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YEAR 9 OPTIONS

MOVE FROM 4 OPTIONS TO 3 GCSE OPTIONS

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TEAM

Name	Role
Mr Persaud	Chair of Governors
Mr Wadley	Vice Chair of Governors
Mr Jenkins	Secondary School Effectiveness Adviser for Curriculum
Mr Persand	Deputy Headteacher Curriculum development, Raising achievement
Mr Green	Assistant Headteacher and in charge of Y9-10 Options
Mr Modi	Assistant Headteacher and in charge of Y9
Mrs Hall	Head of Y9

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TEAM

Name	Role
Mr Ismail	Deputy CEO City of London Academies Trust
Mr Borcherds	HFL Curriculum modelling consultant
Mr Weeds	OFSTED inspector and Challenge Partners Lead
	Senior Leadership Team Curriculum Leaders

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GCSE CORE CURRICULUM

Mathematics
English Language
English Literature
Science 1
Science 2
Core PE
Culture Society Ethics
Life Skills

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GCSE EXAMINED SUBJECTS

1. Mathematics
2. English Language
3. English Literature
4. Science 1
5. Science 2
6. Option 1
7. Option 2
8. Option 3

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OPTION 1

1. History
2. Geography
3. French
4. Spanish
5. Computer Science
6. Separate Science

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OPTION 2 & OPTION 3

1. History
2. Geography
3. French
4. Spanish
5. Drama
6. Music
7. Business Studies
8. Psychology
9. Child development
10. Media studies
11. Hospitality & Catering
12. Art
13. 3D Design
14. PE
15. Dance
16. Computer Science
17. Separate science

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Key points

Further Maths GCSE
Languages e.g. Polish, Greek etc
Separate science
Extra-curricular offer

MOVE TO 3 GCSE OPTIONS

- Best outcomes for students to support with next steps

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GCSE GRADES

Student 1 - Grades

9
8
9
8
9
8
9
9

Average Point Score (APS)
69/8
8.63

Student 2 - Grades

9
8
7
6
9
9
8
8
9

Average Point Score (APS)
73/9
8.11

Student 3 - Grades

9
9
9
8
8
8
8
8
5

Impact of grade 5

A LEVEL GRADES

Student 1 – A level Grades

A* = 56 points

A* = 56 points

A* = 56 points

Student 2 – A level Grades

A* = 56 points

A = 48 points

A = 48 points

B = 40 points

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3 GCSE OPTIONS

- More time to study the 3 other options, Maths, English
- Breadth of curriculum in Y7-9 - Move from 3 year GCSE to 2 year GCSE
- Curriculum much more intensive – Degree level moved to A level and A level moved to GCSE
- Fewer exams to support student wellbeing
- Lower need for after-school intervention due to increase in time for other subjects.

3 GCSE OPTIONS

- Curriculum review recommendation Nov. 2025

"England is by no means an international outlier in providing national exams at 16, and these remain important for discerning routes for 16–19. However, ***it is an outlier with regard to the volume of this assessment.*** *The amount of time that young people spend in exams at Key Stage 4 has become excessive…* ***time spent on them at GCSE level should be reduced,*** *through a subject-by-subject approach where this can be done without materially affecting reliability and efficacy."*

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Student Wellbeing concerns

- 85% of UK students report experiencing exam anxiety during exam periods, with around 1 in 4 describing it as nearly unbearable. Only 4% said they *never* felt anxious about exams. (Save My Exams)
- 71% of students said they did not seek help for their exam anxiety (survey of 1,000 UK students). (Education Today)
- 77% of secondary teachers reported seeing mental health issues linked to exam anxiety in Year 11 students. (ASCL Survey)

Student Wellbeing concerns

- 74% of teachers said some students needed alternative arrangements due to exam anxiety. (ASCL Survey)
- 47% of teachers observed students arriving or leaving the exam hall in distress. (ASCL Survey)
- 65% of schools reported students *not attending* because of anxiety around GCSE exams. (ASCL Survey)

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Student Wellbeing concerns

- 28% of students were withdrawn from GCSE exams due to anxiety, according to teachers surveyed. (ascl.org.uk)
- In a separate earlier survey of 1,000 16–17-year-olds, 51% felt so anxious before exams they feared they might not be able to sit them (39% of boys, 63% of girls). (teachingpersonnel.com)
- That same poll found 48% felt so stressed they thought they might be sick, and 51% had cried because of exam stress. (teachingpersonnel.com)

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Student Wellbeing concerns

- More than 63% of 15–18-year-olds said they struggled to cope in the lead-up to GCSEs and A-levels, with 56% reporting trouble sleeping. (YoungMinds)
- From that research, 15% stopped going to school because of exam stress, and 13% had suicidal thoughts linked to exam pressure. (YoungMinds)
- The same study found 13% had self-harmed and 1 in 4 had panic attacks during the exam period. (YoungMinds)

3 GCSE OPTIONS

- Curriculum analysis from County curriculum modelling consultant

3 GCSE OPTIONS

- Curriculum analysis from HFL's curriculum modelling team 2023-2024 data

Number of Options at Key Stage 4 (Year 10)

Option Choices	Number of Schools	% of Schools
3	10	17%
4	47	81%
5	1	2%
Total	58	

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3 GCSE OPTIONS

- Curriculum analysis from HFL's curriculum modelling team 2025-2026 data

Number of Options at Key Stage 4 (Year 10)

Option Choices	Number of Schools	% of Schools
3	15	25%
4	44	73%
5	1	2%
Total	60	

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Q&A