Oldbury Wells

My Key Stage 4 Options Booklet 2026-2028

Name: .....

Form: .....

	Date completed
I have researched what studying each subject requires of me. (Assemblies, booklet and recommended websites)	
I have completed my online initial preferences by **Friday, 13th February 2026**	
I have spoken to my subject teachers on the Parents' Evening on **Tuesday, 17th March**	
I have discussed my choices with my form tutor.	
I have completed and returned my final options form by **Friday, 20th March 2026**	

Introduction

Year 9 is the time for learners to choose the subjects that they will study during the next two year.

This booklet gives details of the courses that students can follow at Oldbury Wells throughout Key Stage 4. It will help you and your parents discuss together the courses and subjects that are available and so make informed decisions about the right qualifications and subjects for you. It is important that you are confident about those decisions not only to ensure success over the next few years here at school, but also to achieve future success beyond school. To support you with this next stage of your education, your Head of Year, Form Tutor, Pastoral Manager and of course your Subject Teachers will all spend time with you considering the most suitable routes for you to take.

This is a particularly important time in your schooling as you are selecting a group of subjects which you will study for the next 2 years and hopefully, for many of you, for a further 2 years into college.

Until the end of Year 9, all students must follow the compulsory National Curriculum; this gives a broad experience of the range of skills and areas of knowledge and understanding considered essential for future learning. After Year 9, the National Curriculum becomes a little more flexible and in addition to 'Core' subjects you are given the chance to choose some 'Optional' subjects, tailored to your abilities, interests and future chosen career pathway.

The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 is one of the first big decisions you have to make in your educational lives not least because choosing the right combination of subjects and qualifications is crucial to keeping future pathways open beyond the age of sixteen.

The purpose of this booklet is to help you make the right decisions. Some of you may already have a clear idea of what pathway or career you would like to follow. Others may be unsure of what you wish to do in the future. When it comes to choosing your options, you should always consider these three things - (1) your **ability** within the subject, (2) how much you **enjoy** the subject, and (3) is the subject **relevant** to what you wish to achieve in the future. You should not consider subjects based on what your 'friends' are doing, instead making mature choices around these three aspects. Over the next few weeks, there will be a programme of assemblies to help you in the process of choosing your options.

Please make full use of all the help that is available to you so that you are completely confident about the decisions you are about to make for next September.

Yours faithfully

Mrs K Barlow
Assistant Headteacher

Please note that in this booklet the terms 'parent' and 'parents' include others with parental responsibility

Our Curriculum at KS4

The subjects forming the *compulsory* / core part of the school's curriculum will be English Language, English Literature, Maths, Science, PSHE and Core RE and Core PE. (PSHE, Core RE and Core PE are non-examination subjects).

You can choose some of the subjects you have already been studying in Years 7-9. There are also two new subjects on offer at KS4 which are Business Studies and Creative i-Media; while these subjects may appear exciting, they are not without demand and in the case of Business Studies, there is a substantial Maths component and understanding. You could also consider whether to study Triple Science rather than combined Science. With respect to Triple Science, consideration needs to be tempered with a realistic appraisal of ability in the subject.

By offering a wide range of different subjects, our curriculum is inclusive. We consider very carefully when constructing our curriculum where subjects will take students at Post 16 (after Year 11 is completed). We are also mindful of the Government's expectations of pupils and the drive to have high ambitions for its students. The following is a statement from the Secretary of State for Education:

> "*Every child, no matter what their background, should receive an education that opens doors to their future and prepares them to realise their potential in adult life. Central to achieving that is ensuring that young people develop the body of knowledge and skills that allow them to succeed not just in modern Britain but in the modern world.*
>
> *At its most basic that means young people leaving school fully literate and numerate, with an understanding of the history and geography of the world they inhabit, its workings as revealed by the findings of science, and a grasp of languages other than their own. This academic core should not be the preserve of an academic elite, it should be the basic right of every child*".

This education drive has become known as the English Baccalaureate. Despite recent shifts in National policy, Oldbury Wells considers the EBacc an important element of our curriculum offer.

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

The EBacc became a new word in England's state schools in 2010. In the White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, published on 24 October 2010, the Secretary of State for Education announced the introduction of the English Baccalaureate. The EBacc is being used as an indicator of students' achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 (GCSE). The Government views the EBacc as a measure of success in a rounded education and was introduced due to concerns that the number of students who received a broad education in core academic subjects was too small. The EBacc subjects we offer are: Computer Science, Geography, History, French, Biology, Chemistry, Physics (Triple Science).

To achieve the EBacc students need to secure a grade 4 or above at GCSE in English, Maths, the Sciences, History or Geography AND French.

Our approach is to encourage our students, based on their potential outcomes, towards the EBacc set of subjects. All students will be asked to take a humanities subject (Geography/ History) to make sure they have a breadth and balanced combination of subjects. To help you the EBacc subjects in this booklet have **yellow** headers.

Our Curriculum at KS4

Academic Courses

These are terms used to define either subjects or qualifications.

- GCSEs are Academic qualifications
- Cambridge Nationals are Vocational qualifications and are equivalent to GCSEs.

The Additional - Option Subjects

In addition to the Core subjects, students will select four optional subjects that they want to study at KS4. We will try our best to guarantee as many students as possible get their first four choices, however due to maximum group sizes and timetable constraints this is not always possible. Also please note that if insufficient students choose a particular course, the course will not run.

As such, we ask all students to complete an initial preferences form to rank their top **six** option choices. This information will then be used to construct option blocks that will accommodate the wishes of the majority of students.

Once the option blocks have been finalised, students will be asked to pick their final choices.

Students will pick one preference and one reserve subject from each option block.

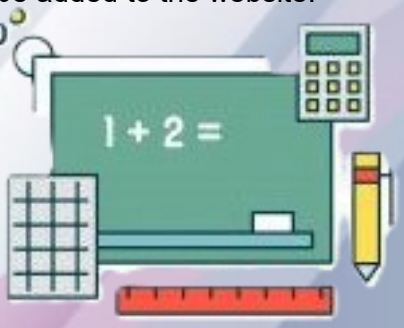
It is important that they choose **and order** these choices carefully as they could end up studying any of their reserve option choices.

Advice and Guidance

This booklet will hopefully provide you with all the information needed to make informed decisions. There will also be a series of options assemblies in the coming weeks and the resources and videos of these assemblies will be added to the website.

If you still have any queries, please contact:

Mrs K Barlow, Assistant Headteacher
katy.barlow@oldburywells.com



Guidance Steps

Step 1: Understand what you have got to do!

It is really very simple - you have got to decide which courses to follow through your next two years at school. You will have to study 'Core' subjects, which are English Language, English Literature, Maths and Science (Double or Triple Science). Religious Education and PE are taught but are not examined - these subjects are **compulsory** for all students, you will have no choice in these.

There are then 'Additional' subjects you can choose, as shown in this booklet, which you need to consider carefully.

Step 2: Meet with your Form Tutor

Your form tutor will be able to discuss with you what your strengths and interests are. They will have gathered lots of information about how well you have been doing in your current subjects and what your potential could be in different subjects at KS4.

Firstly, they will discuss which is the right pathway for you. They will then discuss your target levels in all your subjects and look at your most recent grades and reports.

Step 3: Find out all you can about the subjects on offer

Read through the descriptions of the available subjects in this booklet. It might be best to do this with a pen and a highlighter, so that you can highlight the important points about each course and note any questions that you might need to ask later.

When you have read through each description, check that you know the answers to the following questions:

- What is the content of the course? What topics will I be studying?
- What do I know of this subject already? It might be new, which sounds exciting, but does it suit my abilities and talents?
- What do I need to know about studying this subject at this new level?
- What do I need to know about subjects I haven't studied before?
- How is the subject taught? What will I be doing in the lessons?
- What examinations does this course lead to?
- How will I have to demonstrate my knowledge, skills and understanding in this subject?
- How will my achievements be assessed?
- Where will this course take me after Year 11?
- I am not making decisions about subjects based on friendship groupings. This is for my future.

Our Curriculum at KS4

Step 4: Think about yourself and your plans for the future

As you work through this booklet, stop every now and again and think about the following and check with your Form Tutor:

- Which subjects really interest me?
- What are my strengths and weaknesses?
- How do I work best?
- What skills will I need for particular subjects?
- What subjects do my teachers think are best for me?
- What do I want to do in the future? Will this course help me towards my education after Year 11?
- Will the combination of courses give me choice if I want to go on to 6th Form or College?

Step 5: Weigh it all up!

When you have studied this booklet, thought through the issues and discussed them with your tutor, parents and teachers, start to think about all the information and advice that you have collected.

- Which subjects are really important for me at this stage in my education?
- Do I have a good balance of subjects?
- If I change my mind about what I want to do in the future, will my mix of subjects still keep opportunities open to me?
- Am I thinking about my long-term goals, as well as my short-term plans?
- Again, I am not making decisions based on friendship groupings, these decisions are for me and my future!

Step 6: Fill in the KS4 Options Form!

You will now be provided with the option blocks which have been designed to meet the needs of the year group, and you will need to make your final decisions.

You have got to feel confident about the decisions you make - after all, you are committing yourself to following that course for the **next two years**.

Don't Worry - we are here to help and see you through every step of the way.

Checklist for KS4 Pathway and Subjects

1. ***Choose a subject or course that fits your plans***	• If you have a clear idea about doing particular work-based training or a job after Year 11, find out the most appropriate courses for it. You can do this by contacting colleges, looking at a prospectus or reviewing the college website. • If you have a general idea of the broad area of work you'd like to go into later on, find out whether you can do any KS4 courses which would start you on the way without stopping you from doing other things if you change your mind. Reach out to our careers advisor or someone you may know who works in that field. • If you want to continue on to 'A' Levels or Level 3 BTEC qualifications, find out what subjects you could do and whether you need to take certain courses at KS4 to help you achieve your aims.
2. **Don't choose a subject or course just because**	• You like the teacher (after all, the teacher could be different next year!) • Your friends are choosing it – they are different from you and have different strengths and interests. This could also lead to you not being less productive in class, potentially negatively influencing outcomes.
3. **Think carefully before deciding not to continue with a subject or course at KS4**	• Quite a few jobs which are not directly related to a subject may make use of it, for example, Art and Music are very useful in primary school teaching, tattooing, audio engineers, concept computer games design – creating immersive digital worlds (visual and auditory) and food stylists etc. • You may do well at a new course such as Business Studies (choice wisely, there's lots of Maths – finance and calculations involved) or in a subject you have not liked in the past because you will learn and be assessed in a different way at KS4. Check out the learning style and assessment method as well as the course content. • A particular teacher may influence your choice, while flattering, consider that unfortunately staffing can be fluid and that sometimes teachers gain promotions elsewhere.

Career Guide
Suggested Subject Mix

Engineering (including electrical)

(A-Levels in: Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Product Design, ICT)

Triple Science, Computer Science or Resistant Materials and personal preference of EBacc combination.

Law

(A-Levels in: Languages, English, History, Geography, Business Studies)

Philosophy & Religion, GCSE Business Studies and personal EBacc preference to include either History and Geography or a language and Geography or History.

Medicine (Doctors, Dentists, Vets, Chemists)

(A-Levels in: Maths, Chemistry, Biology)

Triple Science and EBacc subjects are essential.

Armed Forces (Officer Level)

(A-Levels in: Maths, Sciences, English, Humanities)

Triple Science, GCSE PE or History, a language and humanities.

Arts Based

(A-Levels in: Drama, Music, English, Art, Textiles, Product Design)

Drama or Art & Design, Resistant Materials or Music, Textiles or Art & Design, History, Geography or Philosophy & Religion, French.

Science Based (e.g. Research, Electronics)

(A-Levels in: Maths, Sciences, Design subjects)

Triple Science, or Resistant Materials, a minimum of 2 EBacc subjects (language and humanities).

Design Based (e.g. Architect)

(A-Levels in: Maths, Sciences, Design subjects)

Triple Science, or Resistant Materials, Art & Design or Textiles, a language and humanities subject.

Sports Based (e.g. Sports Science, Coaching, Nutrition, Physiotherapy)

(A-Levels in: Biology, BTEC Sport, Psychology, Chemistry)

Triple Science, BTEC Sport, EBacc combination preference

Career Guide
Suggested Subject Mix

Computing or Technology (e.g. computer programming, games designers, hardware design)

(A-Levels in: ICT, Physics, Chemistry, Maths, Art, Product Design)

Triple Science, Business Studies, Computer Science, Creative iMedia or Resistant Materials, Art & Design, EBacc combination preference.

Teaching

A-Levels in preferred specialism, however combinations need to be carefully considered based on the career pathways described above. (*A-Levels in - refer to above choices and look at subjects that align closely*)

Think hard about:

- Which subjects you enjoy.
- Which subjects you are good at.
- Which subjects lead onto the A Levels or college courses that you want to do.
- Which subjects will build towards the career that you have in mind for yourself.

Learning Strengths

Students may wish to consider the following with respect to academic strengths (the list is not exhaustive but is suggestive only).

Numerical/Practical Strengths *may lead to the following choices:*

Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science, Design and Technology

Reading/Discussion/Writing Strengths *may lead to the following choices:*

History, English, Philosophy & Religion, Modern Languages, Drama

Practical/Creative/Artistic Strengths *may lead to the following choices:*

Art, Creative iMedia, Drama, Music, Design Technology, Sport Science

Logical/Deductive/Analytical Strengths *may lead to the following choices:*

Geography, Business Studies, Modern Languages, Triple Science, iMedia

Abstract/Conceptual thinking Strengths *may lead to the following choices:*

English, Philosophy & Religion, Music, Art, Modern Languages, Drama …or even all subjects

Careers Advice

When thinking about Key Stage 4, you need to give some thought to your future. Advice about careers and courses are always available from Mel Lawrence, our CDI registered Careers Advisor, who is in school every Wednesday.

As a school we also use www.unifrog.org which is a complete careers and destinations package. All students should have a log in for the platform and be able to access the range of features it offers. This includes personality and interests profiling, a complete careers library with information on subject and entry requirements, as well as much more.

There is also a wide range of other computer software to help you make career and subject choices:

www.unifrog.com

www.icould.com

www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

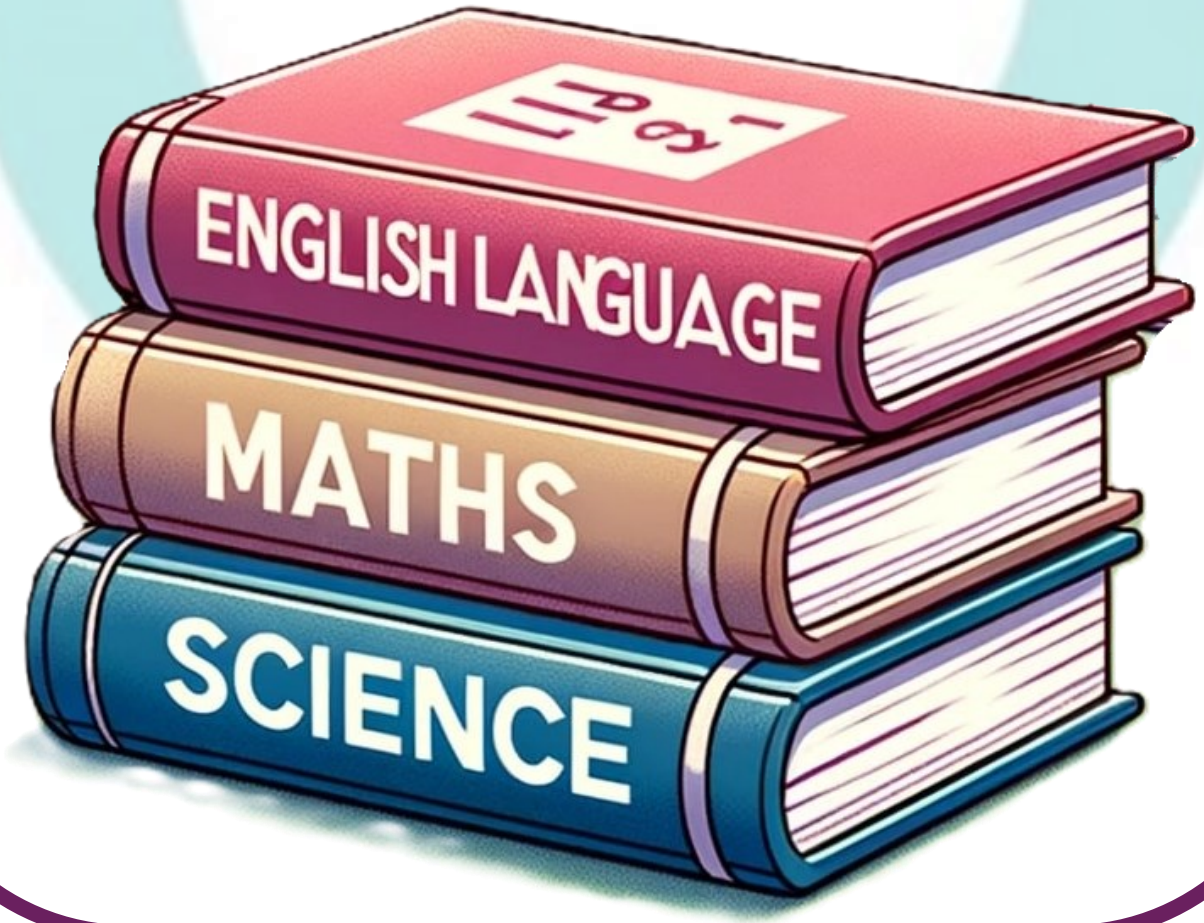
www.ucas.com

During tutor time, you will be working on some Careers Education Activities.

This is an active and continuing programme aimed at giving you the ability and confidence to make choices and decisions about further education, training and careers.

Your Form Tutor is closely involved throughout this process, particularly in preparation for and follow-up after the career's sessions.

Core Subjects



English Language

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: English Language

Lead Teacher: Ms S Lawson (sally.lawson@oldburywells.com)

Exams will no longer be tiered and students will be graded and certificated on a 9-grade scale from 9 to 1, where 9 is the highest grade. Students will receive 2 grades: one for English Language and one for English Literature.

This course includes work on:

Paper 1: Exam Testing Ability to read and analyse 20th Century fiction.

Descriptive or narrative writing, including spelling, grammar and punctuation.

50% of total GCSE mark

Paper 2: Exam TestingAbility to read and analyse non-fiction texts.

Persuasive writing, including spelling, grammar and punctuation.

50% of total GCSE mark

This course develops skills in:

Speaking and Listening: The ability to formulate, clarify and express their ideas; adapt speech to a widening range of circumstances and demands; listen, understand and respond to others. Also, the ability to use the vocabulary and grammar of spoken standard English and take part in drama activities.

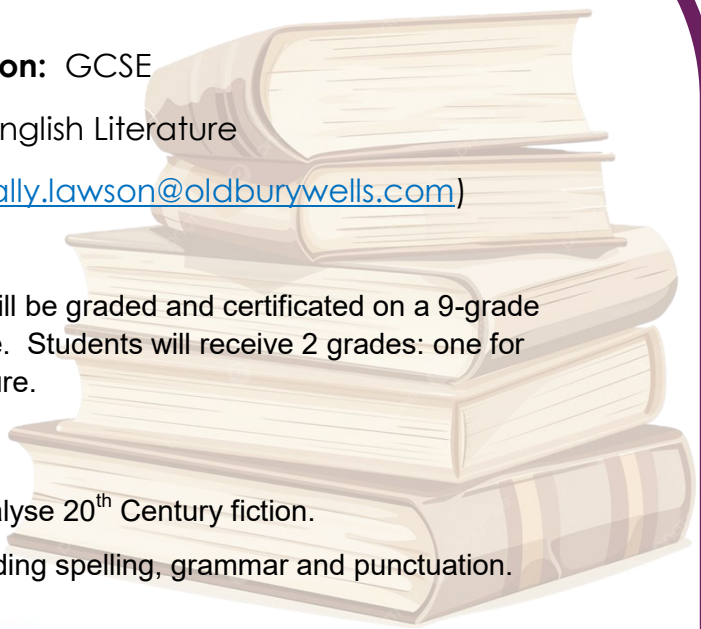
Reading*:* Including their ability to read accurately and fluently; understand, respond to and enjoy literature of increasing complexity drawn from the English literary heritage and from different cultures and traditions; and analyse and evaluate a wide range of texts.

Written English*:* To develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader; to develop a wide vocabulary and effective style; organise and structure sentences and whole texts; develop presentational skills including accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting.

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

A' Level English is one possible progression from GCSE English Language but written communication skills are vital in a range of level 3 courses including A' Level History and A' Level Psychology.

English Literature



Qualification: GCSE

Specification: English Literature

Lead Teacher: Ms S Lawson (sally.lawson@oldburywells.com)

Exams will no longer be tiered and students will be graded and certificated on a 9-grade scale from 9 to 1, where 9 is the highest grade. Students will receive 2 grades: one for English Language and one for English Literature.

This course includes work on:

Paper 1: Exam Testing Ability to read and analyse 20th Century fiction.

Descriptive or narrative writing, including spelling, grammar and punctuation.

50% of total GCSE mark

Paper 2: Exam TestingAbility to read and analyse non-fiction texts.

Persuasive writing, including spelling, grammar and punctuation.

50% of total GCSE mark

This course develops skills in:

Speaking and Listening: The ability to formulate, clarify and express their ideas; adapt speech to a widening range of circumstances and demands; listen, understand and respond to others. Also, the ability to use the vocabulary and grammar of spoken standard English and take part in drama activities.

Reading: Including their ability to read accurately and fluently; understand, respond to and enjoy literature of increasing complexity drawn from the English literary heritage and from different cultures and traditions; and analyse and evaluate a wide range of texts.

Written English: To develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader; to develop a wide vocabulary and effective style; organise and structure sentences and whole texts; develop presentational skills including accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting.

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

A' Level English is one possible progression from GCSE English Language but written communication skills are vital in a range of level 3 courses including A' Level History and A' Level Psychology.

Mathematics

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: Mathematics

Lead Teacher: Dr J Kiapene (john.kiapene@oldburywells.com)

The qualification will be graded and certificated on a 9-grade scale from 9 to 1 using the total mark across all three papers where 9 is the highest grade. Individual papers are not graded.

Foundation tier: Grades 1 to 5

Higher tier: Grades 4 to 9 (grade 3 allowed)

This course includes work on:

The qualification consists of three equally weighted written examination papers at either Foundation tier or Higher tier. All three papers must be at the same tier of entry and must be completed in the same assessment series. Each paper is 1 hour and 30 mins.

Paper 1: Non-calculator assessment

Paper 2 & 3: Calculator is allowed.

The assessments will cover the following content headings:

- Number
- Algebra
- Ratio, proportion and rates of change
- Geometry and Measures
- Probability
- Statistics

This course develops skills in:

- AO1 Use and apply standard techniques.
- AO2 Reason, interpret and communicate mathematically.
- AO3 Solve problems within mathematics and in other contexts.

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

Students can progress from this qualification to Level 3qualifications in numerate disciplines, such as:

- Core Mathematics
- GCE Mathematics and GCE Further Mathematics
- GCEs in the Sciences
- GCE Geography
- GCE Psychology
- GCE Economics

Science Combined

Qualification: A double GCSE worth 2 grades (e.g. 9/8, 4/4)

Specification: AQA GCSE Trilogy - Combined Science (8464)

Lead Teacher: Mr D Cox (daniel.cox@oldburywells.com)

This course includes work on:

This course combines topics in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Practical skills are also developed and several Required Practical Tasks need to be completed and fully written up. Students will develop an understanding of the world around them through the study of these 3 disciplines.

Assessment is based on written examinations with a total of 6 papers taken in the summer of Year 11 (2 in each of the science subjects).

Topics included are:

Biology: Cell Biology; Organisation; Infection and Response; Bioenergetics; Homeostasis and Response; Inheritance, Variation and Evolution; Ecology.

Chemistry: Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table; Bonding, Structure and Properties of Matter; Quantitative Chemistry; Chemical Changes; Energy Changes; The Rate and Extent of Chemical Change; Organic Chemistry; Chemical Analysis; Chemistry of the Atmosphere; Using Resources.

Physics: Energy; Electricity; Particle Model of Matter; Atomic Structure; Forces; Waves; and Magnetism and Electromagnetism.

This course develops skills in:

- Practical Techniques.
- Taking a critical approach in scientific evidence and methods.
- Knowledge and understanding of working scientifically.
- The essential role of science in society.
- Interest and enthusiasm in Science.

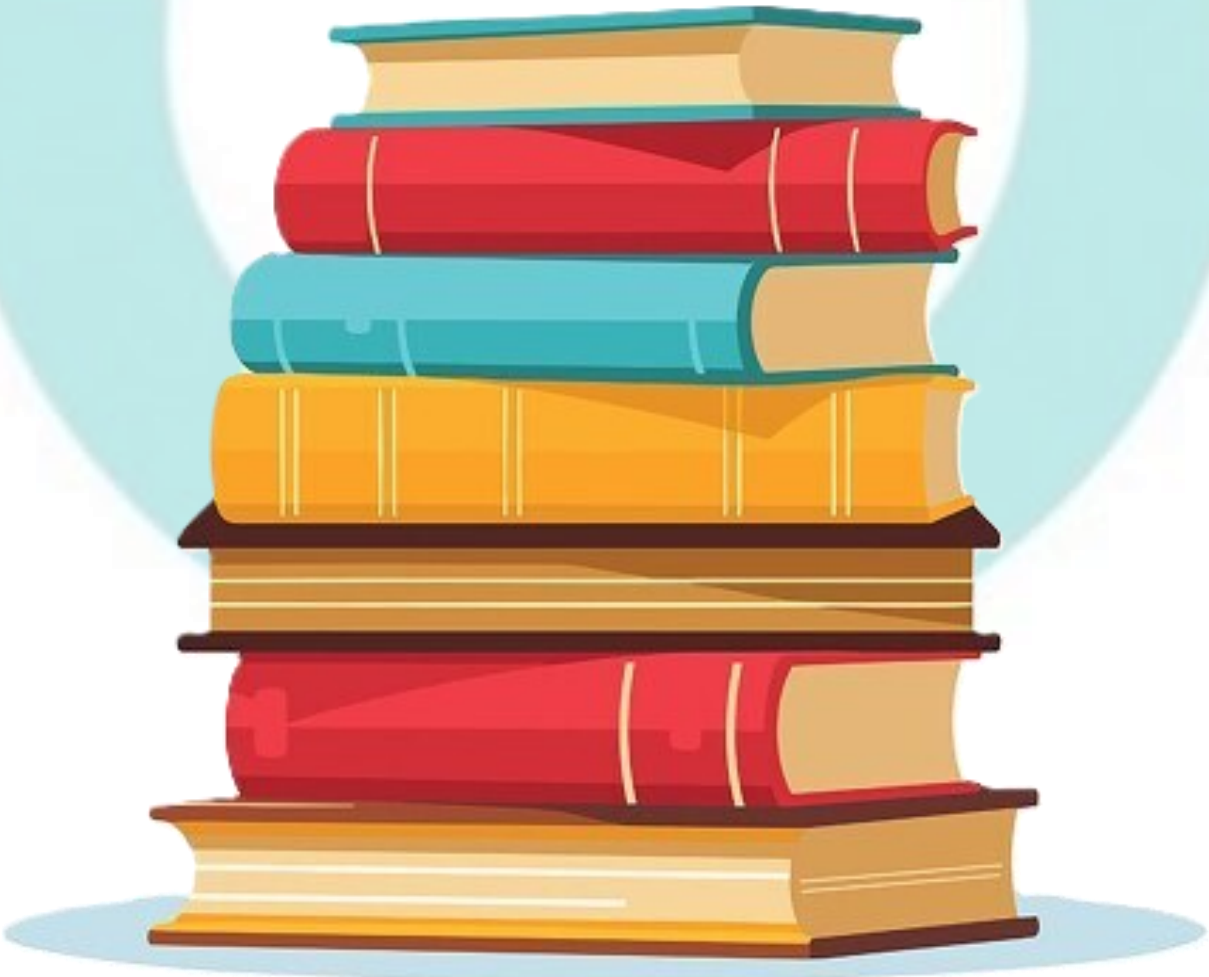
Opportunities for Post 16 Study

This course provides an excellent foundation from which to study any science at A-Level or BTEC. Other vocational qualifications involving science could be studied or an Apprenticeship in a science-based vocation.

Career Prospects

Science is a strong academic subject and essential for progression to sixth form centres and colleges. There are many broad and specialist careers that can be followed in science including Medical, Armed Forces, Public Services, Veterinary Studies, Zoology, Pharmaceutical Research, Environmental studies, Conservation, Engineering, Criminology and Forensics.

Additional GCSE Subjects



Art & Design

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: OCR GCSE Art & Design

Lead Teacher: Mrs E Wycherley (emma.wycherley@oldburywells.com)

Year 10/11 Coursework 60%

You will produce two portfolios over the two years to include:

- Experimenting with a range of personal themes based on monochrome and artist inspired briefs.
- The study of artists, illustrators and graphic designers to inspire project work.
- Development of ideas which reflect personal strengths either using mixed media, 3D presentations, painting or graphics.
- Graphics produced by hand or Photoshop designs.

Year 11 Practical Exam 40% (Jan – May)

You will produce an imaginative personal response, with teacher support, to a series of starting points with the development of a final piece produced in 10 hours under exam conditions. The preparation work is structured in a similar way to the coursework portfolio with an inspirational PowerPoint at the beginning to get the creative juices flowing! You will work to your own strengths of media, processes and ideas. The exam allows you to develop your own personal project linked to an exam title set by the exam board.

This course develops skills in:

- Creative thinking problem-solving
- ICT Photoshop skills
- Imaginative experimentation
- Visual presentation skills
- Critical/historical thinking

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

Current progression into post 16 study would be A level Art and Design. This in turn leads to a Foundation course or direct entry onto a range of degree courses e.g. Graphics, Fine Art, Photography, 3D Design, Jewellery making, Theatre Studies, Sculpture, Animation, Illustration etc.

Career Prospects

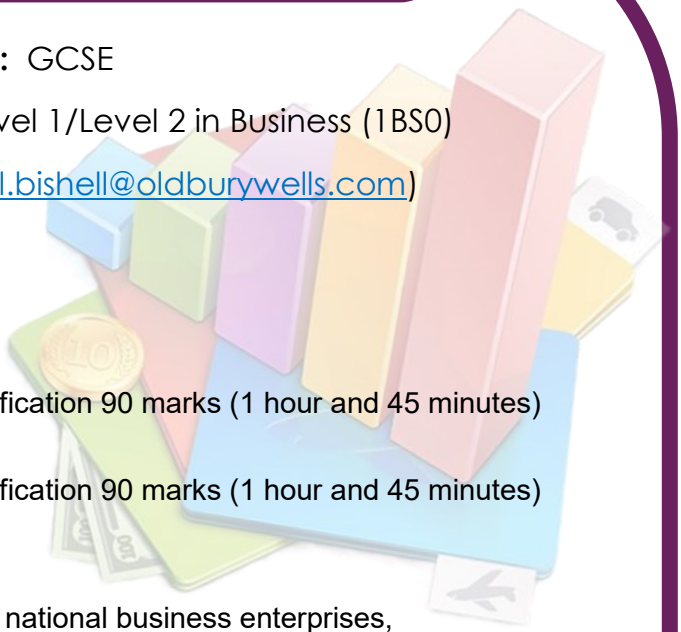
Fine Art painter or sculptor, Art historian, Mural painter, Exhibition Coordinator/Museum Curator, Logo/Branding, Illustrator, Graphic design, Interior/set/theatre design, Magazine designer, Advertising or fashion photographer, Web design, Packaging design, Special Effects/Prop Design, Jewellery maker, Landscape or Urban designer, Ceramic/Glass designer, Animator/Filmmaker, Florist, Art therapist, Photojournalist.

Business Studies

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 in Business (1BS0)

Lead Teacher: Mrs A Bishell (april.bishell@oldburywells.com)



The course includes work on:

Theme 1: Investigating Small Business
Written examination: 50% of the qualification 90 marks (1 hour and 45 minutes)

Theme 2: Building a Business
Written examination: 50% of the qualification 90 marks (1 hour and 45 minutes)

Course content includes:

Theme 1 you will investigate a range of local and national business enterprises, concentrating on the key business concepts, issues and skills involved in starting and running a small medium sized business:

- Enterprise and entrepreneurship
- Spotting a business opportunity
- Putting a business idea into practice
- Making the business effective
- Understanding external influences on business

Theme 2 you will develop your knowledge of business past the start-up phrase and focuses on the key business concepts, issues and decisions used to grow a business, with emphasis on aspects of marketing, operations, finance and human resources. In this theme you will look at national and global businesses. You develop a more detailed knowledge and understanding of business theories, which you will use to analyse and evaluate the success of businesses:

- Growing the business
- Making marketing decisions
- Making operational decisions
- Making financial decisions
- Making human resource decisions.

This course develops skills in:

- Research, analysis and evaluation.
- Written and oral communication and presenting work in a wide variety of formats.
- Numeracy for analysing a range of financial data.

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

Students can move on to Level 3 courses such as an A Level in Business Studies or a technical in a business related subject.

Career Prospects

Can lead to a career in Retail, Banking, Business Management and Human Resources.

Computer Science

This is an EBacc subject

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: OCR

Lead Teacher: Miss V Reddington (vickie.reddington@oldburywells.com)

GCSE Computer Science is a course designed to give you an in-depth understanding of how computer technology works and provides an opportunity to look at what goes on 'behind the scenes'. You don't need to have studied this subject before and assessment is based on two written exams:

- Computer systems: 50%
- Computational thinking, algorithms and programming: 50%

As part of the course students also complete a programming project.

This course includes work on:

This course is suitable for young people who want to explore and investigate how computers work, computer networks, cyber security, ethical, environmental, and legal issues associated with the use of computers. In addition, you are most likely to enjoy the subject if you have a real interest in logical thinking, writing algorithms to solve complex problems and creating computer programmes in Python.

This course has a high level of mathematical demand where you are not able to use a calculator in final exams, therefore only suitable for students working at 3+ and above in Mathematics at Key Stage 3.

This course will develop skills in:

- Understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of Computer Science, including algorithms, logic and data representation.
- Analyse complex problems using computational thinking through practical experience of solving such problems, including designing, writing and debugging programs.
- Think creatively, innovatively, analytically, logically and critically.
- Understand the difference between hardware and software and how they make up digital systems.
- Learn how computers communicate using a network and the security required in protecting computers against potential threats.
- Understand ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with the use of computers.
- Apply mathematical skills relevant to Computer Science

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

Candidates can progress either directly to employment through apprenticeships or proceed to further qualifications e.g. Level 3 qualifications such as GCE A Level Computer Science or the OCR Cambridge Technicals Extended Certificate in IT.

Career Prospects

Computer Science is a subject which is becoming more and more central to every type of business. A good foundation in this subject will enable you to follow one of a wide variety of career paths. Well -qualified and skilled programmers are in great demand as shown in numerous surveys. Further specialised study can lead to employment in the gaming industry and the cyber security industry. A qualification in Computer Science is a good basis for work as an IT technician, IT consultant, computer engineer, software engineer, analyst, data modeller, systems administrator, network administrator, software applications developer, programmer and development.

Food Preparation & Nutrition

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: AQA Food Preparation and Nutrition (8585)

Lead Teacher: Miss E Short (eloise.short@oldburywells.com)

This course includes work on:

- Enabling learners to make connections between theory work and practice.
- Applying understanding of food and nutrition whilst preparing and cooking food.
- The delivery of lessons through practical experience. In years 10 & 11 learners will cook approximately once a week whilst completing a series of modules involving written work and food experiments.
- Providing opportunities to be involved with the world's fastest growing industry in the UK.
- Planning, preparing, cooking and presenting dishes to a high standard.
- Analysing and evaluating different aspects of nutrition, food, cooking and preparation.
- Understanding Food Safety, Food Science, Food Provenance and Food Choice.
- Producing a controlled non-exam assessment worth 50% of the final GCSE grade, consisting of the completion of two tasks.

Task 1 Food Investigation (15%)

Task 2 Food Preparation Assessment (35%)

Preparing for the final Single examination paper worth 50% of the final GCSE grade, consisting of two sections.

Section A 20 multiple choice questions

Section B 5 questions varying in styles of approach and content.

This course will develop skills in:

- Producing a range of food preparation skills using a broad range of equipment.
- Making skills, which will enable students to show accuracy and quality.
- A thorough understanding of food, nutrition and health.
- An understanding of social, moral environmental and sustainable issues.
- Food, nutrition and health.
- Food science.

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

Students could go on to study catering, hospitality and nutrition, amongst other options.

Career Prospects

Can lead to careers such as Food marketing and Food consulting, Nutrition and Dietetics, Food Science, Food sales, Chef/Baker/Caterer, Food Journalist/Critic, Environmental Health Officer, Health and Safety Inspector, Restaurateur, Food Wholesaler, Quality Controller, Purchaser/Buyer.

D&T Resistant Materials

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: AQA Design & Technology - Focus on Resistant Materials

Lead Teacher: Mrs E Bell (liz.bell@oldburywells.com)

This course includes work on:

This course covers a broad range of Design Technology areas requiring a general knowledge during the theory element, including woods, metals & plastics (RMT), papers & boards, electronics, graphics, mechanisms, CAD/CAM, industrial practice, sustainability and textiles. This will allow students to specialise and gain a more in-depth knowledge of woods metals and plastics. Students will focus on these materials during their NEA project (Non Examination Assessment) and section B of the exam.

In Year 10 students dive into hands-on projects that spark creativity and build real world skills! From working with metals, learning techniques like annealing, casting, and welding to mastering timber joining and finishing, students produce a variety of impressive products that showcase their growing expertise. Alongside practical work, they develop essential theory knowledge and refine their design skills through both hand-drawing and CAD, preparing them confidently for their Non-Exam Assessment (NEA). This is a dynamic and rewarding course that blends innovation, craftsmanship, and design thinking, perfect for students who love to make, create, and problem-solve!

Students will be required to complete a project (NEA) set by the exam board that is worth 50% of the GCSE grade and then sit a written exam worth 50%.

In **Year 10** the exam boards will release the NEA projects and students will focus on sections A & B of their project which is a written presentation of research leading to a design brief and specification.

In **Year 11** you will complete your NEA project with a focus on design ideas, development work and making a working prototype. The second part of the year will focus on formal exam skills and revisiting theory taught throughout the course in preparation for the summer's examination.

This course develops skills in:

- In-depth knowledge and development of a range of making skills in wood, metal and plastic.
- Develop an understanding of compliant materials and construction techniques.
- Use ICT and manual graphic skills effectively and appropriately incorporating creative thinking.
- Develop technological awareness using a broad range of equipment.
- Develop understanding of the impact of design at a social and environmental level.
- Develop independent research skills and written presentation skills.
- Develop written examination skills in order to apply subject specific knowledge.

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

Foundation Art and Design, BTEC in Design courses of which there are many, A 'level product Design, Engineering, Apprenticeships in many areas such as the building industry, architecture and engineering.

Career Prospects

Can lead to a career such as Architecture, Product Design, Engineering, Jewellery Design or Interior Design.

D&T Textiles

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: AQA Design & Technology - Focus on Textiles

Lead Teacher: Mrs E Bell (liz.bell@oldburywells.com)

This course includes work on:

Students engaging in creative, hands-on projects that promote innovation and problem-solving. They explore a wide range of techniques, including decorative stitching, appliqué, screen printing, digital design, fabric manipulation, and construction methods used in both fashion and interior products. Students also learn about smart and technical fabrics, sustainability in the fashion industry, and the impact of modern manufacturing on textiles.

Alongside practical work, students develop strong design communication skills through sketching, modelling, mood boards, and CAD. This prepares them to confidently produce a successful NEA portfolio and create high-quality, personalised products that showcase their individual style.

This is a dynamic and inspiring course that blends creativity, technical understanding and forward-thinking design, ideal for students interested in fashion, interiors, product design, or anyone who enjoys bringing ideas to life.

In **Year 11** you will complete your NEA project, focusing on design ideas, development work, and producing a working prototype. Later in the year, you will prepare for the final examination through structured revision and practice, covering theory across materials and processes including woods, metals, plastics, papers and boards, electronics, graphics, mechanisms, CAD/CAM, sustainability and textiles.

This course develops skills in:

- Develop strong design skills that demonstrate originality and creativity.
- Refine high-quality making skills to produce accurate, well-crafted textile outcomes.
- Build understanding of a wide range of materials and construction techniques.
- Use ICT confidently, including CAD and digital illustration, to communicate design ideas.
- Cultivate innovative thinking and purposeful problem-solving.
- Gain technological awareness through experience with computerised sewing machines and fashion-design software.
- Strengthen communication skills, encouraging resourcefulness and clear justification of design decisions.

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

BTEC Art and Design, A' level fashion design, A' level Art & Design, apprenticeships in interior design and fashion design.

Career Prospects

Can lead to a career such as Fashion or Textiles Designer, Trend Forecaster, Fashion Buyer, Surface Pattern Designer, Textiles Technologist, Costume Designer, or Interior Designer.

This pathway also strengthens creative thinking and problem-solving skills valuable in *any* future career.

Drama

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: AQA 8261

Lead Teacher: Mr E Marshall (eoghan.marshall@oldburywells.com)

This course includes work on:

The programme of study will equip you with the essential drama skills and techniques to apply to your drama work. There are three components in total, which include devising, study & exploration of text and a live performance review:

- Understanding Drama 40% (written exam)
- Devising Drama (40% coursework and performance)
- Texts in Practice (20% scripted performance to a visiting examiner)

You will:

- Create your own drama work through devising and through learnt script.
- Learn how to analyse and contribute ideas in terms of your own appreciation of drama and theatre.
- Work actively in groups and express yourself in an active and exciting way.
- Explore plays written by other people. Focusing on the purpose of action, character, themes, and issues of these published plays.
- Work and develop performance skills as a performer/director/design.
- Support all your evidence through supported documented written responses to the practical class work.
- Perform in groups and as a solo.
- There will be an expectation to attend theatre trips.
- There will be expectation to attend all rehearsals planned outside of lessons.

This course develops skills in:

Skills in performance will be developed using explorative strategies such as narrating, role play, cross cutting, marking the moment, hot seating. Also, through developmental techniques such as physical, vocal and design skills, theatre styles and genres.

This course will secure and develop your diplomacy and presentation skills. You will learn how to effectively construct your evaluations and work as an ensemble collaborative. It will also help develop your time management, communication, evaluation, and analytical skills.

Course members must be prepared to take part in improvisation and be happy to perform their work in front of a small audience. Drama is a subject which depends upon co-operation with others and one of its benefits is the development of social skills. Students must be willing to work with all other students.

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

Current progression into post 16 would be A-Level Drama and Theatre. The many skills you learn and develop will be highly valued in your future even if you do not continue to study Drama.

Geography

This is an EBacc subject

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: Edexcel - Specification B

Lead Teacher: Mx S Farrington (sam.farrington@oldburywells.com)

This course includes work on:

Paper 1: Global Geographical Issues (37.5%)

- Hazardous Earth
  - Weather & Climate Systems & Hazards, such as hurricanes.
  - Tectonic Processes and Hazards, such as volcanoes and earthquakes.
- Development Dynamics, investigating global inequalities and how countries develop.
- Challenges of an Urbanising World, studying rapid city growth and the issues this causes.

Paper 2: UK Geographical Issues (37.5%)

- The UK's Evolving Physical Landscapes
  - Distinctive Landscapes in our country.
  - Coastal change and conflict, and how to manage our coastline.
  - River processes and pressures, including flood management.
- The UK's evolving Human Landscapes, including how a major UK city is changing.
- Geographical Investigations including two full days fieldwork.

Paper 3: People and Environmental Issues – Making Geographical Decisions (25%)

- People and the Biosphere.
- Forests Under Threat.
- Consuming Energy Resources.
- Making Geographical Decisions.

This course develops skills in:

Geography develops a wide range of skills as well as subject knowledge. These include fieldwork, observation, map work, presenting data, ICT and decision-making. Other skills include communication, organisation, literacy and numeracy.

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

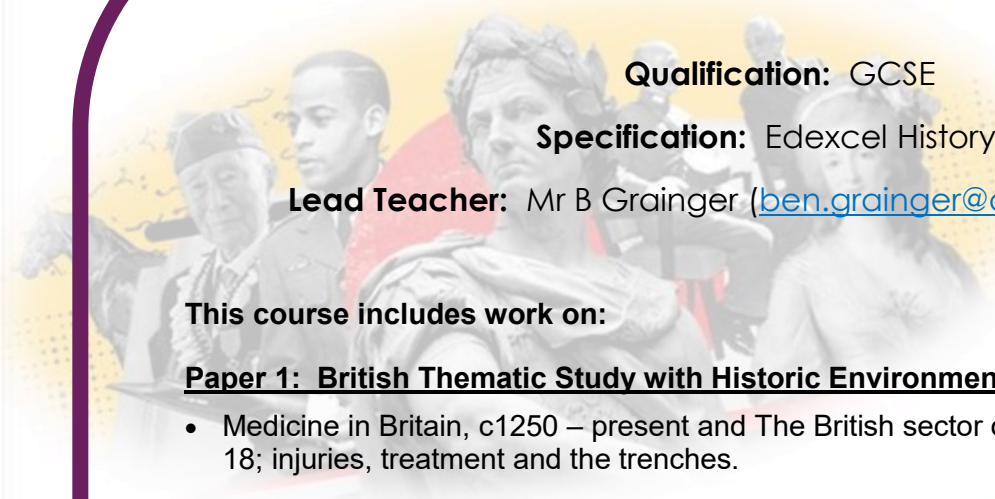
As Geography is a 'bridging' subject, students will have developed a wide range of skills that they can apply to a wide range of further studies, including Geography A' level.

Career Prospects

Geography connects the natural and the human, the local and the global, and helps us to plan sustainably for the future. Careers involving geography include the environmental sector, business, education, natural or social sciences, the media, travel, and resource management. Geography opens up a range of choices for your future work and career, because it equips you with skills that are marketable to employers and colleges.

History

This is an EBacc subject



Qualification: GCSE

Specification: Edexcel History B

Lead Teacher: Mr B Grainger (ben.grainger@oldburywells.com)

This course includes work on:

Paper 1: British Thematic Study with Historic Environment

- Medicine in Britain, c1250 – present and The British sector of the Western Front 1914-18; injuries, treatment and the trenches.

Paper 2: Period Study and British Depth Study

- Anglo-Saxon and Norman England c1060-88
- American West c1835-95

Paper 3: Modern Depth Study

- Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-39

This course develops skills in:

- Understanding what motivates people, what they think and feel.
- Researching information from a range of different sources.
- Evaluating the reliability and usefulness of information you are using.
- Communicating ideas about the past clearly.

Opportunities for Post 16 Study

GCSE History is a great basis for many A-Level subjects and it is highly regarded by colleges, universities and employers. Students who have studied history often study A' Level qualifications in subjects such as English, Politics, Economics and Sociology.

Career Prospects

Many people working in law and accountancy have studied history because of the skills that can be developed in reasoning and arguing your point. There are also many areas more directly related to history, such as travel and tourism, museums and libraries the media industry and government research.

Music

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: Eduqas

Lead Teacher: Mrs J Dangerfield (jo.dangerfield@oldburywells.com)

This course includes work on:

- Performing on your own and in a group.
- Exploring how great pieces of music were put together and composing your own music.
- Listening to a variety of music and learning how to identify the facts about what you hear. You will already have heard about the elements of music in your Key Stage 3 lessons. At GCSE you focus on how these are used for different purposes.

The course has two internally assessed components, and one that is externally assessed.

Component 1: Performing (30%)

- You must perform at least 2 pieces: One piece must be an **ensemble**, the other(s) can be ensembles or solos. You can sing or play any instrument or you can use music technology. You can have an accompanist or use a backing track or perform unaccompanied.
- Performing more difficult pieces can boost your marks.
- You will need to submit a score or a lead sheet of each piece so your teacher can assess how accurately you perform.

Component 2: Composing (30%)

- You will compose two original pieces of music. One is a free composition, which you can complete at any time in the course. The other must be written in response to a brief released by Eduqas on the 1st September in the same school year as you take the exam. They can both be in a similar style as long as the actual musical content is different.
- You will hand in an audio file of each piece – either a live recording (of you or someone else performing your piece) or an output from software. You will also need either a score or a lead sheet with a detailed description of each piece.
- You will complete a composing log which explains how you completed your work.

Component 3: Appraising – (Listening exam) (40%)

There will be 8 questions. Each will have an extract of music which is played out loud for you to answer the questions on what you hear. Two of the questions will be all about the set works which you will study throughout the course. Questions will focus on three things: Elements of Music , Context, Musical Language.

Opportunities for Post 16 study

GCSE Music will prepare you for further Music study at Vocational Level 3 or A Level Music as well as apprenticeships in the music industry.

Career Prospects

The possibilities are endless. Music will enable you to demonstrate many skills which employers, colleges and universities are looking for. It can also give you opportunities to travel, meet people and get the most out of life.

The transferable skills you will master during this course such as self-reflection, communication, teamwork and problem solving will support your progress in whatever field of study or employment you choose within the music industry and beyond.

Physical Education

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: AQA Level 2

Lead Teachers: Mr T Cowburn (terry.cowburn@oldburywells.com)
Miss C Joiner (claire.joiner@oldburywells.com)

This course includes work on:

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Physical training
- Sports Psychology
- Health, fitness and well-being
- Movement analysis
- Use of data
- Socio-cultural influences

Assessment

Theory

There will be two (1hour 15 minute), 78-mark question papers that will be completed at the end of the course. Each paper is worth 30%, equating to 60% of the total course.

The theory specification is broad in content and requires students to be very organised when producing and keeping notes throughout the course.

Practical

Practical performance in three different physical activities in the role of player / performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or an individual activity). This will equate to 30% of the overall grade.

Students will also complete an analysis and evaluation of a performance piece of work that will form the coursework element of the course. This will be completed for one of their assessed activities. This will equate for 10% of the overall grade but is a theoretical piece of work.

This course develops skills in:

The human body and movement in physical activity and sport (30%). These topics are:

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Physical training
- Movement analysis
- Use of data

Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport (30%). The topics are:

- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Health, fitness and well-being

Opportunities for Post 16 study

GCSE PE enables candidates either to progress directly to employment through apprenticeships, or to proceed to further qualifications e.g. Level 3 such as the Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in Sport or A level PE.

Career Prospects

Further study within this subject area could lead to a job that is in the sports industry. Examples of possible jobs are PE teacher, sports coach, personal trainer, physiotherapist, sports development officer, leisure management and many more.

Philosophy & Religion

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: AQA Religious Studies Specification A

Lead Teachers: Dr J Perfect (james.perfect@oldburywells.com)

Philosophy and Religion allows students to explore some of the 'Big Questions' that life presents. By engaging with different points of view, and critically evaluating these, students are able to arrive at reasoned judgements and develop their own ideas about issues ranging from what the role of the family is, to whether or not God exists.

Christianity provides the students with a sound understanding of the main religious tradition of the UK while the study of Buddhism provides an engaging and popular counterpoint through its strong philosophical nature. Both provide excellent thinking tools to explore the ethical issues in the second component of the course.

This course includes work on:

Component 1 - Study of Religions: Beliefs, Teachings and Practices

- Christian Beliefs and practices
- Buddhist Beliefs and practices

Component 2 - Thematic Studies: Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies

- Relationships and Families
- Religion and Life
- Religion, Crime and Punishment
- Religion, Human Rights and Social Justice
- Religion, Peace and Conflict
- Existence of God and Revelation

This course develops skills in:

- Research and analysis
- Critical thinking
- Communication and essay writing
- Empathy and understanding different perspectives
- Objectivity and recognising bias

Opportunities for Post 16 study

Current progression would be at A-Level. You can also continue using the ideas and skills of the subject in another context or subject like Psychology or Sociology.

Career Prospects

PR can link to a variety of careers by developing transferable skills like critical thinking, empathy, and analysis, which are valuable in fields such as Law, Journalism and Media, Teaching, Social Work, Civil Service, Museum Curator and Healthcare. Other direct links include roles in Charity Work, Community Development and Chaplaincy.

French

This is an EBacc subject

Qualification: GCSE

Specification: AQA French 8652, Foundation or Higher tier

Lead Teacher: Miss S Dijoux (solene.dijoux@oldburywells.com)

This course includes work on:

Theme 1: People and Lifestyle

- Topic 1: Identity and Relationships with others
- Topic 2: Healthy Living and Lifestyle
- Topic 3: Education and Work

Theme 2: Popular Culture

- Topic 1: Free-time Activities
- Topic 2: Customs, Festivals and Celebrations
- Topic 3: Celebrity Culture

Theme 3: Communication and the World Around Us

- Topic 1: Travel and tourism, including Places of Interest
- Topic 2: Media and Technology
- Topic 3: The Environment and Where People Live

This course develops skills in:

- understanding and responding to spoken or written language in speaking and in writing
- understanding and applying accurately the grammar and vocabulary covered
- recalling and using language in different situations that are relevant to current and future interests, and being able to move between French and English
- developing new ways of seeing the world to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries and develop an awareness of the cultures existing in the French-speaking world.

Opportunities for Post 16 study

GCSE French offers the basis to study French further at A-level. Studying a language at GCSE will also greatly develop problem-solving skills, literacy, communication, cultural knowledge and memorisation, thus supporting an array of A-level subjects.

Career Prospects

A language is viewed very favourably by universities and hence improves your chances of getting on the course of your choice. A language qualification enables you to access professions in a wide range of fields such as business, law, fashion, journalism, marketing, engineering, tourism, hospitality, diplomatic services and even the Army. It will also open many opportunities abroad with French being spoken on each continent. Although your knowledge of French may be required for certain jobs, it is the transferable skills you developed whilst learning a language that will make you more employable. Learning a language also reinforces the virtues of resilience, tolerance and empathy.

Triple Science

This is an EBacc subject

Qualification: Three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry & Physics

Specification: AQA GCSE Biology 8461, Chemistry 8462, Physics 8463

Lead Teacher: Mr D Cox (daniel.cox@oldburywells.com)

NB: Students interested in taking this science route must be already performing at a Level 4-5 in Year 9 across science and have a strong interest in all sciences. This is a very interesting course but contains 1/3 more content than the Combined Science course. Triple Science students have 14 lessons of Science per fortnight.

This course includes work on:

Each science subject is taught separately with different topics in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Practical skills are also developed, and several Required Practical Tasks need to be completed and fully written up. Assessment is based on written examinations with a total of 6 papers taken in the summer of Year 11 (2 in each of the science subjects).

Topics included are:

Biology Cell Biology; Organisation; Infection and Response; Bioenergetics; Homeostasis and Response; Inheritance, Variation and Evolution; Ecology.

Chemistry Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table; Bonding, Structure and Properties of Matter; Quantitative Chemistry; Chemical Changes; Energy Changes; The Rate and Extent of Chemical Change; Organic Chemistry; Chemical Analysis; Chemistry of the Atmosphere; Using Resources.

Physics Energy; Electricity; Particle Model of Matter; Atomic Structure; Forces; Waves; Magnetism and Electromagnetism; Space Physics.

This course develops skills in:

- Practical techniques
- Taking a critical approach in scientific evidence and methods
- Knowledge and understanding of working scientifically
- The essential role of science in society
- Interest and enthusiasm in science.

Opportunities for Post 16 study

This course provides an excellent foundation from which to study any science at A-Level or BTEC. Other vocational qualifications involving science could be studied or an Apprenticeship in a science-based vocation.

Career Prospects

Science is a strong academic subject for progression to 6th form centres and colleges. There are many broad and specialist careers that can be followed in science including Medical, Armed Forces, Public Services, Veterinary Studies, Zoology, Pharmaceutical Research, Environmental studies, Conservation, Engineering, Criminology and Forensics.

Additional Non-GCSE Subjects

Creative iMedia

Qualification: Cambridge National Certificate Level 1/2

Specification: OCR

Lead Teacher: Miss V Reddington (vickie.reddington@oldburywells.com)

The Cambridge Nationals in Creative iMedia will equip you with a range of creative media skills and provide opportunities to develop skills such as research, planning, reviewing products, working with others and communicating creative ideas for products effectively. The course is assessed by examination and coursework.

This course includes work on:

Creative iMedia in the media industry: In this unit you will learn about the sectors, products and job roles that form the media industry. This will include legal and ethical issues considered and the processes used to plan and create digital media products. How media codes are used within the creation of media products to convey meaning, create impact and engage audiences. You will learn to choose the most appropriate format and properties for different media products. **This unit will be assessed with an exam in year 11 and makes up 40% of the end grade.**

Visual identity and digital graphics: In this unit you will learn about the sectors, products and job roles that form the media industry. The legal and ethical issues considered, and the processes used to plan and create digital media products. How media codes are used within the creation of media products to convey meaning, create impact and engage audiences. **This unit will be assessed with a piece of coursework in year 10 and makes up 25% of the end grade.**

Characters and comics: You will learn about the style and genre of comics and characters. In this unit you will learn to design and create original characters that convey emotion and personality. To set your characters within stories of your own making which flow logically and engage the reader and to use conventions of comics to tell your characters' stories across multiple pages. **This unit will be assessed with a piece of coursework in year 10 and makes up 35% of the end grade.**

This course develops skills in:

- Understanding pre-production skills used in the creative and digital media sector.
- Planning skills required to create a range of digital media products to meet a client brief.
- Understand that digital graphics feature in many areas of our lives and play a very important part in today's world. The digital media sector relies heavily on these visual stimulants within the products it produces, to communicate messages effectively.
- Learn where and why digital graphics are used and what techniques are involved in their creation.
- Understand that websites are the basis of internet content and are therefore used extensively in the creative digital media sector, whether for mobile phones or computers in all their forms.
- Learn how to create an aesthetically pleasing multimedia products that meet a client brief.

Opportunities for Post 16 study

The Cambridge Nationals in Creative iMedia enables candidates to progress either directly to employment through apprenticeships, or to proceed to further qualifications e.g. Level 3 Cambridge Technical in Digital Technology.

Career Prospects

Further study within this subject area could lead to a job that is creative or technical. Examples of possible jobs are Graphic Designer, Web Designer, Web Developer, Games Designer/ Developer, IT Technician, IT Consultant and a Project Manager.

Glossary and Abbreviations

A Level:	Advanced Supplementary Level, and Advanced Level
OCR:	Oxford Cambridge and RSA
Coursework:	Work that is carried out in a subject, supervised by a teacher, which counts towards a final GCSE grade
Examination Boards:	The authorities who award grades and levels on the basis of students' performances in the examinations that the boards devise. The four main ones being: AQA, OCR, EDEXCEL and WJEC
GCSE:	General Certificate of Secondary Education
KS4:	Key Stage 4 – Years 10 and 11 (*years 7-9 are referred to as KS3*)
KS5:	Key Stage 5 – Years 12 and 13
Post-16:	The period after KS4, when most students are over 16 years old. Educational provision at this stage is not governed by the National Curriculum, but all students need to study English and Maths until a qualification is achieved. (NB: this does not have to be at school)
SAT:	Standard Assessment Test/Task
SEN:	Special Educational Needs
Terminal Exams:	Exams that are taken at the end of a course, typically after two years
EBacc:	English Baccalaureate

Overview of Subjects

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Subject specific teacher contact details are within this booklet.

General school contact details

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