



BEECHEN CLIFF

GCSE Option Choices

September 2026

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Introduction

The majority of students in Year 9 at Beechen Cliff will move on to Year 10 and 11 within the school. The curriculum offer is designed to provide academic challenge, a broad range of subjects for students to study and to cater for all abilities. The aim is that after their GCSE studies, students will be fully prepared for the next step in their education.

This booklet aims to help Year 9 students and their parents to make choices about the subjects to be studied at Beechen Cliff in Years 10 and 11. These decisions must be carefully considered as they can have a significant bearing on the next steps in education and life beyond Beechen Cliff.

A small number of students may wish to undertake their Year 10 and 11 studies at another institution. If students wish to continue their studies at a different school or college, we will endeavour to support them in their application process.

One option that may appeal to a small number of students is Somerset Studio School, based on the Writhlington School campus in Radstock, which is also part of the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership. Their curriculum is aimed at students who would benefit from both vocational courses and learning in a smaller, bespoke environment with a STEM focus. More information on Somerset Studio School is available on page 27.

Beechen Cliff Curriculum: Making Choices

The Curriculum

All students follow a Core Curriculum. The following subjects make up the Core Curriculum – these are not optional (timetable allocations are given in hours per fortnight):

- English Language and Literature GCSEs 8 hours (then 7 hours in Year 11)
- Combined/Separate Science GCSEs 10 hours
- Mathematics GCSE 7 hours (then 8 hours in Year 11)
- PE and Games 4 hours
- PSHE 1 hour

In addition to these Core subjects, four optional subjects are studied:

- Option Choice 1 5 hours
- Option Choice 2 5 hours
- Option Choice 3 5 hours
- Option Choice 4 5 hours

Options Pathways

There are two different options pathways to allow students to follow a broad and balanced curriculum, and to support them in making choices that fit with both their interests and academic profile. The default option is the Standard Options Pathway.

1. Standard Options

Most students will follow the Standard Options Pathway. For two out of the four option choices we require students to study a foreign language and History or Geography. Two further choices can be made from the list on page 7.

A student directed towards the Standard Options, but who does not want to study a language and/or History or Geography will need to make an appointment with Mr Seal.

2. Bespoke Options

If we believe a student would benefit from access to a broader spread of qualifications, then a greater flexibility in subject choice will be available on the Bespoke Options Pathway. Parents will be contacted in January if we believe this to be appropriate for their child. Four choices can be made from the list on page 8 in consultation with the Deputy Headteacher, Mr Seal. Students taking the Standard Options and Bespoke Options studying the same subject are taught together.

For some students there may be the need for a reduced curriculum to ensure they receive the support required through their GCSE studies. This will be decided through consultation between parents and the SENDCo, Mrs Blair. Where this is the case, three option choices from the list on page 8 will be selected and the students will have additional literacy and numeracy support as part of their curriculum too.

GCSE Subjects

All GCSE subjects are now linear courses with assessment predominantly by external examination at the end of Year 11 and are graded from 9-1. In this grading system a Grade 4, called a standard pass, is roughly aligned to a Grade C from the previous grading system (A* - G). A Grade 5 is called a strong pass. A Grade 7 is approximately aligned to a Grade A. The Beechen Cliff Sixth Form minimum entry requirement is five Grade 6s (and at least a Grade 4 in both English and Maths).

Non-GCSE Subjects

Most subjects taught at Beechen Cliff are GCSE qualifications, which are graded from 9-1. In addition there are other Level 1/Level 2 qualifications available. These are equivalent to GCSEs but are more vocational/work-related and have a greater level of non-examination assessment. Rather than passed by grades, levels of Distinction, Merit or Pass are awarded instead. Broadly, a Pass at Level 2 is equivalent to a Grade 4 and a Distinction equivalent to a Grade 7.

GCSE Science

Whilst all students study Science GCSEs, there are two routes available:

- a) Separate Sciences
- b) Combined Science

More information is available on page 26

Both Combined and Separate Sciences are good preparation for A level Sciences. Whilst the final decision over whether a student should be entered for Combined Science or Separate Science is the decision of the Science Faculty, we do ask for students' preferences as part of the options choices process.

The timetable for making decisions

| | |
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| November | Parents are notified of the options process. Students take part in taster sessions in options subjects during the Ignite day. |
| January | Parents contacted if their child has been selected for the Bespoke Options pathway. All students will meet with members of the senior leadership team in small groups to discuss their options and ask any questions they may have. |
| Tuesday 13th January | Year 9 Options Evening for Parents (6.00pm) Presentations explaining the options process and responses to frequently asked questions. |
| Thursday 22nd January | Year 9 Parents' Evening – this will be an opportunity to discuss option choices with subject teachers |
| Monday 9th February | Deadline for the completion of the online Option Form. (Details about how to access this form will be provided to parents) |

Advice about making choices

- For further information on subjects, please see the subject curriculum booklets [here](#):
- students must think for themselves (not to base their decisions on what friends are doing)
- Focus on the subject rather than the teacher
- Give thought to the long term (goals beyond e.g. Sixth Form/college, apprenticeships, university, work etc.)
- students should ask questions about the courses - the structure and expectations.

Selecting and Preference Order

We will do our best to allocate students the subjects they choose but this isn't always possible so we ask students to select two reserve choices too. Please think carefully about reserve choices as it is possible that these will be studied for GCSE.

If there is greater demand for a subject than we can offer, or if there are not enough students to make a subject viable, or if the combination of subjects chosen is not possible within the timetable, then a reserve option may be allocated instead. For this reason, we require the subject choices to be given in order of preference and the reserve choices to also be given in order of preference.

Where demand for a subject is higher than the number of places, priority will be given to those who have placed the subject at higher preference. Where more than one student has placed it in the same preference order, the decision will be based on trying to ensure all students are given at least three of their options choices (as long as this is possible based on the compatibility of their chosen subjects). Once these steps have been applied, if there are

still more students than places available, names will be selected at random. Any student who is not given one of their 4 first choice preferences will be placed on a waiting list for the subject should a place become available.

Finally if, based on previous assessments, it is felt that alternative options would be more appropriate, advice will be given.

Subject choices will be finalised and confirmed with all students by June.

Standard Options

| | | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Language Option | One of the following is chosen: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French • German | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish |
| Humanities Option | One of the following is chosen: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography |
| Options | <p>Two of the following are chosen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art GCSE • Business Studies Level 1/2 • Computer Science GCSE • Interactive Media Level 1/2 (Not to be taken with Computer Science) • D&T: Design & Technology GCSE • D&T: Hospitality and Catering Level 1/2 • Music GCSE • Music Technology Level 2 (not to be taken with Music GCSE) • Photography GCSE • Physical Education GCSE • Religion, Philosophy and Ethics GCSE • Second Language GCSE (from the above) • Second Humanities GCSE (from the above) <p>Drama GCSE</p> <p>We do not currently offer Drama at GCSE. However, we would like to be able to run this course. This will depend upon a range of factors including staff recruitment and the number of students who are interested in studying it. You will have the option to let us know if your son is interested in studying Drama when completing the options form. For more information, please visit the AOA Drama website.</p> | |

Bespoke Options

| | |
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| | <p>Four of the following are chosen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art GCSE• Business Studies Level 1/2• Computer Science GCSE• D&T: Design & Technology GCSE• D&T: Hospitality and Catering Level 1/2• French GCSE• Geography GCSE• German GCSE• History GCSE• Interactive Media Level 1/2 (Not to be taken with Computer Science)• Italian• Music GCSE• Music Technology Level 2 (not to be taken with Music GCSE)• Photography GCSE• Physical Education GCSE• Religion, Philosophy and Ethics GCSE• Spanish GCSE <p>Drama GCSE</p> <p>We do not currently offer Drama at GCSE. However, we would like to be able to run this course from September 2026. This will depend upon a range of factors including staff recruitment and the number of students who are interested in studying it. You will have the option to let us know if your son is interested in studying Drama when completing the options form.</p> <p>For more information, please visit the AOA Drama website.</p> |
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| Business Studies Level 1/2 | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Staff Lead | Mr King |
| Syllabus | NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Business and Enterprise |
| Assessments | <p>This qualification has two assessments: one external written examination and one internal synoptic project.</p> <p>Unit 1- Externally assessed written examination (40% weighting) consisting of a mixture of multiple-choice, short-answer and extended-response questions on a range of business topics. 1 hr 30 minutes, 80 marks.</p> <p>Unit 2 - Externally set, but internally assessed synoptic project (60% weighting). The synoptic project will be completed in 21 hours of supervised time. The synoptic project will assess the learner's ability to effectively draw together their knowledge, understanding and skills from across the whole vocational area.</p> |
| Coursed Content | <p>This qualification is designed for learners who want an introduction to business and enterprise that includes a vocational and project-based element. The study of business and enterprise involves understanding key business and enterprise areas such as, legal structures, marketing, market research, operations management, resource planning, human resources, funding, finance and business and enterprise planning. The course is delivered through two units:</p> <p>Unit 1- Introduction to business and enterprise. In this unit learners will show an understanding of what it means to be an entrepreneur and how businesses are organised. Learners will develop knowledge of marketing, operations management and the influences that affect a business. (Externally assessed)</p> <p>Unit 2-Understanding resources for business and enterprise planning. In this unit learners will understand business planning, including research, resource planning and growth. Learners will develop knowledge of human resources and finance and how they support business and enterprise planning. (Synoptic project)</p> <p>This qualification focuses on an applied study of the business and enterprise sector and learners will gain a broad understanding and knowledge of working in the sector. Learners will also develop significant personal and vocational business skills that can be transferred to further study or employment.</p> |
| Taking it further | Depending on the grade the learner achieves in this qualification, they could progress onto Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications and/or GCSE/A Levels. |

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| | <p>Learners who achieve at Level 1 might consider progression to Level 2 qualifications post-16 such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A GCSE in Business Studies.• Study at Level 2 in a range of technical routes that have been designed for progression to employment, apprenticeships and further study. Examples might include Level 2 Technical Certificates in: Accounting; Accounting and Business; Business Administration; Business and Enterprise; Customer Service Operations. <p>Learners who achieve at Level 2 might consider progression to Level 3 qualifications post-16 such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level 3 Applied Generals in: Enterprise and Entrepreneurship; Financial Studies; Business and Enterprise; Applied Business; Business.• Level 3 Technical Levels in: Coordinating Business Support; Business: Marketing. |
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| Computer Science GCSE | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Staff Lead | Ms L Jarvis |
| Syllabus | OCR J277 |
| Assessment | <p>Component 01: Computer Systems (50%) 1 hour 30 minutes written paper includes multiple choice, short answer questions and essay type questions</p> <p>Component 02: Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming (50%) 1 hour 30 minutes written paper includes questions assessing the ability of students to write or refine algorithms</p> |
| Course Content | <p>This course is ideal for students who are interested in computer programming, problem solving and building their own computers. students who are good at maths and enjoy maths find the course particularly rewarding, although a creative mind is also catered for in this course. The computer science course has real relevance in our modern world, as computer science impacts on everything from scientific research, health, transport, banking and communications. It will give an understanding of how computer technology works and looks at what goes on “behind the scenes”. Technology has made the world more connected, but only because people have studied computer science. Through the study of computer programming the course will help develop critical thinking, analysis and problem solving skills as well as giving students the opportunity to improve the world and the lives of the people who live in it.</p> <p>Component 01 Computer Systems: systems architecture, memory and storage, computer networks, connections and protocols, network security, systems software, ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology</p> <p>Component 02 Computational thinking, algorithms and programming: algorithms, programming fundamentals, producing robust programs, Boolean logic, programming languages and Integrated Development Environments</p> |
| Taking it further | <p>Career paths are varied and skills gained will be highly sought after by employers. There is a huge demand for qualified computer scientists and that means careers are well paid. If after following this course you decide on a Computer Science pathway at university, Maths or Further Maths A Level should be chosen. You will also have the opportunity to continue your studies onto A Level Computer Science.</p> |

| Art GCSE | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Staff Lead | Ms C Moorhead, Mrs Wilmot |
| Syllabus | EDUQAS Art C650 QS |
| Assessment | 60% coursework based on two projects completed during Year 10 and Year 11. 40% is examination project base. |
| Course Content | <p>The aim of this course will be to stimulate, encourage and develop the widest range of artistic skills.</p> <p>During the first year of the course, students will be taught a selection of painting, drawing, printing and 3D techniques. These are developed through a series of mini projects. This allows each student to broaden the base on which to build ideas and personal interpretations. Students chose an area to focus on for their Personal Project, which then completes the coursework (60%) Each student will work towards the endorsed GCSE Art & Design.</p> <p>An important section of the course is knowledge of Art History. This is incorporated into the coursework. Gallery visits are part of the course and are viewed as important in progressing individual's ideas and creativity.</p> <p>Emphasis will be laid on the process of the development of ideas as well as on the final result. You will be assessed on all coursework (60%) and a final exam project (40%). Sketchbooks will be required during the coursework and it is essential to show developments and sequential ideas. A sketchbook of ideas for the exam is also essential. students have ten weeks prior to exams to prepare ideas and to perfect a thorough and personal interpretation of their chosen exam question.</p> <p>Homework is a minimum of two hours per week. students should be prepared to work hard on developing their own individual style. Independent study away from school is vital.</p> |
| Taking it further | Art A Level. Advertising, computer graphics, calligraphy, photography, printing/publishing, artist, art teacher, gallery museum work, freelance designer, theatre set design, graphic design, technical graphics, fashion/textiles design illustration, model maker, film/media, art direction, animation design, website design. |

| D&T: Design & Technology GCSE | |
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| Staff Lead | Mr P Simmons |
| Syllabus | AQA 8552 |
| Assessment | The GCSE is made up of two mandatory units, alongside introductory Design and Make Assignments which are covered over the two years. 50% NEA (Non-Exam Assessment) 50% Written Exam |
| Course Content | <p>Design & Technology provides hands-on experience along with the design functions and processes in business. The students undertake their own designs working with CAD, CAM and ICT to facilitate their design process.</p> <p>Introductory Design and Make Assignments: Projects throughout Year 10 that introduce the design process, focusing also on the knowledge and understanding of materials and processes.</p> <p>Unit 1: Design and Making Practice (NEA): A Controlled Assessment task which is introduced towards the last term of Year 10. This involves creating a detailed design project using a theme which is set by the AQA exam board. Candidates will submit a concise e-portfolio alongside a 3D outcome which they have produced for a specific client.</p> <p>Unit 2: Written Paper (Exam): Examination of Design & Technology subject knowledge and understanding. This will be taken in the Summer Term.</p> |
| Taking it further | Design & Technology is a pathway to studying Product Design at A Level. This can then be taken onto further education in design, engineering, architecture and related subjects. Apprenticeships in construction or engineering with technician-level positions in computer-aided design or engineering are a possibility without a degree. Engineering or computer based employment could be a logical career path but so would a more graphically oriented route combining with GCSE Art. |

| D&T: Hospitality and Catering Level 1/2 | |
|--|--|
| Staff Lead | Mrs K Gallagher |
| Syllabus | Eduqas 603/7022/1 |
| Assessment | <p>The students are challenged both practically and theoretically</p> <p>Each unit is assessed as Pass, Merit and Distinction (this equates to GCSE grading 4-8)</p> <p>Unit 1 (40%): The Hospitality and Catering Industry - Written exam - 1hr 30mins</p> <p>Unit 2 (60%): Hospitality and Catering in Action - Practical controlled assessment</p> <p>The practical controlled assessment is a 3hr practical exam where the students will be expected to produce two dishes and accompaniments to satisfy a chosen brief.</p> |
| Course Content | <p>This course concentrates on the hospitality and catering industry. You will develop the knowledge and understanding related to a range of hospitality and catering providers; how they operate and what they have to take into account to be successful. You will have the opportunity to learn about issues related to nutrition and food safety and how they affect successful hospitality and catering operations.</p> <p>In this qualification, you will also develop food preparation and cooking skills as well as transferable skills of problem solving, organisation and time.</p> <p>Year 10</p> <p>Students will spend this year developing both their theoretical and practical skills. The theoretical knowledge you will learn looks at areas such as: nutrition; environmental issues in the food industry; and food poisoning. Over the duration of the year the students will also develop a range of practical skills that will support them in their coursework project. The students will experience using a range of different ingredients and techniques, such as pastry, advanced pasta making, butchering, fish filleting, sauces and breads.</p> <p>Year 11</p> <p>During this year the students will work on their coursework project, where the students will research and develop ideas linked to a given question. This will culminate in a practical exam when the students will have the opportunity to cook and present their dishes. After the culmination of the coursework, the students will begin revision in preparation for the written exam which will be taken in the summer term.</p> |
| Taking it further | <p>Students can progress to the Level 3 course Food Science and Nutrition. Furthermore, the food industry is one of the largest employers in the UK. Career options include: Chef, sports science, dietician, food journalism, product development, home economist, events management, hospitality, front of house, conference management, buyer, production manager, public relations, hygiene control, National Health Service, health promotion, technical management.</p> |

| Photography GCSE | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Staff Lead | Mr D Murphy |
| Syllabus | EDUQAS Photography C656 QS |
| Assessment | 60% coursework based on two projects completed during Year 10 and the Independent Project completed in Year 11 40% is examination based |
| Course Content | <p>The aim of this course will be to educate boys in all aspects of lens based media. Options are available to practice traditional darkroom techniques as well as digital photo practices and media manipulation.</p> <p>During the first year of the course, students will be taught how to use a digital camera, use photoshop and develop ideas in coursework based on research in a variety of set topics, including studio and landscape work.</p> <p>An important section of the course is knowledge of Art History. This is incorporated into the coursework. Gallery visits are part of the course and are viewed as important in progressing individual's ideas and creativity.</p> <p>Emphasis will be laid on the process of the development of ideas as well as on the final result. You will be assessed on all coursework (60%) and a final exam (40%). A digital sketchbook will be required during the course and is essential to show developments and sequential ideas. A digital sketchbook of ideas for the exam is also essential. students have eight weeks prior to exams to prepare ideas and to perfect a thorough and personal interpretation of their chosen exam question</p> <p>Homework is a minimum of two hours per week, and is an essential part of the Photography course. Lessons generally involve photo editing of photographs taken after the school day ends, so it is vital that students opting to study Photography are prepared to go out to take photographs. students should be prepared to work hard on developing their own individual style. Independent study away from school is vital. A digital camera is necessary to study Photography.</p> |
| Taking it further | Photography A Level. Magazine Advertising, Wedding Photography, Portrait Photography Photojournalism, Film, TV art teacher, gallery museum work. |

| English | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Staff Lead | Mrs S O'Higgins |
| Syllabus | AQA 8700 English Language AQA 8702 English Literature |
| Assessment | <p>For English Language students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sit an examination, Paper 1 Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing, worth 50% of the marks , at the end of the two-year course. • sit an examination, Paper 2 Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives, worth 50% of the marks , at the end of the two-year course. • take part in a recorded Speaking and Listening Test between June and July of their first year. <p>For English Literature students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • study a range of poetry, prose and drama • sit a closed text examination on two set texts (Shakespeare and The 19th century novel) 40% of the marks. • sit a closed text examination on two set texts (Modern prose or drama texts and Power and Conflict poetry) and complete two questions on two unseen poems for 60% of the marks. |
| Course Content | <p>The skills developed as part of the study of English language are the abilities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read fluently, and with good understanding, a wide range of texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, including literature and literary non-fiction as well as other writing such as reviews and journalism • read and evaluate texts critically and make comparisons between texts • summarise and synthesise information or ideas from texts • use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing • write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately <p>For GCSE English Literature students should have the opportunity to develop the following skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literal and inferential comprehension • critical reading • comparing texts • producing clear and coherent text: writing effectively about literature for a range of purposes • accurate Standard English |
| Taking it further | A level English Literature. Any employer will require good levels of communication. The AQA Language and Literature courses prepares students to express themselves clearly in speech and writing thereby enabling them to develop good relations with others. Specialist professions might include: Marketing, PR, Law, Politics, Journalism, Research and Education. |

| Geography GCSE | |
|-------------------|---|
| Staff Lead | Ms R Sampson |
| Syllabus | AQA Geography 8035 |
| Assessment | <p>The course follows the AQA specification and is made up of three written exam papers.</p> <p>Paper One (35%): Living with the Physical Environment Covers the key geographical themes of physical geography: natural hazards (volcanoes, earthquakes, extreme weather, climate change), rivers, coasts, ecosystems, rainforests and cold environments (the Arctic).</p> <p>Paper Two (35%): Challenges in the Human Environment Covers the key geographical themes of human geography: urban issues and challenges, population growth, our changing economic world, globalisation, resource management, energy issues, development and aid.</p> <p>Paper Three (30%): Geographical Applications Part 1 is an issue evaluation that involves an element of problem solving, testing candidates ability to apply their geographical understanding and skills to a real life issue. Part 2 is based on fieldwork and will test candidates' general understanding of field work skills as well as questions about a piece of field work they have carried out.</p> |
| Course Content | <p>Geography is the study of the physical and human world. It links these in space and time, helping us to understand how and why the world is changing and to respond more intelligently to what is happening around us. In a globalised world, geography is a relevant, challenging and topical subject to study.</p> <p>Fieldwork is an essential part of the course and there will be a field trip in both Yr 10 and Year 11. In June of Year 10 we will visit Holford Combe in the Quantocks for a river study and in January of Year 11 we will visit Bristol Harbourside to study urban regeneration.</p> <p>A GCSE geographer will develop many key skills which are useful in the wider world and for employers, for example: decision-making, evaluating, understanding different people's points of view, carrying out enquiries, working in groups, collecting, processing and handling data, using maps, graphs and charts.</p> |
| Taking it further | <p>Geography A level. Geographers develop a wide range of transferable skills – in particular good communication and problem solving skills. The career paths for geographers are varied but geography provides useful background for: tourism, conservation, environmental research, meteorology, journalism, hazard management, government, leisure, flood management, transport, retail marketing and town planning to name but a few.</p> |

| History GCSE | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Staff Lead | Ms M Sinclair |
| Syllabus | AQA History 8145 |
| Assessment | <p>Examinations (100%)</p> <p>Paper 1 (50%) (2 hours) Understanding the modern world: (i) America 1920-73 and (ii) Conflict and tension in Asia 1950-75</p> <p>Paper 2 (50%) (2 hours) Shaping the British nation: (i) Health and the people development study and (ii) Elizabethan England depth study</p> |
| Course Content | <p>This qualification is studied in four parts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the transformation of healthcare in Britain from medieval quackery, superstition and bloody butchery to high-tech scientific know-how, and the resultant spectacular improvements in health, welfare and quality of life. Brilliant individuals, breakthrough developments and intellectual developments are studied alongside killer diseases, gory realities and gruesome evidence (b) the accession of Queen Elizabeth I, the consolidation of her rule, the problems she faced and her solutions to them all in the context of the changing ideas of the Renaissance period. The course also includes an investigation of the changing historic environment of Renaissance England, and how specific sites show Elizabeth changes in action. (c) the dynamic history of America in the 20th century, from the 1920s Jazz Age of new technology, new cinema, new music, new art, new architecture, new fashions, and of course Prohibition and its gangsters and molls, and the dark side of Ku Klux Klan racism, through the Great Depression and New Deal eras of the 1930s and the war years, and then the 1950s challenges and 1960s triumphs of the Civil Rights and feminist campaigns to the 1970s backlash against war and convention (d) the Asian 'Hot Wars' in Korea and Vietnam within the global West vs East Cold War. The main foci are the causes of these wars and America's failure to win on the battlefield, in spite of its overwhelming technological superiority <p>A rich variety of teaching and learning methods are used, including trips and visits to relevant sites and resources.</p> |
| Taking it further | <p>History A level.</p> <p>History is in great demand by many employers as they know it teaches independent thinking, research, report writing, presentation skills, source evaluation and decision making. It is important for careers in law, journalism, politics, business, accountancy, education, tourism, conservation, publishing and many others.</p> |

| Religion, Philosophy and Ethics GCSE | |
|---|--|
| Staff Lead | Ms P Netto |
| Syllabus | AQA Religious Studies Spec A 8062 |
| Assessment | 100% Exam (2 x 1 hour 45 minute papers) |
| Course Content | <p>Religious Studies at GCSE includes the study of religion, philosophy and ethics applied to contemporary issues. It will appeal to all students who take an inquiring, critical and creative approach to their studies. Students are encouraged to identify and explore questions about the meaning of life, and to reflect on religious and non-religious responses to contemporary moral and philosophical issues, including medical ethics, conflict, crime and life after death. Independence of thought is vital for our GCSE students, as well as an interest in people and the world around us.</p> <p>This course involves the study of eight modules with a range of religious ideas and moral issues, including the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices within two religions (Christianity and Islam) 2. Thematic studies, four areas are studied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion and life • Religion, peace and conflict • Religion, crime and punishment • The existence of God and revelation |
| Taking it further | <p>A religion, philosophy and ethics course is a valuable preparation for any job where communication skills, the ability to reason and an understanding of people and culture are required. Religion, philosophy and ethics students will have skills valued by employers, and those who study the subject often go on to work in law, politics, publishing, journalism, tourism and the civil service (amongst others).</p> <p>The religion, philosophy and ethics GCSE is a subject highly valued within Higher Education and by professional bodies. students intending to pursue such areas as anthropology, history, law, philosophy, political science or psychology, for example, will find this course part of a good foundation for their studies at A Level and beyond. The GCSE is clearly a good foundation for our A level, where we continue to study Religion, Philosophy and Ethics. It is also an excellent preparation for other academic subjects which are essay based.</p> <p>A comprehensive understanding of religion, philosophy and ethics will help students to engage in complex moral issues in the UK and around the world, be able to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and become more aware of their own values and beliefs.</p> |

| Languages GCSE – French, German and Spanish | |
|---|---|
| Staff Leads | Mrs S Westlake (Head of Languages/French) Mrs L Hall (German) Mrs J Costa (Spanish) |
| Syllabus | AQA |
| Assessment | All examinations take place in Year 11: Paper 1: Listening 25% (Foundation 35 mins/Higher 45 Mins) Paper 2: Speaking 25% (Foundation 7-9 mins/ Higher 10-12 mins) Paper 3: Reading 25% (Foundation 45 mins/ Higher 1 hour) Paper 4: Writing 25% (Foundation 1 hour 10 mins/ Higher 1 hour 15 mins) students in Year 9 studying French, German, Italian or Spanish can continue with either one or both languages at GCSE. |
| Course Content | The courses are practical, teaching you not only the language but also an insight into the life and customs of the countries concerned. The topics covered are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Theme 1: People and lifestyle Identity and relationships with others Healthy living and lifestyle Education and work● Theme 2: Popular culture Free-time activities Customs, festivals and celebrations Celebrity culture● Theme 3: Communication and the world around us Travel and tourism, including places of interest Media and technology The environment and where people live |
| Taking it further | English is not enough! Not everyone speaks or wants to speak English and in GCSE languages we aim to further expand our students' cultural knowledge as we know that this promotes greater tolerance, empathy, and acceptance of others. GCSEs in languages are highly valued and sought after by both universities and employers not only for the linguistic skills but also for the communication and problem-solving skills you will develop when studying a language at GCSE. Many Russell Group universities demand a foreign language at GCSE as a basic entry requirement for all courses (not just languages!). Languages A level is currently offered in all four subjects at Beechen Cliff. |

| Mathematics GCSE | |
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| Staff Lead | Mr R Burnby |
| Syllabus | Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Mathematics (1MA1) |
| Assessment | Terminal exam (100%) |
| Course Content | <p>All students will study a linear GCSE Maths course with three 90 minute examinations taken at the end of Year 11 (one non-calculator paper and two calculator papers). There are two tiers of entry, Foundation and Higher, depending on ability. Grades available in Foundation Tier are 1 – 5, in Higher 4 – 9. The higher sets will cover material encroaching into A Level topics during the course. The reason for this is to challenge the most able and improve student performance at Grades 7 – 9, as well as preparing students for further study in Mathematics and Maths related subjects. students attaining lower results at the end of Year 9 will be taught the Foundation course.</p> <p>Since all the examinations are taken at the end of the course there will be regular internal assessments to monitor students' progress. Sets will be reviewed regularly following these assessments.</p> |
| Taking it further | <p>Those who find they have a talent for Mathematics may wish to study it further. To study Mathematics at A Level we expect you to achieve at least Grade 7 at GCSE. Mathematics A Level is highly sought after and opens lots of doors in lots of different walks of life.</p> |

| Music GCSE | |
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| Staff Lead | Mr P Calvert |
| Syllabus | Edexcel (1MU0) |
| Assessment | <p>Performing Coursework (30%): One solo and one ensemble performance to be recorded, with a minimum combined duration of four minutes.</p> <p>Composing Coursework (30%): Two compositions – one free style and one to a set task with a minimum combined duration of three minutes.</p> <p>Appraising (40%): There will be a written examination lasting 1 hour 45 minutes with questions on classical music, pop music and traditional music (folk and contemporary). Questions will involve listening to and appraising music.</p> |
| Course Content | <p>The aims of the course are to encourage students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop their understanding and appreciation of a range of different kinds of music, extending their own interests and increasing their ability to make judgements about musical quality. • Acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make music, both individually and in groups; • Develop a life-long interest in music, e.g. through community music making • Progress to further study, e.g. A/AS level and other equivalent qualifications, and/or to follow a music-related career, where appropriate. • Develop broader life-skills and attributes including critical and creative thinking, aesthetic sensitivity and emotional cultural development. <p>The students will be required to demonstrate aural perception, musical knowledge and understanding and communication through performing skills, composing skills, listening skills and analytical study of music resulting in written work.</p> <p>Due to the 30% performance weighting, students opting for Music GCSE are expected to commit to some formal instrumental/vocal tuition throughout the two years of study. This will involve a cost to parents. Please contact the department for further information.</p> |
| Taking it further | A level Music, performing musician, music teacher, arts administration. |

| Music Technology Level 1/2: | |
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| Staff Lead | Mr P Calvert |
| Syllabus | Eduqas, Level 1/2 Vocational Award in Performing Arts (Technical Award) |
| Assessment | 40% Externally assessed coursework 60% Internally assessed coursework |
| Course Content | <p>The course is very practical and will enable students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop skills in music recording and production • enable learners to perform music using technology • gain a broad understanding of musical elements • develop existing ICT, communication, project management, and presentation skills • gain an understanding of different popular music styles <p>students will gain a working knowledge of the equipment and software likely to be found in a recording studio and will learn how to use this equipment for different musical applications. This will be undertaken through applying a range of techniques including capturing audio, sequencing and programming instrumental parts, as well as editing and mixing down audio projects.</p> |
| Taking it further | A' level and vocational courses in Music Technology. students will gain a broad knowledge of employment opportunities in the music industry and the jobs undertaken by those who work in it. This includes recording engineers, studio performers and sound engineers. |

| Physical Education GCSE | |
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| Staff Lead | Mr G Hawkins |
| Syllabus | AQA Physical Education 4892 |
| Assessment | <p>Paper 1 - Written examination, lasting 1-hour 15 minutes</p> <p>Paper 2 - Written examination, lasting 1-hour 15 minutes</p> <p>Both exams take place at the end of the 2-year course.</p> <p>NEA (Non Examined Assessment) - Involves three practical assessments and one analysis and evaluation written coursework</p> |
| Course Content | <p>With a heavy emphasis on sports science (anatomy, physiology and biomechanics), three of the five lessons are classroom based in order to deliver the theory content and two lessons are practically based, reinforcing the theory content and working towards the practical assessments.</p> <p>Physical Education is formally assessed through two written exams, an externally assessed practical exam and through a controlled assessment written task. Due to the examination criteria, students need to demonstrate a high level of sporting ability in fully competitive matches - typically playing for school teams and outside clubs in three different sports.</p> <p>Over the two years six main topics are studied during the theory lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied Anatomy and Physiology • Sports Psychology • Physical Training • Use of Data • Socio-Cultural Influences • Health, Fitness and Well-being <p>For the practical assessment, the students have to be able to perform to a good level in either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One team sport (e.g. rugby, football, hockey, basketball, cricket) and two individual sports (e.g. athletics, tennis, badminton). <p>Or,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One individual sport, and two team sports. <p>The assessment for each sport is divided into prescribed skills (maximum 10-marks per sport), which are practised and moderated in progressive drills, and then the performer's effectiveness in full competitive matches (maximum 15-marks per sport).</p> <p>We strongly suggest that this pathway would best suit those students who are confident in science and perform well in formal tests or exams. They need to be able in a range of team and individual sports, and compete in regular competitive sports to a good level.</p> |

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| Taking it further | <p>A course in Physical Education is a valuable preparation for any job involving analytical skills, communication, working as part of a team as well as the ability to work independently</p> <p>Many universities offer an extensive choice of sport related courses: Physiotherapy, Sports Science, Sports Administration, Sport Studies, Sports Psychology, Sports Physiology, Teacher Training etc.</p> <p>As well as being the obvious foundation subject for A level Physical Education, it will also provide good preparation for Science (Biology and Physics), Psychology, Politics and History.</p> |
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| Science GCSEs | |
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| Staff Lead | Ms R Bala |
| Syllabus | AQA Science GCSEs Either: Separate Sciences: Biology 8461/ Chemistry 8462/ Physics 8463 Or: Combined Science: Trilogy 8464 |
| Assessment | <p>All Science GCSEs are assessed in written examinations at the end of Year 11.</p> <p>The Separate Sciences are assessed as follows. Biology: 2 exams, each 1 hour and 45 minutes in length. Chemistry: 2 exams, each 1 hour and 45 minutes in length. Physics: 2 exams, each 1 hour and 45 minutes in length.</p> <p>Combined Science is assessed through six exams, each 1 hour 15 minutes in length (two papers for Biology, two for Chemistry and two for Physics).</p> <p>Students will be assessed on their understanding of practical work in these final examinations. There is no controlled assessment or coursework.</p> |
| Course Content | <p>students cover the initial chapters of GCSE Science in Year 9. All students cover the first few topics in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Beyond Year 9 there are two Science routes. Each is rigorous, and with good grades, either route will allow students to progress onto A-Levels in Biology, Chemistry or Physics. The two routes are:</p> <p>Separate Science GCSEs: This route will result in three separate grades at GCSE.</p> <p>Combined Science GCSE. This is also taught as three individual sciences and results in two grades at GCSE, reflecting average performance across all three sciences.</p> <p>Both Combined Science and Separate Science routes cover Biology, Chemistry and Physics to a high standard. Both routes broadly cover the same topic areas. Those studying Separate Sciences will cover some topics in a little extra depth, and will also be taught some additional topics. Separate Sciences are taught in the same lesson time as Combined Science. It is important to stress that the Combined Science route is a challenging one and is considered to be a good preparation for further A-level study, therefore any student who achieves the required entry grade for A-level will be accepted onto the course regardless of whether they studied Combined Science or Separate Sciences.</p> <p>The additional demands of the Separate Science route means the route taken through Science will ultimately depend upon their progress and attainment throughout Year 9 and Year 10, but we ask parents to indicate if they would like their son to be considered for the Separate Science pathway as part of the options process. No matter which route students take through Science, the subjects are taught predominantly by specialists.</p> |
| Taking it further | |

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| | <p>Science develops a very wide range of transferable skills such as problem solving, practical skills, data analysis, good communication and the ability to explain complex concepts. These skills are highly sought after in all walks of life and, as such, individuals with a good understanding of science are attractive to employers and institutions. Careers which are particularly relevant to the Sciences range from Engineering, Medicine, Veterinary Sciences, Pharmacology, Biotechnology and Environmental Sciences, to name just a few. If you have a natural affinity for the Sciences and wish to study them at A-level, you will need to achieve a Grade 6 in your GCSEs.</p> |
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| <p>Somerset Studio School</p> |
| <p>Headteacher: Mr B Hain</p> |
| <p>Curriculum</p> <p>The KS4 curriculum includes the core offer of English, Mathematics, Separate Sciences, Physical Fitness and PSHE along with option choices just like at Beechen Cliff. The options include subjects such as:</p> <p>Business and Enterprise Level 2 GCSE Design Technology (Engineering) Level 2 Digital Information Technology Level 2 Creative Media Production Level 2</p> <p>These options are not available at Beechen Cliff.</p> <p>Since all students take Separate Sciences three option choices are made.</p> <p>The approach to the curriculum is different to that at Beechen Cliff.</p> <p>The school runs a 6-period day (each lesson is 50 minutes long) and option subjects are taught in double lessons. This allows learning to be more project based and enables students and students to explore, research and develop on their own with the support and coaching of tutors and fellow students. The school aims to develop key skills desired by employers and the projects are also linked to the school's PSHE programme. The curriculum is designed around the CREATE framework for studio schools:</p> <p>Communication Relating to others Enterprise Applied skills Thinking skills Emotional intelligence</p> <p>Unique opportunities, such as the Orchid Project set the school apart from other schools. Further information can be found on the Somerset Studio School website: https://www.somersetstudioschool.com/</p> |



BEECHEN CLIFF

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