

Ss John Fisher & Thomas More RC High School



**Key Stage 4 Options
2024 – 2026**

School Curriculum Intent

The overriding ambition of our curriculum is to cater for the needs of all our pupils and enhance their life chances.

This ambition links to our core vision of enabling every child to achieve more than they think they can achieve by letting all their bright colours shine – a vision which is at the heart of everything we do as a school.

Our vision reflects our belief in Jesus' call to fullness of life. Therefore, the overriding ambition of our curriculum is to give our pupils every opportunity to flourish, to develop their God given talents to the full and enhance their life chances so that they achieve all that they want to in life.

The Options Process

Dear Parents/Carers

Your son/daughter is approaching an important stage in their secondary education. With the beginning of Key Stage 4 only two terms away, it is now necessary for us all to support our Year 9 pupils as they consider which optional subjects to study. The amount of choice available is both exciting and daunting; consequently, having access to high quality information, advice and guidance is crucial. This booklet aims to introduce you to the Options process at Ss John Fisher and Thomas More RC High School and the support that we will be offering.

The Key Stage 4 Options process has now started with an extended assembly and the issue of a Key Stage 4 Options booklet. There is also a digital Key Stage 4 subject information booklet which is available through the school website. In addition, there will be an Options Information Evening for pupils and parents/carers where information about the Key Stage 4 options process will be explained.

Key dates for your diary:	
Week Beginning 15 th January 2024	Digital booklet will be sent to Year 9 pupils and parents/carers via synergy. The digital subject information booklet will also be uploaded on the school website.
Wednesday 17 th January 2024	Options Launch Assembly with Senior Assistant Headteacher, Miss Worsley.
Week beginning 22 nd January 2024	Option talks in lessons by teachers, opportunity for pupil questions/answers.
Monday 5 th February 2024	Draft option forms to be issued to pupils.
Tuesday 6th February 2024	Year 9 Parents Evening, 4pm – 7pm, with an opportunity to discuss Key Stage 4 courses and options with subject teachers
Wednesday 21 st February 2024	Draft option forms to be handed in.
Week Beginning 26 th February 2024	SLT and Subject Leaders to review draft option choices regarding pupil selections, subjects, timetabling and staffing.
	Individual pupil interviews regarding draft option choices, subject suitability and career pathways.
Monday 18 th March 2024	Option choices finalised and final option forms to be issued to pupils.
Thursday 21 st March 2024	Final option forms to be completed and returned to school.
Summer Term 2024	Pupils' option choices finalised.

Please discuss appropriate options with your child using the booklets. Once you have done this, please fill in the form with them and have the form back to school by the deadline. The forms should be signed by the parent/carer.

If you have any queries about the Year 9 Options process, please do not hesitate to contact me: worsley.j@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk

Miss J Worsley

Senior Assistant Headteacher

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is comprised of two parts:

1. Six **compulsory** core qualifications
2. Three additional **selected** qualifications.

All subjects allow for access to post-16 routes and combine to construct a curriculum that meets the needs of every learner.

The pupils will follow a two-week timetable (50 periods over the two weeks) and the table below shows the number of lessons the pupils will have of each subject over the two weeks.

	Year 10	Year 11
English	8	8
Maths	8	8
Science	10	10
RE	5	5
Core PE	2	2
PSHCE	2	2
Option A	5	5
Option B	5	5
Option C	5	5

Part 1 – Compulsory Core Subjects

Our core curriculum comprises **six GCSE qualifications that are compulsory for every pupil:**

- **Religious Education** – 1 GCSE Award, Grade 9-1
- **English Language** – 1 GCSE Award, Grade 9-1
- **English Literature** – 1 GCSE Award, Grade 9-1
- **Mathematics** – 1 GCSE Award, Grade 9-1
- **Combined Science** – 2 GCSE Awards, Grade 9-1
or **Separate Sciences** – 3 GCSE Awards, Grade 9-1

Plus

- **Core PE** – Core PE is a non-examined course.
- **PSHCE** – non-examined course.

Part 2 – Option choices

Pupils also select **three additional qualifications**.

The additional courses we offer are summarised below:

Group A	Group B
Geography	Art & Design
History	ASDAN – Personal and Social Effectiveness
Spanish	Computer Science
	Digital ICT
	Drama
	Food Preparation and Nutrition
	Health and Social Care
	Media Studies
	Music
	Physical Education
	Statistics

Also, the ASDAN – Personal and Social Effectiveness qualification will be for selected pupils who require additional support.

Making the Choice!

- i. Pupils MUST choose 1 subject from Group A.**
- ii. Pupils may then choose a further 2 subjects from Group A and Group B combined.**
- iii. Pupils should choose 2 reserve subjects from Group A or Group B.**
- iv. Pupils to indicate which science route they wish to pursue at GCSE level. This is not guaranteed and after consultation with the Science Department, please note there may be reasons, that pupils are recommended to study a particular science route.**

Pupils cannot choose both Computer Science and ICT – one or the other

Are there any other restrictions to the choice of subjects?

Yes. Subject teachers, may consider assessments, current effort and commitment to the subject, bringing PE Kit, equipment or ingredients to school etc., and may recommend that a particular course or combination of courses will be the most suitable for a pupil to follow.

For example, in Science, Separate Sciences is a fast-paced course with a third more science content than Combined Science and is for pupils with a high level of commitment and willingness to succeed in this challenging area of study. Therefore, it may be in the best interest and more advantageous for a pupil to achieve two stronger grades through Combined Science than it is to achieve three weaker grades in Separate Sciences.

These choices will need to be filled in on the separate choices form and signed by a parent/carer.

A Guide to the Qualifications

There have been many recent changes to the education system resulting in reformed GCSEs, a different grade system and new qualifications. Fisher More proudly offers a diverse range of qualifications at Key Stage 4 to ensure that the curriculum is truly broad, balanced and relevant.

Here is an outline of how the different qualifications are assessed and awarded:

GCSE Qualifications

Award: Level 2 courses

- 9 – 1 scale; with grade 9 being the highest grade.
- The content of the reformed GCSEs is more challenging, especially at the higher grades – hence the introduction of grade 9 in particular.
- Fewer grade 9s are awarded compared to the previous top grade of A* (Current equivalent grade 8).
- A grade 5 is the equivalent of a strong C grade in the old system and is known as a strong pass a grade 4 is the equivalent of a lower C grade and known as a standard pass.
- Most GCSEs are now fully assessed through examinations at the end of Year 11, there are no coursework requirements usually.

BTEC Qualifications

Award: Level 2 courses

- Equivalent to GCSE grades (Level 2 is Equivalent to Grade 4-9).
- Assessed differently to GCSEs with a focus on measuring skills as well as recall ability.
- Increased vocational element to components.
- Significantly fewer final exams – BTECs are also assessed through assignments.
- Leads to career opportunities through Level 3 BTECs at post-16 level as well as adding to your 'basket' of qualifications for other routes.
- Recognised by colleges, industry and the professional sector.

BTEC and GCSE – Comparison of Grades:

BTEC Grades	Equivalent GCSE Grades
Distinction* (Level 2)	8.5
Distinction (Level 2)	7
Merit (Level 2)	5.5
Pass (Level 2)	4
Distinction (Level 1)	3
Merit (Level 1)	2
Pass (Level 1)	1.25

English Baccalaureate

What is the EBacc?

The EBacc is not a qualification in its own right – it is a combination of GCSE subjects, including a language, that offer a, pre-determined, range of knowledge and skills to young people.

Schools are now scrutinised by several different measures of performance and the number of pupils studying subjects that make up the full EBacc is one of them.

What are the EBacc subjects?

The Department for Education stipulates the specific subjects that pupils must study as part of the full EBacc.

If a pupil selected the following subjects at Fisher More they would meet the EBacc requirements:

- English language **and** English literature (Core curriculum)
- Maths (Core curriculum)
- Science: either Combined Science (Core curriculum) **or** Separate Sciences
- History **or** Geography
- Spanish (**or** other languages studied as an extra-curricular subject)

Why are Languages included in the EBacc?

Studying a foreign language can be challenging but also extremely rewarding and exciting. They provide an insight into other cultures and can also broaden pupils' horizons, helping them flourish in new environments.

If your child finds languages difficult, remember that they will have been studying them for much less time than their other subjects and learning a language has the potential to greatly enhance an individual's future opportunities. Employers also value languages, as they are increasingly important to make sure we can compete in the global market. Because of this, languages are increasingly becoming a requirement for graduate schemes.

Do I need the EBacc to go to University?

The EBacc is certainly valued by Britain's most prestigious universities but most universities have no universal entry requirements in terms of specific GCSEs. All or most universities will require a pupil to have gained a strong pass in English and Maths at GCSE but other than that subject choice is ultimately more important at post-16 stages of education.

Making the Right Decision

How do I choose my Options?

- Approach the process with an open mind and listen to staff carefully to make informed decisions about which subjects you might enjoy and would be able to achieve well in. Your teachers are the experts on the courses they deliver – there is a list of Subject Leaders on the next page.
- Make the most of the Individual Advice and Guidance Interview that you will each be allocated. You will receive guidance regarding the range of qualifications that offer the highest positive outcomes for you as a learner.
- Evaluate your strengths and what you find challenging and consider which courses offer you the highest potential final outcomes enabling you to achieve your future goals.
- Do not choose a course because your friends have chosen it, you like the teacher, it sounds easy or you cannot think of anything else. Key Stage 4 is the time to prioritise your own learning, you may not be in class with your friends, you may be taught by another teacher, none of the options are 'easy' and if you need help deciding then we are here to help.

Who should I speak to for more information?

If you have specific questions about particular courses at Key Stage 4 you should approach the subject leaders and subject teachers who will be happy to provide the information you require.

Core Subjects (Compulsory)

English Language and English Literature	Mr Jackson	jackson.m@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Mathematics	Mr Bradfield-Morgan	bradfield-morgan.p@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Combined Science & Separate Sciences	Mr Outhwaite	outhwaite.r@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Religious Studies	Mrs Helliwell	helliwell.s@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Core PE	Mr Atkin	atkin.s@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk

Pathway Subjects

History	Miss Rowley	rowley.r@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Geography	Mrs Hugo	hugo.s@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Spanish	Mrs Kegg	kegg.g@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Computer Science	Mr Davidson	davidson.j@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Statistics	Mr Bradfield-Morgan	bradfield-morgan.p@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Physical Education	Mr Atkin	atkin.s@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
ICT	Mr Thomas	thomas.a@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Media Studies	Mr Hoole	hoole.t@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Drama	Mrs Lomas	lomas.l@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Art and Design	Mr Salmon/Mrs A Holmes	salmon.b@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk holmes.a@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Music	Dr Cheetham	cheetham.a@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Food Preparation and Nutrition	Mrs Hindmarch	hindmarch.k@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
Health and Social Care	Mrs Greenwood	greenwood.v@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk
ASDAN	Mrs Hindmarch	hindmarch.k@fishermore.lancs.sch.uk