



Irlam and Cadishead Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning



Year 9 Guided Choices Course Information 2026

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Welcome to Year 9 Guided Choices

Dear Year 9 Student,

You're about to start an exciting new chapter in your school journey—Key Stage 4 begins in September!

Over the next few weeks, you'll be choosing the subjects you want to study in Years 10 and 11. You'll still do English, Maths, Science and Core PE, but now you get to pick extra subjects that match your interests, strengths and future goals. These choices are important because they can shape your future—both at ICA and beyond. So, take your time, think carefully, and choose subjects you enjoy and feel confident in.

Try not to base your decisions on what your friends are picking or which teacher you might get. Instead, think about what helps you feel successful and what might support your future career ideas. If you're aiming for a specific job or course, some subjects might be especially useful.

Studying a mix of subjects is important—colleges, universities and employers often look for variety. If we think the EBacc pathway is right for you, we'll recommend it and explain why.

Whatever you choose, we'll support you to make sure your subjects help you achieve, make progress and take the next step toward your future. Talk to your parents, carers, teachers and even older students to help you decide.

For now, read through this booklet carefully and start thinking about what you'd like to study next year. If you're unsure about anything, just ask we're here to help.

You've got this!

Mr Smith
Assistant Principal

Guided Choices Process

Making your choices may seem daunting at first, but we will guide you every step of the way.

Stage 1

Guided Choices lessons during Wednesday Period 5
Enrichment January 2026

Stage 2

Parents and students review Guided Choices Booklet at home.

Stage 3

14 th January – Options Process Assembly

Stage 4

Students should now speak to teachers and check Mid Year assessment results to think about option decisions.

Stage 5

Options Information Evening 15th January 2026

Stage 6

Deadline for Guided Choices selection.
5th March

Stage 7

'Right Choice' review meetings.

Stage 8

'Formal Choice' letters sent to parents.
Mid-July

Frequently Asked Questions



What are my choices?

In addition to your core curriculum subjects, which are mandatory, you will make some option choices and give a reserve choice.

Find out more about the subjects on offer to you next year inside this booklet.

It is important that you enjoy learning, so it is vital that you select courses that you find interesting, play to your strengths and develop your skills. You should consider carefully how these choices will affect your future at Irlam and Cadishead Academy and beyond. Many courses of study will link directly into sixth form and college courses.

How do I indicate my choices?

This year, you will select your subject options using a paper form, which will be completed and handed back to your Head of Year. Further information will be shared in the near future about how you and your child will make final subject choices. At this stage, the focus should be on carefully reading the information in this booklet to help support you in making informed decisions.

Will I automatically secure a place on my first choice courses?

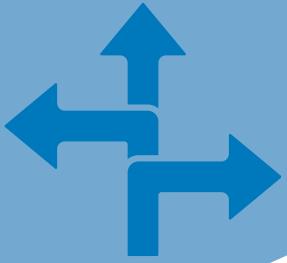
Not necessarily, for three reasons:

1. The range of subjects offered now, at the planning stage, may have to be modified because of staffing or other constraints
2. It may be necessary to limit the numbers for safety reasons and access to equipment
3. A student's level of attainment and progression in Year 9 will be considered before confirming final choices.

You will be asked to give two reserve choices on your Options Form. It is important that you do this as some subjects may be under or oversubscribed, and therefore we will need to find an alternative option for you. If you do not give us a reserve choice, it will not make you more likely to receive your first choice. In fact, you may be placed into whichever subject has the lowest numbers. Remember that once your choices have been made, it will not be possible to change them as your timetable will be fixed and many groups will be full.

Thinking Ahead

How Subject Choices Shape the Future



Supporting Informed Decisions

Choosing GCSE subjects is an exciting step, and one that can influence future opportunities in education, training, and employment. This section is designed to help families understand the bigger picture and support students in making confident, informed choices.

A Link to Careers

Choosing GCSEs can shape future opportunities. Some subjects are essential for certain careers and some A-levels, college courses, and university degrees require specific GCSEs. For example:

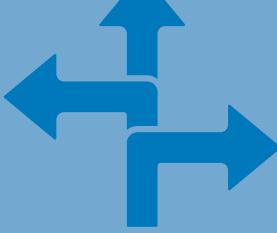
- Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) are key for medicine, engineering, and veterinary science. Triple Science is often preferred.
- Languages support careers in international business, diplomacy, and tourism – and may be required for some university courses.
- Creative Subjects (Art, Music, Drama, Design) lead to roles in media, fashion, architecture, and the wider creative industries.

Even if students aren't sure of their future plans yet, choosing a broad mix of subjects helps keep options open.

Understanding Post-16 Pathways

All students are required to stay in some form of full-time education or training until the age of 18. As part of our careers programme, we help students explore the different pathways available to them after Year 11, so they can make informed and confident choices about their future.

Post-16 Pathways



We encourage families to talk through these options together and explore what best suits their child's interests, strengths, and future goals. If you'd like further guidance or support, our careers team is always happy to help.

Apprenticeships & Traineeships

These are ideal for students who want to gain hands-on experience while working towards a recognised qualification. Apprenticeships combine paid work with study and are available in a wide range of industries.

BTEC Vocational Courses

BTECs are practical, coursework-based qualifications that focus on specific career areas such as catering, hairdressing, health and social care, or construction. They suit students who prefer continuous assessment and learning linked directly to the workplace.

T Levels

T Levels are a newer qualification designed to prepare students for skilled employment or further study. They're equivalent to three A-levels and focus on one subject area, combining classroom learning with a substantial industry placement.

A Levels

A Levels are traditional academic qualifications where students usually choose three subjects to study over two years in a classroom setting. They are assessed mainly through final examinations.

Vocational A Levels

Vocational A Levels are work-related qualifications that focus on practical skills and knowledge in a specific industry, like health care, engineering, or business.

How Can Parents Help?

Encouraging students to explore how their interests and strengths align with different careers can make subject choices more meaningful.



Useful Resources to Explore Together

There are excellent tools available to help students and families explore options and plan ahead:

- **CareerPilot** A free website that helps students explore careers, courses, and pathways based on their interests and skills
- **National Careers Service** Offers job profiles, advice, and guidance for all ages
- **BBC Bitesize Careers** Short videos and articles showing real people in real jobs
- **Sign In - Unifrog** An online platform that helps students explore careers, compare courses, and plan their next steps, all in one place
- **School Careers Programme** Students will continue to receive guidance through assemblies, workshops, and 1:1 support

We encourage parents and carers to explore these resources with their child and talk about their hopes, interests, and goals.

Making Your Choices

- It is compulsory for all students to study the following subjects: English Language and Literature, Maths, Combined Science and Core PE.
- When selecting your options, it is also compulsory that all students select one of History, Geography.
- The remaining three choices are open for you to choose as you wish, and History, Geography and will appear again as you may wish to study more than one of these subjects. Some students will be advised to study French where appropriate.

Compulsory Subjects

All students will study all of these subjects

English Language
English Literature
Maths
Science
Core PE

Option 1 EBacc Subjects

All students will choose one of these subjects

Geography
History

Option 2 & 3 Open Subjects

All students will choose three subjects from this list

Business
Creative iMedia
Drama
Dance
Art
Geography
History
Childcare
Catering
Engineering
PRE
French
Triple Science
Textiles
Music
Sports Studies

EBacc Explained

The English Baccalaureate, or EBacc, is a combination of academic subjects that provide an excellent base for further study and for many careers. Students that are suitable for this option will be informed by Mr Smith.

It is important to study the subjects that are the right ones for individuals. The EBacc pathway will be recommended if it's believed that a student has the ability to study a high number of academic subjects. If it is recommended as a pathway, then students should seriously consider choosing this as it will lead to a greater range of options in the future. These subjects show colleges, universities and employers that students are capable of studying to a higher level- but remember, it takes a lot of commitment and effort to achieve high grades in all chosen subjects. All students at Irlam and Cadishead Academy have the opportunity to complete the EBacc if they wish.

The subjects that make up the EBacc are: English Language and Literature, Mathematics, the Sciences, History, Geography and a Modern Foreign Language.

It is not a qualification, and you will not receive a certificate saying that you have completed the EBacc. However, it does highlight your academic ability, which will provide you with a greater range of opportunities following school. Many further education providers and employers (especially the most prestigious and academic institutions such as Oxbridge/Russell Group universities and many large businesses) require students to complete the EBacc before applying.

It is compulsory for all students to study the following subjects: English Language and Literature, Maths, Combined Science and Core PE. When selecting your options, it is also compulsory that all students select one of History, Geography or a Modern Foreign Language. This is to ensure that we consider you to be an EBacc eligible student, you have considered which of the EBacc subjects you would like to study. The remaining three choices are open for you to choose as you wish, and History, Geography and languages will appear again as you may wish to study more than one of these subjects. Remember, to be an EBacc student, you must be studying History or Geography and a language.

English Language



Course Outline

This course develops essential skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Students learn to:

- Understand and analyse a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Write effectively for different audiences and purposes.
- Express themselves clearly, accurately and creatively.
- Build confidence in spoken communication.



What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

English Language GCSE is a gateway qualification – it's essential for progression into almost every pathway, whether academic, vocational, or employment-based.

- BTEC
- T-Levels
- Apprenticeships

Future Pathways

Careers where communication is key: teaching, publishing, law, journalism, marketing, PR, customer-facing roles, and leadership positions.

Course Contact: Miss E Lee

elizabeth.lee@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



How will I be assessed?

The course is built around two written exams plus a spoken language endorsement:

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

- Time: 1 hour 45 minutes
- Worth: 50% of GCSE (80 marks)
- Focus: 20th- or 21st-century literary fiction.
- Section A – Reading: Analyse one fiction extract (language, structure, writer's choices).
- Section B – Writing: Produce a descriptive or narrative piece, showing creativity and technical accuracy.

Paper 2: Writer's Viewpoints and Perspectives

- Time: 1 hour 45 minutes
- Worth: 50% of GCSE (80 marks)
- Focus: Non-fiction and literary non-fiction from the 19th, 20th, or 21st centuries.
- Section A – Reading: Compare how two writers present their ideas, viewpoints and perspectives.
- Section B – Writing: Produce a piece of non-fiction writing (e.g. article, letter, speech) presenting a viewpoint.

Spoken Language Endorsement

- A separate part of the course (does not count towards the GCSE grade, but is reported as Pass/Merit/Distinction).
- Students prepare and deliver a presentation, respond to questions, and demonstrate effective spoken communication.

English Literature



GCSE
Specification: AQA

Course Outline

- The AQA GCSE English Literature course is taught over two years, with all assessments taking place in a single exam series at the end of Year 11. Students will explore a wide range of texts, each chosen to develop their analytical skills, cultural understanding and appreciation of literature.

Shakespeare

- In Year 10, students will study Macbeth by William Shakespeare, examining powerful themes such as ambition, masculinity, loyalty, and honour.



19th-Century Novel

- Also in Year 10, students will read A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens, exploring ideas of morality, redemption, and social responsibility.

Modern Prose or Drama

- In Year 11, students will study DNA by Dennis Kelly, a contemporary play that raises challenging questions about morality, peer pressure and personal accountability.

Poetry

- Across both years, students will study a cluster of 15 poems from AQA's anthology, developing skills of comparison and interpretation. They will also tackle unseen poetry, learning to respond with confidence to texts they have never encountered before.

Course Contact: Miss E Lee

elizabeth.lee@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



How will I be assessed?

This GCSE will comprise of two papers that students will have to sit at the end of their Year 11 journey.

English Literature Paper 1 (1 hour 45 minutes) - 64 marks - 40% of GCSE

English Literature Paper 2 (2 hours 15 minutes) - 96 marks - 60% of GCSE

What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

Students can go on to study A-Level English Literature, BTECs and courses in Journalism, Media or Performing Arts. Pupils can also use English Literature in apprenticeships where strong communication skills are required.

Future Pathways

Studying English Literature can have potential links to future careers like publishing, teaching, law, journalism, marketing, public relations, theatre and communications.

Mathematics



Course Outline

- Across KS4, you will explore the full breadth of the Mathematics curriculum through its five key strands: Number, Algebra, Geometry, Ratio and Proportion, and Statistics. You will build on the core foundations established in earlier years, developing confidence in new methods, alternative representations, and applying your knowledge to increasingly complex problems.
- Studying Mathematics is an excellent way to strengthen your analytical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills. The subject not only equips you to understand and tackle mathematical and abstract challenges, but also provides valuable skills that can be transferred into many other areas of learning and life.



How will I be assessed?

- At the end of Year 11, students will complete three exam papers, each lasting 90 minutes. Paper 1 is a non-calculator assessment, while Papers 2 and 3 are calculator papers. All three papers are equally weighted, and any topic from the course can appear on any paper.
- Students will be entered for either the Foundation tier or the Higher tier. Foundation tier entries allow students to achieve grades 1–5, while Higher tier entries provide access to grades 4–9.

Course Contact: Mrs R Freedman
rebecca.freedman@irlamandcadishead.org.uk

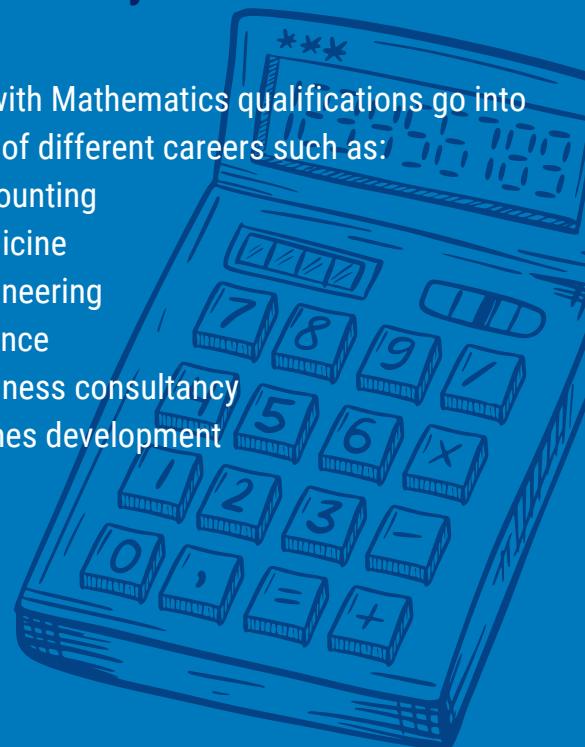
What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

A grade 4 or above in GCSE Mathematics opens the door to a wide range of Level 3 pathways. This includes access to A-levels, T-levels and Apprenticeships, as most further education providers regard a grade 4 in Mathematics as an essential entry requirement.

Future Pathways

People with Mathematics qualifications go into an array of different careers such as:

- Accounting
- Medicine
- Engineering
- Finance
- Business consultancy
- Games development



Combined Science: Trilogy



GCSE
Specification: AQA

Course Outline

- Combined Science gives students the opportunity to engage with all three scientific disciplines – Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Throughout the course, students will develop their understanding through six examination papers: two Biology, two Chemistry and two Physics. As this is a linear qualification, all exams are taken at the end of the course.
- Students will explore a wide range of scientific ideas and themes, with each paper focusing on key topic areas within its specialism. Assessments include a variety of question types such as multiple choice, structured questions, short answers and extended responses.
- Across all three subjects, students will also develop essential practical skills, applying scientific methods and techniques. Entry is tiered, with students sitting either Foundation or Higher tier papers.

How will I be assessed?

- Combined Science is assessed through six exams: two each in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Every exam is 1 hour 15 minutes, worth 70 marks, and taken at either Foundation or Higher tier.
- Biology topics include cells, organisation, infection and response, bioenergetics, homeostasis, inheritance and ecology.
- Chemistry covers atomic structure, bonding, quantitative chemistry, chemical changes, energy changes, rates, organic chemistry, analysis, the atmosphere and resources.
- Physics includes energy, electricity, particle model, atomic structure, forces, waves and magnetism.
- Across all exams, students are assessed on scientific understanding, data interpretation, evaluation skills and practical skills.

What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

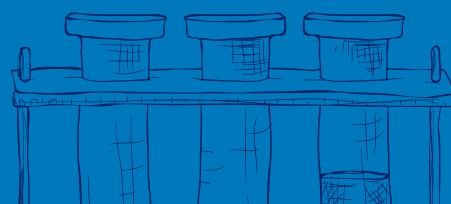
Combined Science will result in 2 GCSEs, this could lead to further study such as:

- Applied Science BTEC
- Science A Levels
- Veterinary Sciences
- Engineering
- Animal Studies
- Psychology
- Health and Social Care

Future Pathways

People with Science qualifications go into an array of different careers such as:

- Medicine
- Dentistry
- Engineering
- Computer Science
- Medical Writer
- Vet
- Psychology
- Forensic Science
- Food Technology
- Laboratory Research
- Meteorology



Course Contact:

Mrs N John-Charles

natalie.john-charles@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



History



GCSE
Specification:
Pearson Edexcel

Course Outline

GCSE History is the study of the past. It is who we are and why we are they way we are.

The course looks at British history, European history and World history from the Medieval times to the present day.

There are a wide number of engaging and diverse topics to learn about, from the Spanish Armada to the Berlin Wall, from the Black Death to the fall of the Soviet Union.

How will I be assessed?

At the end of Year 11, you will be assessed through three exams.

Paper One: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present – 30% of the qualification

Students will explore the causes of disease and illness, and the changing approaches to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment over time.

Paper Two: Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88 and The Cold War, 1941–1991 – 40% of the qualification

Students will study the challenges faced by Queen Elizabeth I, including threats from abroad, the problem of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Spanish Armada. They will also examine the development and escalation of the Cold War, and the eventual collapse of Soviet control in Eastern Europe.

Paper Three: Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–1939 – 30% of the qualification

Students will study the challenges facing the Weimar Republic, Adolf Hitler's rise to power, and life in Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1939.

What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- Once you have achieved your GCSE you could go on to do A-Levels in History, Ancient History or Classical Civilizations. You can also complete a degree in many different types of History at University.

Future Pathways

- There is a large number of pathways for example: teaching, law, business, archaeologist, working in museums, archivist, the civil service, politics, working in libraries.

Student Quote

"I really like History because I get to learn lots of interesting facts and stories about the past".

Course Contact: Mr C Thomas
craig.thomas@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



Geography



GCSE
Specification: AQA

Course Outline

The Geography course is modern, engaging, and explores the world and the people who live in it. Students will study current issues such as climate change, migration, urbanisation, and global development.

Unit One – Living in the UK Today

- Landscapes of the UK
- People of the UK
- Environmental Challenges in the UK

Unit Two – The World Around Us

- Global Ecosystems and Rainforests
- Coastal Landscapes
- People of the Planet
- Environmental Threats

Unit Three – Geographical Skills and Fieldwork

- Geographical Skills
- Fieldwork and Investigations
- Students will develop their knowledge, analytical skills, and understanding of real-world issues through engaging lessons and practical fieldwork.

How will I be assessed?

Students will be assessed continually through retrieval questions, short and long exam questions, and end-of-unit assessments.

At the end of the course, students will be required to sit three written exams:

- Paper 1 – Living with the Physical Environment (70 marks, 1 hour 30 minutes, 35%)
- Paper 2 – Challenges in the Human Environment (70 marks, 1 hour 30 minutes, 35%)
- Paper 3 – Geographical Applications (60 marks, 1 hour 30 minutes, 30%)

These exams assess students' knowledge, understanding, and ability to apply geographical skills to real-world issues.

What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- A-Level Geography

Future Pathways

- Geography is broad; it gives you a wide range of analysis, problem solving and communication skills and is well respected. Geography graduates are employed in a wide range of sectors including the public sector, education, commerce, industry, transport and tourism.
- Geography graduates have excellent transferrable skills, which also attract employers from the business, law and finance sectors.
- A Geography qualification is seen as highly desirable by top universities.

Student Quote

"I enjoy studying Geography because I enjoy learning about the different case studies, especially in natural hazards and I enjoyed going on a field trip and collecting data"

Course Contact: Miss A Daly
alyx.daly@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



Art Craft & Design



GCSE
Specification: OCR

Course Outline

This course allows students to explore creativity and develop practical skills across art, craft, and textile design. You will work with a range of materials and techniques, including fabrics, threads, printing, construction, and mixed-media processes.

Throughout the course, you will research and experiment with ideas, develop personal projects, and create finished pieces that reflect both contemporary and traditional design influences. You will also learn to evaluate your own work and the work of others to inform your creative decisions.

The course is assessed through a combination of practical coursework and a written exam, helping you build both creative and analytical skills for further study or careers in art, design, and textiles.



How will I be assessed?

Assessment

- Coursework (NEA) – 60%
- Students develop, plan, and create a portfolio of practical projects, showing creativity, skill, and the design process from research to final outcomes.
- Written Exam (Externally Set Assignment) – 40%
- Assesses your ability to respond to a set theme, develop ideas under timed conditions, and produce a final piece demonstrating practical and analytical skills.

This combination ensures a balance of creative, practical work and critical understanding of art, craft, and textiles.

Course Contact: Mrs H Colquitt
Helen.Colquitt@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- Level 3 – Further Study Options
- A Levels in Art & Design, Textiles, or Fashion & Textiles
- BTEC/Tech Level Nationals in Art, Design, or Fashion & Textiles
- T Levels related to Design, Creative Media, or Fashion
- Higher Education Pathways
- Foundation Degree or BA in Fashion, Textiles, or Art & Design
- Degree in Fine Art, Graphic Design, or Surface/Textile Design

Future Pathways

- Fashion Designer
- Textile Designer
- Interior Designer
- Costume Designer
- Fashion Buyer or Merchandiser
- Illustrator
- Product / Surface Pattern Designer
- Fashion or Textile Technologist
- Art Therapist
- Craftsperson or Maker
- Upholsterer
- Set or Prop Designer
- Retail Visual Merchandiser
- Fashion Stylist

Child Development



**Level 1/2
Technical**
Specification: NCFE

Course Outline

This Level 2 Childcare course introduces students to the core principles of working with young children and supporting their development.

In Year 10, you will explore nine key content areas, building knowledge and practical understanding in topics such as child development, play, safety, and observation planning. These foundations help you develop the skills needed to work confidently and responsibly with young children.

In Year 11, you will apply what you've learned to an exam board-set case study, completing six tasks that mirror real-world situations within early years settings. This allows you to demonstrate how you can use your knowledge in practical, meaningful ways.

You will also complete a written exam in June of Year 11, assessing your overall understanding of the course. This vocational qualification is graded from Level 2 Distinction* through to Level 1 Pass.

How will I be assessed?

The course is assessed through a combination of coursework and a final examination.

The Non-Exam Assessment (NEA) consists of 16 hours of coursework, allowing students to apply their knowledge and demonstrate practical understanding through a series of structured tasks. This makes up 50% of the overall grade.

The Exam Assessment (EA) is a 1 hour 30 minute written paper, in which students are tested on all key content. The exam typically includes short and extended response questions based around mini scenarios, and contributes the remaining 50% of the qualification grade.

What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- Level 3 – Childcare and Education Pathways
- NCFE CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education (Early Years Educator)
- BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Children's Play, Learning and Development
- T Level – Education and Early Years
- Higher Education Pathways (after Level 3)
- Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies
- Degree in Primary Education (with QTS)
- Degree in Child Development, Psychology or Social Work
- These routes can lead to careers in nurseries, schools, early years settings and further progression into higher education.

Future Pathways

- Early Years Educator (nurseries, preschools, reception)
- Primary School Teacher (via teaching degree/QTS)
- Teaching Assistant / Learning Support Assistant
- Child Psychologist (with psychology degree + training)
- Social Worker (with social work degree)
- Family Support Worker
- Paediatric Nurse / Midwife (requires science qualifications too)
- Play Therapist / Speech and Language Therapist (after further study)

Course Contact: Mrs R Lancaster
rachel.lancaster@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



Creative Media Production



BTEC

Specification: Pearson

Course Outline

This Level 2 Creative Media course introduces students to the world of media production across film, TV, radio, publishing and digital platforms.

Throughout the course, students will develop a range of practical skills including camera operation, editing, sound recording and design techniques through hands-on creative projects.

You will also learn how to plan and research your own media products, taking ideas from initial concept through to final production.

Alongside this, the course explores how media engages different audiences and helps you develop the ability to analyse and evaluate existing media products.

How will I be assessed?

The course is assessed entirely through three coursework-based components.

Component 1 Exploring Media Products focuses on understanding different types of media and how they engage audiences, and is worth 30% of the overall grade.

Component 2 Developing Digital Media Skills allows students to learn and practise a range of practical production techniques and also contributes 30%.

Component 3 Creating a Media Product in Response to a Brief requires students to apply their skills to plan, produce and present a final media product, making up the remaining 40% of the qualification. This qualification follows a vocational approach to learning and is graded from Level 2 Distinction* through to Level 2 Pass.

Course Contact: Mrs R Lancaster
rachel.lancaster@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

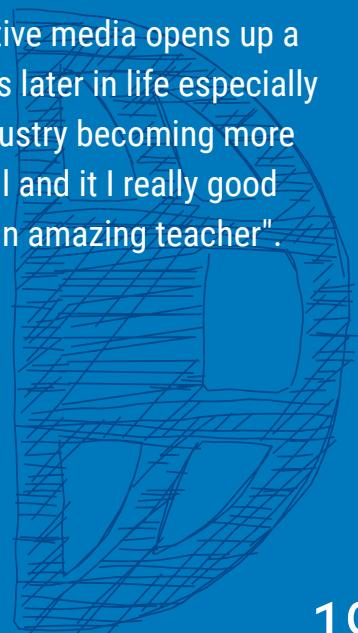
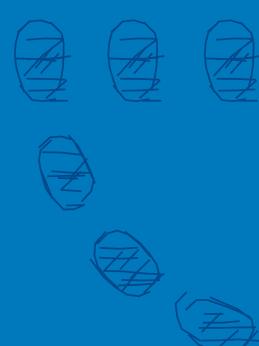
- Level 3 - A Level Media Studies
- Cambridge Technicals Information Technology and Digital Media
- Apprenticeship - Media and Broadcast assistant pathway
- T Level - Digital Production Design and Development or Media, broadcast and Production

Future Pathways

- Games testing/Designing
- Graphic Designer
- Web Design
- Project management
- Software Engineering

Student Quote

"I think that creative media opens up a lot of different jobs later in life especially with the tech industry becoming more and more useful and it's really good when you have an amazing teacher".



Dance



GCSE
Specification:AQA

Course Outline

This course allows students to develop practical skills, creativity, and understanding in dance. You will explore a range of styles, learn performance techniques, and develop choreography skills. Throughout the course, you will study professional works, create your own dances, and perform individually and in groups. You will also develop knowledge of safe practice, health and fitness in dance, and how to analyse and evaluate performances.

The course combines practical performance, choreography, and written theory to give a balanced understanding of dance.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment

- Performance – 30%
- Perform set dances individually and in groups, demonstrating technical skill, expression, and choreography.
- Choreography – 30%
- Create and perform your own dance, either solo or in a group, showing creativity and understanding of dance structure.
- Written Exam – 40%
- A 1 hour 30 minute paper testing knowledge of professional works, choreography, safe practice, health and fitness, and dance analysis.



What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- After completing GCSE Dance, students can progress to a range of Level 3 courses, including:
- A Level Dance
- BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Performing Arts or Dance
- T Levels in Creative & Performing Arts
- Apprenticeships in dance, performing arts, or arts administration

Future Pathways

- Professional Dancer / Performer
- Choreographer
- Dance Teacher / Tutor
- Dance Therapist
- Performing Arts Instructor
- Arts Administrator / Producer
- Stage Performer / Actor
- Movement Coach / Fitness Instructor

Course Contact: Miss R Evans
rebecca.evans@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



Drama



GCSE

Specification: Edexcel

Course Outline

Students at Key Stage 4 study Edexcel GCSE Drama, exploring both performance and practical design. The course develops skills in acting, directing, and theatre design, alongside understanding key theatrical concepts. Students will:

- Create and perform a devised piece and complete a written portfolio (Component 1, 40%)
- Perform scripted extracts in an externally assessed performance (Component 2, 20%)
- Sit a written exam analyzing and evaluating theatre (Component 3, 40%)
- The course encourages creativity, teamwork, and critical thinking, preparing students for further study in drama or performance arts.

How will I be assessed?

Component 1 – Internally Assessed Project (40%)

Students complete a performance or design project and produce an accompanying written portfolio. This component is internally assessed and contributes 40% of the final grade, with marks split between the practical/design work and the portfolio.

Component 2 – Externally Assessed Performance or Design (20%)

Students complete a performance or design task that is externally assessed, contributing 20% of the final grade.

Component 3 – Written Exam (40%)

Students sit an externally set and assessed written exam, which accounts for 40% of the final grade. The exam assesses their understanding of key concepts, analysis, and evaluation relevant to performance or design practice.

You should choose drama if you...

- You are willing and able to perform confidently in front of others.
- You are willing to learn lines independently, in and outside of the classroom.

What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- Students can continue to explore drama as part of an A Level Theatre Studies course or as a BTEC Performing Arts course.

Future Pathways

- Performer
- Director
- Designer
- Teacher
- Business
- Events Manager

Student Quote

Drama is really enjoyable, everyone in our class loves theatre and wants to explore more."

Course Contact: Ms E Gardner

elicia.gardener@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



Engineering



Level 1/2

Technical

Specification: NCFE

Course Outline

This Engineering qualification allows students to work with materials such as wood, metal and plastics to design and manufacture products that meet set project briefs. You will develop practical skills alongside digital skills through the use of Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Computer Aided Manufacture (CAM). The Technical Award is assessed through project-based assignments, giving students the chance to demonstrate their engineering knowledge and practical abilities in real-world contexts.

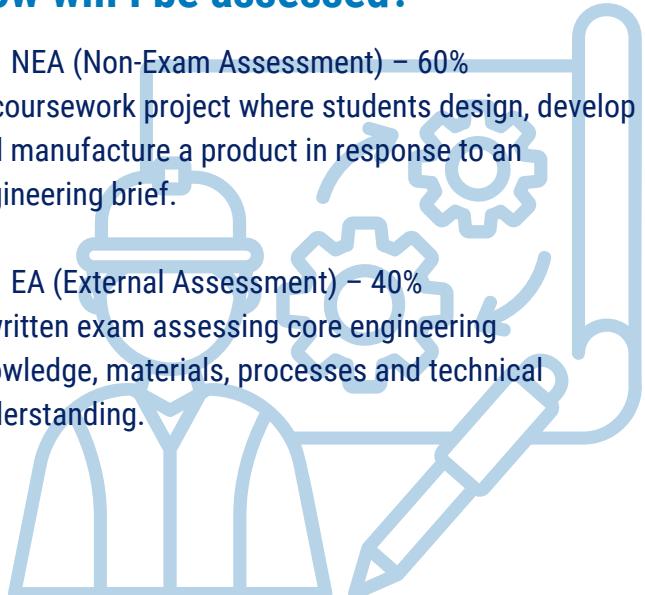
How will I be assessed?

- NEA (Non-Exam Assessment) – 60%

A coursework project where students design, develop and manufacture a product in response to an engineering brief.

- EA (External Assessment) – 40%

A written exam assessing core engineering knowledge, materials, processes and technical understanding.



What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- A Level Product Design
- Level 3 Engineering (BTEC or Cambridge Technical)
- T Level in Engineering & Manufacturing
- Apprenticeships in engineering, manufacturing, fabrication, or technical roles

Future Pathways

Studying Engineering can lead to a wide range of technical and vocational routes. After this course, students can progress into:

- Further study such as Level 3 Engineering, Product Design, or T Levels in Engineering & Manufacturing
- Apprenticeships in areas like mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, fabrication, machining, or manufacturing
- Technical training programmes with local employers or colleges

In the longer term, this qualification supports careers in engineering, design, construction, manufacturing, automotive, aerospace, and many other STEM-related industries.

Course Contact: Mr A Howarth
adam.howarth@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



Enterprise & Business



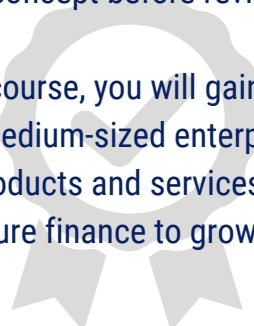
BTEC
Specification: Pearson

Course Outline

This qualification introduces students to the world of enterprise and small business. You will explore how enterprises operate, learn about entrepreneurs, and understand how market research helps businesses meet customer needs and respond to competitors.

You will also plan and pitch your own micro-enterprise idea, developing a business plan and presenting your concept before reviewing your performance.

Throughout the course, you will gain knowledge of how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) promote their products and services, and how they manage and secure finance to grow their business.



How will I be assessed?

Assessment

- Exploring Enterprises – 30% (Coursework)
- Investigate how businesses operate and meet customer needs.
- Planning & Pitching an Enterprise – 30% (Coursework)
- Develop a business idea, create a plan, pitch it, and review your performance.
- Promotion & Finance – 40% (Exam)
- Written exam covering marketing, promotion, and basic business finance.

What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- After completing this course, students can progress to a range of Level 3 business and enterprise qualifications, including:
- A Level Business Studies
- BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Business
- Cambridge Technicals in Business
- T Levels in Business or Enterprise
- Apprenticeships in business administration, management, or enterprise

Future Pathways

- Business Owner / Entrepreneur
- Marketing Assistant / Executive
- Retail Manager
- Sales Executive
- Events Coordinator
- Finance Assistant / Accounts Clerk
- Management and Administration Roles
- Business Development Officer



Student Quote

"I chose to study Enterprise because I've always been interested in how businesses work and what makes them successful. This course helps me understand how to turn ideas into real opportunities."



French



GCSE

Specification: Pearson
Edexcel

Course Outline

This two-year GCSE course aims to develop students' proficient and communication skills in both written and spoken French across the following six thematic contexts:

- My personal world
- Lifestyle and wellbeing
- My neighbourhood
- Media and technology
- Studying and my future
- Travel and tourism

How will I be assessed?

GCSE French is made up of four components: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Each component is assessed separately at the end of the course and contributes 25% to the final grade.



- Listening: 50 marks
- Speaking: 50 marks
- Reading: 50 marks
- Writing: 50 marks

There is no coursework for this qualification.

You should choose French if...

- You are an ambitious individual that is looking to improve your communication skills and have a desire to expand your knowledge and appreciation of the wider world.
- Learning a language will not only improve your confidence, but will strengthen and develop your ability to problem solve, think quickly and build resilience both academically and socially.

Course Contact: Mrs D Preece
danielle.preece@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- Achieving a language at GCSE will open many doors to a wide range of employment opportunities.
- Having a second language is hugely sought after by many employers across a variety of sectors and will really make you stand out from the crowd. Furthermore, it will broaden your horizons and enable you to travel the world and experience a variety of different cultures and customs.

Future Pathways

- Interpreter
- Journalism
- Travel & Tourism
- Business
- Finance
- Hospitality
- Law
- Marketing
- Education
- Public Relations,
- International Aid and many more.

Student Quote

"It teaches me about communication, improves my English Literacy skills and connect with people who don't speak English as their first language, making them feel at ease, which can always give me an edge in the business world "



Hospitality & Catering



**Level 1/2
Technical**

Specification: WJEC

Course Outline

- Our Hospitality and Catering qualification aims to equip learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to work in the hospitality industry. The hospitality and catering sector includes all businesses that provide food, beverages, and accommodation services. This includes restaurants, hotels, pubs and bars. It also includes airlines, tourist attractions, hospitals and sports venues.
- There is the opportunity to learn about issues related to nutrition and food safety and how they affect successful hospitality and catering operations.
- In this qualification, learners will also have the opportunity to develop some food preparation and cooking skills as well as transferable skills of problem solving, organisation and time management, planning and communication. Encouraging learners to cook and make informed decisions about a wide range of further learning, opportunities and career pathways as well as develop life skills that enable learners to feed themselves and others affordably, now and in later life.

How will I be assessed?

Unit 1 – The Hospitality and Catering Industry

- Written exam 90 minutes
- Worth 40% of the qualification
- **90 marks**

Unit 2 – Hospitality and Catering in Action

- NEA - 9 hours will be allocated for this assessment
- Worth 60% of the qualification
- Marked as Level 1 Pass, Level 2 Pass, Merit or Distinction
- Three scenarios to choose from - Planning, practical cooking and service,
- Written evidence to show coverage of the assessment criteria



You should choose hospitality & catering if you...

- Are willing to think for yourself.
- Try to show your individuality.
- Are willing to work independently.
- Want to try out different techniques
- Are willing to work in your own time and take it seriously.

What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- Level 3 Hospitality and Catering
- Apprenticeships within Hospitality Industry

Future Pathways

- Chef
- Dietician
- Food stylist
- Food and Nutrition Teacher
- Wellness coordinator
- Naturopath

Course Contact: Mr J Joubert
Joules.Joubert@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



Music



Course Outline

- Students at Key Stage 4 study for the GCSE Eduqas Music qualification. They will be recorded performing on their chosen instrument or voice, completing one solo and one group performance, which contributes 30% of the final GCSE.
- Alongside performing, students will develop their composition skills, creating two pieces of music: one of their own choice and one to meet a set brief. Lessons focus on developing form and structure, tonality, texture, harmony, melody, dynamics and instrumentation. Composing also contributes 30% of the GCSE.
- Students will also study a range of music through appraising, which makes up 40% of the qualification. They will answer exam-style questions on different types of music and musical styles, including the areas of study: Musical Forms and Devices, Music for Ensembles, Film Music, and Popular Music. Students will sit a mock listening exam in Year 10 and again in Year 11 to prepare for the final assessment.

How will I be assessed?

Component 1: Performance – Solo and Ensemble, 30%
Students record one solo and one ensemble performance, each worth 15%. These recordings are marked and sent to the exam board for moderation. The recommended standard is at least Grade 3.

Component 2: Composition – Free and Set Brief, 30%
Students submit one free composition, demonstrating their creative skills in any genre for an ensemble of their choice. They also submit one composition from a set brief. Each composition contributes 15% to the overall qualification.

Component 3: Appraisal Exam, 40%

Students complete a written listening exam on a range of musical styles and set works, which contributes 40% of the GCSE.

You should choose music if you...

- You can play an instrument.
- You can confidently perform to an audience.
- You have a genuine interest in Music.
- You can work as a team.
- You want to pursue a career in Music or performance.

What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- You can GCSE in Music to go on and study Music further at A-Level, or study a college course.

Future Pathways

- Music producer
- Recording Engineer
- Musician
- Composer
- Music Arranger
- Tour Manager

Student Quote

"I really like History because I get to learn lots of interesting facts and stories about the past".

Course Contact: Mr K Farrier
keir.farrier@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



Religious Studies



GCSE
Specification: AQA

Course Outline

We live in an increasingly diverse society, both locally and globally. Studying religious beliefs and ethical issues helps us to better understand the world around us. Religious Studies equips students with knowledge and insight that is valuable for any path they choose, as everyone will interact with people from a variety of backgrounds, religions, races, and cultures.

Component 1 – Religion

You will study the Beliefs, Teachings, and Practices of Christianity and Islam. This component makes up 50% of the course.

Component 2 – Thematic Studies

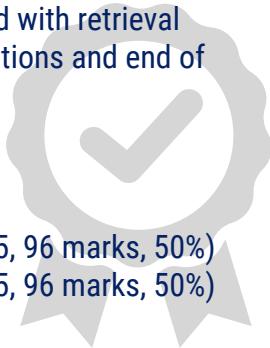
You will study four themes: Relationships and Families, Religion and Life, Religion, Peace and Conflict, and Religion, Crime and Punishment.

How will I be assessed?

Students will be continually assessed with retrieval questions, short and long exam questions and end of topic assessments.

Students will sit two written exams:

- Paper 1- Component 1 (1 hour 45, 96 marks, 50%)
- Paper 2- Component 2 (1 hour 45, 96 marks, 50%)



Course Contact: Mr C Thomas
craig.thomas@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- Students who study GCSE Religious Studies can then go onto A Level Religious Studies or A Level Philosophy and Ethics.
- This can then be taken even further to university level where students can choose from an array of degrees with a religious or philosophical element.

Future Pathways

Studying GCSE RS opens many doors to a wide range of career in the future such as :

- Lawyer
- Solicitor
- Teacher
- Social Worker
- Police Officer
- Journalist
- Author
- Editor
- Counsellor
- Barrister and many more.



Sports Studies



CAMNAT

Specification:OCR

Course Outline

The OCR Sport Studies course allows students to develop applied knowledge and practical skills through real-world sporting contexts. Students will explore:

R184 – Contemporary Issues in Sport (exam)

Key topics shaping sport today, including participation trends, media and technology, and major sporting events.

R185 – Performance and Leadership in Sports Activities

Practical performance skills and the ability to plan, lead, and review sports sessions.

R187 – Increasing Awareness of Outdoor and Adventurous Activities

Understanding a range of outdoor activities, their benefits, safety requirements, and participation opportunities.

How will I be assessed?

Contemporary Issues in Sport (exam, 80 marks, 40%)

Exploring current issues affecting sport, including participation trends, the impact of technology, media influence, and major sporting events. Assessed through an external written exam.

Performance and Leadership in Sports Activities (coursework, 80 marks, 40%)

Developing practical performance skills, taking part in sport, and improving other participants' performance through planning and leading sports sessions.

Increasing Awareness of Outdoor and Adventurous Activities (coursework, 40 marks, 20%)

Gaining knowledge and practical experience in a range of outdoor activities, understanding their benefits, safety requirements, and effective participation.

Coursework units are internally assessed and externally moderated, while the exam is assessed externally.

What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- Links well to all Sport courses at Level 3.
- BTEC Sport
- Cambridge Technicals
- A Level PE

Future Pathways

- Exercise physiologist
- Fitness centre manager
- Personal trainer
- Primary school PE teacher
- Secondary school PE teacher
- Sports administrator
- Sports coach
- Sports development officer
- Sports therapist

Student Quote

"I like that a big part of the course is practical and that we can get marks that way. I have chosen a sport course because I enjoy the practical aspect and Sport Studies allows me to do that."

Course Contact: Mr G Prescott

Gary.Prescott@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



Textiles Design



GCSE
Specification: OCR

Course Outline

This course allows students to explore creativity and practical skills in textile design. You will develop your knowledge of fabrics, materials, techniques, and design processes, including embroidery, printing, and construction.

Throughout the course, you will research and experiment with ideas, plan and create your own textile products, and develop an understanding of both contemporary and traditional design influences.

The course is assessed through a combination of practical coursework and a written exam, helping you build both creative and analytical skills for further study or careers in fashion and textiles.

How will I be assessed?

The course is assessed through a combination of coursework and a written exam:

- Coursework (NEA) – 60%
- Develop, plan, and create your own textile products, demonstrating your practical skills, creativity, and design process.
- Written Exam – 40%
- Assesses your knowledge of materials, techniques, design influences, and critical analysis.

This structure ensures a balance of practical and theoretical understanding of textiles design.

Course Contact: Mrs H Colquitt
Helen.Colquitt@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

- A-Levels:
- Art & Design (Textiles)
- Art & Design (Fine Art, Graphics, 3D Design, Photography)
- Design & Technology (Product Design)
- Business (useful if you're interested in fashion retail/management)
- Vocational Qualifications (BTEC / OCR / UAL Diplomas, etc.)
- BTEC National in Art & Design (Textiles, Fashion, or General)
- BTEC National in Fashion Design & Production
- UAL Level 3 Diploma/Extended Diploma in Fashion & Textiles

Future Pathways

- Fashion Designer
- Textile Designer (prints, fabrics, surfaces)
- Costume Designer (film, TV, theatre)
- Interior/Furnishing Designer
- Tailor / Seamstress
- Textile Technician (weaving, dyeing, materials development)
- Fashion Buyer / Merchandiser
- Visual Merchandiser
- Fashion Marketing / PR / Branding

Student Quote

"I think you should choose Textiles as a GCSE because it gives you an opportunity to express yourself using your work and it allows you to try new things"

Triple Science



GCSE
Specification: AQA

Course Outline

- Triple Science allows students to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics in greater depth than in Combined Science. You will cover all the core topics, as well as additional content to extend your scientific knowledge, such as Space Physics.
- This qualification is linear, meaning all exams are taken at the end of the course. Students will sit six papers in total (two each in Biology, Chemistry and Physics) and achieve three separate GCSEs. Questions include a mix of multiple choice, structured, short answer and extended response, with entry at either Foundation or Higher tier.
- Alongside the theory, you will develop a wide range of practical skills across all three sciences.

How will I be assessed?

- Triple Science is assessed through six exams: two in Biology, two in Chemistry and two in Physics. Each exam is 1 hour 45 minutes, worth 100 marks, and contributes 50% of the GCSE in that subject. Students sit either Foundation or Higher tier papers.
- Biology topics include: cell biology, organisation, infection and response, bioenergetics, homeostasis, inheritance, variation and evolution, and ecology.
- Chemistry topics cover: atomic structure and the periodic table, bonding and structure, quantitative chemistry, chemical changes, energy changes, rates of reaction, organic chemistry, chemical analysis, the chemistry of the atmosphere, and using resources.
- Physics topics include: energy, electricity, particle model of matter, atomic structure, forces, waves, magnetism and electromagnetism, and space physics.

What qualifications could I achieve afterwards?

Triple Science results in 3 GCSEs, one in each discipline of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. This could lead to further study in:

- Applied Science BTEC
- Science A Levels
- Veterinary Sciences
- Engineering
- Animal Studies
- Psychology
- Health and Social Care

Future Pathways

People with Science qualifications go into an array of different careers such as:

- Medicine
- Dentistry
- Engineering
- Computer Science
- Medical Writer
- Vet
- Psychology
- Forensic Science
- Food Technology
- Laboratory Research
- Meteorology



**All students automatically study Combined Science.
Triple Science will use one additional subject choice.**

Course Contact:

Mrs N John-Charles

natalie.john-charles@irlamandcadishead.org.uk



Notes

