

Bedminster Down School

Options Information *For KS4 Courses Starting In September 2023*

Belief, Determination, Success



**BEDMINSTER DOWN
SCHOOL**



Dear Student

Welcome to our options booklet. I hope you enjoy reading it and that you enjoy choosing your options for next year.

Your time to choose!

Year 9 is a very exciting time for students. Probably for the first time since you've been at school, you can choose what to study in year 10 and 11. You are able to select courses that will be relevant to you in your future life, that you're good at and that you enjoy.

There are some subjects that all students have to study because they are so important in everyday life. They are English, Maths and Science. Students will take a total of 5 GCSEs in these subjects. Then you can choose 4 more subjects from a very wide range of courses.

We call this the 'options' process because you have options or choices. This is a significant step on the road to becoming an adult and thinking about what kind of study or work you might want to do at age 16+.

This booklet

This booklet is full of useful information to help you choose your options. You should **read it carefully** and talk about it with your teachers, your parent(s) or carer(s). Don't rush it – these choices are important.

The details of every course on offer can be found towards the back of this booklet, alphabetically listed.

Top Tips

DO ✓

- Think about what you'd like to do in your future. Make sure your courses are a good match for what you want to do.
- If you don't know what you'd like to do in the future, keep your options open by choosing subjects that let you go into a range of different kinds of work or study.
- Read the advice in this booklet and discuss your options: parents, teachers, colleges, employers can all help. Do some research. Your choices matter!
- Think about whether you prefer coursework or exams and choose subjects that suit the way you like to study.

Don't ✗

- Don't choose a subject just because a friend is choosing it. This is your future. Choose what's right for you.
- Don't choose a subject just because you find it easy. It's important to think about what you're good at, but also think about what you need.
- Don't choose a course you won't enjoy. Enjoyment is important.
- Don't rush this! Take your time.

What is the timeline for the options process?

Dates - 2023	Key event
19 Jan 2023	Year 9 Parents' Evening – an opportunity for staff to share information and answer questions about KS4 courses and to encourage students towards suitable courses
30 Jan	Year 9 Options Assembly – Courtney Mitchell (Assistant Principal) will introduce Year 9 Options to students
6 Feb	Options booklet and Options form shared with students
6 – 10 Feb	Tutor time activities focused on Options subjects, the Options process and how Options link to post-16 destinations
9 Feb	Options Information Evening – Courtney Mitchell will present to parents/carers about the Options process and answer any questions
20 – 24 Feb	Year 9 reports are sent home
20 Feb – 1 March	Tutor time activities will focus on 1-2-1 meetings between Year 9 students and their tutors, who will support students in selecting their Options
1 March	Deadline for Options forms to be returned to tutors

What is the core curriculum?

In addition to English Literature, English Language, Maths and Science, all students still have to attend lessons in PE, PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and RE. Details of these subjects aren't included here as there are no exams in them but if you'd like to find out more, please see the school website.

How many subjects can I choose?

When you combine the core curriculum and the options subjects, you will study for 9 qualifications. These will be GCSE or equivalent.

In addition to the core curriculum, all students will study one or more of French, Geography or History. We ask that you choose three other subjects plus two reserves.

Types of Qualifications

What are vocational qualifications?

These courses are equivalent in value to GCSE but are aimed at preparation for the workplace. They are assessed by exam and by producing project work throughout the course. The majority of the vocational courses we offer are through organisations called VCERT, Cambridge National and BTEC.

How are GCSEs assessed?

GCSE courses are examined only at the end of the course, normally the summer of Year 11. Some subjects also have coursework elements.

How have GCSE grades changed?

All GCSEs in England have now switched from alphabetical to number grading. The table below shows the equivalences of the old letter grades and the new numerical scores.

Old letter grade	New number grade	
A*	8 and 9	
A	7	
High B	6	
High C	5	A 'strong' pass, needed for many A Level courses.
Low C	4	A 'standard' pass, needed for most college courses.
D	3	
E	2	
F and G	1	

Choosing your options

On the next few pages is some guidance to help you make your choices. Please read it very carefully.

Am I guaranteed to get the subjects I choose?

We try to give as many students as possible their first choices. However, we cannot promise that students will be given the courses they choose because:

1. Some courses may not attract enough applications to run.
2. Some courses may attract greater numbers than we have staff and facilities to provide for.
3. Some subject combinations may not be possible when we put the new timetable together.

We do not operate a 'first come, first served' system for allocating courses.

Am I able to pick any courses that I want?

The majority of our courses are open to everyone. However, there are a small number of exceptions:

- Because of the similarities between the two courses, you can only choose one of **Art** and **Art Textiles**.
- Because of the similarities between the two courses, you can only choose one of **Computer Science** and **ICT**.
- Due to the high level of mathematical challenge involved in the **Computer Science** course, this subject is only open to students who are being entered for higher tier maths (students in 9ab/Ma1 – Miss Knight's class, and 9cd/Ma1 – Miss Stock's class). If you aren't in one of these groups but you have a keen interest in computers or want a career in ICT, you should choose the ICT course instead.

Inclusion and Learning Needs

Some students may need additional support with their studies. The IPS Team will contact you directly to discuss this if we would recommend any alterations to your KS4 curriculum.

What is the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) and is it important?

The English Baccalaureate is made up of subjects that are highly regarded by universities and employers. Research has shown that studying EBacc subjects will help give a student the widest range of options in future study. The subjects are:

- English
- Mathematics
- Two Science subjects
- History or Geography
- A modern foreign language

The English Baccalaureate is not awarded as a separate certificate, but it is achieved if a student achieves a grade 5 in all these subjects.

Advice and Guidance

As part of our Options process, all students will have a 1-2-1 meeting with their tutor. We recommend that students also speak to:

- Their subject teachers
- Mr Harris or our independent careers advisor
- Potential post-16 providers (eg check out the websites of colleges or apprenticeship organisations)

How do I fill out the form?

All students will be given a paper options form by their tutor. All of the information you need about how to fill in the options form is clearly explained on the form itself. Don't rush it. Take your time and make sure you have had all of the support you need before handing your form back to your tutor.

If you lose your form, please see Ms Parsons in reprographics to get a replacement.

Frequently Asked Questions

I want to do a particular subject at university or at college. Which subjects should I pick?

Different universities and colleges have different entry requirements and may prefer different combinations of subjects at KS4. The most important thing to do is to look at the website of the colleges or universities themselves. Most are very good at explaining the subjects that would be best for you to study.

The key thing is to make sure that, if you have a particular career in mind, you take the time to understand how the choices you make now will impact on your ability to access that career. Please ask your tutor or senior staff for advice.

Which subject is the hardest?

Every subject at KS4 is a challenge – there are no 'easy' options! However, some courses have more coursework than others, and this can suit people who would prefer to work steadily over two years and have fewer final exams. The details of the subjects and whether they include coursework are on the next pages.

Do you have to do Triple Science if you want to study Biology, Chemistry or Physics at A-Level post-16?

No. Triple Science will give you a better grounding in the separate science disciplines, but you will not be prevented from going on to A-Level study in the sciences if you don't opt for Triple Science as one of your options.

If I pick the same subjects as my friends, we will be in the same classes in Year 10 and 11.

We normally run more than one class in each subject, typically up to five classes in our most popular options. This means you are unlikely to be with your friends. Besides, it is vital that your options choices are made based on the subjects you enjoy and that will give you the post-16 opportunities that matter to you.

Don't choose a subject just because your friend is choosing it!

Who can I speak to for more advice?

Further information and support with subject options and choices is offered through our careers team in the Careers Hub; appointments with our independent careers adviser can be booked via email – rdennis@bedminsterdown.org.uk or sharris@bedminsterdown.org.uk

Options subjects

The following pages give details about the Options courses that we offer. For each course, our Curriculum Team Leaders have provided a brief summary. You can also see the full list of courses, and follow links to the full course specifications put together by the exam boards, using the table below.

Subject	Specification	Qualification Type
Art	60180882	GCSE – AQA
Art Textiles	60180882	GCSE – AQA
Biology (Triple Science)	60187529	GCSE – AQA
Chemistry (Triple Science)	60187578	GCSE – AQA
Child Development	60370580	Vocational – BTEC First Award
Computer Science	6018355X	GCSE – OCR
Dance	60370543	Vocational – BTEC Technical Award
Drama	60370543	Vocational – BTEC Technical Award
Engineering	60370063	Vocational – NCFE Technical Award
French	60181576	GCSE – AQA
Geography	60184103	GCSE – AQA
Health and Fitness	60370075	Vocational – NCFE Technical Award
Health and Social Care	6037116X	Vocational – OCR Cambridge National Certificate
History	60182179	GCSE – AQA
Hospitality and Catering	60370221	Vocational – WJEC Award
ICT	60370506	Vocational – BTEC Technical Award
Music	60370555	Vocational – BTEC Technical Award
Photography	60180882	GCSE – AQA
Physics (Triple Science)	60187517	GCSE – AQA
Religious Studies	60188790	GCSE – WJEC

Art – GCSE (Exam board – AQA)

The course is ideal for students who enjoy a variety of 2D and 3D artistic processes. The projects set will explore topics that will enable students to experience a variety of materials and techniques. Each student will create an independent body of art work which will showcase creative and personal responses to their own ideas. Projects set can include the use of some drawing, painting, photography, print making, stencil spray painting, sculpture, graphic design and computer aided art. The course will ideally suit those students who are already have a passion for drawing and designing. A strong and confident drawing ability is very important to explore your ideas at various stages of a project. It is important that students complete artwork in their own time we will make art rooms available regularly after school for students to work on their portfolios and to use the art resources.

Coursework – 60% Students will have to complete coursework units within the first year. In the second year students will refine and prepare for the exam.	Practical Exam – 40% At the end of the course students will compete a 10 hour practical exam.
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Art Textiles – GCSE (AQA)

Fashion Textile Design introduces pupils to a variety of creative and stimulating experiences and techniques. Students will develop their ability to actively engage in a variety of processes within the Fashion Textiles. They will build creative skills to produce pieces of art work as inspiration for the development of their fashion textiles work. This will include both traditional and new technologies and students will use sketch books and portfolios to support and evidence their work. This course is a strong foundation for further progression to art and design textiles related courses such as A Level Art and design, fashion, beauty and styling and enhanced vocational and career pathways.

Coursework – 60% Students will have to complete coursework units within the first year. In the second year students will refine and prepare for the exam.	Practical Exam – 40% At the end of the course students will compete a 10 hour practical exam.
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Childcare – Vocational (BTEC)

The Childcare Tech Award gives learners the opportunity to develop applied knowledge and understanding of child development and growth up to the age of five years. We look at how children learn through play and how meeting the needs of individual children will support their development, play and learning. We look at the different reasons why children may need support in order to thrive, both physical and social factors. We consider how play promotes children’s learning and development.

The Childcare Tech Award is a vocational qualification which can lead into either A Levels or other vocational qualifications at level 2 or level 3.

Coursework – 60% Component 1 (Children’s Growth and Development) and Component 2 (Learning Through Play) are both assessed through coursework.	Exam – 40% Component 3 (Supporting Children to Play, Learn and Develop) is assessed through a two hour controlled assessment.
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Computer Science – GCSE (OCR)

In a world where computers are used every day, this subject allows you to explore what makes them work, the evolution of technology as well as how to write computer programs. You will learn an abundance of skills which are not only directly related to the assessment in this subject but can help with others as well including logical thinking, extended writing and programming. There is a strong mathematical and scientific component to this course, so a grounding in those subjects is important. The course is assessed through exam papers and a twenty hour programming project.

<p>Paper 1 – 50% 90 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How a computer works • CPU, memory and storage • Networks • Ethics and laws 	<p>Paper 2 – 50% 90 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algorithms and programming • Binary mathematics and conversion to numbers • Flowcharts 	<p>NEA (Non-examined assessment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam board created project • Written documentation must be produced as well as a program written in Python
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Dance – Vocational (BTEC)

You will look at different dance styles including contemporary, hip hop and musical theatre. You will study professional work by Boy Blue and from The Lion King – you can see these works on Youtube. There are three components, which are assessed by your teacher, and externally by a visiting examiner who will watch your final performance. Each component includes performance and written work. A good dance student will have good descriptive writing skills, be able to evaluate their performance and will keep a detailed written log of their developments. You will need to participate in practical workshops in bare feet. Students on this course will be expected to work with everyone and must be ready to perform in front of others.

<p>Component 1 - Exploring the Performing Arts. You will examine the work of performing arts professionals and document this through coursework and practical work.</p>	<p>Component 2 - Developing Skills and Techniques in Performing Arts. You will develop their skills and techniques through both practical and written work.</p>	<p>Component 3 - Responding to a Brief. You will work as a group to create a piece of theatre, based on a performance brief.</p>
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Drama – Vocational (BTEC)

You will cover various topics including naturalistic theatre, devising and different theatrical genres made popular by a host of different theatre practitioners. You will develop your skills through working with other students to create performances, as well as independently. There are three components: two of which are assessed by your teacher, and the third externally marked by the exam board. Each component includes performance and written work. A good drama student will have good descriptive written skills, will be able to evaluate their own performance work and will be able to keep a log of their developments. Students on this course will be expected to work with everyone and must be ready to perform in front of others, both during lesson and during possible concerts or other events.

<p>Component 1 - Exploring the Performing Arts. You will examine the work of performing arts professionals and document this through coursework and practical work.</p>	<p>Component 2 - Developing Skills and Techniques in Performing Arts. You will develop their skills and techniques through both practical and written work.</p>	<p>Component 3 - Responding to a Brief. You will work as a group to create a piece of theatre, based on a performance brief.</p>
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Engineering – Vocational (NCFE)

This qualification introduces students to engineering through a vocational and project based course. The course is aimed at students who wish to pursue a career in the engineering sector or go on to further study. It is appropriate for students who enjoy learning through hands-on experiences and through classroom based content which is directly related to those experiences. The study of engineering is the application of maths and science to solve real world problems. This involves an understanding of the different disciplines of engineering and how they have shaped products and the modern world. Students will be able to read technical drawings, select appropriate materials along with tools and machinery, and know how to carry out practical tasks, working in a safe manner.

<p>Unit 1 – external exam – 40% A variety of question styles will be used, including multiple choice, short answer and extended response questions. You will be assessed on content from across the course.</p>	<p>Unit 2 – controlled assessment – 60% You will complete a synoptic project, which will be externally set by the exam board. You will develop your their skills in all aspects of the internal assessment before creating a final project piece.</p>
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French – GCSE (AQA)

GCSE French will continue to build your skills in communicating with others in French. We cover a range of material including topical issues for young people such as social media, peer pressures, school and family life. We include themes designed to use different time frames such as discussing your plans for when you leave school or aspirations later in life as well as past events such as holidays and work experience. We look at the wider French-speaking world outside of just mainland France. French GCSE encourages you to use greater accuracy when communicating in French, as well as a wider range of vocabulary and expression than that used at KS3. Good linguists are confident communicators who enjoy a challenge.

<p>Reading – external exam – 25% You will respond to a stimulus through short answers. You will then also complete a brief translation from French into English.</p>	<p>Writing – external exam – 25% You will respond to a stimulus through writing short answers in French. You will then also write some extended pieces.</p>
<p>Speaking – internal exam – 25% You will complete a role play, with your teacher, and then respond to a photo stimulus. You will then take part in some general conversation in French.</p>	<p>Listening – external exam – 25% This takes the form of listening to a spoken French soundclip and then answering multiple choice and short answer questions.</p>

Geography – GCSE (AQA)

Geography allows you to travel the world from your classroom, exploring case studies in the UK, other higher income countries, newly emerging economies and lower income countries. You will study a wide range of current issues facing our world including climate change, natural hazards, poverty, deprivation, shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainability. You will also study topics that are closer to home, such as the UK's landscapes, the opportunities and challenges that Bristol faces and weather hazards. A strong geographer is world aware, a capable writer and confident in their use of data. They can recall a range of evidence learned in the course and apply it to unfamiliar contexts. They are able to consider their role within society and consider differing viewpoints, values and attitudes when reaching a decision.

<p>Exam 1 – Living with the physical environment – 35% – 90 minutes Natural hazards, the living world, physical landscapes in the UK, geographical skills</p>	<p>Exam 2 – Challenges in the human environment – 35% – 90 minutes Urban issues, the changing economic world, resource management, geographical skills</p>	<p>Exam 3 – Geographical applications – 30% – 75 minutes Issue evaluation, fieldwork, geographical skills</p>
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Health and Fitness – Vocational (NCFE)

This is a theory-based qualification that is an excellent starting point for students interested in pursuing either further education or a career in sport and leisure. The course content includes the body systems (muscular, skeletal, cardiovascular and respiratory) and training methods. This course is aimed at students who have an interest in fitness, training and how the body helps us to perform. There are no practical marks on this course, so **the majority of lessons will be classroom based**. This course therefore does not involve much practical PE – all students will continue to do practical PE as part of our core curriculum. Practical ability is therefore not vital for this course, but an enjoyment of training and fitness work is important.

Unit 1 – Exam 2 hours – 40% Covers content from across the course. This will be taken at the end of Y11.	Unit 2 – Coursework – 60% You will design and undertake a fitness training programme, including evaluating its effectiveness.
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Health and Social Care – Vocational (OCR)

Health & Social Care explores the values behind effective care as well as the breadth of providers and the jobs in this sector. You will learn to understand the importance and relevance of the sector and the crucial work it does in supporting vulnerable people in our society. The ability to link theory to practical scenarios is vital as in addition to the exam there are two coursework modules which require lots of research. You will be required to work independently on the coursework tasks using different sources to produce work related to the role of Health & Social Care practitioners. This course has a clear and well-trodden path into employment in the sector.

Unit 1 – Principles of care in health and social care settings Exam – 40%	Unit 2 – Supporting individuals through life events 30% Coursework Set Assignment	Unit 3 – Creative and therapeutic activities 30% OR RO35: Health promotion campaigns 30% Coursework set assignment
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History – GCSE (AQA)

History tells us who we are, where we came from and how we are connected. Without studying history, we cannot understand where we are now or where we are going in the future. Studying history often ignites a passion, a curiosity and a determination in students. A passion to ensure that wrongs in the past are not repeated in the future. Historians never stop questioning. They question why things happen, they question how they can truly know what happened. They even question other Historians! This ability to question and think critically encourages confidence to communicate ideas and challenge injustice.

Paper 1 – Exam 2 hours – 50% Period Study: Germany, 1890–1945: Democracy and dictatorship. Conflict and Tension the inter-war years, 1918–1939 Wider World Study.	Paper 2 – Exam 2 hours – 50% Health & the People from c1000 to the present day. Elizabethan England, 1492-1522. British Depth Study.
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Hospitality and Catering – Vocational (WJEC)

If you are interested in food preparation then this is the course for you. You will learn about the commercial hospitality and catering environment and develop skills and knowledge that will prepare you for employment within this sector or as a foundation for further study in this area. You will focus on how hospitality and catering providers operate and the different types of services they provide as well as health, safety and food safety in the hospitality and catering industry. There is also a significant practical element to the course which will build on skills required for the practical exam in Year 11.

<p>Unit 1 – The Hospitality and catering industry – External exam – 40% You will apply your knowledge by considering all aspects of the Hospitality and Catering Industry.</p>	<p>Unit 2 – Hospitality and catering in action – Internal assessment – 60% You will apply your knowledge to plan nutritious meals. You will use a variety of skills and techniques to prepare, cook and present dishes and evaluate your cooking skills.</p>
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ICT – Vocational (BTEC)

We all now carry a computer in our pocket and nearly every job requires the employee to know how to use a computer. This course has a hands on approach on how to use everyday software that will be required in the real world. You will familiarise yourself with commonly used software and explain your actions as you use those systems. Each component of coursework requires a thorough piece of written work to accompany what you have been asked to create. You will justify the decisions you have made throughout the course.

<p>Unit 1 – Coursework – 30% <i>Exploring user interface design – PowerPoint</i> A – Investigate user interface design for individuals and organisations B – Use project planning techniques to plan and design a user interface C – Develop and review a user interface</p>	<p>Unit 2 – Coursework – 30% <i>Collecting, presenting and interpreting data – Excel</i> A – Investigate the role and impact of using data on individuals and organisations B – Create a dashboard using data manipulation tools C – Draw conclusions and review data presentation methods</p>	<p>Unit 3 – Exam – 40% Effective digital working practices</p>
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Music – Vocational (BTEC)

You will cover various genres of music from the 1960s to the present day. You will work with other students to create performances, as well as working independently. The course includes three components, two of which are assessed by your teacher and the third, externally marked by the exam board. Each component includes performance work and written work. A good music student will have good descriptive writing skills, will be able to evaluate their own performance work and will be able to keep a log of their developments. Students on this course will be expected to already have the basic skills of playing a chosen instrument (including singing) and must be ready to perform in front of others, both during lesson and during concerts.

<p>Component 1 – Exploring Music Products and Styles. You will explore the techniques used in the creation of different musical styles, through both written and practical work.</p>	<p>Component 2 – Music Skills Development. You will develop two musical disciplines through practical tasks, while documenting their progress.</p>	<p>Component 3 – Responding to a Brief. You will develop and present music in response to a given music brief.</p>
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Photography – GCSE (AQA)

The GCSE course in Digital photography is designed to encourage a creative approach to taking photographs. Students will complete a range of coursework units within the first year, with the second year spent refining their coursework and preparing for their final exam. Within the Digital Photography course, students will learn the key skills of composition and lighting. They will also use the computer software Photoshop to edit and develop their own pictures. The course will ideally suit those students who already have a passion for taking photographs. We will make equipment including digital SLR cameras, Photoshop and our IT suites available, including after school, for students to work on their portfolios. This course will prepare you for photography at A-level or to pursue a career in the Art & Design industry.

<p>Coursework – 60% Students will have to complete coursework units within the first year. In the second year students will refine and prepare for the exam.</p>	<p>Practical Exam – 40% At the end of the course students will compete a 10 hour practical exam.</p>
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Religious Studies – GCSE (WJEC)

Philosophers have debated life's ultimate questions for centuries; studying Religious Studies at GCSE is your chance to join the discussion! This course allows you to develop written and oral skills of explanation, analysis and evaluation through an exploration of different moral issues and beliefs. You will learn about the impact of religion in the past and examine how these beliefs continue to shape the world around us, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. You will study the themes of relationships, life and death, good and evil and human rights, along with the beliefs and teachings of Christianity and Islam.

<p>External Exam 1 – 50% – 2 hours Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World</p>	<p>External Exam 2 – 25% – 1 hour Study of Religion (Christianity)</p>	<p>External Exam 3 – 25% – 1 hour Study of Religion (Islam)</p>
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Triple Science – GCSE (AQA)

If you select separate sciences then instead of getting two GCSEs in combined science, you will get a GCSE in each of biology, chemistry and physics. Instead of spending 10 lessons per fortnight studying science, you will do science for 15 lessons per fortnight, with a different teacher for each of the three disciplines. This course is therefore suitable for those real budding scientists who have a keen interest in how the world all fits together. The course takes the foundations of biology, chemistry and physics (covered in combined science) and develops the understanding even further by exploring how those fundamental ideas are applied to advanced scientific concepts such as 'how loudspeakers work', 'the chemical production of ammonia' and 'how to clone species'. Triple science is built upon the fundamentals of science and contains some more challenging concepts and some additional mathematical skills.

<p>Biology Science in the core curriculum involves 6 exams, each lasting for 75 minutes. If you opt for triple science, then in biology you will sit 2 exams, each lasting for 105 minutes</p>	<p>Chemistry Science in the core curriculum involves 6 exams, each lasting for 75 minutes. If you opt for triple science, then in chemistry you will sit 2 exams, each lasting for 105 minutes</p>	<p>Physics Science in the core curriculum involves 6 exams, each lasting for 75 minutes. If you opt for triple science, then in physics you will sit 2 exams, each lasting for 105 minutes</p>
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