



Sandwell Academy

Key Stage 4 Curriculum
2017 -2020

**Information for
Parents and Students**

March 2017
Prepared by G Smith

What is Key Stage 4 about?

Key Stage 4 usually starts in Year 10, but at Sandwell Academy students start in Year 9. It covers the 13-16 age range and is a very important phase of education.

Students start earlier so that they can choose some of the subjects they enjoy most, which will increase interest and help them to achieve success. Subject teachers then have the opportunity to start examination courses earlier, which gives students more time to prepare for examinations enabling us to maximise success.

The qualifications students achieve during this time will influence strongly their course opportunities and career prospects in the 16–18 phase. The policy of the Academy is to 'provide courses that will give students the best opportunities to succeed.'

All students will receive a balanced educational provision with the opportunity to achieve a range of GCSEs and vocational qualifications.

With the support of parents, we can expect a great deal from each individual student. Outcomes will vary, but you can be sure that teachers will be supporting students to achieve the best that they can.

The Senior Management Team will keep the predicted grades for students under regular review and work with parents if there is any risk of students under-achieving.

During Key Stage 4 more homework can be expected. Students are advised to plan their time carefully so that they can continue to take full advantage of extracurricular activities provided during Session 3.

The Session 3 programme helps students achieve through targeted revision and study support. All students will be expected to attend at least one Session 3 per week. Students will be informed on a regular basis which Session 3 they should attend.

What Qualifications are available?

The Academy has worked hard to provide a range of qualifications to suit all needs. This includes both vocational qualifications and the traditional GCSE courses. These are all level 2 courses.

English Baccalaureate

In 2010 the Government introduced an English Baccalaureate which students are strongly encouraged to follow. It involves studying five GCSE subject areas: English, Mathematics, Science, a Modern Foreign Language and either Geography or History. It is likely that successful attainment of these subjects at grades 9 - 5 will enhance a student's application to university and it will be recognised by employers. The Academy therefore encourages students, where appropriate, to achieve this qualification via the curriculum that is offered.

BTEC – This is a national vocational qualification.

This qualification recognises student competence in a work related area. Assessment is largely through portfolios of evidence, with a final externally assessed unit. Courses are more practical and students achieve a First Award equivalent to 1 GCSE.

GCSE - These are the traditional examinations known as the General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Assessment in all GCSE qualifications is now **Linear**. This means that all examinations and submission of marks happens at the end of the course. Some aspects of course are examined as **Controlled Assessments**. This means that Students prepare and research over a period of time, before completing an extended task under formal exam conditions.

Students who achieve high GCSE or BTEC grades can progress onto AGCE (Advanced General Certificate of Education), Applied AGCE or BTEC National qualifications after age 16. These are all level 3 courses.

Students must realise that most jobs, places in training or further education require students to achieve five GCSEs at grade 9 - 5 or the vocational equivalent.

Core subjects

Students will be taught in groups that will reflect their work to date and how well they have performed in the end of Key Stage 3 SATs in year 8.

GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature

As part of a combined course, students will study both English Language and English Literature following the Edexcel syllabus. Throughout the course, students will study a range of literary and non-fiction texts, as well as analyse features of language and writing styles. Each route is assessed by external examination at the end of the course.

Students are encouraged to read widely, both literature and non-literary texts (newspaper and information texts). Students are also encouraged to buy their own copies of set texts and plays so that they can re-read and revise them in preparation for the examinations.

GCSE Mathematics

All students will follow the Edexcel Linear GCSE Mathematics at either Higher or Foundation level, as is applicable to individual student's ability. Some students will study Mathematics at entry level if appropriate. All students are encouraged and expected to exhibit problem solving skills and strategies.

Assessment involves 3 external exams, 2 calculator papers and a non-calculator paper. Higher tier will be graded from 9 to 4. Foundation tier will be graded from 5 to 1. All papers are equally weighted and can contain any of the topics from the Mathematics curriculum. Students will take the 3 papers only once (at the end of Year 11).

GCSE Science

Most students will study GCSE Combined Science Trilogy, which is equivalent of 2 GCSE qualifications. Combined Science GCSE includes elements of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and practical skills. Examples of topics studied include rates of reactions and bonding in Chemistry, the heart, lungs and cell structure in Biology, and forces, energy and electricity in Physics.

Those students who have demonstrated a talent for Science will have the opportunity to study Physics, Chemistry and Biology in greater depth, resulting in the award of 3 GCSE Science qualifications. Students who would like to be considered for this option need to choose Triple Science as an option in option block 2.

GCSE Spanish (for some students)

Languages are important, both in our everyday lives and in the world of work and leisure. A broad range of topics are studied as part of the GCSE Spanish qualification including Lifestyle, Leisure, Home and Environment and Work and Education. Students will also study aspects of Spanish literature, cinema and art.

Skills will be developed in writing, speaking, listening and reading and these aspects of the language will be assessed at the end of Year 11. Each component is equally weighted comprising 25% of the marks.

What about the choices of subjects I need to make?

Alphabetical list of subjects

GCSE Art

Course breakdown: Unit 1 60% coursework. Unit 2 40% practical examination.

This is a traditional and broad art and design course, whereby students explore all forms of art; drawing, printmaking, ceramics, photography, digital image manipulation and so on.

Year 9: Across 2 projects and a series of workshops students will be introduced to a variety of experiences exploring two and/or three dimensional media techniques and processes including both traditional and new technologies. Students will also take part in an Educational visit to an Art Gallery where they will explore current exhibitions.

Year 10: students continue with their portfolio and complete a further two projects to develop their skills in sculpture, drawing, painting and mixed media. They will explore the work of contemporary artists to inform and inspire their own work. Students who are ahead of schedule and who are working to their target grades will be challenged further by starting an additional project in which they will complete in Year 11. This has enabled past students to gain further marks and experience.

Year 11: students follow a directed path in the first term and have the opportunity to improve upon previous coursework or complete an extension project. In January, students will begin Unit 2, the externally set task (set by the exam board). Students will select a starting point from a range set on the exam paper. After a period of preparatory work, usually 12 weeks, students will create a final response to their chosen starting point under exam conditions; they have 10 hours split over two days to create their final piece.

GCSE 3D Art

Course breakdown: Unit 1 60% coursework. Unit 2 40% practical examination.

The main focus of the course is the 3-dimensional experimentations and outcomes, mainly in ceramics and cardboard construction. Students will also develop skills in, drawing, printmaking, photography, digital image manipulation during the designing process before they make the sculptural outcome.

Year 9: students explore materials and develop skills in the use of cardboard and clay whilst completing two projects in the year. Students will develop strong design skills and be introduced to the work of various 3D designers and crafts people. Students will also take part in a trip to take photographs of local Architecture.

Year 10: students continue with their portfolio and complete a further two projects to develop their skills. These projects further develop practical skills and techniques, exploring the art of mosaic and further work with clay and other sculptural materials. During this year, students also have the opportunity to work with a visiting ceramic artist.

Year 11: students follow a directed path in the first term and have the opportunity to improve upon previous coursework or complete an extension project. In January students will begin Unit 2, the externally set task (set by the exam board). After a period of preparatory work, usually 12 weeks, students will create a final response to their chosen starting point under examination conditions; they have 10 hours split over two days to create their final piece.

BTEC Business

This course is equivalent to 1 GCSE qualification. It is vocational and based on four units of work.

Assessment for three units is via the collection and compilation of evidence in a portfolio, which is then marked by the teacher. A sample of work will then be externally verified. One unit is externally assessed in the format of an on-screen examination.

Units studied;

- Unit 1 – Enterprise in the Business World, this unit is a compulsory coursework unit which is worth 25% of overall course.
- Unit 2 – Finance for Business, this unit is a compulsory examination unit, consisting of short and long answer questions, completed on a computer, lasting 1 hour which is worth 25% of overall course.
- Two other coursework units worth 50% of course.

Grades are awarded at Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction *

GCSE Business

The GCSE course includes the study of small businesses, how individuals can demonstrate enterprise skills, the importance of financial and people management and effective marketing.

Assessment is currently by three written examinations.

GCSE Business is a traditional academic course which will be taught in a study room. Teachers endeavour to incorporate a number of visits such as Cadbury World and Jaguar Land Rover.

GCSE Food preparation and Nutrition

Within the Food, preparation and Nutrition course students prepare, cook and present a wide variety of dishes and menus.

Students develop skills and understanding in relation to planning menus and the importance of a balanced diet.

Students develop competence at working safely within the school kitchen area and learn the importance of food hygiene.

GCSE Computer Science

This three unit course is designed to give students an in-depth understanding of how computer technology works and a look at what goes on “behind the scenes”. The course will help students learn about critical thinking, analysis and problem solving, all essential skills in other subjects and everyday life.

Due to the mathematical rigour of this subject, students will need to be working at a minimum of level 4.4 in Mathematics at Key Stage 3 for entry onto this course. GCSE results are awarded on the scale 9 to 1.

OCR Component 01 – Computer Systems

A written examination paper which focuses on Computer Systems. It is a mix of short and long answer questions, some of which will require candidates to write programming code. This component is worth 40% of the qualification.

OCR Component 02 – Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming

Component 02 is a new written exam, focused on computational thinking and algorithms. Students will be tested on the elements of computational thinking and logic. They are principally assessed as to their ability to write, correct and improve algorithms within a program. This component is worth 40% of the qualification.

OCR Component 03 – Programming Project (non-exam assessment)

This component is the non-exam assessment where candidates will be challenged by a range of exciting and engaging tasks to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in a programming project. This component is worth 20% of the qualification.

ICT - Certificate in Digital Applications (CiDA)

This vocational qualification is aimed at creative learners with a passion for digital applications. Tailor-made to meet the needs of today's creative industries, it covers creative multimedia, artwork and imaging, game making and developing web products.

This qualifications aims to:

- Equip students with the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to design and make, effective digital products for others to use.
- Enable students to use digital tools as a means of expression to inform, persuade and entertain.
- Foster student's creativity and develop their independent learning skills.
- Challenge students to reflect on what they produce and strive for excellence.
- Increase student's awareness of their responsibilities in the digital world and their respect of other people's rights.
- Equip students with professional, real-world skills in planning, project management and communication.
- Give students the knowledge, understanding and the skills they need to support future learning and exploit the creative digital industries.

This qualification provides a broad and solid foundation for further study of various aspects of creative computing, such as graphic design, web design, computer games design and interactive media.

It comprises 2 units.

Unit 1 – Developing Web Products, assessed by a Practical Examination

And one of the following optional units, assessed by a course work project:

Unit 2 – Creative Multimedia

Unit 3 – Artwork and Imaging

Unit 4 – Game Making

GCSE Geography

Geography is the study of Earth's landscapes, peoples, places and environments. It is, quite simply, about the world in which we live. Geography is unique in bridging the social sciences (Human Geography) with the natural sciences (Physical Geography). This exciting and relevant course studies Geography in a balanced framework of physical and human themes and investigates the link between them.

Students will travel the world from their classroom, exploring case studies in the United Kingdom (UK), Higher Income Countries (HICs), Newly Emerging Economies (NEEs) and Lower Income Countries (LICs). Students will then apply their knowledge through fieldwork in at least two locations. Topics of study include hazards, climate change, weather, landscapes, poverty, deprivation, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use. Students are also encouraged to understand their role in society, by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes.

Whilst studying the course the students will have the opportunity to develop communication skills, graphical and cartographical skills, technological skills, including ICT and GIS, interpersonal skills through debate and discussion, and problem solving skills. The course is assessed through three written papers.

BTEC Health and Social care

Students will study towards a BTEC award in Health and Social Care. At KS4, the course involves the study of the care needs of a range of individuals, from young babies to the elderly. During the course, students have the opportunity to also learn about health and wellbeing and discover a range of career options. Students learn the importance of regulations in nursery and care home settings and the skills that care workers need to develop. Students gain an appreciation about human learning and development through important life stages, as well as the psychological and the biological aspects of care.

Assessment is 25% external written exam and 75% portfolio work.

GCSE History

GCSE History will help students understand how the world we live in was shaped, and make them consider today's society in a different way. As Winston Churchill said 'Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it'. Employers and universities regard History qualifications very highly.

In History, students will find out about the past and gain an understanding of why events in history have taken place. Students develop an ability to ask relevant questions and assess the accuracy of different sources of information.

Topics covered are:

	% of the GCSE	Exam length	Number of marks	Content
Paper 1	30%	1 hour 15 mins	52	Medicine in Britain, c1250 – present with a thematic study on the British sector of the Western Front, 1914 – 18: injuries, treatment and the trenches
Paper 2	40%	1 hour 45 mins	64	Period study on the American West British depth study on Early Elizabethan England, 1558 – 88
Paper 3	30%	1 hour 20 mins	52	Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918 – 39

The course will be assessed by examination only.

BTEC Leisure & Tourism

Students will study the Edexcel syllabus learning about the travel and tourism industry and how it contributes to society and the economy. They will develop an understanding of the issues affecting the sustainability and development of travel and tourism, exploring the sector and various travel and tourism destinations.

The course contains two core Units, which are:

Unit 1: The UK Travel and Tourism Sector – this unit covers the main types of tourism in the UK, and the contribution that travel and tourism makes to the UK economy, together with the different component industries that make up the UK travel and tourism sector.

Unit 2: UK Travel and Tourism Destinations – this unit covers what different types of UK destinations have to offer, as well as locating tourist UK destinations and routes.

Students will also study TWO additional Units from the following;

Unit 3: The Development of Travel and Tourism in the UK

Unit 4: International Travel and Tourism Destinations

Unit 5: Factors Affecting Worldwide Travel and Tourism

Unit 6: The Travel and Tourism Customer Experience

Each of the four units has a weighting of 25%. Unit 1 is assessed externally by way of a 1 hr exam and the other three units are assessed internally through coursework.

The course will also involve visits to experience different aspects of the travel and tourism industry.

GCSE Media

This course combines the study of media theories with the practical production of a range of media texts and products. The course is designed to explore the four key concepts: Media Language, Audience, Representation and Institutions.

During the course, students will study how the print and recorded media works and what its function is in today's society. They will develop the ability to evaluate and analyse media texts, including magazines, newspapers, films and a variety of Television and Film genres. Linked to this, students will plan and create some real media products.

The course is split into 3 units – Unit 1 will be a coursework unit where students create a Media product in response to a brief set by the exam board. The other units consist of 2 exam papers which consist of a variety of tasks. Tasks in the exams will link to case studies carried out in lessons prior to the exam. Exams will also have variety in the question types where some responses are multiple choice, some are longer analytical essays and some are practical production tasks based on the exam theme.

Media Studies is the course for you if you enjoy analysing products. To be successful in Media you'll have to be dedicated to completing work in your own time as well as in class. There are plenty of opportunities to create your own products as well as the deep analysis tasks.

BTEC Music

This course is designed for students who enjoy performing, composing and listening to a wide variety of music and builds on the skills covered in Key Stage 3 Music lessons.

Students will need to be of a good standard on a musical instrument or be a confident vocalist, as well as being willing to practice their performance skills outside of lesson time and take part in Session 3 music activities as requested.

Students will develop both individual performance skills on their chosen instrument (or voice) and also work in a variety of ensembles – bands, choirs, wind groups etc. Work completed in instrumental lessons can be used as part of their coursework submissions.

Students will also experiment with composing or arranging music in many styles using Sequel 3 software. Students will also study and be examined on their knowledge of the Music Industry. This is worth 25% of their final grade.

Grades awarded are at Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction*.

BTEC Performing Arts

This qualification is for students who enjoy all aspects of Performing Arts and are willing to have a go at everything.

Study includes 2 core units entitled 'Individual Showcase' and 'Preparation, Performance and Production' as well as specialist units, covering skills and techniques for Musical Theatre.

The course is largely practical, but all evidence will need to be well organised and up to date. Students will be expected to participate in all Academy Productions and Concerts.

Students produce a portfolio of evidence for each unit. This will include keeping a journal, lesson notes, research, DVD/CD recordings of work, progress evaluations and performance assessments.

The Individual Showcase unit is worth 25% marks and is set and marked externally by the examination board.

Grades awarded are at Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction*.

GCSE Product Design

This course builds on the skills already covered in Key Stage 3 Technology. Students will develop high quality design and communication skills as well as gaining an in depth knowledge of materials and manufacture processes. They will develop this knowledge through the design, prototyping and evaluation of products.

Skills will be developed through focussed research and analysis, developing design proposals through sketching, drawing, CAD work and modelling. Practical sessions will involve manufacture in timber, plastic and metal using hand tools and Computer Aided Manufacture (CAM).

Drawing tasks will focus on creativity and the development of ideas. There will be an emphasis on designing for clients, testing and evaluation. Briefs will be set by external clients and guest designers where possible.

It is intended that this course will prepare students for a career in design such as product design, interior design, industrial design, transport design and manufacture. This course is suited to students with analytical and artistic skills.

The assessment of this course will be through

- A controlled assessment task that is internally assessed and externally modified (60%)
- A written examination set by the examination board (40%)

GCSE Religious Studies

During the GCSE Religious Studies course, students will be studying the beliefs, teachings and practices of two of the major world religions; in addition to focusing on one of these major world religions to reflect on the religion's perspective on philosophy and ethics in the modern world.

Students will have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the outside world through exploration of the impact of beliefs, teachings, ways of life and expressing meaning and opinion.

Students will be encouraged to express their own informed views on fundamental questions about identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, value and commitments.

Topics covered are:

- Christianity: Religious Beliefs and Teachings & Practices
- Judaism: Religious Beliefs and Teachings & Practices
- Christianity: Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the Modern World from a Religious Perspective

Assessment is through written examination in Year 11.

The work studied as part of this course will be different to that done by all students as part of their core RE entitlement.

Sport (GCSE PE or BTEC Sport)

All students will continue to develop their sporting abilities and fitness levels throughout KS4 at Sandwell Academy in a compulsory practical session each week. Students will participate in activities that will engage them in physical activity and help to encourage and promote the benefits of life long activity. Students can also opt to take a Sport course, in which case they will be placed on either the BTEC Sport or GCSE PE programme, the course assigned to the students will be the most appropriate for them based on their practical ability and literacy skills.

BTEC First Award in Sport

This course consists of 4 units looking at fitness for sport and exercise, practical sports performance, training for personal fitness and leading sports activities. Students learn about fitness components and different methods of training for sport. They learn how to perform skills and techniques across a variety of sports, and plan a personal training programme, which they perform themselves. Students take on leadership roles within the group when leading warm-ups and small skill based coaching sessions.

- 75% assessment is through a portfolio of evidence including presentations, essays, surveys, and video evidence as well as analysis and teacher observations.

- 25% assessment is externally set and marked by the exam board through as online exam.

Successful completion of the course provides students with a BTEC qualification awarded as either Level 2 Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction *. These are awarded on the scale 9 to 5.

GCSE PE

This course enables students to combine theory and practical application. The AQA examination specification enables students to take part in a variety of sports as a performer.

Assessment is through two written examinations and practical assessments. Students have to be very competent in three sports (a combination of two team and one individual sport or two individual and one team sport). Students should be playing at school level on a regular basis to be viewed as competent.

The theory aspect of the course is 60%, broken down into two 30% examination papers. 10% of the course is based on coursework where students evaluate their performance in one of their three selected practical sports.

Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport (30% of GCSE)

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Movement analysis
- Physical training
- Use of data

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport (30% of GCSE)

- Sports psychology
- Socio-cultural influences
- Health, fitness and well-being
- Use of data

GCSE Triple Science

Students that have a high level of ability in Science (on course to achieve level 4.4 by the end of Year 8) and who enjoy Science can opt to study Separate Sciences. Students will achieve separate GCSE qualifications in Biology, Chemistry and Physics and will study each of these subjects in more depth than if they were completing Combined Science.

Additional topics include looking at the periodic table and bond energies in Chemistry, studying the kidney in Biology and studying medical concepts and magnetic forces in Physics. The extra content in the Separate Science courses gives students an advantage if they study any of the Sciences at A-level. They are also subjects thought highly of by employers



The Students' Entitlement

Students will study the compulsory subjects of English and Mathematics, Science, Geography or History, Spanish, Practical PE and Core RE. The Academy then provides a range of subjects from which students can select to enhance their curriculum experience.

Every effort will be made to provide the subjects chosen but it must be appreciated that this is not always possible. When this occurs, alternatives will be discussed.



Our Guarantee

The Academy guarantees to honour its commitment to provide the National Curriculum with an emphasis on Physical Education and opportunities to explore the world of Business.



Partnership

The students' needs are the main focal point in our partnership with parents and carers. It is the Academy's responsibility to ensure that parents, carers and students are properly advised before decisions are reached. In return the Academy expects the support of parents and carers in achieving the best for their children.

The Academy's guarantee and students' entitlements are non-negotiable. They are there to protect the interests of the students. Without deviating from this and in the interest of deploying effectively the Academy's resources, the Academy reserves the right to implement amendments to the subjects' students might study.

What happens next?

**Information Booklets and Preference Forms issued at the Key Stage 4
Information Evening**

**Tuesday
7 March 2017**

Preference Forms returned to Reception:

**Friday
17 March 2017**

Students are encouraged to use the time up to this date to seek advice from Subject Teachers, Personal Tutors, Head of Departments and the Careers Team.

In addition, a careers and options guidance program called 'Fast Tomato' is available to assist students in their choices.
It can be accessed online via the link on the home page of the Careers section of our website – www.sandwellacademy.com

Issues resolved through Dr Smith

by 7 April 2017

**The contract, confirming proposed subjects and
courses, is posted home**

**Friday
28 April 2017**

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