

Subject choices for Year 9

2023-24

May 2023

A MESSAGE TO PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Parent/Carer,

Pupils at Reepham High School receive a broad and balanced curriculum that we hope inspires and motivates them. Our provision is always selected to provide students with the best opportunities for their future and we regularly review what we offer.

Our current Year 9 curriculum provides pupils with an element of choice and allows the school to customise the curriculum to the individual needs of pupils, maximising their future opportunities as well as keeping them engaged in their own education.

This booklet introduces these changes and explains the decisions that you and your child will now need to make. Please take your time to read this booklet carefully with your child and do not hesitate to contact myself or other subject-specific staff at the school if you need further assistance.

Yours faithfully,



Mr P Beale

Deputy Headteacher

The Year 9 curriculum

The vast majority of what pupils study in Year 9 is compulsory; this provides a broad selection of subjects for pupils to experience. The teaching hours (per fortnight) of compulsory subjects is shown in the table below:

Subject	English	Maths	Science	Comp. Science	Geography	History	Art	PE	Tech	PSHE
Hours	7	7	6	3	4	4	2	4	4	1

However Year 9 is also the first time that pupils will be able to have an input into what they will study. The choice is a very small one, but allows pupils to experience a smaller version of the options process that they will complete for the GCSEs.

Pupils will need to choose two further courses to study. Each of these subjects will have four hours of teaching per fortnight.

Subject	Choice A	Choice B
Hours	4	4

For 'Choice A' all pupils must study either

- Religious Studies
- French
- Spanish

For most pupils, choice B will also be one of these three subjects. Most pupils will continue to study a language and religious studies until the end of Year 9. However, pupils can choose to:

- Study two languages
- Study Music
- Replace one of the courses above with a foundation course to support the transition to more demanding GCSE courses at the end of Year 9.

The foundation courses we are offering this year are:

- Environmental Science
- Sports, Health and Exercise Studies

Pupils naturally are very excited that they are able to choose which subjects they can study, but this is a very small choice and we would hope that, most pupils will continue with the recommended choice of Religious Studies and a language. This combination maximises your options at GCSE.

Please think very carefully about this decision. Having the opportunity to start a new subject and drop a less favoured one, is likely to have many pupils excited. This is **not** a process to discard subjects because you don't like them, but a chance to support pupils who need to develop in one of the specific areas.

CHOICE A

Pupils must select one of:

- **FRENCH**
- **SPANISH**
- **RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

CHOICE B

Pupils then choose a second subject from:

- **FRENCH**
- **SPANISH**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE**
- **MUSIC**
- **RELIGIOUS STUDIES**
- **SPORTS, HEALTH & EXERCISE STUDIES**

IMPORTANT: Please read the subject information before making any decision.

There will be only one group of the subjects listed below. Please ensure you only select these subjects if you match the criteria described:

Environmental Science A foundation course for pupils who may struggle with more academic subjects. If you are working to a high standard in science you will not be selected for this course. Please contact the school if you are unsure if you meet the appropriate criteria

Music An opportunity for musical pupils to work in a specialised group

Sports, Health and Exercise Studies A foundation course for pupils who may struggle with more academic subjects. If you are working to a high standard in maths and English you will not be selected for this course. Please contact the school if you are unsure if you meet the appropriate criteria

Pupils MUST study a language in Year 9 to continue it at GCSE; all other subjects can be studied at GCSE even if they are not studied in Year 9.

Frequently asked questions:

I'm not sure, what should I pick?

If you are unsure you should choose RE and a language.

I really love languages, can I take two?

Yes, you can take French **AND** Spanish. You can choose to continue both languages at GCSE or drop one after year 9.

I don't think that I'm very good at languages, should I just pick something else?

No! This is not the time to drop subjects because you are unsure about studying them. Only pick another subject if you are passionate about that subject and you are suitable for the course. Study your chosen language for another year and make a decision when choosing your GCSE options in Year 9.

I really don't want to do French, Spanish or RE

As a school we need to offer a broad curriculum and these subjects are a key part of that. You can choose to drop these subjects at GCSE but you should not drop them now unless you are ideally suited to one of the other options available.

I really like the sound of Environmental Science and I'm doing really well in my studies. Should I pick it for next year?

No. The Year 9 Environmental Science course is specially designed for pupils who may find more academic subjects challenging. All other pupils who are interested in Environmental Science will be able to experience some similar science topics in both GCSE Science and GCSE Geography.

What if a course is oversubscribed?

This is the first opportunity that pupils have to make an impact on what they study, and if their choice is not possible, it can feel like a disaster. Please be warned that there are limited spaces available and although we do everything we can to give every student the subject they select, it is not always possible.

If too many students opt for a subject, Reepham High School reserves the right to decide a pupil's suitability for a course. When doing so, we consider.

1. Late applications. If the subject choice is full or oversubscribed when the form is received, then the student will be referred to their reserve choice. It is very important, therefore, that students meet the deadline given.
2. If the course is a specialised course, that the pupil meets the required criteria.
3. Reports. These are checked for attitudes to learning (effort, homework, behaviour - but not achievement in the subject). The Head of Department will be consulted where reports do not give sufficient information.

A waiting list will be formed in the case of referral to a reserve choice.

SUBJECT

DESCRIPTIONS

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

In Year 9, pupils will continue to debate unanswerable questions, develop their understanding of the world around them, through philosophical, moral and ethical exploration into their own beliefs and those held by other people. In a world where we can be anything, let's be kind.

The topics will include:

- Philosophy for life - Is a unicorn better in real life or in your mind?
- Life after death - What is the cost of life?
- Relationships and families - What is love? How do you make choices?
- Crime and punishment - Why do people commit crimes?
- Religious practices - What is the image of religion? What is work by people of religion? And even discuss Tattoos!
- Religion and art - How do we as humans express our beliefs?

All these topics will incorporate the opportunity for pupils to enhance their questioning skills, which will improve their written and verbal abilities, through creating well-rounded arguments. Pupils will also relate the topics to current affairs and personal experiences, allowing them to develop their understanding of the world around them. This will all be done through the use of different types of media, film, presentations, group work, debating and written work.

The development of knowledge, understanding and evaluation this year will act as a foundation for those deciding to opt for a GCSE in Religious Studies.

NB. These topics are stand alone and so GCSE RS is open to all.

Good to know:

- RS is seen as one of the highest valued subjects by employers and University because of the skills needed to complete it.
- Subject contact: Ireid@reephamhigh.org.uk

FRENCH

Speaking a second language is an enviable skill that can provide many opportunities later in life. Studying French in Year 9 will allow you to develop your skills and give you more confidence in speaking - this is particularly useful when you travel abroad for work or on holiday.

In Year 9, you will be covering a wide range of useful topics including booking a hotel room or campsite, having a conversation with a doctor or chemist, discussing healthy lifestyle, talking about TV and films, identifying ways to be eco-friendly and be a good citizen.

You will be developing many key skills such as:

- improving your pronunciation and developing a more authentic accent
- starting to develop asking questions in French
- writing more detailed sentences with increased accuracy and beginning to justify your answers
- developing your reading and listening skills using authentic materials (films, songs, TV guides, hotel reviews)
- a more thorough understanding of the different tenses
- translating more complex sentences from French into English and from English into French

An opportunity to travel in Year 10

If you choose this option, you will have the opportunity to take part in the French exchange in Year 10, make new friends, experience French cuisine and learn first-hand about French culture.

A group of pupils studying French in Year 9 will be selected to spend a day at Reepham Primary School to help with their annual French day.

Good to know:

- This option is only available to pupils who have studied French in Year 8.
- If you want the option of taking French at GCSE you must take it in Year 9.
- French is classified as an EBACC subject. Find out more at www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc
- Subject contact: mteillet@reephamhigh.org.uk

SPANISH

Speaking a second language is an enviable skill that can provide many opportunities later in life. Studying Spanish in Year 9 will allow you to develop your skills and give you more confidence in speaking - this is particularly useful when you travel abroad for work or on holiday.

In Year 9, you will be covering a wide range of useful topics including asking for directions, shopping in Spanish speaking countries, discussing healthy lifestyle and career paths, talking about TV and films.

You will be developing many key skills such as:

- improving your pronunciation and developing a more authentic accent
- starting to develop asking questions in Spanish
- writing more detailed sentences with increased accuracy and beginning to justify your answers
- developing your reading and listening skills using authentic materials (films, songs, TV guides, maps)
- a more thorough understanding of the different tenses
- translating more complex sentences from Spanish into English and from English into Spanish

An opportunity to travel in Year 9 and 10

If you choose this option, you may have the opportunity to take part in the Spanish exchange in Year 9 and 10, make new friends, experience Spanish cuisine and learn first-hand about Spanish culture.

Good to know:

- This option is only available to pupils who have studied Spanish in Year 8.
- If you want the option of taking Spanish at GCSE you must take it in Year 9.
- Spanish is classified as an EBACC subject. Find out more at www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc
- Subject contact: bpelaz@reephhamhigh.org.uk

SPORTS, HEALTH & EXERCISE STUDIES

This is a **classroom based** course that works to develop the theoretical side of sports, health and exercise. The course has been designed for those who may struggle academically with the full PE GCSE course and can be considered a foundation course to develop key skills and understanding.

Topics covered:

- Anatomy and physiology
- Physical training
- Sports nutrition
- Sport, sponsorship and the media
- Contemporary issues in sport
- Sports industry
- Sports leadership
- First aid

Key skills being developed;

Pupils will develop their knowledge of human anatomy and physiology while learning how exercise affects the body and how to train effectively for a range of sporting goals. Pupils will also learn about sports nutrition and how to live healthy active lifestyles. They will learn about contemporary issues in sport such as funding, participation, ethics and role models, and sport and the media. Learners will develop an appreciation of the importance of sport, health and exercise and how this shapes the sports industry.

Good to know :

- This course is a theory course only. It does not include practical elements.
- This course suits those who are looking to study GCSE PE.
- This course is NOT required to study GCSE PE
- Subject contact: jeaston@reephamhigh.org.uk

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Environmental Science is suitable for students who have interests in agriculture, biodiversity and the environment. It has been specially designed to be a foundation course for those who find Science challenging.

It will support learning in both geography and science, as well as provide a good foundation for students considering an agricultural career.

This course is an introduction to environmental science, how we do and can use commercial and natural landscapes.

We will be learning about climate science, weather and impact of different energy sources on the environment.

We will also be utilising the allotment resource at the school with some project work looking at developing the biodiversity in a range of the areas including woodlands, ponds and meadows.

Students will be researching and learning about organisms in our ecosystems and developing ways to increase biodiversity in our community.

Students doing this course should feel comfortable and happy in the outdoor environment in all weathers.

Topic Overview

- Energy and resources
- Waste and Pollution
- Climate Science
- Plant growth
- Agriculture
- Biodiversity and ecosystems

Good to know :

- This course will support content being learnt in GCSE Combined Science, Triple Science and Geography. Pupils will be working outside in the allotment throughout the year and will have to dress and behave appropriately.
- Subject contact: mbeale@reephamhigh.org.uk

MUSIC

Students will complete performing, composing and listening activities based around the following topics:

- Film music
- Popular music
- New directions in classical music
- The key periods in musical history
- Instrumental music
- Vocal music

In performing activities, students will be given opportunities to rehearse and perform both solo and group (ensemble) pieces within the style of music they are studying. They will learn effective practice and rehearsal techniques in order to make the best progress on their chosen instrument. Students will also look at what makes a good performance and start learning how to communicate through the language of music.

In composing activities, students will learn to write their own pieces in the style of the music they are studying (see above for list of topics). They will learn how to write idiomatically for different instruments and to create contrast within pieces of music as well as how to use the elements of music to convey different moods and evoke various emotions within the listener.

Through listening and studying music within the topic areas, students will learn how to analyse pieces of music using the musical elements. By studying music in different styles, the students will learn how composers create different moods, create contrast and structure pieces of music. The students will then apply this knowledge in the composing and performing activities. Students will also study basic music theory.

Good to know:

- It is desirable but not essential to take Music in Year 9 if you want the option of taking Music at GCSE.
- Only students who have a clear interest in Music should choose this course.
- Subject contact: ggreen@reephamhigh.org.uk

Please return to the email and follow the link to complete the 'choices' form.

