview

Girls will learn how religion and ethics form the basis of our culture and develop valuable skills that will help prepare them for further study. This new specification is enjoyable and engaging for students of all abilities. There are two components:

Component 1: The study of the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and Judaism.

- Christianity: Girls will realise that Christianity is one of the most diverse religious traditions and beliefs in Great Britain today. They will study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and their basis in Christian sources of wisdom and authority
- Judaism: Girls will also study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Judaism and their basis in Jewish sources of wisdom and authority.

Component 2: Thematic studies - religious and ethical study themes that focus on:

- Peace and Conflict
- Crime and Punishments
- Human Rights and Social Justice
- The Value of Human Life and the Universe.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

Assessment

Two written examinations of one hour and 45 minutes in length, each examination is worth 50% of the course.

Syllabus

AQA

SPANISH

Like French, Spanish is a popular choice for girls in Years IV and V. The course aims to develop confidence in both written and spoken communication, as well as laying firm grammatical foundations for further study of this language.

Course Overview

Spanish is the third most widely spoken language in the world. Not only is it spoken by over 40 million people in Spain, it is the language which unites 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The following topic areas are covered in the Spanish course:

- Theme 1: People and Lifestyle, eg identity and relationships with others, healthy living and lifestyle, education and work.
- Theme 2: Popular Culture, eg free time activities, customs, festivals and celebrations, celebrity culture.
- Theme 3: Communication and the world around us, eg travel and tourism, media and technology, the environment and where people live.

To get the best out of this subject, you should enjoy...

Communicating your opinions and ideas on a range of topics in both the spoken and written form. You should also have a desire to develop your understanding of the vocabulary and grammar of the language, as well as to increase your cultural awareness of the countries where Spanish is spoken.

Assessment

Four skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) are examined separately and carry equal weighting (25%):

- Listening: 45 minutes for the Higher Tier or 35 minutes for the Foundation Tier
- Speaking: 10-12 minutes for the Higher Tier or 7-9 minutes for the Foundation Tier
- Reading: One hour for the Higher Tier or 45 minutes for the Foundation Tier
- Writing: One hour and 15 minutes for the Higher Tier or one hour and 10 minutes for the Foundation Tier.

Syllabus

AQA

GRADING

The way that GCSEs are graded has recently changed. Candidates are awarded their qualifications on a grade scale of 9 (the highest grade) to 1 (the lowest). This scale is aligned to key grades on the former A* to G scale.

New Grading Structure	Old Grading Structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	
5	B
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

English as an Additional Language (EAL) lessons are for students whose first language is one other than English. These lessons can support students studying for English as a Second Language IGCSE.

Learners will typically be at different stages of their English language acquisition, but even those at the same stage of English language will have different backgrounds and needs. Some will be entirely literate in another language and might already have developed concepts in other subjects, such as Science and Mathematics through another language. Others will be progressing at a different rate of language acquisition.

At QM the progress of learning differs for all girls and what the EAL Department offers is one-to-one support for all girls whose first language is something other than English. This might be support for the IELTS examination or classroom-based teaching. We also offer an English for Academic Purposes programme to support all girls in achieving the very best in their academic studies.

PROGRESS, ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT SUPPORT (PASS)

Centrally located in the heart of the school, the Progress, Achievement and Student Support (PASS) Department is here to support all girls.

For some girls, the PASS Department will simply provide a continuation, or an extension, of the provision they already receive. However, the move to GCSE study brings new demands and expectations and sometimes this can identify fresh challenges. The PASS Department doors are always open should a new need arise. This may be the subsequent identification of a specific learning difficulty, it may be practical support to help manage the increased workload and greater independence expected from GCSE study, or a girl may benefit from additional pastoral support for a medical or welfare need.

Support is personally tailored to the needs of each individual girl; for girls with specific learning difficulties, weekly individual support lessons with specialist teachers are provided, whilst for other girls support may also be weekly lessons or the provision of a regular 'drop in' opportunity.

Where appropriate, examination access arrangements are formally applied for from the examination boards, and put in place to ensure that every girl is able to demonstrate their true potential.

We embrace a 'can do' attitude and no matter what form it takes, a special educational need is not a barrier to achievement. The Progress, Achievement and Student Support Department supports our girls all the way.

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