

Wootton Academy Trust

WOOTTON UPPER

AND ARTS COLLEGE

SCHOOL



KS4 Options



Information Booklet

2024 - 2026

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INTRODUCTION



Making curriculum choices in Year 9 is a very important part of your time in school; it is an opportunity for you to take control of your education and shape the way you want your future to be. The options you choose for Years 10 and 11 will affect how you spend your time at school for the next two years. Your choices may also influence what course or training you are able to do after Year 11.

It is important to choose subjects that will interest and motivate you. Think about what you enjoy doing, what keeps you interested in something and what makes you work hard. Remember that you are not alone in making these decisions; everyone in Year 9 is going through the same process. Teachers, friends, parents, carers and family will be able to guide, advise and support you in this important decision-making process.

All pupils continue in education or training until the age of 18. This means that you will remain at school, go to college, or be working in employment, **with appropriate training**, until July 2028. After that, many pupils will continue to study for degrees or higher/degree level apprenticeships at university or in college.

You need to look further ahead than GCSE in your planning. Many of you will be aspiring to go to university or planning to complete a degree apprenticeship; therefore, you need to be aware of which subjects you might be expected to have studied at GCSE and at A Level. Some universities may prefer pupils to have a Modern Foreign Language and either Geography or History at GCSE. A website '[Informed Choices](#)' brings together guidance from admissions teams at Russell Group universities to give pupils clear information about the subjects they should consider if they are hoping to progress to a competitive university. A link to this website is available on the school website and on page 11 of this booklet. You can view degree apprenticeship vacancies on the national '*find an apprenticeship*' website in order to research any subject specific requirements for opportunities at this level. You can also search for degree courses and apprenticeships on **Unifrog** using your personal log in. This will show entry requirements including required subjects.

Please read the subject information sheets available on the school's website (www.woottonupper.co.uk > **Curriculum > KS4 Options**) and also look at other information from other sources.

KS4 Qualification grading structure

- GCSEs are graded 9 to 1, with 9 being the top grade.
- Most Vocational qualifications use Pass/Merit/Distinction/Distinction* grading system. This is directly comparable with the new 9-1 GCSE grading system.

Vocational qualification grading

Vocational Qualification Grade	9-1 Grade equivalent
Level 2 Distinction*	8.5
Level 2 Distinction	7
Level 2 Merit	5.5
Level 2 Pass	4
Level 1 Distinction	3
Level 1 Merit	2
Level 1 Pass	1.25

GCSE qualification grading

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

Assessment is mainly by exam, with other types of assessment used only where needed to test essential subject skills, for example, in Drama there is a performance assessment.

Greater content

Current GCSE courses have more content than was the case in the past. Also, there is an increased expectation that young people remember content and can apply it to a wide range of question types and sometimes surprising contexts in exams.

Two-year courses with assessment at the end of the course

GCSE are intended for study over two years and are no longer divided into different modules. Pupils must take all their exams in one period at the end of their course.



What is compulsory for all pupils in KS4?

Pupils continue to study the following:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- PE (Core)
- Philosophy, Religion & Ethics (Core)
- PSHE (including Careers)

In English, pupils will complete two separate courses: GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature. The assessment is examination based and will be completed at the end of Year 11.

All pupils will study GCSE Mathematics with the examination at the end of Year 11.

All pupils study Combined Science, studying Biology, Chemistry and Physics modules, which leads to two GCSE grades. Triple Science leads to three GCSE grades, and the extra science modules are taught during an option block. Triple Science extends your knowledge of science topics and is a great option if you are looking to study sciences at A level.

To opt for Separate Science, you should be a competent mathematician as there is a significant increase in maths-based content in these courses.

PSHE (Personal, Social, Health & Economic) education - which we call 'Guidance' - remains obligatory for all pupils. PSHE includes sessions on Careers Education and some additional Citizenship topics.

All pupils will continue to follow PE and Philosophy, Religion & Ethics (PRE). However, pupils have a choice if they wish to follow PRE as an examination course.

If pupils wish to follow the GCSE full course in Philosophy, Religion & Ethics which embraces the themes of Citizenship then they will also follow two lessons of core PE per timetable cycle.

If they would rather follow the Core PRE course (non-examination) they will also have four Core PE lessons per timetable cycle.

How long do I spend on each subject?

The proposed number of lessons per fortnight for each subject in Year 10 and 11 are:

Subject	Number of lessons
English	8
Mathematics	8
Science	8
Core PE	2 or 4
Philosophy, Religion & Ethics (Core or GCSE)	2 or 4
Option A	5
Option B	5
Option C	5
Option D	5
Total:	50

Please note:

Whilst we encourage pupils to choose the subjects that suit them, we will look at all pupil choices and if we feel that their choices are not appropriate then we will speak to the pupil and direct them to subjects that are more suited if necessary.

What would you recommend to a pupil who does not know what subjects to study?

Firstly, do not worry – you will be in the majority as most pupils do not have a clear idea at the age of 14 what it is they want to do!

We would recommend that pupils take a **broad range of subjects**, including a:

- Humanities subject (Pupils will choose at least one of History or Geography)
- Modern Language subject – if you enjoy and are good at languages.
- Creative or Technology subject

However, we recognise that some pupils may prefer to opt for a more vocational curriculum, choosing a vocational course alongside one or two other subjects.

What is the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)?

The EBacc is not a qualification in itself. It is a set of subjects at GCSE that keeps young people's options open for further study and future careers and therefore is a national measure of the number of pupils who follow a broad and balanced curriculum.

The EBacc is made up of the subjects which are considered essential to many degrees and open up lots of doors and consists of English language and literature, maths, the sciences, geography or history and a language.

Our aim is such that each pupil can follow a personalised learning plan which is both broad and balanced both in terms of the range of subjects they study and also with regards to the type of qualification and the learning style involved.

The EBacc is one measure of pupils following a broad and balanced curriculum. However, we believe that the arts, design and technology and other subjects are also just as important in achieving this balance.

How many subjects can I choose?

You should choose four main options as subjects to study during Years 10 and 11.

How much time do I spend on my option subjects?

Option subjects are allocated 5 lessons per fortnight.

What are BTECs and Cambridge National courses?

BTECs are vocationally related qualifications, where learners develop knowledge and understanding by applying their learning and skills in a work-related context. They engage young learners in taking responsibility for their own learning and develop essential work-related skills, such as working to deadlines and presenting information effectively.

BTECs are mainly assessed through project/coursework which is marked and moderated internally, before being sent off for external moderation. **All BTEC courses have at least one examined unit which it is necessary to pass to achieve the qualification.**

A BTEC Tech Award is equivalent to one GCSE.

Cambridge Nationals are more practical in nature and provide pupils with knowledge and highly sought-after skills to prepare them for further study, apprenticeships and the workplace. They contain at least 50% external assessment.

BTEC and Cambridge National qualifications may suit pupils who are organised, driven and like working independently. They may suit pupils who prefer coursework to exams.



Which subjects can I choose as an Option?

- Art (GCSE)
 - Child Development (Cambridge National)
 - Computer Science (GCSE)
 - Creative Media (BTEC)
 - Dance (GCSE)
 - Design and Technology (GCSE)
 - Drama (GCSE)
 - Food (GCSE)
 - French (GCSE)
 - Geography (GCSE)
 - Graphics (GCSE)
 - History (GCSE)
 - IT (BTEC)
 - Music (GCSE)
 - Separate Science - Biology, Chemistry and Physics (GCSE)
 - Spanish (GCSE) - *(You must have followed this in Year 9)*
 - Sport (BTEC)
 - Textile Design (GCSE)
 - Travel and Tourism (BTEC)
- In addition, you may choose the GCSE Philosophy, Religion & Ethics course

ONE of your choices MUST include Geography or History.

To select **Separate Science** or **Computer Science**, you should be an able mathematician.

Details of all the subjects on offer are available on the Wootton Upper School website:

www.woottonupper.co.uk > Curriculum > KS4 Options.

Priority order

When selecting your main (and reserve) choices, you will be asked to place them in a rank order so that your favourite is at the top of the list. This will aid us to allocate subjects as we will endeavour to assign as many of the highest priority subjects as possible.

Please note:

We try very hard to accommodate every pupil's option choices; however, we may not be able to operate all the subjects contained in the lists if there is insufficient 'demand' made by pupils or where subjects have a limited number of spaces. In this case then a reserve option may need to be followed or pupils will be informed if any other options need to be considered. It is for this reason that we ask you to select a **Reserve choice from each option block.**

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR PERSONALISED TIMETABLE



Choosing your GCSEs are difficult. There are very few people who are sure about exactly what they want to take, likewise very few people know what career they wish to pursue. However, even at this stage, it is wise to consider the future, starting with your A Levels.

Deciding what is best for you depends on what subjects you enjoy studying. If you are unsure what subjects to choose, remember that balance and breadth are important. It is also wise to speak to your subject teachers; they will be able to provide you with an insight into the course and help you decide whether that subject is right for you.

Very often pupils are sure about some subjects, but still have to make a difficult decision between one or two others: Should I take separate sciences? Should I continue with both Modern Languages? Do I choose Geography or History or both?

You should find that most careers and companies do not mind which GCSEs you take, but are more interested in the grades you achieve. The compulsory subjects of Maths and English are required by universities and employers.

Taking subjects you enjoy will make sure you get the best grades, as you will be enthusiastic about them. Take some time to think carefully about your choices before you decide.

Talk to your parents, discuss with your Form Tutor or ask your subject teachers for help. Find out about the subjects on offer.

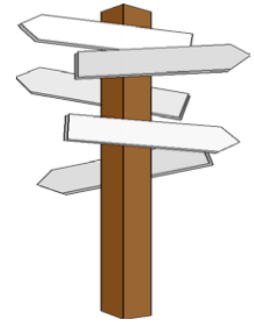
Ask yourself the following important questions:

- **Do I enjoy the subject?**
You are more likely to do well at subjects you really enjoy and at which you are more successful.
- **Do I intend to choose particular subjects because I like my present teachers?**
You may not have the same teacher next year, so this is not a sound reason for your choice.
- **Do I wish to do the same subjects as my friends so that I will be in a group with them next year?**
Again, because of the timetable and the numbers of groups, you may find you are no longer with current friends even if you have made the same choices.
- **Will my choices help me in the future, even if I do not know what I want to do?**
Our Careers Adviser, Careers Coordinator and Head of Careers are available for drop-in sessions for any pupils who wish to discuss their options and how these relate to future career ideas. Please email careers@wootton.beds.sch.uk if you require more information.
- **Can I change my mind after I have completed my options form?**
We will place a form on the website where pupils (in conjunction with their parents) may request a change. However, once the timetable has been written and decisions made about the number of classes there will be in each subject, it is very unlikely that we will be able to accommodate further changes. We will consider any changes where possible but if groups are at capacity then we may not be able to accommodate the request. **No requests will be considered after Friday 27th September.**



What do I know already?

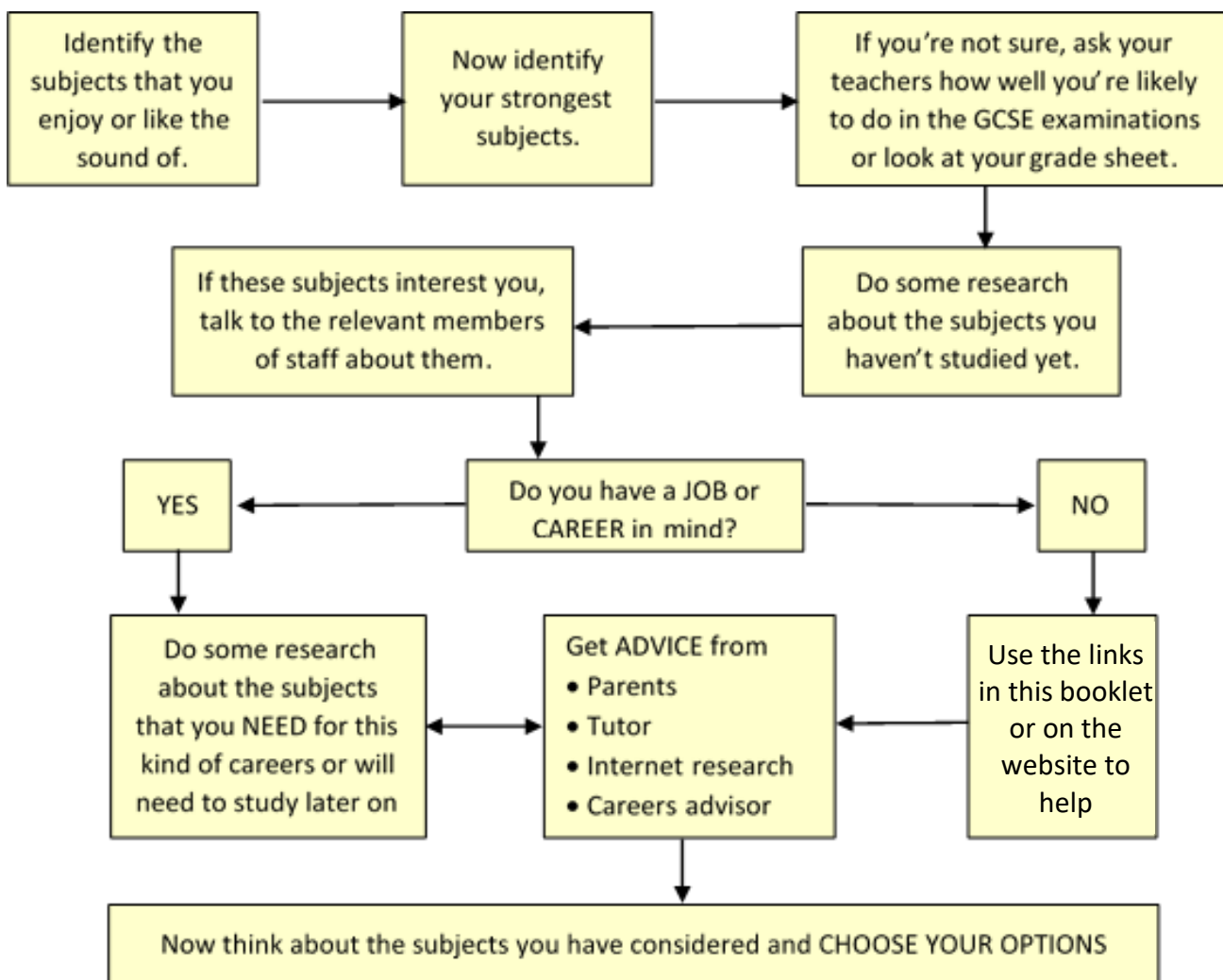
- You are currently covering a PSHE unit relating to Key Stage 4 options and careers (January-March 2024).
- Work Experience is in Year 12 at Kimberley College.



Where can I get more information

- Look at the school website to see details of the courses on offer and where they can take you
(www.woottonupper.co.uk > Curriculum > KS4 Options)
- Use some of the links below to get more information:
 - www.unifrog.org – log in using your personal log in, a parent log in is also available. Look at careers information, search for apprenticeships and university courses and much more
 - www.bbc.com/bitesize/careers - a new resource which links subjects you enjoy to careers
 - Visit the National Careers Website and look at their Job Profiles:
<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/job-profiles/home>
 - Take a look at careers videos, job profile and articles. Focus on 14:
<https://icould.com/stories/choosing-your-gcse-options/>
 - Help and advice for your creative career: <https://discovercreative.careers/#/>
 - Interested in finding out about entry requirements for apprenticeships? Look at live vacancies here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>
 - Search for University courses and their entry requirements: <https://www.ucas.com/>
 - What can I do with a degree in: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree>
 - Learn more about your choices: www.careerpilot.org.uk/information/your-choices-at-14
 - Use Informed Choices to help you understand which subjects open up different degrees, particularly at Russell Group universities: <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

Details of all the subjects on offer and copies of the Options materials are available on the Wootton Upper School website: www.woottonupper.co.uk > Curriculum > KS4 Options



If you have any concerns, then please contact:

Mr G. Freemantle
 Assistant Headteacher (Curriculum)
options@wootton.beds.sch.uk

THE FUTURE



When you reach the end of Year 11 in 2026 there are various alternatives open to you:

- To continue in **full-time** education beyond the age of 16 in school or college.
- To start a recognised Apprenticeship (with a built-in training programme).

It is worth mentioning why you might choose to remain in full-time education at school or college beyond the age of 16:

- To take Level 3 courses, including A Level, BTEC Nationals, T Levels or other vocational courses, either in preparation for a higher apprenticeship/employment at 18 years of age or to go on to Higher Education.
- To pursue a one-year Level 2 course, leading to a BTEC qualification (or equivalent), then to continue a course of study leading to a Level 3 qualification or start an Apprenticeship aged 17 years of age.

Pupils wishing to take Level 3 will have to meet minimum general entry requirements for these courses.

Current Level 3 entry requirements at Kimberley College are:

- Pupils entering Year 12 to study A Levels should have a good range of GCSE grades. The entry criteria are based on an average point score of the grades you gain.
- Pupils must additionally meet the subject specific entry requirements usually a GCSE grade 5 or 6 (current model) for Sixth Form courses.
- Any pupil not achieving a high-level pass in English or Maths at the end of Year 11 will be required to continue studying the subjects until they achieve a high-level pass. This currently applies to all pupils up to the end of Year 13. Pupils will need these high-level passes for application to university.

SAMPLE COMPLETED OPTIONS FORM



Name: Sample student

Tutor Group: 9XYZ

Your Choices

Please tick 1 of these 2 choices

GCSE PRE (4 lessons) and Core PE (2 lessons)	✓
Core PRE (2 lessons) and Core PE (4 lessons)	

You will be asked to choose **ONE** option from each of the blocks.

One of your choices must be Geography or History

Option Block A	Option Block B	Option Block C	Option Block D
Art	Art	Child Development #	Drama
Computer Science *	Child Development #	French *	Geography *
Creative Media (BTEC) #	Computer Science *	Geography *	History *
Dance	Creative Media (BTEC) #	History *	Separate Science *
Design & Technology	Dance	Sport (BTEC) #	Sport (BTEC) #
Food	Design & Technology	Travel & Tourism (BTEC) #	
Geography *	Drama		
Graphics	Geography *		
History *	Graphics		
IT (BTEC) #	History *		
Music	IT (BTEC) #	* indicates EBACC subjects # indicates non-GCSE subjects	
Spanish *	Spanish *		
	Textiles		

Main choices (Only one subject from each option block)

Rank Order	Block	Subject
1	<i>B</i>	<i>Dance</i>
2	<i>A</i>	<i>Graphics</i>
3	<i>C</i>	<i>French</i>
4	<i>D</i>	<i>History</i>

Reserve choices

Rank Order	Block	Subject
1	<i>B</i>	<i>IT</i>
2	<i>C</i>	<i>Geography</i>
3	<i>A</i>	<i>Creative Media</i>
4	<i>D</i>	<i>Sport</i>

OPTIONS BLOCKS



Name: _____ **Tutor Group:** _____

Your Choices

Please tick 1 of these 2 choices

GCSE PRE (4 lessons) and Core PE (2 lessons)	
Core PRE (2 lessons) and Core PE (4 lessons)	

You will be asked to choose **ONE** option from each of the blocks.

One of your choices must be Geography or History

Option Block A	Option Block B	Option Block C	Option Block D
Art	Art	Child Development #	Drama
Computer Science *	Child Development #	Food	Geography *
Creative Media (BTEC) #	Computer Science *	French *	History *
Dance	Creative Media (BTEC) #	Geography *	Separate Science *
Design & Technology	Dance	History *	Sport (BTEC) #
Food	Design & Technology	Sport (BTEC) #	
Geography *	Drama	Travel & Tourism (BTEC) #	
Graphics	Geography *		
History *	Graphics		
IT (BTEC) #	History *		
Music	IT (BTEC) #	* indicates EBACC subjects # indicates non-GCSE subjects	
Spanish *	Spanish *		
	Textiles		

Main choices (Only one subject from each option block)

Rank Order	Block	Subject
1		
2		
3		
4		

Reserve choices

Rank Order	Block	Subject
1		
2		
3		
4		