

# **IPSWICH SCHOOL**



**GCSE**  
**In Years 10 and 11**  
**2017**  
**(for examination in 2019)**

## GCSE COURSES AT IPSWICH SCHOOL

### *To the Parents of Year 9 Pupils*

Pupils now in Year 9 will spend a further two years in the Middle School, leading to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations in the Summer Term 2019. At present these pupils are studying a larger number of subjects than they will offer at GCSE. During the Lent Term 2017, parents are asked which subjects their children will continue to GCSE, and the purpose of this booklet is to explain the choices offered. A detailed description of the GCSE course in each individual subject is included.

### *To Year 9 Pupils*

This booklet is designed to help you make a sensible choice of GCSE subjects. It tells you which subjects are compulsory and which choices you can make, and it gives a thumb-nail sketch of what is involved in each subject. In making your choices, you should bear in mind:

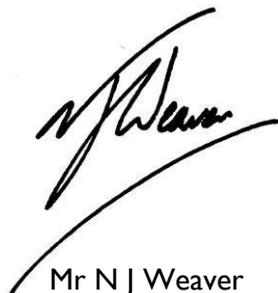
- ◆ Your interests in the different subjects. However, do not choose subjects only because you like them. Other subjects may be more important in keeping a wide range of careers open.
- ◆ Your abilities as they relate to these subjects.
- ◆ Any doors which may be opened or closed as far as A level studies or careers are concerned. Remember that if you drop a subject from your GCSE option choices, it does not follow that you have to drop it forever. There is often a chance to pick up subjects again later. Even if you feel sure now about the career you want to go into, you could well change your mind by the time you are 16 or 18. Never guess what subjects are needed for particular careers. Always check with up to date information available through the Middle School Careers Department, or by using the internet.

You should discuss your choices now with a wide range of people: certainly your teachers, Heads of Departments, parents, Tutor and Housemaster/Housemistress, as well as Mr Boyle (Head of Middle School Careers). Please show this booklet to your parents, who are very welcome to contact individual members of staff if they need further information or advice. Choices will be collected later this term, after the Year 9 Parents' Evening, by means of an options form which will be available to all parents at the Parents' Evening on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February. On the basis of these choices, the 2017-18 timetable will be constructed. Changes of pupil choice after this time will only be possible if setting arrangements and class sizes permit.

Please think carefully about your choices, but do not become over-worried. Experience shows that the vast majority of Year 9 pupils make sensible decisions about their GCSEs and gain results which offer a firm foundation for A levels.



Mr A R Bradshaw  
Head of Middle School



Mr N J Weaver  
Headmaster

## **THE GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION**

GCSE examinations are designed to concentrate on candidates' positive achievements: what they have learned, what they have understood and the skills they have acquired. In some subjects a proportion of a candidate's final mark will be awarded for work done during the course. This may be specific projects, practical exercises, oral tests or a more general form of continuous and controlled assessment. Coursework assessment is carried out by the school but the marks are moderated (i.e. subjected to scrutiny and possible amendment) by the examination board.

Eight grades of achievement (A\*, A-G) are currently recorded on GCSE certificates. However, a new grading system will be introduced for most subjects for those sitting GCSEs and IGCSEs from Summer 2017. There will be 9 grades (9-1), with 9 being the highest, and grades 9 and 8 equivalent to the current A\*. Grade 7 will be equivalent to the current Grade A and Grade 4 to the current Grade C. However, whereas a C grade is now classified by the government as a 'good pass', that will rise to a Grade 5 under the new system as the government seeks to raise standards.

### **STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE - YEARS 10 AND 11**

#### **Compulsory for all Pupils**

- English
- Maths
- A modern foreign language (French or Spanish or German or Russian), or possibly more
- Physical Education (not examined)
- Life Skills (not examined). This includes some 'top-up' ICT as well as covering areas such as Careers and Citizenship
- Science (three separate sciences, Biology, Physics and Chemistry)

## Optional Subjects

The following optional subjects are available:

- Art and Design
- Art Textiles
- Classical Civilisation
- Design Technology
- Drama
- Geography
- History
- Latin
- A second modern foreign language (French, Spanish, German or Russian)
- Music
- PRE (Philosophy, Religion and Ethics)

### **Thinking Skills AS** (formally known as Critical Thinking)

For several years Ipswich School has offered Critical Thinking (now called Thinking Skills) at AS level to pupils in Year 12 as part of the Enrichment Programme. The success of this course has led us to extend out Thinking Skills teaching to a small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11. This will enable pupils to take the AS level at the end of Year 11 *or* as part of the Enrichment Programme in Year 12. Pupils taking Thinking Skills alongside their GCSEs will therefore be able to take an additional subject as part of the Enrichment Programme.

Thinking Skills at AS level in Years 10 and 11 may be offered as an additional two year course, not as an alternative GCSE, and taught one evening per week. There are further details of this very demanding, but stimulating course at the back of this booklet.

## ART AND DESIGN (TEXTILES DESIGN)

The GCSE course will encourage an adventurous and enquiring approach to the subject through direct personal expression, imagination, conceptual thinking, powers of observation and analytical skills. Through expressive and theoretical studies it will lead to a fuller understanding of the visual arts. Emphasis is put on the importance of recording this creative process, with development of ideas through a mandatory work journal.

Art and Design provides is a language concerned with the development of visual perception and aesthetic experience, and is a means of expressing ideas and feelings. It involves making decisions and creating artefacts and recording our experiences. Students are required to make judgements based on evidence, which they have collected from their own study and investigation.

In Art pupils will have the opportunity to study drawing and painting techniques, printmaking, alternative media and sculpture. During Year 11 pupils may wish to specialise in one of the above areas. The majority follow a general course, which allows the individual to choose a wide variety of media.

In Textile Design pupils will create, select and manipulate a range of materials such as fibres, yarns and fabrics and explore processes and the techniques from construction textiles, dyed textiles, printed textiles and fashion textiles. During Year 11 pupils may wish to specialise in one of the above areas.

In order to pass this GCSE examination, pupils have to complete all the sections outlined below:	
Component 1 – Coursework Personal Portfolio in Art and Design 60% of the GCSE	The course is broad and flexible and requires the students to develop an appreciation of the creative process through a practical response using a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials and techniques. From set themes student’s coursework will include supporting studies and personal responses.  This will be approximately 120 guided hours
Component 2 Externally set examination 40% of the GCSE	In January of year 11, pupils are given an externally set title and within a preparatory period of approximately 8 weeks they have to plan and develop a piece of work. Pupils will have 10 hours to create their piece under supervised examination.
	At the end of Year 11, pupils will put up an exhibition of their work, which will consist of the two units.

Good time management and commitment to this subject are essential for success.

We follow the Edexcel syllabus and this GCSE course has a similar structure to our A level Art course which enables a smooth progression to this higher level.

## **DESIGN TECHNOLOGY**

Design Technology at Ipswich School provides an exciting and creative environment, where pupils are encouraged to work on their strengths and make the most of their natural ability. The philosophy of the department is to appeal to all areas of design, whether it is biased towards the technical nature of engineering and architecture or the creative elements of aesthetic styling in product design.

The department enjoys considerable success at GCSE level, with the large majority of committed pupils achieving an A or A\*.

If you are considering a future in any design and/or engineering related course, please ensure you fully appreciate the opportunities that the study of Design Technology can provide you with. If further information is required, please approach any member of the DT teaching staff.

A candidate taking this subject will be given the opportunity to discover many of the aspects of the design world. The course requires the candidates to combine their design and making skills with knowledge and understanding of materials, manufacturing and design issues. Through two and three-dimensional projects, time is divided between the design studios and workshop environments, where skills in graphics, presentation, communication, CAD/CAM, materials and processes are experienced. GCSE Coursework is completed mainly in the second year, with a theory examination being taken at the end of year 11.

### **Year 10 –**

#### **Foundation Projects**

A number of projects will be completed during Year 10 using a range of materials such as wood, metal and plastics and covering topics such as CAD CAM and the principles of Design Technology theory. These projects will build on each pupils' DT knowledge and allow them to make informed decisions in the use of a wide range of materials, tools, machines and presentation skills including CAD.

In the summer term pupils will select a theme set by the exam board and start their Iterative Design Challenge.

### **Year 11 –**

#### **Iterative Design Challenge**

#### **50% of total GCSE / 100 marks / Non-exam assessment**

Throughout Year 11 pupils will work on their chosen Iterative Design Challenge. This exam component gives pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of and skills in design.

They will explore the -

- interrelated nature of the processes used to identify needs and requirements (explore)
- Create solutions to meet those needs (create)
- Evaluate whether the needs have been met (evaluate)

As an outcome of their challenge pupils will produce an e-portfolio of their work and a final prototype.

In the summer term of Year 11 pupils will sit the -

### **Principles of Design and Technology exam**

**50% of total GCSE / 100 marks / 2 hour written paper**

This component brings together the pupils 'core' and 'in-depth' knowledge and understanding.

- 'Core' knowledge of Design and Technology principles demonstrates pupils' broad understanding across the subject.
- 'In-Depth' knowledge allows pupils to focus more directly on at least one main material category.

The question paper is split into two sections and a minimum of 15% of the paper will assess the pupil's mathematical skills as applied within a design and technology context.

The purpose-built department is fully equipped and staffed to meet the need of every pupil. All of the design work undertaken enables the individual to develop his/her own creativity and flair, whilst encouraging the self-motivation, time management and initiative which are essential, given the coursework element of Design Technology.

## **DRAMA**

You will enjoy this course if you want to study a subject that is both practical and creative. You will learn about many areas of the drama process including, acting, stage design, costumes, makeup, sound and lighting. As well as gaining knowledge and understanding of the creating and performing process, you will acquire skills in;

- working with others
- problem solving
- communication

You will find that Drama can help you feel more self-confident and prepare you to deal with a range of different situations and people.

We follow the new AQA specification.

### **Component 1: Understanding Drama**

#### **Assessment weighting 40%**

This component is in three sections.

- a.) Pupils will learn about the world of theatre and are expected to show their understanding of the processes involved in producing productions.
- b.) Pupils will study one set play both practically and through close text analysis.
- c.) At some point during the course, pupils will see a piece of live theatre. They will explore the role of the director, designers and actors in creating the performance.

Assessment is through a 1 hour 45 minutes written exam

The exam paper contains a mix of multiple choice, short and extended questions about the live theatre performance and the set text, as well as testing knowledge of the key roles of theatre makers.

### **Component 2: Devising Drama**

#### **Assessment weighting 40%**

The aim of this component is to explore a stimulus such as a poem, music, a photograph or painting, prose, an historical event, newspaper article or artefact. Through practical work, students then create a piece of devised drama based on the issues surrounding the stimulus. Pupils will explore and develop their understanding of how to use the devising process to communicate meaning in theatrical performance which is presented to an audience. Pupils complete a portfolio of evidence completed during the devising process. *(This can be filmed, written, or a combination of the two.)*

**Assessment combines performance with a working log. It is completed in school and moderated externally**

### **Component 3: Texts in Practice**

#### **Assessment weighting 20%**

Pupils are taught theatrical skills and then assessed on what they have learnt through a performance to an examiner. They explore and present two extracts from a text. They may choose to present one monologue and one group piece; there is also an option to be assessed on technical and design skills. Pupils have to develop, apply and practise their skills in acting or design to interpret the playwright's intention, leading them to communicate the extracts in a way that will engage the audience.

#### **Assessment – Performance to a visiting examiner**

- Performance of two extracts to an audience as part of a showcase
- Completion of a concept pro forma to describe their research on the text and their artistic intention for the performance or design.

## **ENGLISH**

**Pupils follow the AQA Language (8700) and Literature (8702) courses.**

### **AQA English Language 8700**

In English Language, pupils are assessed at the end of the course via two examination papers. Both papers test pupils' ability to read for explicit and implied meaning in relation to literary and non-fiction texts. They are, in addition, asked to compare how writers use language to create particular effects. On each paper worth 50%, pupils undertake a directed or creative writing task. Additionally, pupils also complete a Speaking and Listening unit which will be internally assessed. Although the latter does not count in relation to their final grade, it leads to a discrete certification.

### **AQA English Literature 8702**

Pupils will sit two papers in English Literature at the end of Year 11. The first unit tests their understanding of the Shakespeare play and 19th century novel that they have studied. Pupils will be asked to consider an extract from the play in relation to the drama as a whole; they will then tackle a whole-text question on the prose text. This paper is worth 60%. The second paper, worth 40%, examines pupils' understanding of either a modern novel or play in addition to an anthology of poems which comprises the fourth set text of the Literature course. In addition, they are required to respond to an unseen poem. Both papers assess the extent to which pupils understand how writers use language, form and structure to shape the response of the audience or the reader.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

'Geography is an academically robust subject which spans social and physical sciences and promotes a lifelong interest and fascination in how the world works'

Nick Crane  
President of the RGS

GCSE Geography studies a varied group of topics that we feel are both challenging and interesting. There is an important fieldwork element to be taught outside the classroom covering two different areas of the specification. The range of topics we teach provides an exciting balance between human and physical geography and builds on students' previous knowledge. The skills element of the course is taught through an exam which has an issue-based element as well as questions which test the more familiar skills of map work, data presentation and data analysis through basic statistics.

Students will travel the world from their classroom, exploring case studies in the UK, Higher Income Countries (HICs), Newly Emerging Economies (NEEs) and Lower Income Countries (LICs). Topics of study include a range of physical environments, natural hazards and their management, climate change, poverty, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use.

The assessment of the work is set out below. If students have any questions they should talk to their teacher.

### **Paper I: Living with the Physical Environment**

1 hour 30 mins

85 marks, plus three SPAG – 35% of GCSE

#### **A The challenge of natural hazards**

Tectonic hazards	Earthquakes Volcanoes
Weather hazards	Tropical storms Extreme weather in the UK Climate change

#### **B The Living World**

Ecosystems  
Tropical Rainforests  
Hot Deserts  
Cold environments

#### **C Physical landscapes in the UK**

Coastal landscapes in the UK  
River landscapes in the UK  
Glacial landscapes in the UK

**Paper 2:** Challenges in the human environment

1 hour 30 mins

85 marks, plus three SPAG – 35% of GCSE

**A Urban issues and challenges**

Urbanisation and urban development

Urban change in UK cities

Urban sustainability

**B The changing economic world**

Global variations in quality of life

The development gap

Economic futures in the UK

**C The challenge of resource management**

Resource management

Food

Water

Energy

**Paper 3:** Geographical applications

1 hour 15 mins

70 marks, plus six SPAG – 30% of GCSE

**A Issue evaluation** – materials released 12 weeks prior to the exam

**B Fieldwork**

**C Geographical skills**

## **HISTORY**

Those who take History in Years 10 and 11 follow the Edexcel International GCSE syllabus in History. This is a broad, stimulating course which focuses on major developments in the Twentieth Century. As well as learning about interesting events, the course teaches students skills of analysis and communication. By the end of the course you should be able to write with fluency and coherence and you should be able to construct convincing arguments. These are critical skills for nearly every area of employment. All employers recognise that these are delivered by qualifications in History, whilst competitive universities look favourably on qualifications in the subject.

During the two year course all pupils study four subject areas, making links between them and building up wide-ranging general knowledge of the last century. In Year 10 pupils study the early years of the Cold War (1943-1972) and the struggle for civil rights in the USA between 1945 -1974. Most of this unit examines the African-American campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s but other protest movements e.g. women, student, anti-Vietnam are also studied.

In Year 11 pupils study the Russian Revolution (1905-24) and The Middle East (1917-2012). The last topic is not studied in many schools but we feel that it is vital for an understanding of current affairs. The course is delivered via workbooks written by the Department. This cuts down on the amount of time spent taking routine notes and ensures that lessons are focused around active learning exercises.

The course is examined at the end of Year 11. There are two papers which are equally weighted. Both papers are 1 hour and 30 minutes in length which represents much less time in the exam room than traditional GCSE courses. The second paper requires some use of sources. There is no controlled assessment. We believe that the iGCSE course offers suitable challenges for pupils in years 10 and 11 whilst avoiding formulaic examination practices. The amount of content for revision in the iGCSE syllabus is manageable. The sensible examination structure allows us to concentrate on enjoying the subject matter and developing depth in historical understanding rather than jumping through hoops.

The History Department has strong expertise in the subject areas offered as well as extensive experience in teaching pupils how to write well and use historical skills. Many materials are written by members of the Department and extension material is provided for those who wish to go beyond the confines of the specification or beyond iGCSE standard. Most of the skills needed to succeed at this level have already been introduced to pupils in years 7 to 9.

## **LATIN AND CLASSICAL CIVILISATION**

The Latin course in Years 10 and 11 leads towards a GCSE award following the OCR J282 specification. Students are required to study a compulsory Language component together with two Literature components, or one Literature and the Literature and Culture component.

In the course of the Language component the students will develop further their knowledge of Latin vocabulary and linguistic structures through reading and studying texts and stories in Latin. The students will be able to translate a passage of Latin, answer comprehension questions and answer questions on syntax and accidence within the context of a narrative passage. The books from Cambridge Latin Course remain the main textbooks together with the department's own resources.

In the course of the Literature component the students will develop their knowledge and understanding of ancient literature through the study of set texts. Students will be able to analyse, evaluate and respond to the ancient literature they have studied. The set texts will be either from Oxford Latin Anthology or Cambridge Latin Anthology or The Aeneid.

In the course of the Literature and Culture component the students will develop their knowledge and understanding of Roman civilisation and culture through the study of ancient literature and other ancient source material. They will study two different topics through the exploration of the prescribed sources listed in the OCR Prescribed Sources Booklet and other sources which cover the same topic areas.

The course has much to commend it; it gives the opportunity to the students to develop further their linguistic skills which will help both in the study and application of English and other languages. The study of ancient literature and sources which helps give learners an insight into the life and culture of the ancient world and also the relevance of Latin and of ancient literature and civilisation to our understanding of our modern world of diverse cultures. It encourages students to help develop and apply critical analytical skills which will help them in their future study of not only Latin but any other AS and A Level subjects.

High grades are perfectly attainable by those who derive enjoyment from the subject and are prepared to work conscientiously. Latin is altogether an intellectually challenging GCSE academic option.

**Classical Civilisation** will follow the OCR GCSE (9-1) J199 specification. This is made up of two components. The first component is a comparative study of 'Myth and religion' in ancient Greece and Rome which draws on both literary and material sources. This comparison will include the study of topics that are firm favourites with students such as the gods, mythology, heroes and foundation stories. The second component, entitled 'Roman city life', will allow students to become familiar with important archaeological discoveries at the Roman sites of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Ostia and Rome, and it is the intention of the department to offer students the opportunity to experience some of these sites first-hand. This component will also enable students to develop and hone their skills of literary criticism and analysis while studying the ancient literature related to this theme. All the material in this course is presented in English and there is no requirement for any knowledge of either Greek, Latin or previous study of Classical Civilisations.

Students who choose Classical Civilisation as a GCSE option will engage with material that is as fascinating as it is diverse. Our lessons will span a wide range of disciplines. The subjects we explore include art, economics, history, literature, politics, religion and philosophy to name but a few. Such an interdisciplinary subject develops transferrable and highly desirable skills including literary analysis, source analysis and the ability to write convincing and well-supported arguments; it will enhance any set of GCSE choices.

Students who join the Classics department find that enthusiasm and commitment is rewarded. A number of our students continue at A-level, with a selection of these in recent years pursuing the subject at university and finding success with Russell group (including Oxbridge) applications and places.

## MATHEMATICS

Pupils follow the EDEXCEL International GCSE. This is a linear course that leads to the IGCSE qualification. There is no coursework component and assessment is based upon the results of two examination papers sat in the summer term.

The IGCSE course has been widely adopted by Independent Schools and some State Schools over the usual GCSE course which, it is felt, does not offer the same rigour with basic mathematics nor the essential preparation that is vital for pupils who wish to study the subject at a higher level.

The complete course is covered by The Longman Mathematics for IGCSE books 1 and 2. Pupils start Book 1 in Year 9 and this will be completed roughly half way through Year 10. Book 2 will usually be completed during the latter half of the first term in Year 11, thus providing ample time for revision and practice before the examination.

It is hoped that all pupils will enjoy studying Mathematics and the teaching is geared towards achieving this goal; use of sophisticated computer software, investigational activities and practical applications all help to bring the subject to life. As well as developing an appreciation of the subject, the Maths department will aim to ensure that pupils learn Mathematics in such a way that:

- their mathematical ability is developed to the full as far as possible
- they feel confident in the subject and in applying it in different contexts
- they are properly prepared for external examinations
- they are prepared, should they wish, to continue studying Mathematics after Year 11, at a higher level, including reading Mathematics at Oxbridge

In teaching this course, we aim to develop in the student:

- an understanding of and respect for Mathematics
- an appreciation of the place of Mathematics in society
- a high degree of skill in routine mathematical manipulation
- the capacity to engage in problem solving with confidence
- the capacity to apply Mathematics to real-life situations

The top set will complete the IGCSE course in Year 10 and in Year 11 will study OCR's 'Additional Maths' course (the so-called 'Free Standing Maths Qualification'), which will introduce the pupils to some of the material which will be covered in AS Mathematics. This will, in addition to enhancing the mathematical education of the more able, facilitate the choice of AS subjects. Pupils who complete the course and then decide to study Mathematics in the Sixth Form, will find the transition to AS Mathematics more straightforward. Assessment is based upon a single exam in the summer where grades A to E are available (unlike GCSE but similar to GCE, all of these grades are considered to be passes).

Further information concerning this course can be found at [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk), whilst information concerning the IGCSE course can be found at [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com).

## **MODERN LANGUAGES: FRENCH, SPANISH, GERMAN AND RUSSIAN**

A Modern Foreign Language (French or Spanish or German or Russian) will be a compulsory subject for all in Years 10 and 11. Every year, considerable numbers of pupils opt to continue studying two languages that they have been studying in Year 9. It is not possible to start a new language from scratch at this stage, although French and Spanish can be studied in the Sixth Form from scratch.

In all languages, pupils build on the basis of knowledge and skills developed in earlier years. All topics studied up to Year 9 are essential for GCSE, and pupils learn how to talk about them in greater depth, as well as learning about new topics. Progress is still focused upon the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, as well as the development of a greater understanding of the grammar, so that more complex and interesting ideas can be expressed and understood. All assessment happens at the end of Year 11, in the form of external examination in each of the four skills. While the emphasis is on the communication of a range of ideas using a broad vocabulary, it is also important to be able to do so accurately and with grammatical precision. For example, across all topics, such as Personal Identity, School Life, or Future Aspirations, pupils need to differentiate between past, present and future time frames, between positive and negative expressions, and interpret expressions of mood or opinion.

All languages use new and lively textbooks to guide progress, as well as interactive ICT activities. Lessons are also supported by authentic materials drawn from the press, television, and target-language websites. One of our aims is for pupils to gain some understanding of, and interest in, the culture of the target-language country alongside their linguistic skills.

Trips to France, Spain, Russia and Germany for Middle School continue to be very popular and successful. In addition, there are currently successful work experience trips to France, Spain and Germany for the Sixth Form, as well as a Russian exchange with Novgorod for Year 13.

GCSE results in Modern Foreign Languages continue to be strong, and every year a healthy number of pupils choose to continue their language studies into the Sixth Form. Every year we send considerable numbers of students on to University to study Languages, with candidates successfully passing for Oxbridge in each of the last eight years.

## MUSIC

Music GCSE will appeal to those who enjoy playing instruments or singing, creating their own compositions and studying music in a variety of styles. Performances and compositions may be in a classical or popular idiom. Different styles of music are covered in the listening paper.

There are three papers in GCSE music:

- Performing
- Composition
- Listening and Appraising

**Paper 1** Performing (30%) Internally marked, externally moderated.

- Solo Performance (15%). Candidates will perform one piece lasting at least 1 minute.
- Ensemble Performance (15%). Candidates will perform an undoubled part in a small ensemble lasting at least 1 minute.

The combined duration of both performances must be a minimum of 4 minutes and a maximum of 7 minutes.

**Paper 2** Composing (30%) Internally marked, externally moderated.

- One free composition set by the student
- One composition to one of four briefs set by the exam board

Written composing log required.

The combined duration of both compositions must be a minimum of 3 minutes and a maximum of 7.5 minutes.

**Paper 3** Listening and Appraising (40%)

1 hour 30 minutes examination towards the end of the course:

Section A: Questions about unfamiliar music from four areas of study.  
Musical dictation exercise.

Section B: Students will be asked to critically appraise the study pieces from 2 AOS, 1 of which must be AOS 1.

The written paper will comprise of recorded extracts of music.

A good standard of performance is essential for success in GCSE Music, as is a good grounding in music theory. All potential GCSE musicians should have reached a standard of performance and music theory equivalent to grade three of the Associated Board.

There is help available to students wishing to improve their theory skills during a Theory Club at 1.25pm on Tuesdays.

## **PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION & ETHICS**

The Philosophy, Religion & Ethics Department offers an opportunity to study for a GCSE that combines elements of philosophy and the study of ultimate questions with a consideration of religious beliefs, teachings, practices and attitudes to contemporary moral issues. The course involves objective reflection and no particular religious stance is presupposed on the part of the pupil.

### **Course content**

- Study of Religion: Christianity and Islam [Paper One]
- Philosophy of Religion and Religious Ethics [Paper 2]

These divide into 6 sections in total, covering:

- Christianity: beliefs, teachings and practice
- Islam: beliefs, teachings and practice
- Religious Attitudes to Matters of Life & Death [Medical Ethics, Environmental Ethics]
- Religious Attitudes to Sex, Relationships and the Family
- Religious Attitudes to human rights and social justice [discrimination, world poverty]
- The Existence of God, the Problems of Suffering & Evil, Revelation [Philosophy]

### **Key skills**

The key skills developed during the course include: reasoning and articulating ideas clearly, writing, assessing strengths and weaknesses of points of view, empathy, the interpretation of abstract concepts and understanding religion by exploring the significance and impact of beliefs on life in contemporary society.

### **Assessment**

A written examination consisting of two papers is taken at the end of the course.

### **Why take Philosophy, Religion & Ethics?**

The course involves pupils in an exploration of questions of faith and philosophy as well as current social, moral, ethical issues to which there are no standard answers. Pupils are encouraged to consider different perspectives and to develop their own point of view with justification. It is therefore a subject which requires the ability to examine important questions with an open mind, to determine and weigh up the strengths and weaknesses of the main arguments and to reach a reasoned conclusion. These key skills are relevant to life as a whole and are particularly valued in the many careers that require an understanding of others and an ability to relate to people of different backgrounds, e.g. Law, Medicine, Journalism, Politics, International Relations, and Business Management.

## **SCIENCE**

At Ipswich School, all pupils in Years 10 and 11 will continue to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Specialist subject teachers will teach each science subject. At the end of the GCSE courses, all pupils will have a good foundation in Science.

It is anticipated that the majority of pupils will work towards three separate GCSE grades in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. It may be the case that some pupils will find the content of the separate science GCSE courses too challenging to master and they will be diverted to an alternative course which is assessed on fewer units. This would result in them achieving two GCSE grades; one in Core Science and one in Additional Science.

Assessment for all of the science GCSEs is by written examinations taken at the end of Year 11.

## THINKING SKILLS

Thinking Skills is a new course being offered as an additional subject in Years 10 and 11. It is taught after school and leads to an AS Level qualification, the exams for which are sat in the summer of Year 11. It has very little in PSC requirements as most of the content is delivered and practised in lessons. There would be some requirement for additional practise and revision in preparation for the Units but this would not be a great demand as it is chiefly a skills based, rather than content based, subject. This course is the successor to the Critical Thinking course and those students who are interested in taking this subject will be asked to take an aptitude test in the summer term of Year 9.

Thinking Skills develops a specific set of highly desirable intellectual skills. It is therefore independent of subject knowledge and focuses on developing a person's ability to understand, analyse and resolve problems. This is of great benefit in preparing for further study and potential career choices.

The course is divided into two papers, both of which will be sat at the end of Year 11. Paper 1 is entitled 'Problem Solving', which involves 30 multiple choice questions. Students will be asked to extract and process data, search for solutions by finding procedures that will help to solve problems. Students will be asked to interpret numerical and statistical data. They will be asked to draw conclusions from information. No prior knowledge is expected and students do not need to have any qualifications in Maths beyond GCSE level. The emphasis in this paper is on being able to interpret and analyse information.

The second of the two papers is entitled 'Critical Thinking', which focuses on analytical thinking. Students will analyse arguments, recognising where there is an argument, rather than opinion or explanation. Students will be able to recognise the importance of reasons in supporting conclusions and will be asked to evaluate their strength. Students will learn to recognise other parts of arguments, such as evidence, counter-assertions, sign-posting language, assumptions and flaws or weaknesses in arguments. Critical Thinking essentially encourages students to firstly identify an argument, evaluate its strength and then to construct their own arguments.

Thinking Skills helps students to demonstrate a more mature and sophisticated way of thinking.