

Key stage 4 choices booklet
2023/24



The Birley Academy

A L.E.A.D. Academy



Message from the Acting Headteacher

Dear Parent/Carer and Students,

This booklet has been produced to help you make important choices at this crucial stage of your educational career. These are the first of many choices you will have to make over the next few years. Making decisions about which subjects to study in key stage 4 is both a challenge and an opportunity.

Each student will be guided individually to ensure he/she selects the appropriate learning pathway to meet his/her ability and personal preferences. Advice and support will be available from subject teachers, members of the Leadership Team, the Head of Year 9 and the Deputy Head of Year 9.

Parents/Carers, I would ask that you discuss option choices with your son/daughter. You will find details of the subjects being offered within this booklet.

The school places great emphasis on ensuring each student is able to make informed decisions regarding their key stage 4 education.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact the Academy.

Yours faithfully,

D. Casey

Diarmaid Casey
Acting Headteacher

Useful contacts

Please see below for people to contact for more information in school:

Mr Casey – Acting Headteacher
diarmaidcasey@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

Mr Gillett – Assistant Headteacher
dangillett@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

Mrs Buxton – Head of Year 9
vivbuxton@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

Ms Smith – Deputy Head of Year 9
rebeccasmith@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

Key stage 4 curriculum

At The Birley Academy we pride ourselves on our broad, balanced and exciting curriculum. We believe it is vital for a student to have a range of choices to choose from.

Our model is made up of a core curriculum and an optional curriculum. All students follow the core curriculum, which consists of the following subjects:

- English language
- English literature
- Mathematics
- Combined (trilogy) science or separate sciences
- PSHE
- Core PE

Optional subjects are:

- Art
- BTEC sports
- Creative media
- DT technology - graphics or resistant materials
- Engineering
- Food technology
- French
- Geography
- Health and social care
- History
- Music
- Performing arts
- Religious studies
- Travel and tourism

Support with choosing Year 9 options, post information evening:

To help students with this process, they will receive guidance from their form tutors, subject teachers and senior leaders.

On **Thursday 25th January 2024**, there will be the Year 9 Progress Parents' Evening. As well as being able to discuss your child's progress with their subject teachers, there will be an opportunity for parents/carers to discuss the suitability of the courses.

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English – Core Subject

<p><u>Why should I study this course?</u></p> <p>Everyone needs to be able to communicate effectively. This is why English is very important. GCSE English language and literature will develop your writing skills, your ability to read and increase your confidence in expressing yourself. Doing well in English will, therefore, help you make progress in other subjects and will be important when applying for college courses, training schemes and employment. You will also find the combination of writing and speaking elements in the course very enjoyable. They will certainly help you be more confident and able to communicate better in and beyond school.</p>	<p><u>What qualifications will I get?</u></p> <p>There are two separate qualifications studied for through English lessons:</p> <p><u>GCSE English language:</u> This is studied throughout KS4 and all students take this qualification in Y11. It is very important you achieve a grade 5 or above in this subject for your future education or career prospects.</p> <p><u>GCSE English literature:</u> Again, this is studied throughout Y10 and Y11 and is assessed in Y11. You will receive a GCSE qualification by studying Shakespeare's '<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>', '<i>The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i>' by Robert Louis Stevenson, '<i>Blood Brothers</i>' by Willy Russell and a range of poetry in the AQA Power and Conflict cluster.</p>
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>During your two year course you will learn to use words in a variety of ways, from creative writing in stories to more formal writing based on non-fiction texts. To help you with this, you will read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts (e.g. articles, letters and speeches). You may also visit the theatre and watch adaptations of the stories you study in class.</p> <p>Another important part of the course is the speaking and listening unit which is a statutory component of the course. You will be asked to present on a topic in front of an audience of peers and listen to others.</p>	<p><u>How will the course be assessed?</u></p> <p><u>GCSE English Language</u> 100% examination 2 papers</p> <p><u>GCSE English Literature</u> 100% examination 2 papers</p> <p>Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th century novel [<i>'Merchant of Venice'</i> and <i>'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde'</i>]</p> <p>Unit 2: Modern texts and Poetry [<i>'Blood Brothers'</i> and <i>'Power and Conflict'</i> poetry]</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying this course?</u></p> <p>GCSE English language is a basic requirement for virtually all courses and jobs. You will need at least a grade 5 in GCSE English Language to be accepted on a Level 3 course at college (these include A levels and National Diplomas) and a grade 4 for Level 2 courses. If you achieve a grade 6 or above, you might like to study A-Level English language or literature – even take a degree in this subject at university.</p> <p>Some careers specifically related to English include journalism, law, creative writing and teaching.</p>	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mrs Hirst – Curriculum Leader kerryhirst@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

Mathematics – Core Subject

<p><u>Why should I study this course?</u></p> <p>Mathematics is incredibly important in our lives. Without realising it we use maths concepts and the skills we learn doing maths every day. Maths is required in many different careers, not just in accountancy and engineering but in medicine and business and computing.</p> <p>The GCSE maths course not only provides the skills for doing calculations, it also encourages problem solving and thinking skills that can be applied in all walks of life.</p>	<p><u>What qualifications will I get?</u></p> <p>You will get a GCSE in Mathematics</p>
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>This course is designed to reflect the change of emphasis in mathematics teaching set out in the revised programme of study for key stage 4.</p> <p>This means an increased focus on applying mathematics in context, problem solving, reasoning and the functional elements of mathematics.</p> <p>You will study areas such as number and algebra, geometry, measures, statistics, probability, ratio and proportion.</p>	<p><u>How will the course be assessed?</u></p> <p>The scheme of assessment comprises of 3 linear exams, designed to be taken at the end of the course. There is no coursework element.</p> <p>Exams can be taken at either Foundation or Higher tier. Foundation Tier offers grades 1 to 5. The higher tier offers grades 4 to 9.</p> <p>Each paper is worth 80 marks and last for 1 ½ hours. Paper 1 is a calculator paper. Paper 2 and paper 3 are non-calculator papers.</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying this course?</u></p> <p>A qualification in maths is a requirement for many post 16 courses. If you want to study the subject further you could do a core maths level 3 qualification or you can go on to study mathematics or further mathematics at A-Level.</p> <p>Mathematics A-Level lends itself to many careers, and generally earns you more money than other qualifications.</p>	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mr Kerfoot – Curriculum Leader simonkerfoot@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

Combined Science (Trilogy) - Core Subject

<p><u>Why should I study this course?</u></p> <p>Combined science covers the key aspects of science from biology, chemistry and physics. Combined Science (Trilogy) is a double GCSE taken by all students. It builds on the key stage 3 curriculum and covers the National Curriculum programme of study for science at Key Stage 4.</p> <p>It prepares students with the knowledge and understanding needed in the increasingly technological world.</p> <p>The course prepares students for progression to further scientific study post-16, including A-level sciences.</p>	<p><u>What qualifications will I get?</u></p> <p>You will gain two GCSEs with combined science.</p> <p>The grade awarded will be taken from your performance in exams from all 3 sciences (biology, chemistry and physics).</p>
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>You will study Science over two years and cover a range of science topics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cell biology• Infection and response• Bioenergetics• Atomic structure and the periodic table• Chemical changes• Quantitative chemistry• Forces• Energy• Magnetism and electromagnetism	<p><u>How will the course be assessed?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Six papers: two biology, two chemistry and two physics.• All papers are sat at the end of Y11• All papers are 1 hour and 15 minutes• Foundation and higher tiers of entry are available• The papers are equally weighted. Each is worth 16.7% of the grade and has 70 marks <p>There will be a range of question styles - multiple choice, structured, closed, short answer and open response.</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying this course?</u></p> <p>Being a core subject, science is studied by everyone. Therefore, it is important to make as much progress as possible to maximise your life chances.</p> <p>GCSE core science gives you a good foundation of knowledge in science. Success in combined science can provide access to A-Level (AS/A2) science courses, including applied science and psychology. In the long term, if you decide to pursue your scientific studies, it can lead to an almost limitless number of job opportunities. Highly qualified scientists are very much in demand and their skills are required in many jobs.</p>	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mrs Hall – Curriculum Leader of Science</p> <p>oliviahall@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

Separate Sciences – Core Subject

<p><u>Why should I study this course?</u></p> <p>This course is offered to students who wish to study the three GCSEs in science. It is well suited to students who demonstrate enthusiasm and ability in the subject in KS3. It aims to encourage you to explore, explain, theorise and model in science. It develops a critical approach to scientific evidence and helps to prepare you for further studies in science.</p>	<p><u>What qualifications will I get?</u></p> <p>You will gain three GCSEs - one for biology, chemistry and physics.</p> <p>You will study all three.</p>
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>If you choose to study separate sciences, you will have extra lessons of science each week.</p> <p>The course includes all of the elements from combined science (trilogy – core science). In addition, extra units in biology, chemistry and physics are studied leading to separate biology, chemistry and physics GCSEs being awarded.</p>	<p><u>How will the course be assessed?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Six papers: two biology, two chemistry and two physics.• All papers are sat at the end of Y11• All papers are 1 hour and 45 minutes• Higher and foundation tiers of entry are available• The papers are equally weighted. Each is worth 50% of each grade and has 100 marks <p>There will be a range of question styles - multiple choice, structured, closed, short answer and open response.</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying this course?</u></p> <p>Separate sciences is an excellent choice if you are intending to study science at A-Level. For example, AS/A Level biology, chemistry, physics and applied science. It will also provide the basis for future study of the sciences at degree level and has the potential to offer extensive employment opportunities. In the long term, if you decide to pursue your scientific studies, it can lead to a huge number of job opportunities. Highly qualified scientists are very much in demand and their skills are required in many jobs.</p>	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mrs Hall – Curriculum Leader of Science</p> <p>oliviahall@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

PSHE – Core Subject

<p><u>Studying this subject you will:</u></p> <p>In Y10 some of the topics you will explore include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health and well-being• Careers and personal skills• Getting ready for the world after-school ends• Tackling relationship myths• Understanding diversity in relationships <p>In Y11 some of the topics you will explore include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get post-16 ready• Self-esteem and mindfulness• Relationships and sex education• Health and safety for adult life• Protect yourself, respect yourself• 'Life through a lense' - an insight into what films can teach us	<p><u>What skills will I learn/develop?</u></p> <p>The ability to manage and lead teams and the confidence to discuss, reflect and share views on a wide variety of topics.</p> <p>The ability to plan and research new topics.</p> <p>Overcome new challenges and learn about new options for post-16 success.</p> <p>Learn how to manage risks and think about possible problems and barriers, whilst taking part in a range of activities, including work experience, voluntary work opportunities, peer mentoring, group projects, mock interviews and visits to post-16 education providers.</p>
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>PSHE is about enabling you to think for yourself about social, personal and moral issues. It is about you, your life and the issues you face as a young person when you leave school and go into society as a confident and capable individual.</p> <p>In the course you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- exploring real facts and information about other people's lives and the world you live in.- gaining an understanding of issues that are relevant to young people and the lives you lead.- having the opportunity to explore your lives and the lives of others in a safe and questioning environment.- being supported through various adult decisions, such as work experience and post-16 options.	<p><u>How will PSHE be assessed?</u></p> <p>Over the two years students will create a personal, learning and thinking skills portfolio. This will be a two year piece of work and will evidence achievement of key skills including team work, self-management, creative thinking and extra-curricular successes and achievements.</p> <p>This portfolio will go on to support students in Y11 and provide evidence for their progress piles.</p> <p>In Y11 students will spend the first ½ term of PSHE completing personal statements and applying for Post-16 options. This process is a crucial time and requires support both in school and from home.</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying PSHE?</u></p> <p>Some possible post 16 options are;</p> <p>Sociology, Law, Criminology, Politics, Religious Studies, Media Studies, Psychology</p>	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mrs Gillham – Assistant Headteacher</p> <p>leoniegillham@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

Optional subjects



GCSE Art

<p><u>Why should I study this course?</u></p> <p>This is an exciting and very popular broad based course exploring practical and contextual work through a range of 2D and 3D processes and techniques.</p> <p>It is an endorsed fine art course where you can work with a wide range of art materials and techniques. You will have the opportunity to take part in gallery visits to study the work of artists and enrich your portfolio.</p>	<p><u>What qualifications will I get?</u></p> <p>GCSE – fine art</p>
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>In Year 10 you will work towards building a portfolio of coursework by continuing to develop your drawing, painting and practical skills linked to the theme of people. This will require creative research skills and a passion to learn new skills and techniques.</p> <p>In Y11 you will have the opportunity to complete a second project for your portfolio from 3 given starting points. This will help to develop your independent working. For both projects you will need to evidence research, experimental, development and refinement work, final designs and an individual personal response.</p> <p>After Christmas term in Year 11 you will receive an external set assignment paper and preparation time to investigate, experiment, develop and refine your ideas. You will be given 10 hours of formally supervised time to complete a personal response to the starting point.</p>	<p><u>How will the course be assessed?</u></p> <p>The exam board requires you to provide evidence towards four coursework assessment objectives.</p> <p>Develop ideas through investigations (24 marks) Refine work by exploring and experimenting (24 marks) Record ideas, observations and insights (24 marks) Present a personal and meaningful response (24 marks)</p> <p>60% of your coursework marks will be awarded on the quality of your coursework presented inside your portfolio.</p> <p>40% will be awarded for the quality of your external set assignment. This will include your preparation work and final 10 hour personal response.</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying this course?</u></p> <p>There are many fantastic jobs you could consider after studying Art and Design.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Animator- Illustrator-Graphic Designer- Marketing-TV& Radio-Photographer- Prop designer-Fashion designer- Special effects for film and television-Artist- Costume designer-Teacher- Art therapist-Set designer- Interior designer-Architect- Body artist	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mrs Jackson – Curriculum Leader</p> <p>heatherjackson@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

Creative Media (Cambridge National Certificate – Level 2)

<p><u>Why should I study this course?</u></p> <p>The Level 2 Cambridge National qualification in Creative iMedia will develop knowledge, understanding and skills that are used in the media industry.</p> <p>You may be interested in this if you want an engaging qualification where you will use your learning in practical, real-life situations, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• developing visual identities for clients• planning and creating original digital graphics• planning, creating and reviewing original digital media products.	<p><u>What qualifications will I get?</u></p> <p>You will get a BTEC level 2 qualification.</p> <p>The final grade will be a Pass, Merit or Distinction.</p> <p>This BTEC qualification gains the equivalent points of 1 GCSE.</p>
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>You will study 2 mandatory units and choose 1 optional unit. The two mandatory units are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unit R093: Creative iMedia in the media industry. This is assessed by taking an exam. In this unit you will learn about the media industry, digital media products, how they are planned, and the media codes that are used to convey meaning, create impact and engage audiences. <p>Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o The media industryo Factors influencing product designo Pre-production planningo Distribution considerations <p>Unit R094: Visual identity and digital graphics. This is assessed by completing a set assignment. In this unit you will learn how to develop visual identities for clients and use the concepts of graphic design to create original digital graphics to engage target audiences.</p> <p>Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Develop visual identityo Plan digital graphics for productso Create visual identity and digital graphics <p>The final unit will be decided from the following</p> <p>Characters and comics; animation; Interactive media; Visual imaging; Digital games</p>	<p><u>How will the course be assessed?</u></p> <p>R093 is an externally examined written paper worth 40% of the total grade.</p> <p>R094 and another is NEA (non-examined assessment) which is done in class as coursework is worth 60% of the final grade.</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying this course?</u></p> <p>Students who study Creative Media usually go onto take digital media courses or other ICT / business variants at A-Level or through an apprenticeship.</p> <p>Studying the subject allows for a pathway to university.</p> <p>The course can lead to potential careers in business & marketing, digital media authoring, the media sector, and other relative roles.</p>	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mr Gillett, Assistant Headteacher dangillett@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

BTEC Technical Award- Engineering

<p><u>Why should I study this course?</u></p> <p>Designed specifically for schools, BTEC technical awards are a Level 2 qualification. These qualifications assess students through assignments and tasks, rather than through traditional exams taken at the end of Year 11.</p>	<p><u>What qualifications will I get?</u></p> <p>You will get a BTEC Level 2 qualification.</p> <p>The final grade will be a pass, merit or distinction.</p> <p>This BTEC qualification is the equivalent points to 1 GCSE.</p>
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>The course is made up of three components - two that are internally assessed and one that's externally assessed.</p> <p>Our three-block structure - explore, develop and apply, has been developed to allow students to build on and embed their knowledge. This allows them to grow in confidence and then put into practice what they have learned.</p> <p>Our assessment structure is also designed so that students can build on what they learn, and develop their skills, as they move through the course.</p>	<p><u>How will the course be assessed?</u></p> <p>Component 1 30% internally assessed Explore - Students explore the various engineering sectors and the role of design in engineering.</p> <p>Component 2 30% internally assessed Develop - Students develop knowledge and understanding of the processes of engineering a product.</p> <p>Component 3 40% externally assessed Apply - Students pull together all they have learned and apply their knowledge by creating their own product.</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying this course?</u></p> <p>After completing their BTEC technical award, students will be in a great position to continue in the engineering sector. This qualification prepares students for both practical and academic routes.</p>	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mr Allan – Curriculum Leader danallan@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

GCSE Food

<p><u>Why should I study this course?</u></p> <p>GCSE food is an exciting and creative course which focuses on practical cooking skills to ensure students develop a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials.</p> <p>At its heart, this qualification focuses on nurturing students' practical cookery skills to give them a strong understanding of nutrition.</p>	<p><u>What qualifications will I get?</u></p> <p>A GCSE in food, preparation and nutrition.</p>
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>You will be learning about;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food preparation skills - you will make <u>mostly savoury</u> food products using a wide variety of skills, techniques and finishes• Food, nutrition and health - you will learn how the foods you make effect the body and mind• Food science - how do ingredients work and react together (scientifically) and what are these functions in food• Food safety - how to prepare food safely and hygienically• Food choice - learn about an array of target markets and what affects their food choices• Food provenance - food and how it affects social, moral and environmental issues• Food preparation and cooking techniques	<p><u>How will the course be assessed?</u></p> <p>50% exam on the five areas composed of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiple choice questions (20 marks)• Five questions each with a number of sub questions (80 marks) <p>50% coursework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Task 1: Food investigation (30 marks) Students' understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients.• Task 2: Food preparation assessment (70 marks). Students' knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking, presentation of food and application of nutrition related to the chosen task. <p>Students will prepare, cook and present a final menu of three dishes within a single period of no more than three hours, planning in advance how this will be achieved.</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying this course?</u></p> <p>Upon completion of this course, students will be qualified to go on to further study or embark on an apprenticeship or full time career in the catering or food industries.</p>	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mr Allan – Curriculum Leader danallan@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

GCSE Technology – Graphics or Resistant Materials

<p><u>Why should I study this course?</u></p> <p>GCSE design and technology will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will learn about wider influences on design and technology, including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors.</p> <p>Students will get the opportunity to work creatively designing and making; they will get to apply technical and practical expertise. The GCSE allows students to study core technical, designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials techniques and equipment. They will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth.</p>	<p><u>What qualifications will I get?</u></p> <p>GCSE Design and Technology</p>
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>You will have to choose either a graphics or resistant material specialism. You <u>cannot</u> do both.</p> <p>Section A: Core technical knowledge - A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions on a range of different technologies and materials. Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smart materials; New technologies; Energy; Systems; Mechanical devices <p>Section B: Material specialism - A mixture of shorter and longer answer questions based on a specific material choice. Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Production; Forces and stresses; Specialist techniques; Surface treatments and finishes; Ecological and social footprints <p>Section C: Design and make - Questions about the process of designing and making. Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designers; Research; Design strategies; Prototype development; Specialist tools and equipment 	<p><u>How will the course be assessed?</u></p> <p>50% Coursework Coursework will begin in June of Y10 and should be completed by the February of Y11. The coursework brief changes each year but will consist of 20 A3 pages of research, design, manufacture and evaluation, along with a final prototype.</p> <p>50% Exam- End of Y11 The exam will consist of three sections.</p> <p>Section A: Core technical knowledge - A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions on a range of different technologies and materials.</p> <p>Section B: Material specialism - A mixture of shorter and longer answer questions based on a specific material choice.</p> <p>Section C: Design and make - Questions about the process of designing and making.</p> <p>15% of the exam is applying maths to technology style questions.</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying this course?</u></p> <p>Students can progress onto A-Level design and technology. In addition, students have progressed on to college to study games design, graphic design, carpentry, advertising, marketing and other design based subjects.</p>	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mr Allan – Curriculum Leader danallan@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

GCSE French

Why should I study this course?

The GCSE course aims to build on prior learning and extend students language beyond the basic skills. Students will be challenged through a variety of learning activities, enabling them to feel competent in real life language situations. The ability to communicate in another language is an extremely valuable life skill – both professionally and socially.

In today's global economy employers are keen to have people with language skills working for them. People who can offer language skills, in addition to their specialist knowledge are very much in demand in the competitive job markets of today. Students will also build up an extensive cultural awareness of French speaking countries.

What will I do?

Y10 and Y11: Over the course of Year 10 and Year 11, students will study 3 themes: **identity and culture** (family, technology and free time); **local, national, international and global issues** (home town, health and the environment); **current and future study** (life at school, future plans)

Students will practise the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing through these contexts to gain a higher level language capability. They will develop an ability to discuss a variety of issues and topics in another language. They will develop an ability to communicate in a foreign language in real-life situations.

What could I do after studying this course?

Many students go on to study languages at Post-16 through A-Levels (AS and A2 French, for example). Some students even go on to study French at degree level.

- GCSE French contributes to the English baccalaureate, an additional qualification, which many sixth-forms and universities require students to have.
- “Modern linguists earn more than graduates from any other discipline except medics, architects and pharmacologists.”

What qualifications will I get?

A GCSE in French: grades range from 9 to 1

A grade 9 to 5 will count towards your EBACC qualification

How will the course be assessed?

Students are assessed through the AQA exam board and the course is made up of 4 exams; **listening, speaking, reading** and **writing**.

Students will complete these exams at the end of Y11.

Each of these skills are worth 25%.

All of these exams are differentiated by **foundation** and **higher** tier and students can be entered for a combination of different tiers.

Who should I contact for further information?

Miss Mason – Curriculum Leader for MFL

karamason@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

GCSE Geography

Why should I study this course?

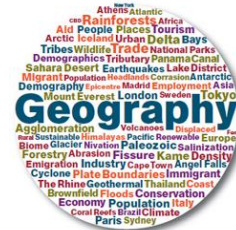
Geography is not only up-to-date and relevant, it is one of the most exciting, adventurous and valuable subjects to study today. "So many of the world's current problems (hurricanes, flooding, migration) boil down to geography, and we need the geographers of the future to help us understand them" (Michael Palin).

Geography is a subject which can form part of the Ebacc. It is a solid academic subject and well respected by universities and employers alike.

Geography covers many different skills including map skills, numeracy, interpreting satellite imagery and fieldwork. You will improve your literacy through your written work and extensive use of specialist vocabulary and make practical use of your numeracy skills when you interpret data and construct graphs.

What qualifications will I get?

A full GCSE in Geography.



How will the course be assessed?

Component 1: Investigating geographical issues

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes (40% of the qualification)

This will assess the 3 themes that students study:

Theme 1: Changing places-changing economies

Theme 2: Changing environments

Theme 3: Environmental challenges

Component 2: Problem solving geography

Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes (30% of the qualification)

This will present students with a geographical issue which they must solve using their knowledge and understanding from across the 3 themes.

Component 3: Applied fieldwork

Written exam 1 hour 30 minutes (30% of the qualification)

Students will assess different approaches to fieldwork in investigating a geographical issue and will then justify the decisions they have made in their proposed method of investigation.

What could I do after studying this course?

You might choose to do A level Geography and then a degree in Geography at University. You could become:

- ✚ Architect
- ✚ Pilot
- ✚ Urban planner
- ✚ Journalism
- ✚ Data management
- ✚ Environmental consultant
- ✚ Finance

Who should I contact for further information?

Mr Townsend – Curriculum Leader

gavintownsend@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

GCSE History

Why should I study this course?

History is fun! You will enjoy looking at the past and throughout the course you will study a wide range of different topics, looking at the history of England, America, Germany and some wider European history.

Studying History could help you get on the course you need beyond GCSE. Colleges and universities value history very highly. History is seen as excellent preparation for many jobs.

History is a subject which can form part of the Ebacc.

What will I study?

Topic 1: The development of medicine in Britain, c1250–present, with an in depth study of Britain during WW1 in the trenches.

Topic 2: Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88. This focuses on a study of how Queen Elizabeth gained control of England, threats at home and abroad and Elizabethan society.

Topic 3: The American West, c1835–c1895. You will study how the Native Americans lived in America and how the European Americans drastically changed their lives when they settled in the West.

Topic 4: Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39. You will study Germany from the end of WW1 and through the 1920's and 1930's. You will consider the problems Germany faced rebuilding after WW1, how the Nazi party began, how they took control of Germany and what it was like to live in Nazi Germany.

What could I do after studying this course?

GCSE History is rated highly by colleges, universities and employers. Oxford and Cambridge universities view History as one of the most desirable qualifications a student can have. History is an excellent qualification to have when trying to pursue many jobs. You will gain many skills that employers find important such as analysis, problem solving, and an understanding of people and politics. These skills are essential for jobs such as law, journalism, business, media work, research and politics. History graduates provide more leading directors in Britain's top companies than any other subject!

What qualifications will I get?

A full GCSE in History



How will the course be assessed?

The course is linear and there will be 3 exams.

Paper 1: Medicine through time
Paper 2: Elizabeth and the American West
Paper 3: Germany 1918-1939

Exams are taken at the end of Y11.



Who should I contact for further information?

Mrs D Casey – Curriculum Leader
debbiecasy@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

Health and Social Care

Why should I study this course?

Health and social care equips students to discover the impact of positive and negative human development and how to critically analyse how these factors affect our day to day lives.

The study of health and social care enables students to explore academically and practically areas that influence how we develop throughout life stages and in turn raise expectations of how we can live successful and healthy lives now and in the future.

What will I do?

The course is broken down into the following topic areas:

Human lifespan development;
Development across the life stages;
Physical, intellectual, emotional and social development;
Factors affecting growth and development;
The impact of major life events;
Understanding the structure and practices of health and social care services;
Barriers to accessing services;
Safeguarding;
Care values;
A brief history of the NHS;
The impact of Covid 19 on health and social care services;
Factors affecting health and wellbeing;
Designing health and wellbeing improvement plans

What could I do after studying this course?

Health and social care is an ideal course for any student looking to work in the care industry.

This includes jobs such as:

- Care assistant
- Nurse
- Midwife
- Doctor
- Physiotherapist
- Pharmacist
- Child care worker

What qualifications will I get?

Level 2 BTEC award- Health and social care.



How will the course be assessed?

Students will study three components over two years.

1. Human lifespan development (coursework – 30%)
2. Health and social care values (coursework and practical assessment – 30%)
3. Health and well-being (exam – 40%)

Two of the three components are coursework based. This means students will learn and research different topics before being set an assignment to complete.

This assignment must be completed independently, and will be marked by your teacher.



The final component is an external exam that assesses your knowledge on all the course content.

Who should I contact for further information?

Mr Perry – Curriculum Leader

stuartperry@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

Music BTEC

<p><u>Why should I study this course?</u></p> <p>This course allows you to engage with the music industry and develop a range of relevant practical and technical skills. You will explore music product development and events management, and apply your knowledge in new and practical industry-related contexts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performing is a big part of the course (25%)• You get to make your own music (25%)• This course builds confidence used in all areas of life• Music demands self-discipline and promotes independent learning• Music is a course that helps you display your creativity Music requires you to work in a group for some elements of the course focusing on collaboration	<p><u>What qualifications will I get?</u></p> <p>You will get a BTEC Level 2 qualification.</p> <p>The final grade will be a Pass, Merit or Distinction.</p> <p>This BTEC qualification gains the equivalent points of 1 GCSE.</p> <p>There are also opportunities to sit exams in music theory.</p> 
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>There is an expectation that a student who studies BTEC music MUST practice at least 3 hours a week outside of the classroom; that the student is already confident with their chosen instrument, be it voice or any other instrument.</p> <p>You will study the following two mandatory units, covering the fundamental knowledge, skills and understanding required for the music sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the music industry• managing a music product <p>You will explore two subsectors of the music industry, by choosing a further two units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• introducing music performance• introducing music sequencing 	<p><u>How will the course be assessed?</u></p> <p>There are 4 units to be completed.</p> <p>The music industry is externally assessed; the 3 remaining units are internally assessed.</p> <p>You will carry out tasks/assignments throughout the course. Your teacher will mark these, and you will receive feedback on how you are progressing.</p> <p>For the assessment for Unit 1 which is sent away to be marked, you will be able to draw on the knowledge, skills and understanding you have developed in the qualification as a whole.</p> <p>Introducing music performances you will be expected to be recorded.</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying this course?</u></p> <p>The UK's creative industries are generating approximately £71.4 billion of value to the UK economy. This means that there are lots of routes you could decide to take into a very big industry.</p> <p>The sector-specific knowledge and skills will support progression to a Level 3 academic, applied general or technical level music or music technology qualification, or to an apprenticeship.</p>	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mr Gillott – Head of Performing Arts</p> <p>seangillott@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

BTEC Performing Arts

Why should I study this course?

You should study this course if you enjoy drama and production and would like to further explore this as an option.

If you have an interest in acting, musical performance, stage management, production and set design this course is for you.

Students that have enjoyed drama in KS3 will be able to continue their learning and gain a valuable qualification in drama.

What qualifications will I get?

You will get a BTEC Level 2 qualification.

The final grade will be a Pass, Merit or Distinction.

This BTEC qualification gains the equivalent points of 1 GCSE.

What will I do?

You will cover three units. These are:

- Exploring the performing arts
- Developing skills and techniques in the performing arts
- Responding to a brief

The course will consist of theory lessons, practical lessons, assignment work and performances.

You'll learn essential skills such as acting, musical performance, stage management, production and set design.

How will the course be assessed?

The course is a vocational course. This means the majority of the course is coursework based.

Pupils will be assessed through written assignments and reports, practical performances and an exam.

You will be assessed against pass, merit and distinction criteria.



What could I do after studying this course?

Students could go on to Level 3 education at a 6th form or college to study a Level 3 qualification.

BTEC Level 2 in performing arts can help you take your first steps towards a career onstage or behind the scenes.

Who should I contact for further information?

Mr Gillott – Head of Performing Arts

seangillott@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

Religious Studies

<p><u>Why should I study this course?</u></p> <p>Religious studies is an opportunity for you to study, assess and evaluate faith in God. It is a unique chance for you to formulate an opinion about belief whilst learning to understand the beliefs and values of others.</p> <p>Religious studies will develop many skills including debate, tolerance, evaluation and your literacy.</p> <p>The course is a detailed study of social issues and the way that Christians and Muslims deal with these challenges. It allows you to understand and engage with huge topics including the existence of God, the reasons for war, the changing nature of the family, criminal activity, abortion and euthanasia, to name but a few. For each topic you will gain a detailed understanding of how different religious groups deal with these issues, as well as forming your own opinion on the subjects.</p> <p>The course includes units on war and peace, crime and punishment, marriage and the family life and many more interesting and engaging units.</p>	<p><u>What qualifications will I get?</u></p> <p>The course is a full GCSE</p>
<p><u>What will I do?</u></p> <p>You will study a variety of diverse subjects from sex and relationships to environmental issues.</p> <p>The two religions we focus upon are Christianity and Islam.</p> <p>You will discuss the beliefs of these two religions in relation to the topic we are studying along with your own beliefs.</p> <p>Religious studies is a unique subject as it allows you to discuss your views and beliefs openly and honestly regardless of what they may be.</p>	<p><u>How will the course be assessed?</u></p> <p>The course is assessed over 3 exams that last for one hour and 30 minutes each.</p> <p>There is no coursework module in religious studies.</p>
<p><u>What could I do after studying this course?</u></p> <p>Many students that have studied RS have gone on to do A-Level religious studies.</p> <p>An RS GCSE qualification is desirable when applying for courses such as law, psychology, philosophy, sociology, citizenship, any social care role (nurse, doctor, midwife), criminology, teaching or journalism.</p>	<p><u>Who should I contact for further information?</u></p> <p>Mr Puckett – Curriculum Leader tompuckett@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk</p>

BTEC Sport Studies

Why should I study this course?

You should study this course if you enjoy sport and would like to further explore this as an option subject.

Students that have enjoyed PE in KS3 will be able to continue their learning and gain a valuable qualification in sport.

What qualifications will I get?

You will get a BTEC level 2 qualification.

The final grade will be a pass, merit or distinction.

This BTEC qualification gains the equivalent points of 1 GCSE.



What will I do?

You will cover the following potential modules:

1. Fitness for sport and exercise
2. Practical sports performance
3. The sports performer in action
4. Leading sports activities

How will the course be assessed?

The course is a vocational course. The majority of the course is coursework based.

There is an exam. This is a requirement to achieve a Level 2 pass.

All other work is coursework based and will be graded at pass, merit or distinction.



What could I do after studying this course?

Students could go on to third level education to study a Level 3 sports / P.E. qualification.

Sport studies can be a good starting point for students who are interested in a career in sports and leisure, such as a fitness trainer, sports coach, PE teacher, physiotherapist, sports psychologist or a nutritionist.

Who should I contact for further information?

Mr Perry – Curriculum Leader for PE

stuartperry@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

BTEC Travel and Tourism

Why should I study this course?

Tourism is the ideal course for anyone with an interest in developing their understanding of workplace skills in one of the fastest growing employment areas in the world. It investigates how companies and destinations aim to meet the needs of people and how businesses can succeed. You will learn how businesses are organised and how they run. You will also learn how businesses and destinations can grow to be more successful.

In year 10 we visit Blackpool to explore its appeal to tourists and visit Blackpool Tower to find out how Merlin meet the needs of their different customers. In year 10 we visit Ponds Forge and Manchester Airport to explore customer service.

Why would you study Tourism?

- Mainly controlled assessment rather than exam based assessment. More independent learning.
- To develop skills for working in the leisure and tourism industry e.g. cabin crew, leisure centre staff, hotel and catering.
- To develop transferable ICT skills e.g. researching using the internet and preparing PowerPoint presentations.

What will I do?

We study:

- **Unit 1:** UK Tourism and Tourism Sector – understand the importance of businesses in travel and tourism and their importance to the UK economy. (25% external assessment to be sat in year 11)
- **Unit 2:** UK Tourist Destinations (25% controlled assessment)
- **Unit 3:** Customer Experience (25% controlled assessment)
- **Unit 4:** International Tourism Destinations (25% controlled assessment)

What qualifications will I get?

A Level 2 award in travel and tourism

How will the course be assessed?

Controlled Assessment 75% of the final grade

External exam (1 hour 15 minutes) 25% of the final grade

It is marked using the following grades:

Level 2 Pass

Level 2 Merit

Level 2 Distinction / Level 2 Distinction*

Who should I contact for further information?

Miss Calvert

angelacalvert@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

What could I do after studying this course?

You might choose to continue onto college to study cabin crew, Level 3 travel and tourism, hospitality and then continue on to university to do a vocational degree like events management, for example.

Key dates:

- Monday 15 January - Y9 Parents' Options Information Evening
- Week beginning Monday 15 January – Year 9 options assemblies
- Thursday 25 January - Year 9 Progress Parents' Evening
- Week beginning Monday 29 January - Y9 options choice goes live (students choose their option choices)
- Friday 9 February - Y9 options deadline

Help and support:

Please email with any queries you have about the options process to;

Mr Casey – Acting Headteacher
diarmaidcasey@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

Mr Gillett – Assistant Headteacher
dangillett@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

Mrs Buxton – Year 9 Head of Year
vivbuxton@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk

Ms Smith – Year 9 Deputy Head of Year
rebeccasmith@birleysecondaryacademy.co.uk



The Birley Academy
A L.E.A.D. Academy

Contact Details

If you wish to contact school then you may do so using the contact details below:

The Birley Academy
Birley Lane
Sheffield
S12 3BP

Tel: 0114 239 2531

Email: enquiries@birleysecondaryacademy.sheffield.co.uk