



Birchwood High School  
*your dreams, your future, our challenge*

**YEAR 9 FOUNDATION YEAR**



In Year 9, you will begin what we call a **foundation year**. This part of the *options process* is all about helping you choose some of the subjects you really enjoy and might want to study for your GCSEs.

You'll be able to choose some of the subjects you want to focus on, but there will also be a group of **core subjects** that everyone continues to study, as they are an important part of your overall education.

The choices you make now are not your final GCSE decisions — but they are an important first step.

# COMPULSORY SUBJECTS

In Year 9, everyone will be required to study the following subjects. These are essential for your overall education.

English  
Maths  
Science  
Core PE  
PSHCE



# OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

You also have the opportunity to choose **six** additional options subjects.

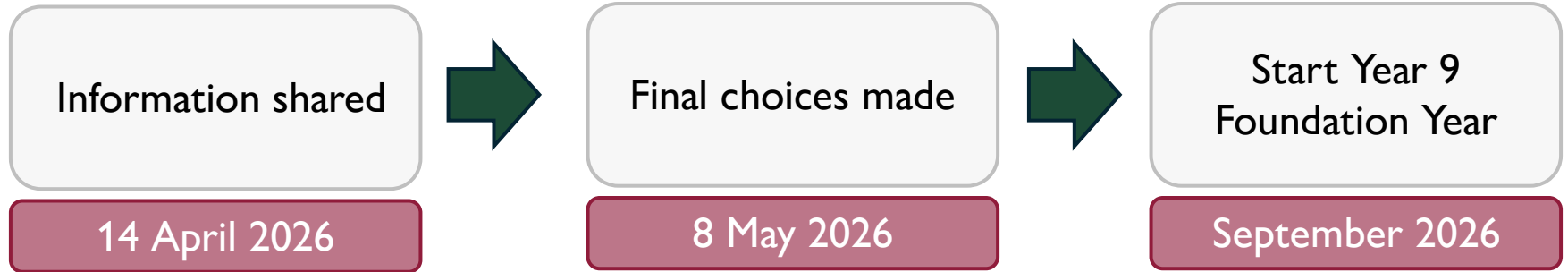
These are not your choices for GCSEs. You will not cover GCSE content in Year 9.

**Your six choices must include a minimum of 1 from each of the two Options Suites below.**

Ebacc Suite	Creative Suite
French German Spanish History Geography Religious Studies Computer Studies	Art Music Drama Dance Product Design Food Technology Computer Studies Film and Media Studies

*For example, you could either pick 1 from the Ebacc Suite and 5 from the Creative Suite  
OR 5 from the Ebaac Suite and 1 from the Creative Suite.*

## TIMELINE





## HOW TO PICK YOUR SUBJECTS

It's about YOU, not your friends.  
These subjects must be interesting to you.

It's about the subject, not the teacher.

Talk to your parents and any older siblings  
to get their advice.

The best people to talk to are your subject  
teachers!

To help make the right decision for you, the  
following slides show you what you would  
study in each of subjects.



# EBACC SUBJECTS

A French student is an enthusiastic communicator who is culturally aware and understands the importance of being a global citizen.

Year 9 topics will include:

- Free time including online activities and streaming.
- Family, relationships and role models
- School including expressing your opinions about rules, teachers & future ambitions.

Skills practiced:

Translation, dictation, read aloud, real life practical role play situations, describing in detail, listening, reading, up to 130 words of writing in French.

What we'll need from you:

- Commitment to regular Quizlet / Memorise vocab learning with regular vocab tests.
- Regular vocab learning is essential for overall progress.
- Homework once per week – a mixture of vocab learning, reading + writing tasks.
- We subscribe to **Active Learn**, **Linguascope**, **Quizizz**, **Quizlet**, **The Language Gym**, **Atantôt** and **Blooket** to support your learning.

Listening  
Reading  
Speaking  
Writing

# GERMAN

A German student is an enthusiastic communicator who is culturally aware and understands the importance of being a global citizen.

## Year 9 topics will include:

- Family, relationships and role models
- School including expressing your opinions about rules, teachers & future ambitions.
- Free time including online activities and streaming

## Skills practiced:

Translation, dictation, read aloud, real life practical role play situations, describing in detail, listening, reading, up to 130 words of writing in German.

## What we'll need from you:

- Commitment to regular Quizlet / Memrise vocab learning with regular vocab tests.
- Regular vocab learning is essential for overall progress.
- Homework once per week – a mixture of vocab learning, reading + writing tasks.
- We subscribe to **Active Learn**, **Linguascope**, **Quizizz**, **Quizlet**, **The Language Gym**, **Atantôt** and **Blooket** to support your learning.

Trip Opportunity: A residential trip to Germany in Y9/10!! TBC

A Spanish student is an enthusiastic communicator who is culturally aware and understands the importance of being a global citizen.

Year 9 topics will include:

- Free time including online activities and streaming.
- Holidays & travel including the cultures of different Spanish-speaking countries.
- Family, relationships and role models

Skills practiced:

Translation, dictation, read aloud, real life practical role play situations, describing in detail, listening, reading, up to 130 words of writing in Spanish.

What we'll need from you:

- Commitment to regular Quizlet / Memrise vocab learning with regular vocab tests.
- Regular vocab learning is essential for overall progress.
- Homework once per week – a mixture of vocab learning, reading + writing tasks.
- We subscribe to **Active Learn**, **Linguascope**, **Quizizz**, **Quizlet**, **The Language Gym**, **Atantôt** and **Blooket** to support your learning.

Trip Opportunity: A residential trip to Madrid in Yr9!

Listening  
Reading  
Speaking  
Writing

# GEOGRAPHY

TOPIC	WHAT DO WE STUDY?
Coasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key processes on the coastline?</li> <li>• How do waves and tides work?</li> <li>• What landforms are created on the coast?</li> <li>• What issues do people living at the coast face?</li> <li>• How have people responded to these issues?</li> </ul>
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where is Brazil and what is it like?</li> <li>• Why are tropical rainforests under threat?</li> <li>• How is population distributed in Brazil?</li> <li>• How is Brazil attempting to become more sustainable?</li> </ul>
Should Bishop's Stortford continue to expand?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What stages are there to a fieldwork investigation?</li> <li>• Primary and secondary data collection techniques</li> <li>• Data presentation techniques</li> <li>• How to analyse data through PEEL paragraphs</li> <li>• How to conclude a fieldwork investigation</li> <li>• What are the positives and negatives of different data collection methods</li> </ul>
How is the UK globally connected?	<p>The UK's connections to other countries, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the UK's media globally important?</li> <li>• Where does food come from?</li> <li>• Where do products e.g. clothes and electronics come from?</li> <li>• How does the UK help other countries, including through aid and conflict?</li> <li>• Why are the UK's cities globally important?</li> <li>• How has migration affected the UK?</li> </ul>

# GEOGRAPHY

## Key skills developed:

- Data collection, presentation and analysis.
- Map reading and interpretation.
- Effective verbal and written communication.
- Team work.

## Can lead to careers in:

- Cartography
- Environmental science
- Town planning
- Teaching and lecturing
- Data and risk analysis



## Was the British Empire a force for good?

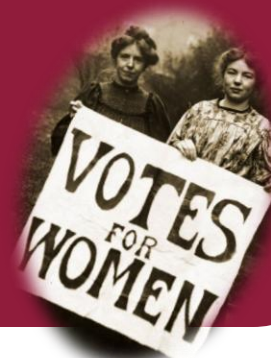
- Why did Britain want an Empire?
- How did the British rule India & Australia
- African Kingdoms, 400-1600AD, Britain and the Slave Trade.
- Local links e.g: Cecil Rhodes & slave owners

## Did migrants to Britain receive a warm welcome or a cold shoulder?

- Causes of migration to Britain over time
- Attitudes towards migrants in Britain
- European Union
- Asylum seekers

## How far has life improved in Britain after 1900?

- Suffrage
- Welfare State
- Equality



# HISTORY

## Key skills developed:

- Critical thinking
- Analysing evidence
- Making informed decisions
- Developing perspective

## Can lead to careers in:

- Journalism
- Museum curation
- Archaeology
- Archiving
- Teaching and lecturing



# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

TOPIC	WHAT DO WE STUDY?
<b>How should humans make moral decisions?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Absolute vs relative morality</li><li>• Divine Command Theory</li><li>• Utilitarianism</li><li>• Situation Ethics</li><li>• Virtue Ethics</li><li>• Ethical egoism</li></ul>
<b>What is religion?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Traditional vs modern forms of religion</li><li>• Functionalist view</li><li>• Marxist views</li><li>• Feminist views</li></ul>
<b>Do we have a duty to promote human rights?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are human rights?</li><li>• Issues of inequality and human rights breaches</li><li>• Religious and non religious teachings on equality</li><li>• Human rights campaigners in the past and today</li><li>• Censorship</li></ul>
<b>Is religion a force for change?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Religion as a conservative force – medical ethics, families and relationships, gender inequality</li><li>• Religion as a force for change – civil rights movement, liberation theology</li></ul>

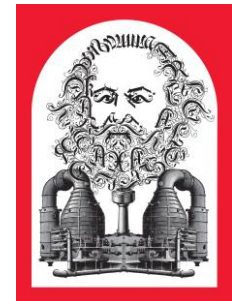
# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## Key skills developed:

- Effective verbal and written communication.
- Analysis and evaluation of arguments.
- Source interpretation.

## Can lead to careers in:

- Archiving
- The charity sector
- Law
- Teaching
- The clergy
- Youth or social work



You will study both ICT and Computer Science in Computer studies. This will give you insight into both BTEC ICT and Computer Science courses available at GCSE

The lessons are structured, 50% theory and 50% practical, this is similar to the lessons at year 10s.

### Topics you'll cover

- Python programming.
- The components that make up the PC and how they all work together.
- Networks
- Software including OS and utility software.
- Interface design
- Spreadsheets.

### Can lead to careers in:

- Cyber security
- Software engineer
- Programmer
- Graphic designer
- Web designer.



# CREATIVE SUBJECTS

# DANCE

## ***What will you study?***

- Set Phrases (this is 2 solos in a Contemporary dance style)
- Duet or Trio based on a theme and style of your choice
- Creation of choreography based on a stimulus given by the exam board

## ***What opportunities will I have?***

- Theatre trips
- Workshops with professionals
- Teaching primary school students
- Visiting MOVE IT Dance convention
- Performance at venues such as the Royal Albert Hall
- Lead Dance clubs
- Become a Dance Ambassador
- Have your own Dance kit
- Festivals and competitions

## ***What could this subject lead to?***

- BTEC Performing Arts L3 (we do this at Birchwood in the 6<sup>th</sup> form!)
- Dance Colleges/ Schools at 16 or 18



### Opportunities to:

- Be a Dance Ambassador – run the year 7&8 Dance Club

## What will I study?

- Gender Stereotypes (Scripted)
- Blackout (Scripted)
- I Don't Like Mondays (Devised)
- Working from a Stimulus (Devised)
- Cookies (Theory)
- The Crucible (Theory and Scripted)

## What Will I Study if I continue on to GCSE?

- 3 Exams
- 1 Devised (Year 10)
- 1 Scripted (Year 11)
- 1 Theory (Year 11)

You will watch a play (Woman in Black) and Read a play (The Crucible) for your Theory exam.



## Opportunities to:

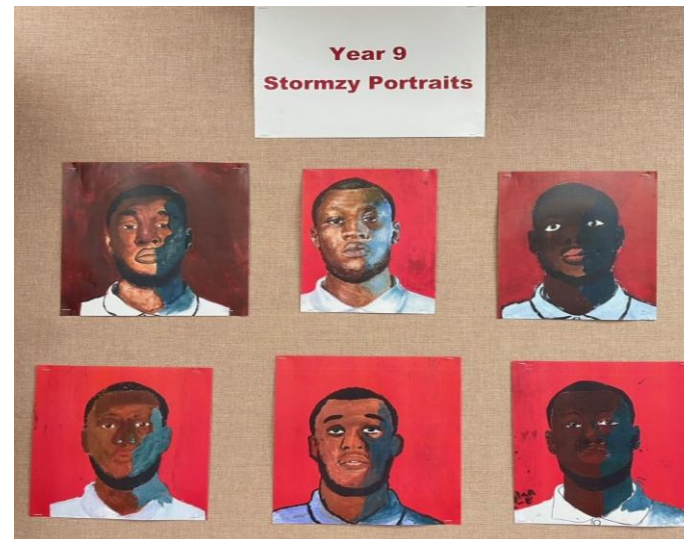
- Be a Drama Ambassador – run the year 7&8 Drama Club
- Trips to watch performances in London and local theatres.

## What will I study?

- Still life drawing, and acrylic painting on canvas.
- Landscape watercolour painting
- Landmarks paper cut, and lino printing.
- Portrait drawing, painting, and stencil cut techniques.
- 3D sculpture techniques.

## What Will I Study if I continue on to GCSE?

- Explore and develop skills in a wide range of media and techniques including:
- Mono printing
- Lino printing
- Acrylic painting
- Watercolour painting.
- Collage.



Year 9 Music is about preparing you for GCSE Music and giving you the opportunity to be best all-round musician you can be.

### **How will we achieve this:**

- You will have more opportunities to perform music of your choice on your instrument, or voice, than in Year 7 or 8. Practical music will be a big part of year 9.
- You will develop a deeper understanding Music ICT and how to compose and create music in different styles including Film, The Waltz and Song Writing.
- You will improve your listening skills and vocab by studying a range of musical styles.
- You will be building on skills, knowledge and understanding already started in years 7 and 8 e.g. listening, composing and performing.

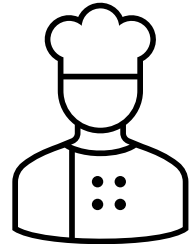
### **Why?**

- Music is a great choice because it is fun. You will be surrounded by like-minded students, who have also opted for Music, and will be building skills that are important for life e.g. communication, creativity, group working, listening, performing – all of which are important for your next steps into GCSE and eventually 6th form, college and work.

## What will you learn about?

The topics below will run throughout the year and link to all practical tasks;

- Hygiene and safety/Nutrition/Diet and good health
- Knife safety – knife skills/precision of knife cuts
- Cleaning down/weighing and measuring/using ovens and equipment safely and hygienically
- Sauce making/batters/cake methods/whipping cream/ragu/setting/gelatinisation
- Filleting fish/de boning chicken
- Making the following from scratch - bread/pasta/pastry
- Improving pace/organisation/following a recipe/timeplans



## What can you do after Year 9?

- Food preparation and nutrition course – careers such as; nutritionist/  
Food technologist/dietitian/food scientist
- Hospitality and catering course – careers such as; chef/events  
management/restaurant management

- Students will work with Timbers, Metals, Polymers, Textiles and Papers & Board.
- They will create several products and explore a range of designing techniques from freehand sketching through to CAD as well as developing research and analysis skills.
- All of this will help to prepare them for if/when they choose D&T as one of their final GCSE Options in Years 10 & 11.
- All aspects of D&T are studied, with no particular specialist focus at this stage.

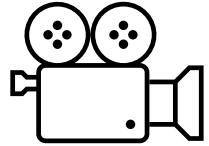
## Possible Careers:

Product Design, Graphic Design,  
Furniture Design, Textile Design,  
Engineering, Surveying,  
Architecture, Teaching as well as  
training and apprenticeships in craft  
related fields.



# FILM & MEDIA STUDIES

You will study both Media and Film studies. This will give you insight into both courses available at GCSE which follow a similar course structure of two exams equating to 70% theory and a coursework component accounting for 30% practical.



## Key Skills developed:

- Developing knowledge of film language (incl. Cinematography, sound, mise-en-scene and editing).
- How to analyse media products
- Critical thinking and how to apply theoretical perspectives.
- How to write a screenplay and film planning
- Film production and editing skills (using Adobe Premiere Pro)
- Desktop publishing skills using Photoshop and Indesign.

## Can lead to careers in:

- Television production
- Online Media
- Advertising and marketing
- Film Marketing
- Journalism and publishing
- Social Media management
- Music Video
- Radio
- Video Game Design

# STEP 1

You will receive an email inviting you to log into the GCSE Options system and choose your subjects. The email will look something like this (it will contain your name, email address and password). Click the link in your email to access the system using these login details.

Dear {{STUDENT\_FIRST\_NAME}} {{STUDENT\_LAST\_NAME}}

Below are your login details for {{SCHOOL\_NAME}}

Email: {{STUDENT\_EMAIL}}

Password: {{PASSWORD}}

{{LINK}}

# STEP 2

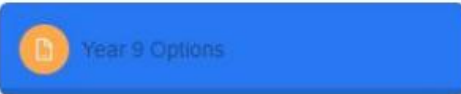
Once you have logged in, click the “continue” button to access your options form.

You will then see a list of available subjects and any rules you need to follow.

When you successfully complete a requirement, a green tick will appear.

You can't submit your form until all criteria have been ticked.

Year 9 Foundation Year 2026/2027



Year 9 Options progress

[Step 1: Year 9 Options](#)



### Select your preferred subjects

Click on the subjects you would like to choose from the list below, you will rank them in order in the next step.  
Any rules you need to follow when choosing are shown on the right.

#### Available subjects

- Art and Design
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Design Technology
- Economics
- English Literature
- French
- Further Mathematics

#### Your choices

1. Art and Design

#### All criteria

- You have made 1 choice.  
You'll need to select 5 more subjects.
- Subjects in this group must be chosen together:  
**Art and Design / Spanish**
- Only one from this group of subjects can be chosen:  
**Art and Design / Biology**

# STEP 3

Once all criteria are ticked, you are then asked to rank your subject choices

The screenshot displays a web interface for subject selection. At the top left, under 'All criteria', there are three green boxes with checkmarks:

- You have made enough **6** choices.
- Subjects in this group must be chosen together:  
**Art and Design / Spanish**
- Only one from this group of subjects can be chosen:  
**Art and Design / Biology**

To the right, a blue button labeled 'Rank your preferences' is visible. Below this, a progress bar shows 'Subject Selection' as a completed step and 'Ranking your preferences' as the current step.

The main content area is titled 'Now it's time to rank your preferences' and includes the instruction: 'Please re-arrange the subjects so the one you MOST want to do is at the top, and the one you could live without is at the bottom.'

On the left, under 'Your choices', a list of subjects is shown:

1. Art and Design
2. English Literature
3. Spanish
4. German
5. Further Mathematics
6. Design Technology

On the right, under 'Instructions', there are two lines:

- ← The subject you want to do the MOST
- ← The subject you want to do the SECOND-MOST

A yellow callout box with arrows pointing to the first and second items in the 'Your choices' list contains the text: 'Drag and drop your subjects into the order you would prefer - put the subject you most want to do at the top of the list'.

At the bottom right, another yellow callout box with an arrow pointing to a blue 'Submit your choices' button contains the text: 'Once you are happy, click to submit your choices'.

A 'Back' button is located at the bottom left.

# STEP 4

## SUBMITTING YOUR CHOICES

We will now send an email to your parents to notify them of the choices you have made. Below is an example of what it will look like:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your child, Student 1 A1 has sent us their options subject choices for Birchwood High School, and we are writing to get your confirmation that you are happy with these choices.

In ranked order (starting with their top priority choice), they have chosen:

Before the deadline, you can log back into your form and make changes to your choices if you change your mind.

**Don't leave it to the last  
minute to submit your  
choices!**