

# GCSE Options Information Evening 2025



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# Aims

- To provide an overview of the courses and qualifications that we offer as part of our KS4 curriculum
- To explain the GCSE Options process at Little Heath School
- To outline the personalised support and guidance that your child will receive during this process, to ensure that they make the best choices



# Key stage 4 – what does this mean?

- Your child's education is split into phases:
  - Key Stage 1 and 2 – primary school
  - Key Stage 3 – Year 7 and 8
  - Key Stage 4 – Year 9, 10 and 11
  - Key Stage 5 – Year 12 and 13 (6<sup>th</sup> form / college / apprenticeships etc)
- At each transition point, they need to make decisions about what they do next – the GCSE Options Process is an important part of this!



# The Options Process – what is this?

- Before students join Key Stage 4, they need to decide which subjects they will study
- This decision needs to be made carefully – students need to take lots of things into account when making their choices.
- It is really important that they understand the Options Process, and what this means in terms of any future plans they have, as well as considering their own likes / dislikes and strengths.
- Our job is to ensure that you and your child have all of the information you need in order to make an informed decision



# Key stage 4 – the statutory curriculum

Part of the KS4 curriculum is compulsory, meaning that every child in the country has to study it – this is the ‘statutory curriculum’.

This curriculum is made up of the following subjects:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Science
- Games
- Religious Studies
- PSHE/RSE



# Key stage 4 – the Option subjects

- The remainder of the subjects will be chosen as ‘Options’.
- We have put a framework in place to ensure that all students opt for subjects that will enable them to study a ***broad and balanced curriculum***, which also ***reflects their own personal interests, abilities, aptitudes and talents***.
- This will leave them with lots of opportunities open to them when they leave school.



# The Options Process

To ensure that our curriculum offers breadth and balance, our options framework is structured in a way that enables all pupils to:

- study subjects in a range of curriculum areas
- have the *opportunity* to take all of the EBacc subjects
- have an element of free choice, so that they can pursue their own interests, possibly related to future choices.



# EBACC

The EBacc is not a qualification. It is a set of subjects at GCSE that keeps young people's options open for further study and future careers.

## The EBacc is:

- English language and literature
- maths
- the sciences
- geography or history
- a language





# EBACC

- The EBacc is made up of the subjects which are **considered essential to many degrees and open up lots of doors.**
- **Research** shows that a **pupil's socio-economic background impacts the subjects they choose at GCSE, and that this determines their opportunities beyond school.**
- A study by the **UCL Institute of Education** shows that studying subjects included in the **EBacc** provides students with **greater opportunities in further education** and **increases the likelihood that a pupil will stay on in full-time education.**
- The **Russell Group** has named **languages** as subjects that **open doors** to more degrees at universities
- **Sutton Trust** research reveals that **studying the EBacc can help improve a young person's performance in English and maths.**
- **Studying a language alongside a humanities subject** gives them a **competitive edge** in future applications.
- [DfE EBacc Leaflet.pdf](#)



# Course types

At Little Heath, we offer two types of courses at Key Stage 4:

1. Traditional GCSE courses
2. Vocational Courses

Students will be advised which course types are appropriate for them, depending on which profile (colour) they are assigned to, their plans for careers / future study, and which method of assessment best suits their needs.



# The Key Stage 4 grading system

- Students are no longer awarded grades A\* to U at GCSE
- Instead, they will be graded according to the new system.
- The table below shows what each of the new grades means, based on the new and old systems:

Old A* - U GCSE grades	New 9 – 1 GCSE grades	Equivalent new Level 2 / Level 1 grades (vocational courses)
A*	9	L2 – Distinction* (8.5)
A	8	L2 – Distinction (7)
B	6	L2 – Merit (5.5)
C	5	L2 – Pass (4)
D	4	L1 – Distinction* (3)
E	3	L1 – Distinction (2)
F	2	L1 – Merit (1.5)
G	1	L1 – Pass (1)
U	U	U



# Student profiles

- Every student has been assigned to a profile.
- There are four profile groups - **Red**, **Yellow**, **Green** and **Blue**
- Each student is assigned to the profile that is most appropriate to them, based on a detailed analysis of their data and a range of other factors.
- A letter will be sent home at the same time as the Options booklet, to explain which profile you have been allocated to.

**We do this so that students are able to select the courses that are most appropriate for them within each subject area, while still accessing the full curriculum.**



# Profiles – how have these been decided?

In order to identify the criteria for each profile group, we have conducted a thorough analysis of all relevant data. This includes:

- review of prior attainment data
- analysis of current Year 8 data, in collaboration with the KS3 team
- Engagement with Learning grades
- SEND information
- other relevant pastoral / academic information

***There is also some flexibility within each profile to ensure that the needs of all students within each group are met.***



# Courses – overview

		Profiles			
Department / subject	Courses	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue
Vocational courses					
Traditional / GCSE courses					
Compulsory courses					
Art	GCSE Art and Design	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue
Inclusion	ASDAN				
Business and Economics	GCSE Business	Red	Yellow		
	BTEC Business and Enterprise			Green	Blue
Citizenship	GCSE Citizenship Studies	Red	Yellow		
Design and Technology	GCSE 3D Design		Yellow	Green	Blue
	GCSE Design + Technology	Red	Yellow		
	GCSE Food + Nutrition	Red	Yellow		
	GCSE Textiles			Green	Blue
	BTEC Hospitality and Catering		Yellow	Green	Blue
Drama	GCSE Drama	Red			
English	GCSE English Language			Green	Blue
	GCSE English Literature	Red		Green	Blue
Geography	GCSE Geography	Red	Yellow		
	BTEC Travel and Tourism			Green	Blue
History	GCSE History	Red	Yellow	Green	
ICT and Computer Science	GCSE Computer Science	Red	Yellow		
	BTEC ICT			Green	Blue
Languages	GCSE French	Red	Yellow		
	GCSE German	Red	Yellow		
	GCSE Spanish	Red	Yellow		
	FCSE Spanish				Blue
Mathematics	GCSE Mathematics	Red	Yellow		
Media	GCSE Media Studies	Red	Yellow		
Music	GCSE Music	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue
Physical Education	Core PE				
	GCSE PE	Red	Yellow		
	BTEC Sport Studies			Green	Blue
PSHE / RSE	PSHE / RSE	Red	Yellow		
Religious Education	GCSE Religious Studies	Red	Yellow		
Science	GCSE Combined Science	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue
	GCSE Triple Science (option)	Red			
Social Sciences	BTEC Child Development		Yellow	Green	Blue

# Option Blocks (groups of subjects)

- The subjects are organised into blocks (groups of subjects) for timetabling purposes
- Students will select subjects – the number / type of courses chosen from each group will vary slightly in each colour profile
- The purpose of this system is to ensure that students have access to a range of combinations of courses, and that we are able to timetable their requests.
- The courses on offer are slightly different for each of the profile groups, however all students will be able to access all subjects
- Finite resources
- Over-subscription to courses



# Option Blocks (groups of subjects)

## Master model

COMPULSORY	GROUP A		GROUP B									
	HUMANITIES	LANGUAGES	TRADITIONAL				DIGITAL					
English Language (1)	<i>Geography</i>	<i>French</i>	Art	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue	Business Enterprise			Green	Blue
English Literature (1)	<i>History</i>	<i>German</i>	Or Art Textiles	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue	Computer Science	Red	Yellow		
Maths (1)		<i>Spanish</i>	Or 3D Design		Yellow	Green	Blue	ICT		Yellow	Green	Blue
GAMES			Business Studies	Red	Yellow			Media	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue
RE			Child Development		Yellow	Green	Blue	Travel & Tourism		Yellow	Green	Blue
PSHE/RSE			Citizenship	Red	Yellow							
Combined Science (2)*			Drama	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
ASDAN			Food Science & Nutrition	Red	Yellow							
			Or Hospitality & Catering		Yellow	Green	Blue					
			<i>French</i>	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
			<i>Geography</i>	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
			<i>German</i>	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
			<i>History</i>	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
			Music	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
			PE	Red	Yellow							
			Or Sport Studies		Yellow	Green	Blue					
			Resistant Materials	Red	Yellow							
			<i>Spanish</i>	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
			Triple Science	Red								

\* Combined Science will give you 2 GCSEs; Triple Science will give you 3. If you opt to to study triple science from Group C, it will also replace Combined Science.





# Option Blocks (groups of subjects)

## Master model

	COMPULSORY	GROUP A		GROUP B									
		HUMANITIES	LANGUAGES	TRADITIONAL				DIGITAL					
COURSES	English Language (1)	<i>Geography</i>	<i>French</i>	Art	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue	Business Enterprise			Green	Blue
	English Literature (1)	<i>History</i>	<i>German</i>	Or Art Textiles	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue	Computer Science	Red	Yellow		
	Maths (1)		<i>Spanish</i>	Or 3D Design		Yellow	Green	Blue	ICT			Green	Blue
	GAMES			Business Studies	Red	Yellow			Media	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue
	RE			Child Development		Yellow	Green	Blue	Travel & Tourism		Yellow	Green	Blue
	PSHE/RSE			Citizenship	Red	Yellow							
	Combined Science (2)*			Drama	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
	ASDAN			Food Science & Nutrition	Red	Yellow							
				Or Hospitality & Catering		Yellow	Green	Blue					
				<i>French</i>	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
				<i>Geography</i>	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
				<i>German</i>	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
				<i>History</i>	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
				Music	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue					
				PE	Red	Yellow							
				Or Sport Studies		Yellow	Green	Blue					
			Resistant Materials	Red	Yellow								
			<i>Spanish</i>	Red	Yellow	Green	Blue						
			Triple Science	Red									

\* Combined Science will give you 2 GCSEs; Triple Science will give you 3. If you opt to to study triple science from Group C, it will also replace Combined Science.



# How do we find out more about the courses that are on offer?

- Read the information in the Options Booklet
- Students should talk to their class teachers
- Tutor time activities this term
- Taster activities for the new subjects that are not taught at Ks3 (Business, Media, Child Development, Citizenship, Travel and Tourism, Technology courses, Spanish and German)
- Talk to one of us!



# Tutor work / careers advice

Students will be completing a number of sessions during tutor time, with a focus on helping them to make the right choices for them

1. Session 1 – The options process at LHS
2. Session 2 – Decision making and self reflection
3. Session 3 – What courses are available to me?
4. Session 4 and 5 – Careers case studies – making an informed choice.

The careers resources are also signposted in the Options booklet – parents and students will have access to the ECLIPS online careers portal, which has a huge range of resources and case studies that are specifically targeted at students who are making their option choices



# How do we know if our children should consider a particular subject?

- KS3 bands (Foundation, Intermediate and Higher)
- Conversations at home
- Engagement with subjects
- Future pathways
- Reports coming home
- Parents' Evening – prioritise options conversations for non-core subjects



# Timeline

Date	Event
14 <sup>th</sup> January	<u>Assembly</u> - An Introduction to the Options Process
29 <sup>th</sup> January	<u>Information Evening – 6pm in the Main Hall</u>
Term 3	<u>Options Information Booklet</u>
Term 3	<u>Tutor time activities to support the GCSE Options process</u>
Term 3	<u>Taster activities</u>
17 <sup>th</sup> February - 28 <sup>th</sup> February	<u>Applications</u> - These will be completed online. Details of this will be sent out nearer the time. Deadline: Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> February
17 <sup>th</sup> March – 4 <sup>th</sup> April	<u>Options Interviews</u> - Each student will attend an individual Options Meeting with a member of the Pastoral or Curriculum Team. During these meetings, choices which have been made during the initial application process will be reviewed with students.
Term 5	<u>Follow up conversations and Quality Assurance</u>
Term 5	<u>Confirmation of GCSE course places</u> - Students will receive written confirmation of their course choices at the end of the process

# FAQs

1. What happens if my child changes their mind during the options process?
2. Is there a reserve list for each subject, for students who do not get a place on the course?
3. Are students able to change courses at any point during KS4?
4. Will my child be forced to take anything?
5. How do I get an update from a specific subject teacher, regarding my child's progress?
6. My child struggles with literacy and will find subjects that involve a lot of writing tricky. What do you recommend?
7. My child is interested in a specific career – who can I speak to for more information?
8. My child does not know what they want to do when they are older. How should they make their decisions at this point?

# Any Questions?

Please feel free to stay behind at the end to speak to one of us!

