



# Blanchelande College

Outstanding. Understanding.

GCSE Options – September 2011

## **Planning for the Future**

The aim of this booklet is to provide information to Year 9 pupils and their parents about the subjects on offer at GCSE in Years 10 and 11. The end of year 9 is an important time for our pupils as they make choices and decisions about their future.

GCSE courses are designed to run for 2 years involving several module exams and final exams at the end of year 11.

**Compulsory GCSE subjects** are Mathematics, English (Literature and Language), Science and Religious Studies. Additional study areas are Physical Education, Personal, Social and Health Education and Careers Guidance.

**Optional GCSE subjects** are History, Geography, Art, Extra Science, Music, Food and Nutrition, ICT, Psychology, Business Studies, Physical Education, Drama, French and Spanish.

Pupils normally choose 4 of these options, one from each option 'block' but we strongly recommend that one of these should be either French or Spanish.

## **Advice on Choosing Subjects**

In general we seek to allow pupils to study the subjects they wish, providing we feel that the combination is in the best interests of the pupil. We will seek to discourage combinations which we feel are inappropriate to the pupil concerned. When considering their choices, pupils should try to balance the following factors :

- Interest and enjoyment.
- Their ability in a subject and likely future progress.
- Sensible combinations (which are likely to ensure a broad education and keep options open).

It is worth remembering that a choice of career at this stage is often premature and, experience suggests, unlikely to last. A large proportion of pupils change their minds about careers, if they have any firm ideas at all, many times before the end of their education.

Pupils should avoid choosing a subject if, in the opinion of their teachers, they are unlikely to secure a good GCSE grade. GCSE scores are still important evidence available to University admission departments at the time they offer places.

We will expect pupils to work hard in all of these subjects, compulsory or chosen. Subject specialist teachers and small class sizes mean that all pupils are challenged and supported.

They should also think about the total amount of coursework which must be undertaken. Some pupils prefer coursework rather than having all the assessment concentrated on the final examinations. Please contact the College if you need any further advice.

At Blanchelande we ask the girls to make a 'free choice' of subjects initially. This enables us to arrange the subjects in groups or blocks to allow as many girls as possible to take at least 3 of their choices. However there will inevitably be some combinations which are not possible but we try very hard to keep this to a minimum.

In preparation for GCSE studies, we strongly recommend that all our pupils complete at least one hour of study every evening during the week at the same time. Even if there is no homework the girls should be going over notes, revising and reading. This time becomes study time and should not be interrupted. This routine will become invaluable during the next two years of GCSE study.

After each subject heading the examination board and specification used is given. Each full specification can run to hundreds of pages but they are all available on the exam board websites if you would like to access them. The website addresses are on the school website – [www.blanchelande.co.uk](http://www.blanchelande.co.uk)

## **MAKING YOUR CHOICES**

Please discuss these options with your daughter and fill in the enclosed form. This should be returned to their Form Tutor by Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

We cannot guarantee that every pupil will be able to study her four choices but we will try very hard to group the subjects so that all the girls can study at least three of their first four choices.

If you need any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

Patrick Harland  
Principal

## COMPULSORY SUBJECTS

### **RELIGIOUS STUDIES    OCR R Studies J620**

This course consists of 4 modular papers taken from units B571, B572, B583, B584, B603 based on :

Christianity

Christian Scriptures

Ethics

Each paper is tested with a one hour written examination, with units normally taken in January and June each year.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE    AQA 4705**

This course offers an opportunity to demonstrate attainment in speaking, listening, reading and writing using the following assessment techniques:

#### **Controlled Assessment**

Speaking and Listening 20%

Understanding spoken and written texts and writing creatively  
40%

#### **Examined Unit**

Reading 20%

Writing 20%

## **ENGLISH LITERATURE    AQA 4710**

### **Controlled Assessment**

The significance of Shakespeare and the Literary Heritage - 25%

### **Examined Units**

Exploring modern texts (prose, drama, exploring cultures) - 40%

Poetry across time - 35%

## **MATHEMATICS    AQA 4360**

This syllabus covers all four strands of National Curriculum Mathematics which are :

AT1        Using and Applying Mathematics

AT2        Number

AT3        Shape, Space and Measures

AT4        Handling data

The assessment procedure for Mathematics consists of 3 Units taken during the 2 year course :

**Unit 1**     Handling data and number

**Unit 3**     Number and algebra

**Unit 5**     Shape, Space and Algebra

## **SCIENCE**

All the examination boards are preparing new specifications at the present time. They are due to be available to start teaching from September 2011.

We are currently considering all the courses available to find the best option for our pupils. Details will be sent to parents as soon as a final decision has been reached.

Every pupil will study Biology, Chemistry and Physics to achieve at least two Science GCSEs.

## **SEPARATE SCIENCES**

Those pupils who choose the Extra Science Option will take three separate GCSE Science subjects, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. New specifications are under consideration for Chemistry and Physics. The single science Biology course has already been selected.

## **OPTIONAL SUBJECTS**

### **ART Edexcel 1029**

This is an unendorsed syllabus allowing a wide range of techniques to be used. The course requires a high level of commitment of both time and effort.

**Unit 1** - Personal Portfolio is awarded 60% of the marks. The work is produced for assessment under controlled conditions. It is internally set and standardised and externally moderated.

**Unit 2** – Examination question is awarded 40%. Here pupils are given a theme, which is externally set and have approximately 20 hours preparation time before an external set timed examination of 10 hours duration.

At the end of the course each candidate will mount an exhibition of her work, which will be on display to a public audience.

It is an exciting and rewarding course, which allows pupils to develop their work in a personal manner.

### **BUSINESS STUDIES OCR**

Business Studies is an exciting and fast moving subject which looks at the way in which businesses start and operate to satisfy customers and make profit for investors. You will learn how business decisions are made and have the opportunity to practise your own business decision making in a variety of simulated business situations. How would you set the price for a new mobile phone? How would you raise the capital finance to start your own business? How can a new product idea be protected?

Your business decision making skills will gradually improve and you will begin to understand business articles in newspapers, become confident in assessing business opportunities for yourself and discover possible careers for the future. You should consider studying Business

Studies because you are part of it – a customer, possibly an investor or you might be interested in your parents' links with business.

The syllabus includes:

- Marketing – finding out what people want and how to meet their needs
- Business Enterprise – forming a company, multi-nationals, franchising
- People – how to motivate, organise, select, train and reward employees
- Finance – sources of finance, profit and loss accounts and balance sheets
- Production – where and how to produce goods and services
- Writing a business plan
- Government and the UK economy

Lessons will make use of business events reported in the news to illustrate the topic being taught, making them relevant to what is happening in the world today. Lessons will be a mixture of instruction, discussion, video clips, business case studies and reviews of business events in the news.

Assessment is by two written papers and one controlled assessment. The first written paper is worth 25% of the overall marks and is taken at the end of Year 10. The second written paper is worth 50% and is taken at the end of Year 11. The controlled assessment (coursework) is worth 25% and is researched both during lesson and homework time, but written up in class. It is submitted in the form of a business report comprising three investigations into a business related task set by the examining body.

Further Information: Mr P Harland,

[harlandp@blanchelande.sch.gg](mailto:harlandp@blanchelande.sch.gg)

Exam Board website: [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

## **GEOGRAPHY    OCR B**

This interesting new course combines traditional elements with modern themes and methods.

The main themes are :

- Rivers and Coasts
- Population and Settlement
- Natural Hazards
- Economic Development

Three of these are assessed in a final examination while the fourth (which changes each year) forms a decision making exercise which emphasises sustainability.

Coursework is still undertaken but it is now assessed through controlled assessment. There is also an externally assessed enquiry. The topics for both of the above are chosen from a list which changes annually.

Assessment can be summarised as follows :

Sustainable decision making	25%
Enquiry (coursework and investigation)	25%
Key themes	50%

## **HISTORY Edexcel Schools History Project**

We are currently studying :

- Unit 1:** The American West
- Unit 2:** Medicine and Treatment
- Unit 3:** The transformation of surgery 1845 – 1918
- Unit 4:** Controlled Assessment – Mao's China

The course is intended to illustrate different aspects of history: why things change over time (unit 2); an in-depth study (unit 1); source enquiry (unit 3); why/how historians disagree (unit 4).

Each unit is worth 25%.

Two units will be worked in Year 10, two units in Year 11. This spreads (and lessens) the revision load.

## **HOME ECONOMICS : FOOD AND NUTRITION    AQA 3562**

This course studies nutrition and health, meal planning, food products, preservation, cooking processes, safety and the role of the consumer.

The coursework component is worth 40%. There are two investigations to include practical work. This will be done at school.

The terminal examination consists of one paper.

Home Economics is NOT an easy option and requires a high level of commitment and careful study.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) Edexcel**

Key features and benefits are:

- Up-to-date, engaging content
- Clear and flexible modular structure
- Straightforward assessment
- Single tier examination paper
- KS 4 National Curriculum Programme of Study for ICT
- Tailor-made teaching and learning resources

### **Unit 1: Living in a Digital World – Year 10**

Externally assessed - 40% of the total GCSE

Overview of content

- In this unit pupils explore how digital technology impacts on the lives of individuals, organisations and society.

- They learn about current and emerging digital technologies and the issues raised by their use in a range of contexts (learning and earning, leisure, shopping and money management, health and wellbeing and on the move).
- They develop awareness of the risks that are inherent in using ICT and the features of safe, secure and responsible practice.

### Overview of assessment

- This unit is assessed in June through a 1 hour 30 minute examination paper set and marked by Edexcel.

## **Unit 2: Using Digital Tools Year 11**

Internally assessed - 60% of the total GCSE

### Overview of content

This is a practical unit. Pupils broaden and enhance their ICT skills and capability. They work with a range of digital tools and techniques to produce effective ICT solutions in a range of contexts.

They learn to reflect critically on their own and others' use of ICT and to adopt safe, secure and responsible practice.

### Overview of assessment

- The unit is internally assessed under controlled conditions.
- Pupils must complete a controlled assessment task provided by Edexcel.
- Pupils must complete the task within 40 hours.
- Marking of the task is carried out by teachers and moderated by Edexcel against set assessment criteria.
- The total number of marks available for the controlled assessment task is 80.



## The Five Areas of Study

The five areas of study for all of the units in the Music specification are :

1. Rhythm & Metre
2. Harmony & Tonality
3. Texture & Melody
4. Timbre & Dynamics
5. Structure & Form

The Three Strands are:-

1. The Western Classical Tradition
2. Popular Music of the 20th & 21st centuries
3. World Music

For further details about this new course please see Mr Claxton.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION    AQA 3581 or 3583**

### **Unit 1 – 40%**

Knowledge and Understanding for the Active Participant

Written paper 1 hr 30 mins

Multiple choice

Short answer question

Extended answers

Topics based on :

Linking physical activity with diet, work and rest for personal health and a balanced healthy lifestyle.

Making informed decisions about getting involved in a lifetime of healthy and physical activities.

### **Unit 2 – 60%**

The Active Participant

Controlled assessment of four activities from contrasting areas as a participant and official.

Due to the large practical content of the PE Syllabus we recommend that candidates should have represented the College or another club in at least two activities.

## **PSYCHOLOGY AQA**

Why study GCSE Psychology?

Psychology is the study of how people think and behave, and unless you are going to live on a desert island when you are older, chances are that understanding yourself and other people will be important in your life.

- The topic areas have been chosen because of their importance and prominence within the core area and their relevance to everyday life
- The exam is no longer tiered; there the question papers have been designed to be accessible to candidates of all abilities
- Pupils will gain experience of designing and conducting informal classroom research

What will I study in GCSE Psychology?

### **Unit 1: Making sense of other people**

Assessed by a written exam of 1 hour 30 minutes (50%)

- Memory, e.g. eyewitness testimony
- Non-verbal communication, e.g. body language and personal space
- Development of personality, e.g. Antisocial Personality Disorder
- Stereotyping, Prejudice and Discrimination, e.g. ways of reducing them
- Methods of investigation, e.g. how psychologists study mental health

## **Unit 2: Understanding other people**

Assessed by a written exam of 1 hour 30 minutes (50%)

- Learning, e.g. treating phobias and change unwanted behaviour
- Social influence, e.g. conformity, obedience and bystander intervention
- Sex and gender, e.g. what makes us male or female
- Aggression, e.g. can a brain disease cause aggression?

### **Which careers might GCSE Psychology be useful for?**

- Health
- Education
- Justice system
- Business
- Any job where you will be working with, or alongside, other people

## **SCIENCE – EXTRA SCIENCE**

### **BIOLOGY IGCSE 0610**

Cambridge IGCSE Biology is accepted by universities and employers as proof of real ability and knowledge.

As well as a subject focus, the Biology syllabus enables pupils to:

- Recognise the usefulness (and limitations) of a scientific method, and how to apply this to other disciplines and in everyday life
- Develop relevant attitudes, such as a concern for accuracy and precision, objectivity, integrity, enquiry, initiative and inventiveness
- Further interest in, and care for, the environment
- Develop an understanding of the scientific skills essential for both further study at A Level and in everyday life.

Assessment consists of: Multiple choice paper – 30%  
Practical assessment – 20%  
Theory paper – 50%

The Chemistry and Physics specifications are still under consideration.

## **DRAMA GCSE AND DANCE GCSE**

Both of these subjects **may** be on offer depending on demand but are most likely to be as additional subjects after school when specialist teachers are available. If so, there is likely to be an additional cost to parents. The current additional cost for this is £120 per term.

