



**REED'S**  
School

# GCSE Handbook

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Careers and Higher Education

# INTRODUCTION

Pupils work towards GCSEs and IGCSEs in the Fourth and Fifth Form at Reed's. These remain an important qualification and they will play a part in later university admissions and job applications. On entry into the Fourth Form pupils will continue to study English, Mathematics, usually at least two science subjects and a Foreign Language. Pupils will also study a number of option subjects and it is the purpose of this booklet to outline the core and option courses available and the process of selecting options. The most important things about IGCSE and GCSE are:

- that the quality of the results is what matters, not the number of subjects or passes
- that students should follow an enjoyable and diverse course that reflects all their strengths and interests
- that their choice involves consideration of future academic studies (see appendix one)

## The Structure of the Curriculum

The Curriculum at GCSE and IGCSE is designed to leave the subsequent selection of Sixth Form subjects as unrestricted as possible and to maximise a pupil's chances of obtaining the highest possible grades.

The GCSE curriculum is designed around a combination of core and option subjects with flexibility built in to allow pupils to choose patterns of subjects that serve best their interests and skills.

All pupils take English Language, English Literature and Mathematics GCSEs. They then choose a combination of science subjects: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Electronics and Computer Science are offered as science subjects with pupils choosing usually two or more of these. In addition pupils usually take at least one Modern Language. The remainder of a pupil's choice is then an open selection of option subjects. In total the majority of pupils take nine GCSEs with those studying Further Mathematics picking up a tenth qualification.

We try to keep the science selection as flexible as possible – there will be pupils whose best interests are served by

taking only one science subject and they should discuss this possibility with Mr Atkins. The number of science subjects taken alters the number of further options a pupil can take – two sciences chosen leaves three further choices, three sciences leaves two choices, and four sciences leaves one further choice of option subject. Some pupils may also wish to switch DT into their menu instead of a science and again this can be considered as possibility after consultation. Similarly there may be some boys who are best served by not studying a Modern Language and again this possibility should be discussed with Mr Atkins.

The following are offered as option subjects: Art, Design and Technology, Drama, French, Geography, German, History, Latin, Music, P.E., Religious Studies and Spanish. Latin, German and Spanish may only be taken by those who have studied them in the Third Form. Boys study their strongest language at GCSE.

## GCSE and IGCSE

From the Fourth Form onwards pupils are able to specialise, enabling them to study individual subjects in greater depth. These studies will lead to qualifications called General Certificates of Secondary Education or GCSEs, or to International GCSEs (IGCSEs). Though designed originally for international students, IGCSEs are now commonly taught in this country and are accepted by all universities and employers. At Reed's we offer a combination of IGCSE and GCSE courses. This is a deliberate choice made by the School and in each subject the decision is taken to select the examination board and approach we believe best suits Reed's pupils both in terms of their current studies and in their role as the building blocks for future study.

The major distinction between GCSE and IGCSE is the method of assessment used. Any judgement therefore about the relative difficulties of IGCSE and GCSE at its heart is a question of whether a pupil will find a course tested primarily by examinations more challenging

# INTRODUCTION

than one that comprises a combination of controlled assessments and examinations. IGCSEs may be seen as more 'traditional' in their emphasis on a final examination but they do allow for greater flexibility in the organisation and delivery of a subject and provide greater opportunities for pupils to develop their interest. For some academic areas IGCSEs are a better fit than GCSE – for others the nature of the subject makes GCSE a more suitable approach for Reed's pupils.

At GCSE or IGCSE there is very little evidence to suggest that there are any preferred subject combinations for later university entry. Some subjects naturally lead on to A Levels eg. Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography etc., but others are equally valid in a pupil's profile. Where a pupil is considering an American university the advice is to keep Geography or History as a subject at GCSE.

## The Process of Selecting Options

At Options Evening pupils are asked to make an initial selection of their preferred options. We do our best to accommodate as many choices as we can. To that end the initial choice is as free as possible. Some subjects are limited in the number of pupils that they can accommodate and selection criteria may be applied.

The Options Evening in March provides the opportunity for parents and pupils to sample subjects and talk to staff about possible options. A good performance in the summer examinations in subjects chosen is expected.

Pupils are encouraged to discuss their choices with their tutor, housemaster, subject teacher, Heads of Department and parents. Further advice is readily available from the senior staff. It is important that choices are discussed as widely as possible.

Subject	NEA%	Exam
Art	60	40
Design & Technology	50	50
Drama	60	40
Electronics	20	80
History	27	73
Music	60	40
Physical Education	40	60

## NEA (Non-Examined Assessment)

NEA plays an integral part in some courses and provides an opportunity for pupils to gain final exam marks for their work during the course. NEA is work that pupils do in class and prep time; it varies from essays and projects, as coursework, to drama productions, and is intended to encourage independent work. NEA is built into the main study of the subject, i.e. it is not intended to be an extra activity tacked on for testing purposes. In most subjects NEA is written up under examination conditions within class time. Each piece of NEA will be assessed for particular skills rather than just marked for 'correctness'. Components for subjects are detailed in the table above. Pupils are given the maximum guidance and assistance possible at every stage of the process and we try to co-ordinate NEA to ensure that pupils are not too overburdened at various times.

### D.J. Atkins

*Deputy Headmaster | Academic*

## CORE SUBJECTS

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### English Language and Literature

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Head of Department  
Mrs A. Trehearn

#### Specification

Edexcel IGCSE English Language 9-1(4EA1)  
Edexcel IGCSE English Literature 9-1(4ET1)

Pupils study English Language and English Literature and are prepared for two different IGCSEs, Edexcel English Language and English Literature.

English Language is assessed by two examinations and the Literature course is assessed by two examinations in Prose and Poetry and Drama.

### Mathematics and Further Mathematics

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Head of Department  
Mr J. Wright

#### Specifications

Mathematics Edexcel IGCSE (4MA1)  
Further Mathematics - AQA Linear (8365)

All of the major components of mathematics are covered by the Mathematics GCSE course: numeracy, data handling, shape and space and algebra. It includes 'everyday' mathematics and unstructured problem solving.

Mathematics IGCSE is assessed by two calculator papers.

The Further Mathematics course motivates and challenges more able mathematicians by covering more complex problems across all topics and provides a solid basis for students wishing to progress to A Level Mathematics and Further Mathematics.

Further Mathematics is assessed by a calculator and non-calculator paper.

### Sciences

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Head of Department  
Mr D.Thompson

#### Specifications

Biology: Edexcel IGCSE in Biology (4BI1)  
Chemistry: Edexcel IGCSE in Chemistry (4CH1)  
Physics: Edexcel IGCSE in Physics (4PH1)

All the science courses enable pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of scientific facts, concepts and principles and develop an appreciation of their significance and the skills needed for their use in new and changing situations. The courses are designed to emphasise practical enquiry and the development of the 'scientific method'.

The assessment for each of the three sciences comprises two written papers. The awareness of practical skills is covered in the examinations.

### Computer Science

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Head of Department  
Mrs J. Mustafova

#### Specification

CIE IGCSE Computer Science 0984

The emphasis of the course is on computing as a problem solving tool and the development of computational thinking skills. Pupils learn how to abstract and decompose problems then learn how to write coded solutions to these problems in a high-level language. Pupils will also acquire knowledge and understanding of computer design, networking, software design and the impact of computer technology on society

The course is assessed by two examination papers one of which is based on pre-released material.

## CORE SUBJECTS

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### Electronics

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Head of Department  
Mr D Thompson

#### Specification

Eduqas C490P

This course develops pupils scientific and mathematical knowledge and understanding with the engineering skills to tackle problems in an electronic context. Pupils apply these both theoretically and in a practical context. Practical work is an intrinsic part of this course and is vitally important in developing a conceptual understanding of many topics and it enhances the experience and enjoyment of the subject.

The course is assessed by two written papers and a NEA which examines system design and realisation

### Modern Foreign Languages

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(French, German, Spanish)

Head of Department  
Ms F.Cramoisan

#### Specification

Edexcel IGCSE French  
Edexcel IGCSE German  
Edexcel IGCSE Spanish

Pupils at Reed's take a Modern Foreign Language as a core subject. Pupils choose their strongest language they have studied in the Third Form. In all the Modern Languages pupils cover a variety of themes: home and abroad; education and employment; personal life and relationships; the world around us; social activities; fitness and health. Alongside these themes, pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and application of grammar.

Each course is assessed equally in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Able linguists are able to opt to continue two Modern Foreign Languages. These are usually French and German or French and Spanish.

## OPTION SUBJECTS

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### Art & Design

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Head of Department  
Miss A.N. Johnson

#### Specification

AQA Art, Craft and Design 8201

The course develops pupils' visual and tactile awareness and modes of expression through practical skills, relevant theory and problem solving. It encourages experimentation in the use and application of materials and media. It also gives an understanding of the works of artists, architects, designers and craftspeople.

NEA is undertaken in areas of study including:

drawing and painting, graphic design, printmaking and 3-dimensional work. Gallery and museum visits are regarded as an integral part of the course, as is the study of the history of art which is used to complement practical work.

All the pupil's work is internally exhibited and assessed before moderation by an examiner. Assessment consists of a coursework portfolio, which demonstrates and documents a pupil's progress through assignments and an examination task which is set at the start of the Spring Term in the final year of the course and ends in a 10-hour examination. Pupils are assisted in the preparation phase of the examination task.

# OPTION SUBJECTS

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## Design & Technology

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**Head of Department**  
Ms K. Charles

**Specification**  
Design and Technology AQA 8552

In this course pupils work creatively when designing and making with a broad range of design processes, materials, techniques and equipment. Pupils gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors. The course starts with a range of small tasks and experiments designed to develop their understanding and practical skills which are then applied to the NEA practical project which is a major focus of the Fifth Form.

The course is assessed by a written examination and a NEA practical project. The examination tests theoretical and design knowledge with particular focus on the specialist material area of woods, metals and plastics. The practical project is a substantial design and make task culminating in the production of a prototype to meet a defined brief.

## Drama

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**Head of Department**  
Mr T. Silk

**Specification**  
Eduqas

GCSE Drama is an exciting, inspiring and practical course that promotes involvement in and enjoyment of theatre, as actors directors and designers. Additionally it provides opportunities to attend live theatre performances and to develop skills as informed and thoughtful audience members.

The course is assessed in three areas: by a NEA practical performance or design work of their own devised work; by a NEA practical performance or design work of extracts of a play; by an examination focusing on the set text, 'A Caucasian Chalk Circle' by Bertolt Brecht, and an on analysis and evaluation of a live theatre production.

## Geography

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**Head of Department**  
Mr L.R. Buckingham

**Specification**  
AQA 8035

This course studies a core of traditional geographical content, and also offers opportunities for pupils to study contemporary themes and events which will enable them to relate their learning to the world they live in. Pupils benefit from becoming informed about how physical and human environments interact, how their lives are connected with other people and places, and why and how the world's landscapes and societies are changing in the early part of the 21st century.

The course is assessed by three written papers. These cover the Physical Environment, the Human Environment and a paper that tests the application of geographical skills including fieldwork and the study of a pre-released case study.

Fieldwork remains central to geography – a day trip to Southampton is undertaken in the Fourth Form, and a residential trip to the Isle of Purbeck takes place at the beginning of the Fifth Form.

## History

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**Head of Department**  
Mr A.J. Waller

**Specification**  
Cambridge IGCSE(0470) Option B

This course involves the study of some of the main events which have influenced the course of 20th Century History. Pupils learn how past events have shaped the present and produced many of the problems that the world is forced to face. The course covers International Relations since 1919, the Cold War, The Gulf region 1970-2000, and a depth study of Germany 1918-45, covering Weimar and the rise of the Nazis and life under Nazi rule.

The course is assessed by two examinations combining essay questions and source analysis and by a NEA assignment undertaken in the Fifth Form.

# OPTION SUBJECTS

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## Latin

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**Head of Department**  
Ms G. Whittingham

**Specification**  
OCR J281

The course provides a detailed linguistic study of the Latin language in its historical context. Pupils study both Language and Literature. Pupils learn vocabulary and a variety of grammatical constructions applied to translation and comprehension, and they also study a range of authors (such as Pliny, Julius Caesar, Virgil and Ovid) in the original language, allowing for exploration into Roman history of the time. The study of Latin also has an extremely unique, positive influence on pupils' written English by expanding knowledge of both vocabulary and syntax.

The course is assessed through three written examinations.

## Music

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**Head of Academic Music**  
Ms K. Chan

**Specification**  
Eduqas

This course introduces pupils to the analysis of music through different musical genres and further develops their performing abilities. It is important to note the significant performance element to the course and pupils should be studying a musical instrument to complement the course.

Pupils all learn how to compose individually through the use of ICT and are encouraged to explore genres of their choice within the free composition module. For the paper, pupils study a wide variety of styles, focusing on the understanding of music theory and the development of music from 1600 to the present day. Two set works are studied from the areas of popular and classical music.

Assessment is through written examination, aural analysis, NEA composition elements and a NEA performance.

## Religious Studies

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**Head of Department**  
Mr C. Perceval

**Specification**  
Eduqas Religious Studies C120P1

The course is built on the philosophical and ethical approaches of two comparable religious faiths and applies ethical and philosophical concepts to our world today. Pupils cover Buddhism and Christianity and highlight the diversity and shared nature of their beliefs. The four thematic elements of the course are: issues of relationships; issues of good and evil; issues of life and death; issues of human rights.

The course is assessed by three written examinations covering philosophical and ethical themes, the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and the beliefs, teachings and practices of Buddhism.

## Physical Education

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**Head of Department**  
Mr B.J. Edwards

**Specification**  
AQA GCSE in Physical Education 8582

The course provides candidates with an opportunity to study both the practical and theoretical aspects of Physical Education. The knowledge gained should enable candidates to develop an understanding of effective and safe physical performance.

The course is assessed by two written papers and a NEA portfolio of practical performances. The papers cover the human body in physical activity, socio-cultural influences on sport, and health and well-being.

The NEA practical portfolio comprises evidence of practical performance in three different physical activities (as a player in both an individual and team activity) as well as an analysis and evaluation of a performance.

Please note: we do not offer A Level Physical Education at Reed's, but a bespoke course combining coaching and AS Physical Education qualifications.

# APPENDIX ONE

## IGCSEs/GCSEs needed or recommended for some popular Career and Higher Education options

Certain Higher Education and Career options will require a specific set of GCSEs (and A Level) subjects to be taken. The below is intended to provide a guide to some of the most popular choices which may impact your decision on what to study at GCSE. Please note that most Career and Higher Education options require English Language and Mathematics – these are not mentioned below since it is assumed that all Reed’s pupils will take these subjects at least to GCSE Level. Please note that where a course of Higher Education requires an A Level that the School offers at GCSE, you can generally accept that the GCSE would be required to progress on to A Level.

### American Universities

If you are considering applying to university in the USA and wish to pursue this route as a Sports Scholar, there are certain GCSE subjects required. In order to qualify for an athletics scholarship, you will need have taken the following at GCSE:

- Maths
- English
- Physical Science (Chemistry or Physics, though Biology often accepted)
- Social Science (Geography or History)
- Foreign Language

### Popular career/university course choices and required GCSEs

- Please note that in most cases, these GCSEs are required to enable students to study the qualification at A Level and then access courses for higher education
- If a student has a specific career or university course in mind, it is recommended that they look at the course pages on the university website for the latest requirements

Subject	Requirements:
Architecture	Maths and Physics and/or Art and Design (different universities will require different subjects, depending on the focus of the course)
Classics/Classical Civilisation	Latin likely to be required.
Engineering	Most engineering courses will require Physics – check course requirements very carefully if not intending to take this subject at GCSE/A Level. Computing can also be a useful attribute in an Engineering application, depending on the course.
Law	No specific subject requirements
Medicine	Biology and Chemistry
Psychology	Biology likely to be required.
Veterinary Science	Biology and Chemistry

If you are in any doubt about how your GCSE options may affect your future career/university aspiration, please consult the relevant pages on Firefly and/or contact [sbutler@reeds.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:sbutler@reeds.surrey.sch.uk) for further information.