

The background is a dark blue gradient. It features several large, semi-transparent geometric shapes: a large orange arrow pointing up and to the right, a medium blue arrow pointing up and to the right, and a large green arrow pointing up and to the right. There are also various blue and green trapezoids and triangles scattered around. A white rectangular border frames the entire content.

# Options 2023-25



DARWEN  
VALE

# Principals Message

As you reach the end of Year 9, it is time to reflect on the subjects that have captured your interest this year and those that you would like to take on to a higher level of study. It is time to also consider a range of new subjects that may appeal to you.

Whilst you may not yet have clear ideas about which direction your future career might take, our advice is to keep your option choices as broad as possible, for example, a language, a humanities subject, a creative subject. You should be thinking about the kinds of working environment that you would feel happy in and those which are definitely not for you. This will help you decide on the range of skills that you are going to need in the future and which subject combinations will be most useful to you next year.

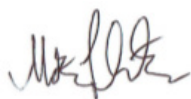
You will not have a completely free choice about the subjects that you study in Year 10 and 11. You will have to continue to study core subjects that are crucial in developing key skills you can use and these are highlighted on page 5 of this booklet.

You will also need to choose three further options which are clearly explained in this booklet. You may have heard of the prestigious English Baccalaureate, which comprises of achievements in Maths, English, Sciences, a Modern Foreign Language and History or Geography. We have made it clear how this route can be followed if your child so wishes, for access to top colleges and universities.

The booklet is designed to give you an overview of the subjects that are on offer next year. It is important that you ask further questions of your teachers and subject leaders if you are considering a subject.

We will give you as much help and advice on these important decisions as you require.

Yours sincerely,



Matthew Little

Principal

# Introduction

This booklet has been designed to inform you about the next exciting phase in your child's education. You may have already been discussing this important step with your son or daughter for some time.

The deadline for making these important decisions is now approaching quickly. It is important that your child's future learning choices are made for the right reasons.

The courses that are followed throughout years 10 and 11 will influence your son or daughter's long term future. You and/or your child will be invited to an information session where you can discuss the options in lots of detail with the experts in school.



|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Thursday 2nd March     | Options evening for parents, carers and pupils<br>Options evening for parents, carers and pupils<br>Options presentation (live event) 5:00pm till 7:00pm meet with subject leaders/teachers of the option subjects |
| Friday 10th March      | Options deadline   |
| From Monday 27th March | Individual choices interviews held with each student to discuss the suitability and viability of the choices made  |
| June/July 2023         | Letter sent home confirming courses for next year  |



We offer a great variety of courses and our aim is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum whilst still giving an individual a degree of choice.

This booklet provides a detailed outline of all the opportunities available to our students.

There have been a number of government-led changes that have gone out to national press and can sometimes be confusing. We aim to give practical and straight forward information that will guide and advise students to take courses that suit their aspirations.

**We are aiming for excellence for all.**

## Core subjects

Core subjects are studied by everyone and are outlined below:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Maths
- Science
- Physical Education

## Options

In addition to the core courses above, students are asked to make THREE choices from the options form, and ONE reserve subject. The option subjects will be given three periods each per week.

Option 1 must be ONE of these subjects:

- Geography
- History
- Triple Science
- French

The other two options can be from the following:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| • Art and Design                    | • Geography                                       |
| • Art photography                   | • History   |
| • Business – Enterprise & Marketing | • Hospitality & Catering (Food)                   |
| • Computer Science                  | • Music   |
| • Dance                             | • Sport Science                                   |
| • Drama                             | • Triple Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) |
| • French                            |   |

## Points to note

We will do our very best to satisfy the choices of all students. Please bear in mind that it is very difficult to timetable the hundreds of different combinations.

We will look very closely at the abilities and attitudes to learning of all our pupils against their choices and this will include interviews and coaching sessions with senior staff.

Careful consideration must be given to the size of teaching groups. We may not be able to allow certain courses to run if the number of students choosing that option is too low.

# English Baccalaureate

The English Baccalaureate is made up of achievement at GCSE level in Maths, English, 3 Sciences, a Modern Foreign Language and History or Geography. We have the highest expectations of all our learners.

To qualify for the English Baccalaureate they must choose history or geography AND a modern foreign language. Both the compulsory Combined Science and the optional Triple award count towards the English Baccalaureate, as does Computer Science.

In the next few pages of this booklet, we will explain the subjects that are on offer.

The option form that your child must complete will be sent to their Darwen Vale school email address.



## Note to students

It is important to stress that your future career options will not generally be affected by the choices you make at this stage in your education. Important considerations that should guide your choices are outlined on the next page.



Do  
choose



- Subjects you like
- Subjects you are good at
- Subjects you are particularly interested in
- Subjects you feel would help you in the general career area you are interested in or would help you progress to college or post-16 pathways

Don't  
choose  
subjects  
because.



- You like the teacher – as you might have a different teacher
- Your friends have chosen it – as they might be put in a different class
- You think they are easy – no subjects at GCSE are easy. They all require hard work and dedication to be successful.

# Art & Design

## Why?

- The opportunity to explore ideas and experiment with a wide range of media to produce creative art works, both individually, and in collaboration with other students.
- Broad-based projects which encourage imaginative work
- The chance to discover new ways of working.
- Introduction to a large and diverse range of artists and designers, both traditional and contemporary

You will explore and experiment with combinations of media such as:

- Painting
- Drawing
- Graphic design
- Textiles
- 3D sculpture
- Photography

## What will I learn?

### How is it assessed?

**There is 1 exam, worth 40% of your final grade. 60 % is classroom-based assessment through a portfolio of work.**

**Art is all practical.**

*"Art gives me the freedom to express myself. I love the relaxed atmosphere in the art studio and enjoy exploring and experimenting with different media & techniques. I want to be a fashion designer so art was a great option for me. I was able to balance my academic subjects with more creative ones" - Year 11 Pupil*

### Progression opportunities

- Continue to college or sixth form to study Art, Fashion, Photography, Media, Fine Art, sculpture, interior design.
- Careers within art and design:
- Teaching, professional artist, media, architecture, game design, fashion, interior design, broadcasting and many more!

See Miss Ramsey for more information

# Art Photography

## Why?

- Discover new and exciting ways of working creatively
- Study from broad-based projects individually and in collaboration with other students
- Work with professional standard equipment such as DSLRs and Adobe Photoshop
- Experience working with traditional and contemporary technologies

All Art and Design courses are entirely practical with 60% of your grade coming from coursework and 40% from an examination.

This course offers the opportunity to select from a range of starting points including Portraiture, Landscape, Natural Studies, Documentary, Photojournalism and Moving Image and develop such skills and techniques as Macro Photography, Black and White Photography, Still life Photography, Photoshop editing and stop motion animation.

## Course Content

## Progression opportunities

- Progression from GCSE to A-Level photography
- BA (Hons) Degree; specialist areas include Photography, Film Studies, Media Studies and Animation
- Careers; Professional photographer (Editorial, Sport, Fashion, Wedding, portrait, Advertising, Forensics/Crime Scene, Journalism), Film and Television, Photo editor, Lecturer

## This course would suit you if...

- You are enthusiastic about photography
- You have some artistic skill
- You are creative and willing to explore
- You are receptive to the ideas of others
- You can work independently
- You are resourceful
- You are hardworking

See Miss Ramsey for more information



# History

## Why?

How did Hitler rise to power in Germany? What was lifelike living in Nazi Germany?

Why was Elizabethan England called the 'Golden Age'? These are some of the questions that we look at in GCSE History.

This, knowledge rich course, is challenging, interesting and rewarding. It will teach you life changing skills like the ability to construct your own argument, how to analyse and how to reach a judgement. You will refine and develop your source skills, look at interpretations and study the work of some of the world's leading historians.

1. Germany Democracy and Dictatorship 1890-1945
2. Conflict and Tension – The Interwar period 1919-1939
3. Health and the people: c1000 to the present day – a thematic study of medical development and public health.
4. Elizabethan England 1558 -1603

## What will I learn?

### How is it assessed?

**Paper 1: Understanding the Modern World- Conflict and Tension and Democracy and Dictatorship (50%) 2 hrs**

**Paper 2: Shaping a Nation- Public Health and the People and Elizabethan England (50%) 2 hrs**

### Progression opportunities

- Lawyer
- Author
- Journalist
- Academic Researcher
- Politician
- Teacher
- Research and development
- Business and marketing
- Archaeology

See Mr Redfern for more information

# Geography

## Why?

Have you ever wondered why Climate Change is happened? Have you ever thought about why some parts of the world are wealthier than other part? Have you ever considered why natural disasters like earthquakes or tsunamis occur?

If you've answered yes, then Geography could be the course for you! Studying Geography will teach you about the problems that the world faces today and help you understand issues that affect our day to day lives from farming to urbanisation. If you are curious about the world you live in, then Geography is for you.

You will look at a combination of human and physical geography. Below is a list of the topics that you will study.

### Physical Geography

- Natural Hazards
- Tectonic Hazards
- Weather Hazards
- Climate Change
- Ecosystems
- Tropical Rainforests
- Hot Deserts
- Cold Environments
- The UK Landscape (Coasts, Rivers

& Glacial Landscapes)

### Human Geography

- Urban Issues & Challenges
- The Changing Economic World
- The Challenge of Resource Management
- Food
- Water
- Energy

## What will I learn?

## Progression opportunities

GCSE Geography prepares you to study A Level Geography or a Travel and Tourism Diploma. Careers using Geography:

Universities and Employers welcome this subject as a valuable qualification because of the range and variety of skills that a student develops over the two years.

- Weather reporter
- Park Ranger
- Pilot
- Travel Agent
- Teacher
- Surveying
- Planning
- Energy
- Environmental sustainability

## How is it assessed?

You will study 3 different units each with an exam at the end of Yr 11.

2 exams last 1 hour 30 minutes and the other lasts 1 hour 15 minutes.

See Mr Redfern for more information

**We Aim  
High**

**We Care**



**We Work  
Hard**

**We Are  
Vale**

# French

## Why?

It's a multilingual world. 94% of the world does not speak English as their first language. 75% of the world does not speak English at all.

The internet has brought everyone much closer together so chatting, blogging and networking with people of different languages from all over the world is easy. Imagine all the other people you could communicate with and all the amazing places you could travel to or work at and all because you can speak their language. So log onto the world's real social network and learn languages at GCSE!

There are 128 million people in the world who speak French as their main language, 72 million who live in a country where French is spoken as a language and 110 million people who are or have learnt French – YOU are one of them. There are 33 French speaking countries. Many universities prefer undergraduates who have studied a language because fewer and fewer students have the skills which French gives you – listening, speaking, reading, writing, communication, knowledge and understanding of other countries and cultures. It is a subject which proves you have brain – it is an academic subject.

## Progression opportunities

- Translating
- Interpreting
- International finance
- International Law
- International Organisations such as the United Nations
- Teaching English as a foreign language
- Transport, tourism and leisure
- Anything, Anywhere in the World

## How is it assessed?

- 25% Speaking
- 25% Listening
- 25% Reading
- 25% Writing

*"I'm enjoying French at the moment because I like the group work and the way we're learning."* - Year 10 Pupil

*"So far it has been challenging but fun – I like that!"* - Year 10 Pupil

*"I believe taking French as a GCSE is a fantastic opportunity as it broadens your horizons. I enjoy learning the different topics and it's good fun!"* - Year 9 Pupil

**All examined at the end of the course**

See any of the French teachers for more information

# Triple Science

## Why?

Triple Science (three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics) is an excellent pathway for those wishing to study Science to a higher qualification level, for those wishing to follow on to a career with a scientific element in it or for those students highly inquisitive about the world around them.

For each separate GCSE you will take part in a large number compulsory practical investigations as part of the GCSE course.

Triple Award Science allows you to study all three separate sciences of Biology, Chemistry and Physics and gives you three separate GCSE grades allowing you to show your strengths in each science. Opting for this course allows you to study each course in more depth. Pupils who opt for Triple Science are more likely to get higher grades if they take A-Level Sciences. Opting for this course allows you to explore in greater depth why things happen, rather than just describing them. In addition to studying the theory of the separate sciences, you will also explore many investigations and experiment to high levels.

## What will I learn?

## Progression opportunities

Triple Science is strongly recommended if you are considering studying Science at A-level or are considering a career that uses Science. There is a demand for Scientists in the UK job market and employers are crying out for candidates with science-based skills. Triple Science will set you on the right path for your career and is looked upon more favourably by colleges, universities and employers.

### Careers using Science:

- Careers in medicine, e.g. Doctor
- Chemist
- Climate change analysts
- Meteorologist
- Nuclear power operator
- Chemical Technician
- Veterinary Science
- Pilot

## How is it assessed?

For each of the separate GCSE's you will sit two 1 hour and 45 minute exams worth 50% each.

There is no controlled Assessment.

See Mrs Marsland for more information

# Business Enterprise & Marketing

## Why?

Business is a perfect opportunity for students to study things that are relevant to the society that we live in. Anything is possible in Business such as becoming the next Mark Zuckerberg or starting up your own unique company. Either way you will be prepared for the world of work and gain a competitive advantage in competitive careers. Although an academic subject, it is practical, applied and exciting.

Every day you shop and use certain brands. You will address questions such as.....

- Who is Nikes target customer?
- Starburst used to be called Opal Fruits...why?!
- How does Coca Cola remain such a successful brand?
- How does Facebook make a profit?
- Why do we pay high prices for brands such as North Face?

In this subject, students study marketing and enterprise elements of business, these include:

1. Understanding how to target a market
2. Making products financially viable
3. Product development
4. Attracting and retaining customers
5. Things to consider when starting a new business
6. Functional activities of start-up businesses

## What will I learn?

### How is it assessed?

- Written exam paper
- Coursework/ moderated controlled assessments

**This course is chosen to offer pupils a course which is heavily based on coursework, completed during lesson time.**

### Progression opportunities

- Graphic design
- Data controller
- ICT technician
- Gaming
- Gaming art
- Digital media
- Working in TV and film
- Network manager
- Level 3 creative courses

See Miss Mitchell, Mr Miele or Mrs Cull, for more information

# Computer Science

## Why?

We are now living in a digital age and the digital age needs computer scientists...

Computing is part of everything we do and studying computer science at GCSE is a start to enabling you to solve complex, challenging problems in a real world context.

Computing offers many benefits to school graduates. It's a highly paid, rewarding career path and offers people great life opportunities

Challenge yourself – choose Computer Science

You will learn all about the different principles and concepts of computer science. This includes:

1. Systems architecture
2. Storage
3. Networking
4. System Security
5. Systems software
6. Computational thinking
7. Programming fundamentals
8. Producing robust programmes

## What will I learn?

## Progression opportunities

- Web developer
- Games programmer
- Code analyst M15
- Software developer
- IT Technician
- In fact, anything involving computers is possible

## How is it assessed?

2 externally sat exams worth 50% each (Computer systems and Computational thinking, algorithms and programming). These are 90 minutes each.

You will also get the opportunity to complete a practical programming task using Python software.

See Miss Mitchell, Mr Miele or Mrs Cull, for more information



# Drama

## Why?

In a society in which effective communication is vital, the study of drama develops verbal and non-verbal, individual and group communication skills which are skills for living. Drama enhances

students' artistic and creative abilities and gives them a better understanding of themselves and their world.

This course is an extremely varied one which introduces you to most, if not all, aspects of Theatre. From acting and directing through to devising and designing original pieces of theatre. GCSE Drama is a fantastic way of learning and applying both subject specific and easily transferable skills.

Throughout the course you will continue to develop your acting skills, including the use of; voice, physicality, characterisation and improvisation. Lessons are very practical and involve a great deal of collaborative work, though there are also possibilities to create solo work if you wish. The course is very flexible and offers options for not only actors, but also those wishing to explore design elements, including lighting, sound, costume, set, and even hair & make-up!

1. Exploring the Performing Arts – You will research different styles of theatre and choose one to research for your coursework. Even though you are assessed by coursework, you will rigorously explore these styles practically in lesson. As Drama leads by the belief that practical knowledge and skills can help assist with theory-based work.
2. Developing skills and techniques in the Performing Arts – For this component you will develop your skills either as a performer or designer (costume, set, lights, sound, hair & make-up, props) which will then be shown through the realisation of a performance from a script.
3. Responding to a brief – You will devise your own performance in response to a stimulus. With 12 weeks to develop your performance you will consider – staging, style, techniques, characterisation, intent/impact.

## What will I learn?

## How is it assessed?

Exploring the Performing Arts –  
Coursework 30%

Developing skills and techniques  
in the Performing Arts –  
Performance 30%

Responding to a brief –  
Performance 40%

## Progression opportunities

After you have finished the course, you may want to go on to further study such as A levels, BTECs or a mixture of both. Or you might want to find work in performing arts, as an actor, apprentice, or a trainee. Which option is best for you will depend on both the grades you achieve in this qualification and in other qualifications you have taken. In addition to the obvious career progressions, Drama offers valuable employability skills all colleges, universities and businesses look for in candidates:

Initiative, Organisational skills,  
Communication skills, Teamwork, Problem  
solving, Creativity, Motivation and  
enthusiasm.

See Mr Bebro for more  
information

# Music

## Why?

If you like to perform, compose and listen to music then choose this subject!

It will help you take responsibility for your own learning and support you in other areas of your study. It helps sharpen your memory and concentration, helps in the study of languages, improves your IQ and emotional intelligence and teaches you self-discipline.

This course would suit you if:

1. You play an instrument or sing (compulsory requirement)
2. You are creative
3. You relish a challenge
4. You enjoy listening to music
5. You want to work both individually and as
6. Part of a group
7. Composing music is an interest
8. You enjoy experimenting with new ideas
9. You want a creative subject to balance your choices

## What will I learn?

## Progression opportunities

Music helps to develop personal skills essential for success in examinations, job interviews and so on. It is desirable for anyone wanting to be a performer, composer or Music teacher. The skills and dedication required to achieve in Music are held in high regard by colleges and future employers.

## How is it assessed?

- Performing 25%
- Composing 25%
- Exam 25%
- Compulsory Module 25%

See Mr Bebro for more information

# Sport Science

## Why?

For sports lovers and budding physiotherapists, future professional footballers or someone who is enthusiastic about health and fitness, this is the subject for you!

Sport Science helps students appreciate how sport science underpins sport at all levels. Pupils learn about injury prevention, improving personal fitness through appropriate training and how athletes require a balanced diet to be able to perform

1. Reducing the risk of sports injuries (Written Exam) 40%
2. Applying principles of training (Coursework) 30%
3. Sports nutrition (Coursework) 30%

## What will I learn?

## How is it assessed?

There are 3 individual units that are assessed. The grade is determined by an accumulation of points across these 3 units which result in an end grade:

- Pass (4)
- Merit (5.5)
- Distinction (7)
- Distinction Star (8.5)

## Progression opportunities

Sport Science is the ideal preparation for further education in Sport and Exercise Sciences. The course develops your knowledge of a healthy active lifestyle, diet and nutrition, and dealing with sporting injuries

Typical jobs taken by people who study the Sport course are: physiotherapist, sports coach, fitness instruction and personal trainer, strength and conditioning coach, nutritionist, PE teacher as well as being a professional athlete or in the Armed Forces.

See Mr Baines for more information

# Hospitality & Catering

## Why?

This course enables students to gain an insight into The Hospitality and Catering Industry, the 3rd largest sector in the UK. Students will learn how this multi-billion-pound sector works and what makes businesses within it successful.

Students will gain knowledge of customer care, the operation of a restaurant kitchen, the front of house service area, food preparation time management and food presentation skills.

A genuine interest in cooking is essential as students will undertake numerous practical tasks during the course. A commitment is needed for the buying of ingredients and students must be willing to undertake written and practical homework tasks

The course is split into 2 units:

- 1. UNIT 1:** The Hospitality & Catering Industry – this involves studying the make-up of the industry and the types of business that operate within it. It includes health & safety, food safety legislation, food ill-health & allergies, and environmental issues.
- 2. UNIT 2:** Hospitality & Catering in Action – this involves the study of nutrition, menu planning to suit dietary needs, cooking methods and presentation techniques.

## What will I learn?

## Progression opportunities

In addition to the obvious career progression into the Hospitality & Catering industry, this course is suitable for those students interested in other areas such as nutrition, diet, and the tourism & travel industries. It is also ideal for those simply interested in cooking and food, providing them with useful knowledge of healthy eating and food preparation for later on in life.

## How is it assessed?

Unit 1 – externally assessed written exam – 40%.

Unit 2 – internally assessed NEA (Non-examined assessment) – 60%.

The NEA takes place during Year 11 and requires students to nutritionally plan, prepare and cook a variety of dishes for a given customer group or dietary need. The project consists of both written work and a 4-hour practical exam which assesses their practical skills.

See Miss Ramsey for more information

# Dance

## Why?

- Dance is both powerful and empowering as a form of non-verbal communication, and supports learning across a range of subjects;
- Dance promotes fitness and wellbeing.
- Students develop confidence and self-esteem through performing, as well as promoting determination to succeed and improve.
- Sensitivity to others and team-working skills are developed in group performance and choreography.
- As choreographers, students employ the skills of problem-solving and creativity.
- They develop their knowledge and understanding of a range of dance styles through the interrelated processes of performing, creating and appreciating dances.
- As critics, students make informed decisions and articulate opinions about the dances they see, they develop as effective and independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds.
- Viewing professional works develops a critical appreciation of dance in its physical, artistic, aesthetic and cultural contexts.
- As dancers, students develop their physical, technical and expressive skills as well as their individual qualities as performers.

1. Exploring the Performing Arts
2. Developing skills and techniques in the Performing Arts
3. Responding to a brief

## What will I learn?

## Progression opportunities

After you have finished the course, you may want to go on to further study such as A levels, BTECs or a mixture of both. Or you might want to find work in performing arts, as an apprentice or a trainee. Which option is best for you will depend on both the grades you achieve in this qualification and in other qualifications you have taken, what you enjoy doing and any advice you can access about the further learning and training opportunities available in your area.

## How is it assessed?

You will carry out tasks or mini-projects throughout the course. Your teacher will mark these, which will give you an idea of how you are getting on.

Towards the end of the course you will do one larger project in acting, dance or musical theatre, where you use the knowledge, skills and techniques you have learned to devise and deliver a workshop performance to a specific audience from a brief that will be given to you.

All the work you do through the course prepares you for this larger project, which is sent away to be marked.

See Mr Baines for more information

# Notes

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**IT'S  
YOUR  
PASSION**

**IT'S  
YOUR  
CHOICE**