



Key Stage 4 Curriculum 2026 - 2028



Introduction

Please note, this guide is written for our students. It addresses the students directly. Parents can use this guide to structure discussions with their children about the decisions.

So, where do I start?

The first decision you need to make is which Science GCSEs you would most like to achieve. No previous year group has been given the choice before, so you will need to consider carefully. Do you want to study what is called 'separate sciences', which means you would achieve a separate GCSE in 'Biology', 'Chemistry' and 'Physics'. Three GCSEs, in other words. If you make this choice you can make **two** more GCSE options choices from the selection in this programme.

Or do you want to study what is called 'combined science', which means that you study all three Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) and it means you would achieve a Science qualification that is worth two GCSEs. If you make this choice, you can make **three** more GCSE options choices from the selection in this programme. **If you chose 'combined science' one of your GCSE options must be either French, Spanish, History, Geography, or Computer Science.**

If you missed SMC's assembly on the differences between the two Science pathways, [please click here](#).

What do I need to decide next?

Whether you have two or three options to pick, you will pick your options from the list in this booklet.

What about the subjects I don't choose?

You don't need to pick English, Maths or Religious Studies for GCSE. These subjects are part of the core curriculum offer at Trinity and all students complete qualifications in them. In fact, you gain two qualifications in English: English Language GCSE and English Literature GCSE.

Please note, we have included course information on Religious Studies GCSE in this programme – even though this is also part of the core curriculum; this is because you are more likely to have questions about the content of this course than you are about English and Maths.

However, if you would like to know more about Maths GCSE at Trinity please [click here](#).

If you would like to know more about English Language GCSE and English Literature GCSE at Trinity, please [click here](#).

Is there anything else on the curriculum?

There is an hour of PE that is not an examined GCSE subject. All students do this (it is additional to GCSE PE).

Where is the options form?

Please use the link [here](#) to complete the form.



Mr Hopkins
Deputy Headteacher

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Course Details for the
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What will I learn?

You will have the opportunity to experiment with a variety of different media to explore your strengths and preferences. This will include drawing, painting, photography, clay, mixed media and printmaking. You will be encouraged to develop your own ideas. The main aim of the course is to develop your visual language skills and for you to build a comprehensive portfolio of work to progress to further courses or employment. After all, the world needs more artists.



How will I be assessed?

You will be required to submit a portfolio that is worth 60% of the GCSE. You complete this over time. There is also an externally set task which you are given ten hours to complete. This is worth 40% of your GCSE.

Is this the right course for me?

If you enjoy developing your visual skills, as well as being creative, enthusiastic and imaginative then this course is for you. Students often appreciate that there is no final written exam: by the time the final exams come, all Art assessments are done!

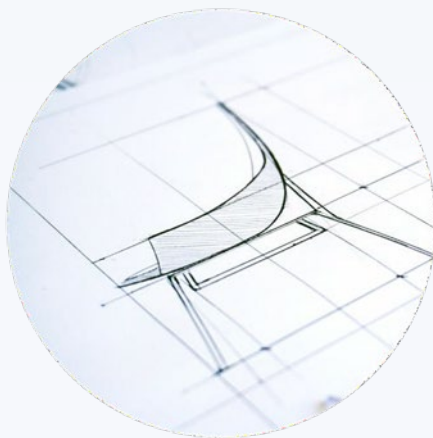
Please note that if you choose to study GCSE Art (Art, Craft & Design) then you cannot study Design & Technology (3D Design). You can study GCSE (Art, Craft & Design) and Photography.

Any questions? Contact Mrs Reay

For more information [click here](#).

What will I learn?

You will experiment with a wide range of materials and modelling methods to find the best ways to turn your ideas into three-dimensional sculptures, objects and wall art. You will be encouraged to develop ideas, charting your techniques and recording your methods as you progress. You will combine all your work into three distinct portfolios.



How will I be assessed?

In Year 10 you will undertake a trip to a city to collect primary research. This is combined with traditional joinery techniques to make a decorative frame and portfolio of experiments and developmental work. Next you will be presented with a theme that you will develop into an extensive portfolio packed full of drawings, research, models, laser cut pieces and so much more. These two pieces of work are worth 60% of the final grade. In Year 11 you will choose a theme provided by the exam board. You will generate a sketchbook of research, experiments, developmental work and evaluations. The final piece will be made in a 10-hour practical exam.

Is this the right course for me?

Are you creative? Do you love products and gadgets? Do you have an interest in engineering and how things are made? Are you especially keen on the idea of creating your own products? Are you good at working independently and taking responsibility for your own progress? If the answer is “yes” then this could be the course for you.

If you enjoy being inventive, creative and working with wood, metal and plastics then this course could be for you. You are in control of what you make, we will teach you the best techniques to make it happen. There is no written exam, which is appealing to some students. However, you will have to produce a large amount of detailed, high-quality work over the duration of the course.

Please note that if you choose to study GCSE Design and Technology (3D Design) then you cannot study GCSE Art (Art, Craft & Design).

Any questions? Contact Miss Roche

For more information [click here.](#)

What will I learn?

The Business Studies GCSE will give you a great understanding of how a business works and allows you to get an idea of how to go about starting your own, as well as working for an organisation. You could be the next Tim Cook, or Mary Barra!

You will learn all about the ownership of business, the marketing mix, how to manage people and how to manage finance and many other skills. You will sit two examinations at the end of Year 11, the first will be about the theoretical side of business and in the second exam you will apply your knowledge to a real-world business case by solving issues that they may have.



How will I be assessed?

The course has two exams at the end of Year 11. Paper 1 is on 'Business Dynamics'. Paper 2 is on 'Business Considerations' in which students are given data and asked to apply their understanding to it. Both papers have both short questions and questions where an extended response is needed.

Is this the right course for me?

You will need to have a good grasp of English and be willing to take notes and answer exam questions in class. You don't need to have any prior knowledge about businesses, just an interest in to how they work!

Any questions? Contact Mr Brown

For more information [click here.](#)

What will I learn?

What could be more fascinating than learning how children grow? You will learn about the health and wellbeing of children aged 0-5, how to create a safe environment for children, the nutritional needs of babies and children and the development journey from birth to five years old.



How will I be assessed?

There are three units. 'Health and wellbeing for child development' has an exam at the end of the unit. The other two units ('Create a safe environment and understand the nutritional needs of children from birth to five years' and 'Understand the development of a child from one to five years') are what's called NEAs – these are done in school and assessed by your teachers.

Is this the right course for me?

This course will be beneficial to anyone considering a career in early years or primary teaching and supports progression to a Level 3 vocational or academic Childcare, Psychology, Health & Social Care subjects or an apprenticeship. Learners will develop decision making, observation skills, resourcefulness, problem solving, interpersonal skills, professional behaviours, and an appreciation of other.

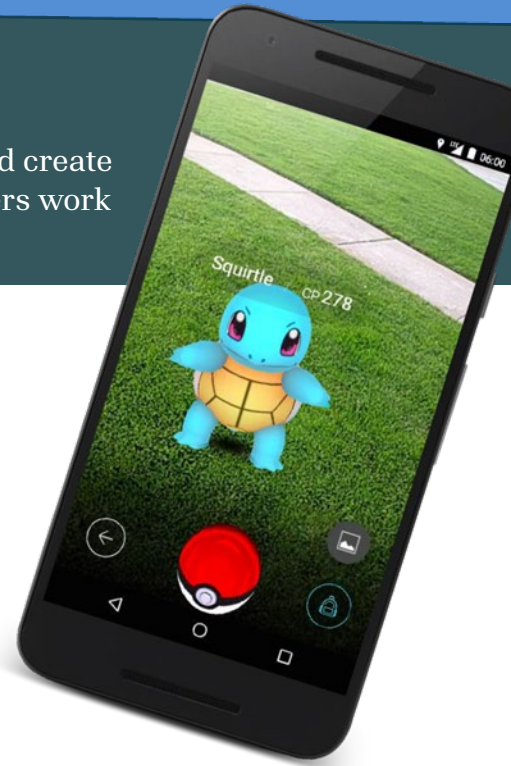
Any questions? Contact Mrs Roche

For more information [click here.](#)

What will I learn?

Have you ever played *Pokémon Go*? Could you do better and create the next big Smartphone App? Want to know how computers work rather than just using them as a tool?

The GCSE in Computer Science is an innovative course where you get to learn the fundamentals of computing and high-level language programming. You will learn how to program using Python. You will learn the skills that you would need to create your own software and to distribute it on to different platforms. You will also learn about the theory behind computing – such as how processors work – to give you a solid foundation in all areas of Computer Science.



How will I be assessed?

You complete two exams that are designed to test your understanding of computing theory and practical programming skills. Paper 1 is on 'Computer Systems' and Paper 2 is on 'Computational Thinking'.

Is this the right course for me?

You don't need to have any experience of programming, but the content is highly mathematical and requires a high level of logical reasoning, so you do need to enjoy solving problems and be good at Maths. This is something that the Computer Science staff and the Senior Leadership Team will take into consideration when determining a student's suitability for the course to ensure all students on this course are successful. The course is very theoretical, and you have regular lessons where you will be expected to take notes and answer exam questions. There will be an opportunity each week to develop your coding skills using Python.



Any questions? Contact Mr Brown

For more information [click here.](#)

DANCE

What will I learn?

Do you have a passion for movement? Even if you have never danced on a stage before - it's time to uncover your potential!



This a picture of our GCSE dance group performing in one of the many brilliant public performances that they made last year.

How will I be assessed?

Unlike many other courses there is no written exam at the end of the two years. There is a controlled assessment which will take place in Y11.

You will be assessed through project work. For Units 1 and 2 you will undertake projects (not exams) in response to briefs. The project for each Unit will take 10 hours and be worth 30% of your qualification. For each one you will be given a scenario and will need to undertake several tasks. In Unit 3 you will undertake another project (no exam) in response to a brief, which will take 20 hours and be worth 40% of your qualification. You will be given a scenario and will need to undertake several tasks.

Is this the right course for me?

If you feel that project work, rather than exam-based work, is a strength you have – and if you love music and movement – then this would be a great subject for you to explore your creative skills. You will need your enthusiasm, your imagination and your ability to experiment and collaborate. It is the perfect practical subject – even if you have never danced before.

*Any questions? Contact Mr Hopkins**

** He doesn't teach the course – but he can answer questions on it!*

What will I learn?

Live theatre is one of the greatest things to witness. The aim of GCSE Drama is to promote an enthusiastic enjoyment of this art. Two thirds of lessons will be mainly practical, focusing on performance and design skills. We will also work on written skills, and the ability to describe, analyse and evaluate texts and performances from a theatrical perspective. All students come on at least one theatre trip.

We also encourage students to participate in Trinity Theatre Company performances.

How will I be assessed?

Component one is 'Understanding Drama' and this part is assessed in an exam. This unit is focused on one text and analysing a piece of live theatre.

Component two is 'Devising Drama' and is a practical unit. You perform a piece you have written and evaluate it.

Component three is 'Texts in Practice'. This unit asks students to perform two scenes from one play, which students have a free choice over.



Is this the right course for me?

This course helps students collaborate with others, think analytically and evaluate effectively. Students gain confidence to pursue their own ideas.

Students need to be able to demonstrate both practical and academic ability: the exam unit does need you to learn to write essays about how theatre is created. The ability to work effectively in a team is also essential.

Any questions? Contact Mrs Rowley

For more information [click here.](#)

What will I learn?

Pourquoi le français? Une langue étrangère, c'est une clé pour communiquer, voyager et rêver plus loin!

French GCSE isn't just grammar — you also learn about food, films, music, festivals and traditions. Put simply, it helps you understand another culture and see the world differently. French is spoken in over 25 countries across Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, and Canada. Learning French opens the door to international culture.



How will I be assessed?

Theme 1: People and lifestyle

Theme 2: Popular culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

Students are assessed in their listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. They will be asked across these skills to answer questions in English and in French and they will be expected to interact effectively for several purposes. They will also be expected to understand, respond to and translate different types of writing.

Is this the right course for me?

French GCSE is an excellent way of broadening your cultural horizons for students who are interested in the world beyond our shores. This is the perfect course for students who like to be assessed across more than just written communication. It best suits students who are willing linguists: young people who like talking and learning new things.

Any questions? Contact Mr Shaw

For more information [click here](#).

What will I learn?

Geography covers so much that helps us to understand the modern world: changing cities, global development, weather hazards and climate change.

In recent years we have taken students to visit cities across the UK such as Newcastle. It is our aim to get GCSE students out of school to investigate the world for themselves and see what they have been taught in the real world.

How will I be assessed?

The GCSE specification consists of three exam papers. Paper 1 is 'The Physical Environment' which lasts 1 hour and 45 minutes. This exam covers coasts, rivers, weather hazards, climate change and ecosystems. This paper is worth 37.5% of your final grade. Paper 2 is 'The Human Environment' which lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes. This exam covers changing cities, global development, resource management and energy resource management. It is also worth 37.5% of your grade. Paper 3 covers 'Geographical Investigations: Fieldwork and UK Challenges' and lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes. This exam covers elements of the fieldwork and makes connections to geographical challenges the UK faces today. It is worth 25% of the overall qualification.

There is no controlled assessment element to the course, but students will complete two fieldwork days, one on the human environment and one on the physical environment. The techniques used will be examined in Paper 3.

Is this the right course for me?

Geography GCSE is perfect for students who are interested in the world and want to know about why things happen in the physical and the political world. The fieldwork element to the course makes it unique among GCSE courses allowing students gather and analyse their own data.

As GCSE Geography is assessed by exams, it suits students who are comfortable with extended pieces of writing that use evidence to structure an argument, or express both sides of a debate.



Any questions? Contact Mrs Brown or Miss Bates

For more information [click here.](#)

What will I learn?

Health and Social Care covers the rights of individuals, person-centred values of care, how to protect individuals in various care settings and learn about the impact of life events.



How will I be assessed?

The course is made up of one examined unit, one mandatory coursework unit and one optional unit.

Is this the right course for me?

This course is perfect for you if you are applying for a job or apprenticeship in the healthcare sector. You need to be independent, self-motivated with exceptional organisational skills. You can also carry on your studies in this area in sixth form. You need to have great attendance as it is a mixture of course work and examined theory.

Any questions? Contact Miss Roche

For more information [click here.](#)

What will I learn?

History helps us understand the modern world and why things came to be. We are fortunate that our syllabus covers a range of units which include medieval and modern history as well as British, European and World history. The variety of topics and time periods makes this an exciting opportunity for students to explore different aspects of history. Added to that, the skills developed during the course will allow students to become more adept at reading, analysing, and creating a coherent argument - vital tools in today's world.

As part of 'Understanding the Modern World' we will study America 1840-1895. This includes study of the lives of the Plains Indians, westward expansion of the USA and the American Civil War. We will also study Korea and Vietnam during the turbulent time of the Korean War 1950 -1953 and the Vietnam war, finishing with the Fall of Saigon in 1975. In 'Shaping the Nation' we will study beliefs about the medicine and the causes of disease: from the Black Death to public health, improvements in the twentieth century. We also look at Norman England 1066-1100 - using our connections to Carlisle Castle.

How will I be assessed?

There will be two examinations at the end of Year 11 of two hours each, both worth 50% of the overall assessment, and both testing two units.



Is this the right course for me?

This course is perfect for students who have an interest in the past and how we are shaped by it. The course allows you to study a range of fascinating periods of history in detail. As GCSE History is assessed by exams, it suits students who are comfortable writing essays – extended pieces of writing that use evidence to structure an argument, or express both sides of a debate.

Any questions? Contact Ms Wedderburn

For more information [click here](#).

What will I learn?

You will develop skills in preparation, cooking and presentation of dishes. This can include professional techniques such as molecular gastronomy and contemporary plating. The Hospitality and Catering industry is a major employer of the people in the UK.



How will I be assessed?

Unit 1 is called 'The Hospitality and Catering Industry' and it covers the study of different types of hospitality and catering provision for situations: front of house and kitchen operations; the needs and requirements of customers; what makes a business successful; as well as nutrition and food safety. This is assessed by a 90-minute exam.

Unit 2 is called 'Hospitality and Catering in Action' and it covers the safe planning, preparation, cooking and presentation of a variety of nutritional dishes. There is a focus on: nutrients provided by foods and their function in the body; the nutritional needs of specific groups of people; unsatisfactory nutritional intake; the impact of cooking methods on nutrients in foods; as well as environmental issues and menu planning. This is assessed through 9-hour assessment. This is not a traditional 'exam'. This time includes the cooking and presenting two food courses in 3-4 hours.

Is this the right course for me?

This course is perfect for learners who enjoy cooking and want to creatively experiment with food. There are opportunities to take your studies further in the hospitality and catering industry. The Unit 2 assessment having a strong practical element means that it is an opportunity for students who have skills outside of those assessed by traditional exams to do well in a practical setting.

Any questions? Contact Miss Roche

For more information [click here.](#)

What will I learn?

Students taking GCSE Music will learn to perform, compose and appreciate different types of music. They will develop critical and creative thinking. The set works enable students to conduct in-depth studies into different musical styles and genres and put them in a wider context. Students develop their cultural, aesthetic and emotional awareness, and the ability to make music individually and as part of a group.



How will I be assessed?

Music GCSE has three parts to assessment. Students are required to perform a minimum of two pieces lasting 4-6 minutes. Performing is 30% of the qualification. Students are also assessed on their composition: they write two of their own pieces. This is 30% of the qualification. There is also one exam which lasts one hour and fifteen minutes. The exam is 40% of the qualification.

Is this the right course for me?

Although the course is well suited to students who are already musicians, please speak to Mrs Richardson if you are not but you are still interested in the course. One of the big advantages to Music GCSE is the amount of the assessment given over to creativity and performance. There are many opportunities to further your GCSE studies with the school performances at the carol service and in the shows put on at Trinity.

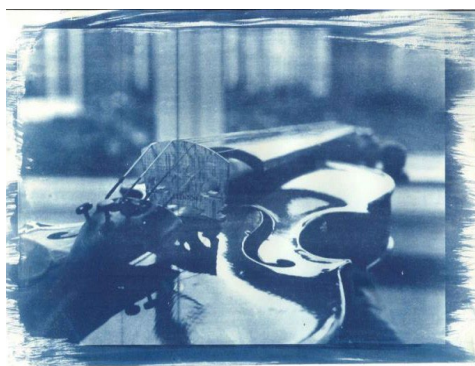
Any questions? Contact Mrs Richardson

For more information [click here.](#)

What will I learn?

GCSE Photography provides opportunities for you to work in digital imaging and light-sensitive materials. You will be encouraged to pursue approaches to portraiture, landscape photography, still life photography, (working from natural or manufactured objects), documentary photography, Fine Art photography, photography involving a moving image, (television, film and animation) as well as new media practice such as computer-manipulated photography and photographic projections.

As a school we are very lucky to have our own dark room which is popular with our GCSE students. It is not a necessity for Photography students to own a good camera, as we have our own equipment. However, a love of taking photos is important: you will be taking photoshoots in and out of school.



How will I be assessed?

There are two parts to the assessment. Component one is a portfolio of work – a 'sustained' project that is worth 60%. Component two is a response to an externally set assignment. This is worth 40%. It has a set amount of preparation time and ten hours of supervised time in assessment conditions.

Is this the right course for me?

The practical nature of this course mean that it is accessible for all. There is no final written exam, which some students find takes pressure of them during the final exam series. Careful tuition is given to students, so even if you have never had the opportunity to work with real cameras before you can take the course. Our teachers also create opportunities for students to photograph (see the picture of the owl!).

Please note that if you choose to study Art and Design (Photography) then you can study either GCSE Art & Design (Art, Craft and Design) or GCSE Art and Design (Textile Design) or GCSE Art& Design 3D Design.

Any questions? Contact Mrs Reay

For more information [click here.](#)

What will I learn?

There are two ways to study PE at Trinity: GCSE and BTEC. Both courses are rooted in physical activity and practical performance and will appeal to any boy or girl with a genuine interest and a degree of ability in a variety of sports.



How will I be assessed?

GCSE PE is assessed through two written exam papers and a practical in physical activity that is worth 40% of the marks. The two written papers are in 'The Human Body and Movement in Physical Activity' and 'Socio-Cultural Influences and Wellbeing in Physical Activity and Sport'. The practical performance is assessed across three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or an individual activity).

BTEC PE covers a very similar range of content, but assessment is at regular intervals throughout the course rather than examinations at the end of the two years.

Is this the right course for me?

GCSE PE is the perfect course for students who have an interest in the scientific side of Physical Education, as well as skills and experience across three different physical activities.

BTEC PE is the equivalent of GCSE PE but is assessed at regular intervals and has fewer written exams at the end of the course – whilst still being as fascinating and diverse as the GCSE option. Some students find the structure that this course provides a better fit – especially if they are not involved in three different sports.

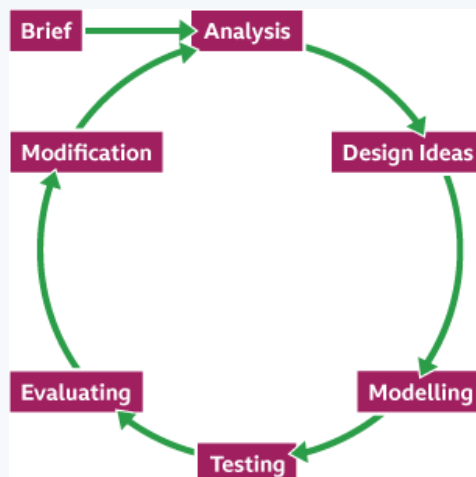
Please note that all students complete an hour of 'core' PE in Y10 and Y11.

Any questions? Contact Mr Threlkeld

For more information click [here](#) for GCSE. Please click [here](#) for BTEC.

What will I learn?

You will learn how to produce technical drawings, computer-aided design, as well as traditional hand tool techniques on a range of woods, metals and plastics. The main aim of the course is to help you develop into a product designer of tomorrow. Everything around you from the pen in your hand to the chair you are sitting on was created by a designer. They all started with GCSE product design!



How will I be assessed?

You will produce an extended project on a theme provided by the exam board. There are various elements that you need to cover such as research, creating a client profile, generating design ideas, making prototype models and a final piece. This is worth 60% of the final grade. You will then sit an exam paper that focuses on the properties of materials, tools, health and safety, the environment and design.

Is this the right course for me?

If you enjoy designing and making, but also learning facts, this course will suit you well! We have a thriving A level course, if staying with us for 6th form is something you're thinking about for the future. You'll need to be a logical thinker with strong computer skills to be successful in this GCSE.

Any questions? Contact Miss Roche

For more information [click here](#).

What will I learn?

No other subject in school deals so directly with vital moral and spiritual dimensions of human experience. It contributes much to the understanding of our own society and of the culture of other nations. It also provides opportunities for students to engage with questions of belief, value, meaning, purpose, truth and their influences on human life. It challenges students to reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes and contributes to their preparation for adult life in a pluralistic society and global community.



How will I be assessed?

GCSE Religious Studies is divided into three units. Component one is 'Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World', It concerns issues around relationships, life and death, good/evil and human rights. It makes up 50% of the qualification and is assessed by a two-hour exam. Component two is 'The Beliefs, Teachings and Practices of Christianity'. It concerns the common and different views within different strands of Christianity itself. It makes up 25% and is assessed by a one-hour exam. Component three is the study of a world faith and is worth 25% of the overall qualification.

Religious Studies GCSE is the right course for you.

A GCSE in Religious Studies is an excellent and widely respected preparation for many careers, such as medicine, law, teaching, social work, childcare and any job where you must make moral decisions. Students do not need to be 'religious' to do well in the subject; an open, questioning mind helps a lot. As an essay-based subject, it will also teach students how to create extended pieces of writing that evidence an argument or express a debate.

All students at Trinity take Religious Studies GCSE.

Any questions? Contact Mrs Ellis-Williams

For more information [click here.](#)

What will I learn?

¿Por qué el español? Es la lengua extranjera perfecta para comunicarte, viajar y soñar más lejos.

In Spanish GCSE, students learn how to understand, speak, read, and write Spanish for real-life situations. The course is practical and topic-based. As you might expect, you learn about grammar (present, past, and future tenses; adjectives and agreement; common verbs etc.) but you also get insight into the identity and culture of Spain: family and relationships; social life; leisure activities; as well as customs, festivals, and traditions in Spanish-speaking countries.



How will I be assessed?

Theme 1: People and lifestyle

Theme 2: Popular culture

Theme 3: Communication and the world around us

Students are assessed in their listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. They will be asked across these skills to answer questions in English and in Spanish and they will be expected to interact effectively for several purposes. They will also be expected to understand, respond to and translate different types of writing.

Is this the right course for me?

Spanish GCSE is an excellent way of broadening your cultural horizons for students who are interested in the world beyond our shores. This is the perfect course for students who like to be assessed across more than just written communication. It best suits students who are willing linguists: young people who like talking and learning new things.

Any questions? Contact Mr Shaw

For more information [click here](#).

Choosing your options is an important step, but it's not about deciding what job you want to do for the rest of your life. This is your chance to choose subjects that interest you, play to your strengths and help you build useful skills for the future. Many people change direction as they grow and learn, and careers are rarely fixed. If you choose subjects you enjoy and work hard in them, you will keep your options open and give yourself the best chance of success. Talk to your teachers, tutor and family if you are unsure — you are not expected to have everything worked out yet.

While you are in school, you will receive the following support to help you explore your options and plan your next steps.

- Guidance from form tutors, subject teachers and our careers adviser.
- Careers assemblies, workshops and lessons.
- Information about further education, apprenticeships and employment pathways delivered mainly by external partners such as Carlisle College, University of Cumbria, Hello Futures, Gen 2 and Amazing apprenticeships.
- Independent and impartial careers guidance at key decision points with our careers adviser.
- Work experience supported by staff but secured by the student.
- Exploration of a wealth of different careers and employability skills embedded in the curriculum of each subject.

Useful websites.

The school careers website which has a wealth of information and further useful links: <https://trinity.cumbria.sch.uk/curriculum/careers>.

The Cumbria Careers Hub contains a wealth of information prepared to support parents and carers: <http://education.careershucumbria.co.uk>.

This website enables you to explore the local labour market to discover opportunities in Cumberland: <http://cumbria.startprofile.com>.

A government website that provides careers information, advice and guidance: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>.

This website contains information to enable parents and carers to support their children through their next steps: <https://www.hellofuture.ac.uk/parents-carers/>.

For further information contact Mrs Oliver