



**LEIGHTON PARK**  
FOUNDED 1890

## GCSE COURSE OPTIONS

2019 -2021



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At Leighton Park we are pleased to offer a wide range of IGCSE/GCSE courses from which all students should be able to make a suitable selection. We are also offering a BTEC qualification in Creative Digital Media Production and have recently introduced GCSE's in Dance, Engineering and Food Preparation & Nutrition. Choosing the right IGCSE/GCSE's involves many difficult and important decisions. To help you in this process, a summary of the different subject areas has been prepared by each Head of Department. We are in a strong position to guide you through your IGCSE/GCSE years, as one of the school's greatest attributes is the care that it extends through its tutors and academic teachers to all its students. We recognise that each child is different and so, within our options system, we recognise that some students may benefit from choosing 'practical' subjects whereas others may not. From Year 9 through to the end of the Sixth Form there is an experienced academic team supported by Careers Advice from Inspiring Futures to offer advice to help you get it right.

This booklet marks the formal beginning of the options process, although I am sure that you will all have begun to think about it already. Within this booklet, you will find an outline of the IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC curriculum content (both core subjects and options) and the assessment procedure for each subject. In addition to the booklet, your son/daughter has been involved in a careers related, decision-making day organised by Inspiring Futures (Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire). A further opportunity to discuss IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC options with academic teachers will be afforded at the **Year 9 Parents' Consultation evening on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March** and our careers team can also offer students and parents individual counselling.

**The deadline for submitting your options will be Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March. Please complete and return the form provided at the back of this brochure to me.** After this date, option blocks will begin to be formalised and changes to subject choices may only be possible within option lines and dependent on class sizes. Please do also bare in mind that as students are afforded a 'free' selection of subject combinations that it is not always possible to guarantee every students' first choice combination. The selection of a reserve subject is required to further facilitates this process.

Please take the time to read through this options booklet. An electronic version is also available on the school website. It is recommended that you consult with your teachers and tutors to help you make the decision that is right for you. However, should you have any further questions having read the booklet, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Karen Gracie-Langrick  
**Deputy Head, Academic Studies**



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- Textile Design



## IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC – AN INTRODUCTION

*This booklet describes the IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC courses and arrangements for this coming September. It provides details of all the IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC courses we offer for 2019 – 2021, and an options choice form.*

The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is the nationally recognised qualification which students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland work towards during Years 10 and 11. IGCSE/GCSE's can be taken in a wide range of subjects, which are set and marked by the Examination Boards, which provide a choice of options and syllabuses within each subject.

As you may be aware, the Government have introduced a significant programme of reform of public examinations in England. The key changes are outlined below:

- IGCSE/GCSE students all follow a linear programme, which means that there are no longer modules at different times during the year and that all external examinations will take place in the May/June of Year 11.
- In addition, students are no longer able to re-sit individual modules, although they will be able to re-sit the full IGCSE/GCSE. There is an opportunity to take IGCSE in Mathematics in January and IGCSE English in November, because of the importance of these subjects for entry to further education and employment.
- Students who re-sit any of their IGCSE/GCSE's do not need to redo their controlled assessments, they can carry these forward.
- Marks will be awarded for accurate spelling, punctuation and use of grammar (SPAG) in external IGCSE/GCSE examinations in English Literature, Geography, History and Religious Studies.

### GRADES AND TIERS OF ENTRY

From September 2017, the Government's GCSE Phase Three reforms came into operation. This means that at Leighton Park all subjects will be taught using the new specifications and all GCSE subjects will be graded from 1-9 (with 1 being the lowest; a 4/5 being regarded as a C Grade; a 7 regarded as an A Grade; and a 9 being the highest) as opposed to the A\*- G Grades. All GCSE/IGCSE exams (including most Cambridge I.E. and Edexcel IGCSE except Latin and MFL) will also be graded using 1-9. If you would like further information, Ofqual has published details regarding how the new GCSEs will be graded on their website.

At Leighton Park, our students will follow the International GCSE (IGCSE) course in Mathematics, English (Language and Literature), History, Geography, Latin and Modern Foreign Languages (MFL): French, German and Spanish. All confirmed subject specifications are outlined within this booklet, although a number of subjects are still currently considering their final specification. Students and parents will be informed of any further changes to courses as outlined in this brochure should they occur.

Some subjects (indicated in the following pages) have exam papers graded as Foundation or Higher Tier. Higher Tier papers enable access to Grades 4-9 to be achieved. Foundation Tier papers allow access to Grades 1-5 to be achieved. There is no need to decide at this stage which Tier you will be working towards. IGCSE subjects have the same provision but with different terminology.

For some students the Foundation Tier is appropriate and can give you a very satisfactory result, although it is not normally one which provides a firm basis for Sixth Form Level in that subject or related ones. Your teachers will advise you during the course which is the more appropriate level of entry for you and a final decision will be made prior to submission of examination entries to the Examination Boards in February 2021.



## EXAMINATIONS AND CONTROLLED ASSESSMENTS

From September 2016, fewer GCSE subjects were assessed using a combination of Controlled Assessments (which are completed at regular intervals during the course) and an examination at the end of the course. The IGCSE courses have no Controlled Assessment element but they may still have a Coursework component (NEA). Courses with Controlled Assessment or Coursework, which form a very important part of the GCSEs, will require steady, consistent effort over the two years, and not just a period of intensive revision at the end. You will need to learn to plan your work, and to keep to deadlines. Failure to complete work on time often leads to a poorer grade.

In the more practical and creative subjects the course can consist of up to 60% Controlled Assessment. Very careful thought and consultation should take place before embarking on more than two such subjects because of the degree of organisation and individual work required to achieve a good grade.

There is an Appeals Procedure for you to use if you feel that there has been a problem with the organisation of the Controlled Assessment. Copies of all the information will be available from the School Reception. Please refer to the school website for our policy on reviews of marking of Non-Examined Assessments (NEAs).

## BTEC LEVEL 2 FIRST AWARD

### What are BTECs?

**BTEC** stands for '**Business and Technology Education Council**', which used to run the award, first introduced in 1984. BTECs are now awarded by the Edexcel exam board and are taken in more than 100 countries at all levels, from pre-GCSE to Degree equivalent.

A BTEC takes a practical approach to learning, without missing any of the important theory on the subject. Focus skills include: teamworking; working from a prescribed brief; working to deadlines; presenting information effectively; and accurately completing administrative tasks and processes.

BTECs are extremely reputable, having been around for 25 years now, so rest assured you will be embarking on an excellent course.

### How can I study a BTEC qualification?

BTECs can be studied alongside of GCSEs.

### How are BTECs graded?

BTECs are graded using a Pass (P), Merit (M), Distinction (D) and Distinction\* (D\*) scale, (Distinction\* is the same as Grade 8/9 (A\*) for a GCSE and a pass is equivalent to Grade 4/5 (C Grade))

### How will I be assessed?

BTECs are made up of a number of units, which are usually assessed through assignments that are both set and marked by your teacher. Some BTECs (including Creative Digital Media Production) contain externally marked tests (exams).

## LEARNING RESOURCES

The Library offers a wide range of books, magazines, DVDs and online resources to support learning during the IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC years. Students in Years 10 – 11 are entitled to borrow up to eight books at a time. Books can be requested for loan or ordered to buy at discounted prices through the Library. The Resources Room, which contains six computers, a printer and a

photocopier for student use, is accessible throughout the day and from 4.15pm – 5.30pm for on-line research, word processing and more general use. The Senior Study Room is intended for the exclusive use of students in Year 11–13. It houses six additional computers, a wide selection of relevant journals, plus a steadily growing collection of key texts. The Library subscribes to a number of online resources including Britannica Online, the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography and The Day online newspaper, all of which can be accessed using the relevant usernames and passwords listed in the Prep Diary/School Calendar. We also have two iPads located in the Non-Fiction Room, which students can use to access the library catalogue, our online resources and apps collection. A selection of newspapers and magazines is displayed next to a comfortable reading area on the Library landing.

## **CAREERS**

Our long-term goal is to prepare students for a place at an appropriate University or other place of Higher Education. It is important to make sure that your choices of exam courses for IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC do not block off any important career options later on. Help is given at each important stage for this purpose.

In Year 11 each student is enrolled as a member of ISCO – the Independent Schools Careers Organisation; this can give careers advice until the age of 23. Each student will also sit the Futurewise tests, a series of psychometric tests revealing aptitude and work-based personality. A detailed report alongside an individual interview with a careers adviser from ISCO all help towards making choices easier for you. A careers adviser from ISCO will always be in attendance at parent consultation evenings to give support to any careers related questions.

There are many sources of careers information available in the well-stocked Careers Library. Here you will find books, computer packages, CD ROMs videos suited to all age ranges, providing information for all career opportunities. Comprehensive selections of current university prospectuses are always available alongside UK Course Discover, a computer package for choosing Higher Education.

In addition to our annual Career's Fair (held in the Spring Term), there is the opportunity for all student to undertake work experience. This takes place in Year 11 during the penultimate week of the summer term after all GCSE examinations have finished.



## CHOOSING YOUR IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC SUBJECTS

At Leighton Park we offer a wide range of two-year courses. These are made up of Core Subjects, which all students study, and Optional Subjects, from which you should select six. This will enable you to take up to 10 IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC examination subjects. In addition, all students also receive PE & Games and PSHCE delivered throughout our Your Life Programme.

### **CORE SUBJECTS** (taken by all)

**English** (Language and Literature)

**Mathematics**

**Global Perspectives**

**OPTIONAL SUBJECTS:** *You MUST choose at least **TWO** separate **Sciences** or the **Combined Science Option** (which would constitute two choices) and **ONE Language**.*

**Approaches to Learning**

**Art & Design**

**Biology**

**Chemistry**

**Combined Science A** (Biology, Chemistry, Physics and is equivalent to a double award) and 2 option choices

**Computer Science**

**Creative Digital Media Production (BTEC Level 2 Award)**

**Dance**

**Design and Technology**

**Drama**

**Engineering**

**English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

**Food Preparation and Nutrition**

**French**

**Geography**

**German**

**History**

**Latin**

**Mandarin**

**Microsoft Office Specialist Certificate in IT Application Skills**

**Music**

**Physics**

**Physical Education**

**Religious Studies**

**Spanish**

**Textile Design**

We would like you to select **SIX optional subjects** and **ONE reserve** from this list. The reserve subject is very important because whilst we make every effort to enable you to study the subjects you wish, in a very few cases this may not be possible.

Please make sure you read carefully the information about the separate GCSE Science courses on the following pages and if you decide to select the **Combined Science option** please note that this will count as **TWO** of your option choices.

Students wishing to follow an IGCSE/GCSE course in Spanish, German or Mandarin must first seek guidance from their teacher to determine their potential for these courses. It will be important that students have reached a high standard with their Year 9 work.

Students who have been receiving **EAL** (English as an Additional Language) lessons must select to follow the EAL course as one of their options.

Students who receive 1-1 ILC support or feel that they will be unable to follow as many as 10 IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC courses should select the **Approaches for Learning** Course. Details of which can be found later in this booklet. Students looking to select Approaches for Learning should, along with their parents, consult with the Deputy Head, Academic Studies, Karen Gracie-Langrick and the acting SENCO, Jo-Anne Elliot, before committing to it on this form.



## **FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS – AS and A2 LEVELS, THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AND BEYOND**

As well as your own preferences there are some further considerations to bear in mind when you are choosing your options. The Sixth Form at Leighton Park offers a broad curriculum and a choice of A Levels or IB Diploma. Our current requirements for Sixth Form entry are for a minimum of 5 passes at Grade 6 (Grade B) or above. Certain A Level and IB Diploma courses will require a Grade 7/8 (Grade A) in that subject at IGCSE/GCSE and some universities will require you to have gained a Grade 5 (high Grade C) or higher in particular IGCSE/GCSE subjects before you can be accepted onto a course. From September 2017, all A Level courses became linear, so examinations taken at the end of the Lower Sixth no longer form part of an A Level assessment.

Please consider the following points:

- Students will either select two or three separate sciences or the Combined Science route. Those who wish to take Biology to Sixth Form Level should take Chemistry for GCSE as well.
- Please be aware that Science related courses (particularly medicine) at university may require the study of all three Sciences at GCSE Level.
- If you wish to study Maths at Sixth Form Level, or eventually to pursue a university course in which Maths is important, then an A Grade (Grade 8) at IGCSE Level will be essential.
- To study two Modern Foreign Languages, you will need to have shown particular linguistic ability and interest in Year 9.
- The IBDP encourages a broader approach to study. More details are available in the IBDP information booklet available from Helen Taylor, the Head of Sixth Form/IB Co-ordinator.
- Progression from the Creative Digital Media Production BTEC is now available in two ways in the Sixth Form. IB Film may be taken as part of the IB Diploma or as a stand-alone IB Course and/or Music Production (Grades 1-8) as part of the enrichment programme. Success in these qualifications count for UCAS points.

You should not be satisfied with a Grade 4/5 (Grade C) in any subject which you hope to continue at A Level or for IB Diploma Higher Level in the Sixth Form at Leighton Park.

**IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC CHOICES 2019 – 2021  
CONSULTATION COPY ONLY**

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**NAME** ..... **TUTOR** .....

**CORE**

All students study Maths, English and Global Perspectives

**OPTIONS**

You **MUST** choose **SIX subjects**, and nominate **ONE reserve (R)**.

You **MUST** choose at least **TWO separate Sciences or the Combined Science Option** (which would constitute two choices) and **ONE Language**.

Please indicate your order of preference from **1 (most preferred)** to **6 (least preferred)**, and **R**. It is hoped that everyone will get his/her preferred choices, but in the event that your choices cannot be accommodated within the timetable then your reserve choice will be used.

Art & Design		Geography	
Biology		German	
Chemistry		History	
Combined Science		Latin	
Computer Science		Mandarin	
Creative Digital Media Production		Microsoft Office Specialist Certificate in IT Application Skills	
Dance		Music	
Design Technology		Physics	
Drama		Physical Education	
Engineering		Religious Studies	
Food Preparation & Nutrition		Spanish	
French		Textile Design	
*Approaches to Learning		**EAL	

**Date:** .....

**Parent/Guardian signature:**

.....

**Important information**

\*The option for 'Approaches to Learning' (please see further details within the booklet) is for those students who feel that they will be unable to follow 9 IGCSE/GCSE/BTEC courses. **REMEMBER** - Students looking to select 'Approaches to Learning' should, along with their parents, consult with the Deputy Head, Academic Studies, and the SENCO before committing to this option on the form.

\*\*Students who have been receiving EAL (English as an Additional Language) lessons must select to follow the EAL course as one of their options.



