

GCSE Course Information

Commencing September 2008



Loretto

Loretto GCSE Course



SUBJECT CHOICES FOR GCSE (4th Form)

FOR SEPTEMBER 2008

At Loretto we anticipate that most GCSE pupils should and will do three separate sciences, as has been the practice at Loretto for many years. For very good social and academic reasons we believe that young people should experience the full diversity of scientific issues that currently affect—indeed dominate—modern life, and this is best accomplished by pupils taking all three sciences to GCSE. We have included the options of Art and Music within the Science columns in acknowledgement that some pupils who naturally lean towards a mixture of expressive arts and humanities subjects will benefit from dropping one science subject (likely to be either Chemistry or Physics), taking up Art or Music in lieu, and therefore having increased choice of non-science subjects in the Options columns.

Pupils requiring support for learning identified learning difficulties may also consider dropping a science subject to make time to see, on a regular basis, our Support for Learning teachers. **This decision must only be taken in consultation with the Director of Studies and Head of Support for Learning. It is important that parents do not sign up for Support for Learning without first discussing this with these two curriculum managers.**



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GCSE CURRICULUM

Core and Options

Core

English (+ English Literature)
Mathematics
3 Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)
French or Spanish
Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE)
Religious Studies
Physical Education

Pupils for whom English is an additional language to their native language may not have to do the core Modern Languages (French or Spanish).

Options

Pupils should chose 1 option from each of two columns, leaving 1 column blank. In the option column not chosen, pupils will do non-examinable PE, and RS (RS pupils are in due course entered for a Short course GCSE qualification).

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Music	Geography	Geography
Drama	History	Art
History	Spanish	Latin
PE	ICT	



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ART (OCR Syllabus 1300).

This is assessed in a single tier and comprises **two** components: Coursework (60%); and terminal examination (40%).

There are three assessment objectives:

- i) Candidates record responses from direct experience, observation and imagination and develop ideas for their work, investigating visual and other sources of information.
- ii) Candidates explore and use a range of processes, materials and techniques by selecting visual elements in one or more specialist disciplines working in two and/or three dimensions and candidates review, modify and refine work as it progresses through process to outcome realising their intentions.
- iii) Candidates investigate and research to identify the distinctive characteristics of art, craft and design, relate them to the context in which the work was created, making connections with their own work and they make informed comment and critical judgements about art, craft and design, using a specialist vocabulary.

Coursework

The purpose of coursework is to provide candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate through the assessment objectives their ability to investigate, explore, modify, develop, and realise ideas in one or more, two or three dimensional areas of study.

Candidates will be required to present for assessment **four units** of coursework. The work must relate to **two** or more areas of study ie. Drawing and painting, Graphics, Photography, Textiles and Three-Dimensional Studies. The units of work may be independent of one another or inter-related.

All coursework must be completed by the end of the Spring Term in the year of examination.

Coursework is internally assessed.

Terminal Exam

The terminal examination in Art requires candidates to produce a unit of work from conception to realisation over a fixed period of time.

An examination paper containing twelve open ended starting points is provided by OCR. Candidates have **ten** hours in which to complete their response to any **one** of the starting points.

The ten hour examination is timetabled by Loretto Art Department within an eight week period defined by OCR.

BIOLOGY (Cambridge IGCSE 0610)

The syllabus currently used is Cambridge International GCSE (0610) For this syllabus there are two tiers of entry, Foundation and Higher. Each tier is defined in terms of the grades on which the tier is focused: Foundation Tier – Grades C-G; Higher Tier – Grades A*-D. Candidates sit three written papers in the Summer term of the Fifth Form year. One is multiple choice, duration 45 minutes, one extended answers, duration 1 1/4 hours, and one practical skills based, duration 1 hour.

The themes and topics covered are:

Theme	Topics
Classification of Living Organisms	Characteristics of life, classification, adaptations
Organisation and Maintenance of Organisms	Cells, nutrition, transport, respiration, excretion, coordination
Development and Continuity of Organisms	Reproduction, growth, development, inheritance
Relationships between Organisms	Energy flow, mineral cycles, human influences on the environment,

CHEMISTRY (Cambridge IGCSE 0620)

The syllabus currently used is Cambridge International GCSE (0620) For this syllabus there are two tiers of entry, Foundation and Higher. Each tier is defined in terms of the grades on which the tier is focused: Foundation Tier – Grades C-G; Higher Tier – Grades A*-D. Candidates sit three written papers in the Summer term of the Fifth Form year. One is multiple choice, duration 45 minutes, one extended answers, duration 1 1/4 hours, and one practical skills based, duration 1 hour.

The themes and topics covered are:

Theme	Topics
The particulate nature of matter	Kinetic particle theory
Experimental Techniques	Outline of apparatus and purity
Atoms, Elements and Compounds	Atomic structure and bonding
Stoichiometry	Balancing equations and the mole concept
Electricity & Chemistry	Electrolysis and industrial processes
Chemical changes	Energetics
Chemical Reactions	Rates, Equilibria and redox reactions
Acid,Bases and Salts	Analytical detection, pH
The Periodic table	Groups and trends
Metals	Reactivity, Extraction and uses
Air and Water	Uses, pollution and rust
Sulphur	The Contact process
Carbonates	Limestone
Organic Chemistry	Fuels, homologous series, polymers (natural and synthetic)



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DRAMA AND THEATRE ARTS (AQA Syllabus 3546)

The course is examined by practical assessment (60%) and by one written examination (40%). Students' best marks in Scripted Performance and in Improvisation are submitted for the practical component. There is a great deal of scope for creativity and the importance of being able to work as part of a team is paramount. We place emphasis on developing confidence and inter-personal skills within a supportive environment.

ENGLISH (OCR Syllabus 1500)

All pupils must take English and most would be expected to pass at band C or above.

Method of Assessment

Exams

Papers 1 or 3 30% Papers 2 or 4 30%

Those presented at Foundation will take Papers 1 and 2, achieving grades C-G.

Those presented at Higher will do Papers 3 and 4, achieving grades A*-D

Coursework

All candidates do:

Speaking and Listening 20% Written Coursework 20%

Papers 1 and 3 involve the reading of *non-fiction* texts and *media* texts.

Tasks set are:

- Summary writing – selection and evaluation of information and argument
- Analysis of stylistic effects – response to and development of ideas
- Writing for a target audience to discuss, argue or persuade.

Papers 2 and 4 involve the reading of *prose from other cultures*

Tasks set are:

- Tracing development within the story of character, setting, theme, style language
- Identifying and writing from experience on cultural issues, to inform, explain and describe or to argue, persuade and instruct
- Writing to explore, imagine or entertain.

Speaking and Listening Assessments

You are assessed on your use of **talk** to

- Explain, describe, narrate
- Explore, analyse, imagine
- Discuss, argue, persuade.

You will be required to speak to different audiences and in different situations (e.g. Group work, paired work, class work, to a formal audience, to adults), and on the effectiveness of your **listening** to

- Assimilate information
- Make judgements
- Report back to others
- Guide the course of a discussion.

Written Coursework comprises

- Non-fiction writing to inform, explain and describe
- Imaginative writing to explore, imagine and entertain
- Writing to analyse, review and comment
- A study of a play by Shakespeare
- Study of prose and of poetry from the English literary heritage



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- Study of work published before 1900 by a specified writer .
- Study of work by a major writer whose work was published after 1900.

Work undertaken during the two year course will involve experience of a range of reading texts and writing tasks as well as speaking and listening tasks. You will be expected to read plays, poetry and prose by a range of writers and also to expand your experience of non-fiction and media texts.

ENGLISH LITERATURE (OCR Syllabus 1501)

Because there is such a significant amount of literature included in the English specifications, we do not always insist on everyone doing English Literature in addition, though progress to English Literature AS level is easier with GCSE English Literature.

Some coursework can be shared with English
Study of a Shakespeare play
Study of prose by a pre-1900 writer
But study of poetry by a pre-1900 writer must also be included.

In addition 3 specific texts chosen from the exam board's prescription must be prepared for a 2 1/2 hour examination which involves post 1900 literature.

A play by a 20th century dramatist – J.B. Priestley, Arthur Miller commonly appear on the syllabus list.

A novel by a 20th century prose writer – William Golding and John Steinbeck are popular choices.

The MEG exam board's own poetry anthology is used or poems by modern poets such as Sylvia Plath, Seamus Heaney.

Coursework counts for 30%

Exam paper for 70%.

As with English, there are two levels of exam presentation – Foundation and Higher.

It is possible for pupils to take English but not English Literature. A pass must be secured in English for Sixth Form and further education while Literature is optional. Not taking English Literature really means that the weight of revising for exams is lightened; the three exam texts must be known in thorough detail and that involves learning and retention of information. Some students may prefer to concentrate on subjects in other areas to secure a broader base of subjects. Literature itself must be studied to secure an English pass and so no lessons may be missed if English Literature is dropped, nor will preps be avoided.

GEOGRAPHY (EdExcel Syllabus (A) 1312)

On average approximately 85% of Fourth and Fifth Formers are studying Geography towards GCSE. Most would expect to pass at band C or above.

Entry to the AS/A2 course does require a minimum C pass.

Syllabus Structure

The syllabus consists of **4 Core** themes which are studied in the Fourth form (45% of the paper) and **2 Option** themes studied in the Fifth Form (30% of the paper). In addition a piece of Coursework is undertaken in the Fifth Form which involves group fieldwork and the compilation of an individual report of approx. 2000 words (25% of the paper).

Core themes: The physical world
 The human world
 The economic world
 The natural world

Option themes: Managing the environment
 Managing urban areas

Scheme of Assessment

Pupils may be entered at either Foundation level in which case the maximum attainable grade is C, or Higher level in which case an A* can be obtained.

HISTORY (OCR Syllabus 1537b)

Specification

OCR Modern World History

Content

Core Content

International Relations post 1919

- Were the Peace Treaties 1919-23 fair?
- To what extent was the League of Nations a success?
- Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?

Depth Studies

Russia, 1905 – 1941 (for written examination)

- Why did the Tzarist regime collapse in 1917?
- How did the Bolsheviks gain power, and how did they consolidate their rule?
- How did Stalin gain and hold onto power?
- What was the impact of Stalin's economic policies?

Germany, 1918-1945 (for course work)

Britain and the First World War, 1914-1918 (for Paper 2)

- How was British Society changed, 1906-1918?

Examination

Paper 1 : (2 Hours) 45% marks

2 questions on the core content and 2 questions on the Depth Study.

Paper 2 (1 Hour 30 Minutes) 30% marks

Consists of a source based investigation of an historical issue taken from the British Depth Study.

Coursework – 25% marks

Two coursework assignments on the Germany 1918-1945 depth study.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (AQA Syllabus 3521)

This specification encourages the investigation and study of information and communication technology in a variety of contexts, for example home, school, recreation, community, business and industry. In these contexts, candidates are given opportunities to acquire competence, capability and critical skills through the creation, implementation, use and evaluation of a range of ICT systems. Candidates from all cultures and both genders can develop their interest in, enjoyment of, and critical reflection about information and communication technology as an integral part of modern society. It is offered at two tiers foundation for grades G to C and higher for grades D to A*.

The core syllabus is split into two sections:

Section A Tools, Techniques and Systems
Section B Information Systems in Society

Assessment

Written Paper 40% of total marks

Foundation Tier

1½ hours short answer questions

Higher Tier

1½ hours short and extended answer questions

All questions will be compulsory

Coursework 30% of total marks

AQA-set Assignment

Description of a situation where appropriate use of ICT will solve some given problems

Coursework 30% of total marks

Project

Candidates are required to submit a report on the solution to a problem that demonstrates their ICT capabilities. Wherever possible, candidates should select a problem from their own area of interest.

LATIN (OCR Syllabus 1942)

The GCSE consists of the following:

Four set texts taken from the Cambridge Latin Anthology; two prose and two poetry. Students read, translate and analyse the texts in much the same way as they would English Literature. In the exam they answer a series of questions exploring a part of each text in detail, to which they will have the opportunity to add additional learning.

Roman Life Topics looking at many aspects of Roman lifestyles, including entertainment and leisure, the Roman army, religion, slavery, women and many others.

Unseen and comprehension work. Students are taught to analyse, answer questions on, and translate short passages of prepared Latin.

Assessment is wholly by examination.



MATHEMATICS (EdExcel Syllabus 1387)

The GCSE course starts in the Third Form with a review of arithmetic and basic algebraic techniques which are normally covered in most schools by age 13. The fundamental rules of algebra are established along with a formal introduction to co-ordinate geometry and the equations of lines and simple curves. The topics of probability, geometry, Pythagoras and trigonometry are also developed during the latter part of the Third form year and form the basis of much of the remainder of the course.

During the Fourth Form, a more rigorous approach to algebra is pursued along with extending topics already established at Third Form level. The arithmetic of areas and solids, geometry of circles and statistics are all topics which are taken to a more demanding level.

In the Fifth Form, the more abstract mathematical concepts of number, together with interpretation of graphs, variation and function notation are introduced. Much of the remainder of the Fifth Form year is spent in revision and practice for the GCSE exam.

At all times during the three years, there are regular non-calculator tests in preparation for the GCSE non-calculator paper. The moderated coursework component is undertaken during the Fifth Form following initial format practice towards the end of the Fourth Form year.

We enter candidates at two of the three tiers for GCSE. The intermediate tier gives a maximum grade of B and is based on a shortened syllabus with a reduced algebraic content. The highest tier awards grades up to A* and is the recommended level of entry for any candidate who is considering taking the AS/A modules in the Sixth Form. For those unsure of the level of GCSE entry, a decision is generally taken after the Fifth Form mock GCSE examinations.

MODERN LANGUAGES (OCR Syllabus 1525 and 1528)

For GCSE, pupils must sit a minimum of ONE language, but many will choose two. From September 2002, the following combinations will be available for Fourth Form.

FRENCH alone
FRENCH and SPANISH
SPANISH alone*

*This option will only be advised in certain circumstances (eg if a pupil is new to Loretto and did not do any French at his/her previous school; or if it is felt by a pupil's teachers that Spanish represents the greatest chance of success in a language at GCSE).

NB To study Spanish in the Fourth Form, pupils must have chosen these subjects in the Third Form.

In each language, pupils are prepared for the Midland Board GCSE, involving listening, reading and writing papers, and a 15 minute oral exam. The two year course is topic based, a different topic being covered every 3-4 weeks. Examples of topics are 'My school and routine'; 'Holidays'; 'Sport and Leisure'; 'Shopping'. At the end of each topic, pupils will have written a short essay or letter, will be able to discuss the topic orally, and will have done several reading and listening exercises. Grammar items are integrated into this programme. Past tenses, for



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example, are likely to be covered in connection with talking and writing about your holidays

Each classroom is equipped with individual listening posts, for the development of speaking and listening skills. In French, our native French assistant takes half the class for one lesson per week to concentrate on speaking practice.

All GCSE language pupils will be encouraged to go on one of the Language 'study trips' to the appropriate country. These are organised by the department.

Parents wishing to discuss further any aspect of GCSE languages at Loretto can do so by contacting the Head of Department, either via the school secretary or e-mail address:

burnetj@loretto.com

MUSIC (OCR Syllabus 1909)

The GCSE course is open to anybody who enjoys playing an instrument, and who wishes to:

1. Improve through having lessons and more opportunities to play.
2. Take advantage of the fact that they enjoy playing their instrument, and play for up to 40% of their exam.

The minimum standard by the end of the Fifth Form is Grade 3, any further on is to the candidate's advantage.

There is no instrumental exam, and no examiner comes to visit. Instead all the pieces are recorded on tape, with as many opportunities to get the music right as necessary. The tapes are sent away and externally moderated.

As well as instrument playing, there are two other sections:

- a) Compose three pieces of music. This is a structured course and professional musicians perform and record them for you. This is done as coursework; there is no exam (30%). Most pupils elect to do composition on the computer, and we use Sibelius.
- b) Sit a listening exam lasting about an hour and a quarter. This is done in the Music School classroom, as the whole exam contains pieces of music on tape. Questions are on things like spotting different musical instruments, spotting different dynamics and different styles of music (30%).

The GCSE course has scope for being in any style of music, though an appreciation of classical and popular music is expected for high marks. Pupils can choose to incorporate recording studio lessons into their GCSE if they so wish.

P.S.H.E.

The whole school excepting the Upper Sixth attend PSHE tutorials once per week on a Friday afternoon for up to an hour. Each tutorial is run by their PSHE tutor or an outside agency who may be called in to give expert advice on a particular topic such as drugs or alcohol.



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Each tutor group is mixed by House and sex and consists normally of 12 pupils. The topics covered apart from those mentioned, include sex education, relationships, self esteem, bullying, racism, disability, personal safety and moral dilemmas. Much depends on the year group and the availability of outside speakers. Last term we used a theatre group for Third and Fourth Form to highlight the ills of drug and alcohol abuse and to prompt discussion on a range of adolescent problems such as underage sex. On another occasion the Roy Castle Foundation ran a seminar on smoking.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (OCR Syllabus 1970)

GCSE PE is a new course at Loretto and is being introduced for September 2005. It is for people who enjoy sport, want to improve their knowledge and performance in a range of practical activities and learn about the principles and practices that lead to good performance.

The course is an excellent, although not compulsory, introduction to the AS/A2 PE course which has been running for a number of years at Loretto. For further information contact Mr David Burton: burtond@loretto.com

During the course pupils will study:

1. **Effective performance in four chosen practical activities**
2. **Observation and Analysis in one practical activity**
3. **Factors affecting participation and performance in physical activity**
4. **The relationship between health, fitness and practical activity**
5. **Risk assessment in physical activity.**

Syllabus outline

UNIT 1	
Factors Affecting Participation And Performance	Skeleton and joints, Muscles, Circulatory and respiratory systems, Skill, Motivation and mental preparation, Social reasons for participation, School, Social background, Local and national facilities
UNIT 2	
The Relationship Between Health, Fitness And Practical Activity.	Components of fitness, Factors affecting fitness, Investigation into effect of fitness on performance and how to assess it, Fitness training principles, Training methods, Training effects
UNIT 3	
Risk Assessment In Physical Activity	Potential hazard, Prevention of injury, Injury treatment

Practical activities

Pupils choose **four** practical activities from at least **two** activity areas: **Games Activities, Gymnastic Activities, Dance Activities, Athletic Activities, Outdoor and Adventurous**



Activities, Swimming Activities, Exercise Activities

The course is assessed in two parts:

Part 1 -1 hr 45 min exam paper containing questions from the three units in the syllabus 40%

Part 2 – Practical performance and written observation and analysis coursework 60%

PHYSICS (Cambridge IGCSE 0625)

The syllabus currently used is Cambridge International GCSE (0625) For this syllabus there are two tiers of entry, Foundation and Higher. Each tier is defined in terms of the grades on which the tier is focused: Foundation Tier – Grades C-G; Higher Tier – Grades A*-D. Candidates sit three written papers in the Summer term of the Fifth Form year. One is multiple choice, duration 45 minutes, one extended answers, duration 1 1/4 hours, and one practical skills based, duration 1 hour.

The themes and topics covered are:

Theme	Topics
General Physics	Kinematics, Dynamics, Energy, Work & Power
Thermal Physics	Simple Kinetic Theory,, Thermal Properties, Thermal Energy Transfer
Electricity & Magnetism	Magnetism, Electrical Quantities, Circuits, Electromagnetic Effects, CROs
Waves	Basic Wave Behaviour, Light, Sound
Atomic Physics	Radioactivity Nuclear Physics



RELIGIOUS STUDIES (OCR Syllabus 2344)

Introduction

Religious Studies at Loretto follows the NEAB GCSE short course and is studied in the Third and Fourth Form.

At the end of the two years pupils may sit the external examination. There is no coursework component to this GCSE. It is taught by the Chaplain, Revd. Andrew Keulemans

About the Course at Loretto

The course runs over two years with a single lesson per week. It addresses the fundamental questions that arise when thinking about religious belief. Pupils will be expected to learn about three faiths; Christianity, Islam, Hinduism. The course also considers how religion and faith address moral issues and encourages pupils to raise questions about the meaning and purpose of life.

Course Outline

The existence of God

- Arguments for the existence of God

- The argument from design

- The argument from religious experience

- The question about the origin of the universe

- The problem of suffering

- does the existence of suffering raise questions about God's love and purpose.

- The problem of evil

- where does evil come from and what questions does it raise about God's power

The nature of God

- Is God personal or impersonal?

- Is God immanent or transcendent?

- What is the difference between monotheism and polytheism

How might God be known

- Knowing God through nature (general revelation)

- Knowing God through religious texts (special revelation)

Ways of making moral Decisions

- Absolute and relative morality

- Sources of moral authority

- Relationship between belief and behaviour

- War and peace

Issues of life and death

- Euthanasia

- Abortion

Relations

- Sex, marriage and divorce

- Prejudice and discrimination

Global issues:

- Wealth and poverty