Trinity School Carlisle



KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM 2027–2029

Your GCSE options

Everything you need to choose the subjects you'll study in Years 10 and 11

This booklet is written for you, the student. Parents and carers: please use it to talk the choices through together.

Choices due: Wednesday 3rd February 2027

Welcome

This booklet explains how options work, what each subject involves and how to hand in your choices.

Choosing your options is a big step, but it shouldn't be a scary one. You'll study these subjects for two years, three lessons a week, so pick ones you'll enjoy and do well in. You don't need to have your future worked out yet. Plenty of people change direction as they go, and that's fine.

Read it, talk about it at home, and ask lots of questions. We're here to help.

Mr Hopkins
Deputy Headteacher

Mr Grant
Assistant Headteacher

What's in this booklet

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The subjects (A to Z)

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Key dates and how it works

Here's what happens between now and the summer. Put these dates somewhere you'll see them.

When	What happens
November 2026	You get this booklet. Read it and talk it through at home.
November and December	Ask your subject teachers, form tutor and our careers adviser about anything you're unsure of. Start a shortlist on the planner at the back.
Tuesday 15 December 2026	**Options evening.** Come with your family before the Christmas break, meet the subject teachers and ask your questions.
Christmas holidays	Talk it through at home while it's fresh, and fill in your planner.
January	Any last questions? Ask your subject teachers or form tutor, and use your autumn report to help you decide.
Wednesday 3 February 2027	**Deadline.** Complete the online options form.
Tuesday 9 March 2027	We write to you to confirm your subjects and explain how to ask for a change.

How it works in four steps

Step	What you do
1	**Choose your science route.** Combined Science or Separate Sciences. This decides how many options you pick. Page 4
2	**Choose your options.** Three if you're doing Combined Science, two if you're doing Separate Sciences. Page 5
3	**Pick a backup.** Just in case a subject doesn't run or two of your choices clash.
4	**Hand in your choices.** Fill in the online form by Wednesday 3 February 2027. Planner and form link: page 26

Who can help? Subject teachers, your form tutor, your Head of Year, our careers adviser, older students and your family. Ask lots of questions.

Step 1: Choose your science route

Everyone studies Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The choice is how many GCSEs you get for it. Either way, you finish with nine GCSEs.

	Combined Science	Separate Sciences
What you get	One Science qualification worth 2 GCSEs	3 GCSEs: Biology, Chemistry and Physics
Options you pick	**3**	**2**
Good to know	One of your options must be French, Spanish, History, Geography or Computer Science	You'll have 8 hours of science a week

Missed the assembly on the two Science routes? Watch the recording here.

What everyone studies

You don't pick these. Everyone at Trinity takes them.

Subject	What you get
English Language and English Literature	Two GCSEs. Find out more about English
Maths	One GCSE. Find out more about Maths
Religious Studies	One GCSE. See page 23
Science	Two or three GCSEs, depending on your route. See page 4
Core PE	One hour a week. Not an exam subject, and separate from GCSE PE.

Step 2: Choose your options

Pick three options if you're doing Combined Science, or two if you're doing Separate Sciences. A few rules apply:

- **Combined Science?** One of your options must be French, Spanish, History, Geography or Computer Science.
- **Art and Photography** can be taken together.
- **PE** comes in two versions, GCSE or BTEC. The PE page explains the difference.
- **Computer Science** needs strong Maths. Staff will check it's the right fit before confirming a place.

Not sure? Start with what you enjoy

Find the things you like, then read those subject pages first.

If you like…	Have a look at…
Drawing, painting and visual ideas	Art · Photography
Designing and making things	Design & Technology · Hospitality & Catering
Performing on stage	Drama · Dance · Music
Sport and how the body works	PE & Sport
Puzzles, logic and tech	Computer Science
Rocks, volcanoes, fossils and the outdoors	Geology · Geography
Money, brands and big ideas	Business Studies
Looking after and helping people	Child Development · Health & Social Care
Travel and other cultures	French · Spanish · Geography
Debating and arguing a point	History · Geography · Business Studies

Making your decision

Questions to ask yourself

- Will I enjoy it for two years, three lessons a week?
- Will I do well in it?
- How is it assessed, and does that suit me: exams, coursework or practical work?
- Where could it lead?

Myth or fact?

You might think…	Actually…
“I should pick what my friends pick.”	They might not end up in your class, and it’s your two years. Choose for you.
“I need to know what job I want.”	You don’t. Pick subjects you enjoy and work hard in, and you keep your doors open.
“No exam means less work.”	Coursework subjects swap exams for a lot of detailed work done over time.
“I’ve never danced or played an instrument, so those aren’t for me.”	Dance is open to complete beginners. For Music, have a chat with Mrs Richardson.

At options evening, ask…

- What does a typical lesson look like?
- How much coursework and homework is there?
- What do students find hardest?
- What do students go on to do after this course?

Scan, watch, listen. Every subject page has a QR code. Scan it with your phone camera to find out more. Look out for the quotes from students who are taking the course now.

Art (Art, Craft & Design)

GCSE · AQA

Love drawing, painting or making things? This is where you build your own portfolio.



What you'll learn

You'll try out lots of different materials to find what you're good at: drawing, painting, photography, clay, mixed media and printmaking. You'll be encouraged to develop your own ideas, and you'll finish with a portfolio you can use for further courses or work.

How you're assessed

- Portfolio, built up over the course: 60%
- Externally set task, completed in 10 hours: 40%
- No written exam. By the time summer exams start, your Art is finished.

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You enjoy being creative and building your visual skills
- You're imaginative and happy to experiment
- You'd rather show what you can do than write about it

Good to know: You can take Art and Photography together.

What students say

"I feel calm and free when I create my art as I have a lot of freedom and can express myself." Yr 11 Student HJ

Any questions? Ask Mrs Reay.

Full course details

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Scan for course details

Business Studies

GCSE · Eduqas

Ever thought about starting your own business, or wondered how big brands decide what to sell?



What you'll learn

You'll find out how businesses work, both from the point of view of starting your own and of working for an organisation. Topics include who owns businesses, the marketing mix, managing people and managing money.

How you're assessed

- Two exams at the end of Year 11
- Paper 1, Business Dynamics: the theory of how business works
- Paper 2, Business Considerations: you're given data about a real business and use it to solve its problems
- Both papers have short questions and longer written answers

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You're curious about how businesses work. You don't need to know anything about business already.
- You're happy writing in English, taking notes and practising exam questions in class

Any questions? Ask Mr Brown.

Full course details

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Scan for course details

Child Development

Cambridge National (Level 1/2) · OCR

What could be more fascinating than learning how children grow?



What you'll learn

You'll learn about the health and wellbeing of children from birth to five, how to keep children safe, what babies and young children need to eat, and how children develop in their first five years.

How you're assessed

- Three units
- Health and wellbeing for child development: an exam
- Two coursework units (called NEAs), done in school and marked by your teachers: creating a safe environment and nutrition from birth to five, and how children develop from one to five

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You're interested in working in early years or primary teaching
- You might want to go on to Childcare, Psychology or Health & Social Care at Level 3, or an apprenticeship
- You want to build skills like observation, problem solving and working with people

What students say

" We are able to discuss things in class which helps improve my understanding, and I have learnt things that will be useful lots of areas in my future" Ruby Y11

Any questions? Ask Mrs Groves.

Full course details

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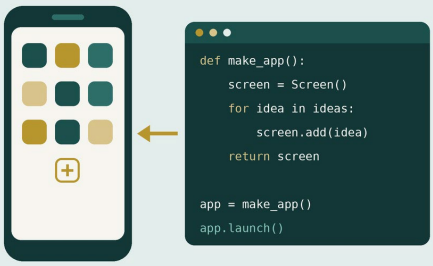
Scan for course details

Computer Science

GCSE · OCR

Have you ever used TikTok or BeReal? Could you do better and create the next big smartphone app?

Want to know how computers actually work, not just how to use them?



What you'll learn

You'll learn how to program in Python, plus the skills you'd need to build your own software and get it running on different platforms. You'll also learn the theory behind computing, such as how processors work.

How you're assessed

- Two exams at the end of Year 11
- Paper 1: Computer Systems
- Paper 2: Computational Thinking

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You enjoy solving problems and you're good at Maths. The course is very mathematical and needs strong logical thinking.
- You're happy with a theory-heavy course: regular lessons involve taking notes and answering exam questions
- You don't need any coding experience. There's time each week to build your Python skills.

Good to know: Because the course needs strong Maths, Computer Science staff and the Senior Leadership Team will look at whether it's the right fit for you before confirming a place.

Any questions? Ask Mr Brown.

Full course details

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Scan for course details

Dance

Level 1/2 Vocational Award in Performing Arts · Eduqas

Got a passion for movement? Even if you've never danced on a stage, it's time to find out what you can do.



What you'll learn

You'll explore your creative skills through movement and music, working with others to create and perform. Our GCSE dance group performs in public shows during the year.

How you're assessed

- No written exam at the end of the two years
- Units 1 and 2: a project for each, responding to a brief. 10 hours each, 30% each.
- Unit 3: a longer project responding to a brief in Year 11. 20 hours, 40%.

Is it for you? It could be if…

- Project work suits you better than exams
- You love music and movement
- You're enthusiastic, imaginative and enjoy working with others. You don't need to have danced before.

Any questions? Ask Mr Hopkins (he doesn't teach the course, but he can answer your questions).

Full course details

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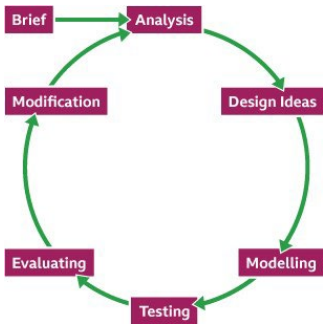
Scan for course details

Design & Technology

GCSE · AQA

Everything around you, from the pen in your hand to the chair you're sitting on, started with a designer.

Could that be you?



What you'll learn

You'll learn technical drawing, computer-aided design and traditional hand tools on woods, metals and plastics. The aim is to help you become a product designer of the future.

How you're assessed

- A design-and-make project (non-exam assessment) of about 30 to 35 hours: 50%. You respond to a challenge set by AQA, covering research, a client profile, design ideas, prototype models and a final product.
- One written exam, 2 hours: 50%. It covers materials, tools, health and safety, the environment and design, and includes some maths and science.

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You enjoy designing and making, and you also like learning facts
- You think logically and have good computer skills
- You might want to take A level Design & Technology in our sixth form

Any questions? Ask Miss Roche.

Full course details

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Scan for course details

Drama

GCSE · AQA

Live theatre is one of the best things you can see. Want to be part of it?



What you'll learn

About two thirds of lessons are practical, working on performance and design. You'll also learn to describe, analyse and evaluate plays and performances. Everyone goes on at least one theatre trip, and you're encouraged to join Trinity Theatre Company productions.

How you're assessed

- Component 1, Understanding Drama: an exam on one play and a piece of live theatre you've seen
- Component 2, Devising Drama: you create and perform your own piece, then evaluate it
- Component 3, Texts in Practice: you perform two scenes from a play of your choice

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You enjoy performing and working in a team
- You're happy to write essays about how theatre is made, as well as perform
- You want to grow in confidence and follow your own ideas

Any questions? Ask Mrs Rowley.

Full course details

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Scan for course details

French

GCSE · AQA

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

(Why French? A foreign language is a key to communicating, travelling and dreaming bigger.)



What you'll learn

It isn't just grammar. You'll learn about food, films, music, festivals and traditions, and see the world a bit differently. French is spoken in over 25 countries across Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and Canada.

How you're assessed

- Three themes: People and lifestyle; Popular culture; Communication and the world around us
- You're tested on listening, reading, speaking and writing
- You'll answer questions in English and in French, hold conversations and translate

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You're interested in the world beyond the UK
- You like being assessed on more than just writing
- You enjoy talking and learning new things

Good to know: French counts towards the Combined Science rule on page 5.

Any questions? Ask Mr Shaw.

Full course details

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Scan for course details

Geography

GCSE · Pearson Edexcel Geography A

Ever wondered why floods or storms occur? Why cities grow and change? Or how we can protect ourselves from climate change? Geography helps give you a world of knowledge



What you'll learn

Geography helps you understand the modern world: changing cities, global development, weather hazards and climate change. We get out of school too. Recent trips have included UK cities such as Newcastle.

How you're assessed

- Paper 1, The Physical Environment (1 hr 45): coasts, rivers, weather hazards, climate change, ecosystems. 37.5%
- Paper 2, The Human Environment (1 hr 30): changing cities, global development, resource and energy management. 37.5%
- Paper 3, Fieldwork and UK Challenges (1 hr 30). 25%
- Two fieldwork days, one human and one physical. No coursework.

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You want to know why things happen in the physical and political world
- You like collecting and analysing your own data
- You're comfortable writing longer answers that use evidence to make an argument

Good to know: Geography counts towards the Combined Science rule on page 5.

What students say

Picking geography helps you know what the world is like and how people live their daily lives. You get to attend plenty of school trips that are good and Geography doesn't get boring." Rachel Yr11

"The best thing about Geography would be that almost every topic is easy to understand and remember" Jaxan Yr11

Any questions? Ask Mrs Brown or Miss Bates.

Full course details

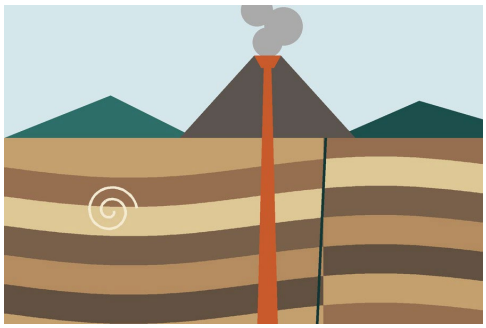
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Scan for course details

Geology

GCSE · Eduqas · new for 2027

Did you know the Lake District was once a chain of volcanoes? Find out how the ground under your feet was made.



What you'll learn

Geology is the science of how the Earth works. You'll study minerals, rocks and fossils, plate tectonics, earthquakes and volcanoes, how the climate has changed over millions of years, and how the Earth compares with the Moon and Mars. You'll also find out how geologists track down water, metals and energy resources, and how they help protect people from natural hazards.

How you're assessed

- Component 1, Geological Principles: an on-screen exam, 1 hour 15 minutes. 50%
- Component 2, Investigative Geology: a written exam, 1 hour 30 minutes. 50%. You work out the geology of an area from a map.
- At least two days of fieldwork, including an investigation out in the field
- No coursework

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You love the outdoors and want to know how landscapes were formed
- You enjoy science and piecing together clues from evidence
- You're happy using maths and data: they make up at least 10% of the marks

Good to know: Geology is new at Trinity for 2027.

What students say: "Studying Geology has helped me to understand the world around me and to the ground beneath my feet".

Any questions? Ask Mrs Vaughan

Full course details

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Scan for course details

Health & Social Care

Cambridge National (Level 1/2) · OCR

Interested in a career looking after people?



What you'll learn

You'll learn about people's rights, person-centred care, how to protect people in different care settings and how life events affect people.

How you're assessed

- One exam unit
- One compulsory coursework unit
- One optional coursework unit

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You're thinking about a job or apprenticeship in health or care
- You're independent, self-motivated and well organised
- Your attendance is good. Missing lessons makes the coursework hard to keep up with.

What students say

"I chose it because you can learn loads of helpful things and I like the lesson because it is interesting and an organised lesson" Jessica Year 11

Any questions? Ask Mrs Groves.

Full course details

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Scan for course details

History

GCSE · AQA

How did the world end up the way it is?



What you'll learn

You'll study four units: Medicine in Britain from the Middle Ages to the present; Early Elizabethan England 1558-1588; The American West 1835–1895; and Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939.

How you're assessed

- Three exams at the end of Year 11: Paper 1 is on Medicine with a special focus on the Western Front in WWI, 80 minutes (30%); Paper II is on Elizabethan England and the American West, 1 hour 50 minutes (40% in total); Paper III is on Weimar and Nazi Germany, 90 minutes (30%)

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You're interested in the past and how it shapes us
- You're comfortable writing essays that use evidence to make an argument
- You want to get better at reading, analysing and arguing a case

Good to know: History counts towards the Combined Science rule on page 5.

What students say

"I'm glad I chose History as I've learned so much and it is so interesting and fun." Angel Y11

"I am glad I chose History because all the topics are interesting. I am never bored in lessons." Isaac Y11

"I love History because…you get to study many different events in the world." Jessica Y11

Any questions? Ask Ms Wedderburn.

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Scan for course details

Hospitality & Catering

Level 1/2 Award · Eduqas

Fancy cooking like a professional chef?



What you'll learn

You'll develop your skills in preparing, cooking and presenting dishes, including professional techniques like molecular gastronomy and modern plating. Hospitality and catering is one of the UK's biggest employers.

How you're assessed

- Unit 1, The Hospitality and Catering Industry: a 90-minute exam on how the industry works, customers, food safety and nutrition
- Unit 2, Hospitality and Catering in Action: a 9-hour practical assessment where you plan, cook and present two courses. It isn't a traditional exam.

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You enjoy cooking and experimenting with food
- Your strengths show best in practical work
- You might want a career in hospitality

Any questions? Ask Miss Roche.

Full course details

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Scan for course details

Music

GCSE · Eduqas

Love making music, or want to write your own?



What you'll learn

You'll perform, compose and listen to lots of different types of music. Set works let you study musical styles in depth. You'll make music on your own and as part of a group.

How you're assessed

- Performing: at least two pieces lasting 4 to 6 minutes. 30%
- Composing: two pieces of your own. 30%
- One exam, 1 hour 15 minutes. 40%

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You already play or sing, or you're keen to learn. Not a musician yet? Talk to Mrs Richardson.
- You like a course where most marks come from being creative and performing
- You want to perform in the carol service and school shows

Any questions? Ask Mrs Richardson.

Full course details

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Scan for course details

Photography

GCSE Art & Design (Photography) · AQA

Love taking photos? We even have our own darkroom.



What you'll learn

You'll work with digital images and traditional light-sensitive materials. Styles include portraits, landscapes, still life, documentary, fine art and moving image, plus computer-edited photography and projections. You don't need your own camera: we have the equipment.

How you're assessed

- Portfolio, a sustained project: 60%
- Externally set assignment, with preparation time and 10 hours of supervised work: 40%
- No written exam

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You love taking photos, in school and out (our teachers set up shoots like the owl on this page)
- You'd rather not have a final written exam
- You've never used a real camera? That's fine. You'll be taught carefully.

Good to know: You can take Photography and Art together.

What students say

"Photography is fun and interesting because you are always doing different things."

"I like how you get to use creativity in your work, but I do suggest you keep up with your coursework.".

Any questions? Ask Mrs Reay.

Full course details

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Scan for course details

PE & Sport

GCSE PE · AQA, or BTEC Tech Award in Sport · Pearson

Into sport? There are two ways to study it at Trinity.



What you'll learn

Both courses are based on physical activity and practical performance. They suit anyone with a real interest and some ability in a range of sports.

How you're assessed

- GCSE PE: two written exams (The Human Body and Movement; Socio-Cultural Influences and Wellbeing) and practical performance in three activities worth 40%. One activity must be a team sport, one individual, and the third either.
- BTEC Sport: similar content, but assessed regularly through the course, with fewer exams at the end

Is it for you? It could be if…

- GCSE PE: you're interested in the science behind sport and you play three different activities
- BTEC Sport: you'd prefer regular assessment, or you don't take part in three different sports

Good to know: Everyone also does one hour of core PE a week in Years 10 and 11. That isn't an exam subject.

What students say

I chose it because I have an interest in doing something to do with sport in the future (job)
Samantha Y11
It is interesting how sports impact an individual psychologically and physically
Anna Yr11

Any questions? Ask Mr Threlkeld.

GCSE course details · BTEC course details

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Scan for course details

Religious Studies

GCSE · Eduqas · everyone takes this

What's right, what's wrong, and what gives life meaning?



What you'll learn

You don't choose RS: everyone at Trinity takes it. It's here because students often have questions about it. You'll explore big questions about belief, values, meaning and truth, and think about your own views and other people's.

How you're assessed

- 2 x written exams – 1 hour 45 minutes each
- Paper 1 – Religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes (4 themes to be studied)
- Paper 2 – The study of two comparative religions: Christianity – beliefs, teachings & practices & Islam – beliefs, teachings & practices

Why it's worth it

- You don't need to be religious. An open, questioning mind helps most.
- It's great preparation for careers like medicine, law, teaching and social work, or any job where you make moral decisions
- You'll get better at writing extended answers that argue a case

What students say

Y11- I enjoy RS because I like learning about how different people live their lives and how they see the world. Max E
Y10 – I enjoy RS because we study different religious and non-religious views that are relevant in today's world, particularly the ethical choices people make because of their beliefs. Lauren

Any questions? Ask Mrs Ellis-Williams.

Full course details

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Spanish

GCSE · AQA

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

(Why Spanish? It's the perfect foreign language for communicating, travelling and dreaming bigger.)



What you'll learn

You'll learn to understand, speak, read and write Spanish for real-life situations. Alongside grammar (tenses, adjectives, common verbs) you'll learn about family, social life, leisure, and the customs, festivals and traditions of Spanish-speaking countries.

How you're assessed

- Three themes: People and lifestyle; Popular culture; Communication and the world around us
- You're tested on listening, reading, speaking and writing
- You'll answer questions in English and in Spanish, hold conversations and translate

Is it for you? It could be if…

- You're interested in the world beyond the UK
- You like being assessed on more than just writing
- You enjoy talking and learning new things

Good to know: Spanish counts towards the Combined Science rule on page 5.

Any questions? Ask Mr Shaw.

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Careers information, advice and guidance

Choosing options isn't about deciding what you'll do for the rest of your life. It's about picking subjects that interest you, play to your strengths and build useful skills. Careers are rarely fixed, and lots of people change direction. If you choose subjects you enjoy and work hard, you keep your options open.

Support you'll get in school

- Guidance from form tutors, subject teachers and our careers adviser
- Careers assemblies, workshops and lessons
- Information on college, apprenticeships and jobs, much of it from partners such as Carlisle College, University of Cumbria, Hello Future, Gen 2 and Amazing Apprenticeships
- Independent, impartial careers guidance at key decision points
- Work experience: staff support you, but you find your own placement
- Careers and employability skills built into every subject

Useful websites

Website	What it's for
Trinity careers page	Our own careers information and links
Careers Hub Cumbria	Information to help parents and carers support you
Start Profile Cumbria	Explore jobs and opportunities in Cumberland
National Careers Service	Government careers information and advice
Hello Future: parents and carers	Helping families support next steps

Want to talk it through? Contact Miss Gosling.

My options planner

Fill this in as you go, then use it to complete the online form.

My Science route

☐ Combined Science (I pick 3 options) ☐ Separate Sciences (I pick 2 options)

My choices

	Subject	Why I picked it
Option 1		
Option 2		
Option 3 (Combined Science only)		
Backup choice		

Before I hand it in

☐ I've read the pages for every subject I'm choosing

☐ I've checked the rules on page 5

☐ I've talked to the subject teachers

☐ I've talked it through at home

☐ I've completed the online form by Wednesday 3 February 2027

Hand in your choices online

Deadline: Wednesday 3 February 2027

Options form: [ADD 2027 OPTIONS FORM LINK HERE]