

William Ellis School



Key Stage 4 Courses
2026

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Introduction

At William Ellis School we strive to give every student the best educational experience we can. We aim to inspire, challenge and motivate students to learn and achieve excellence and we seek to develop lively and enquiring minds. To help us achieve this we have a relevant, broad and balanced Key Stage 4 curriculum.

For the first three years of secondary education every student covers the same subjects, with no element of choice. In Year 9 students follow core subjects and are then able to choose some of the courses they wish to pursue in KS4. Students are involved in creating an individual timetable to suit their talents, interests and strengths.

Choosing GCSE courses is the first major decision that students have to make and can affect their future education and career prospects. It is a decision which should be made only after careful consultation with teaching staff and parents.

This booklet has been put together to enable both students and their parents to consider the range of options available. The booklet should provide the necessary information to form the basis for a detailed discussion which will lead to sensible decisions. The choice is not a totally free one. All students have to continue with certain subjects, and teachers will review students' choices before they are finalised.

We would not expect most students in Year 9 to have definite plans about the subjects they would like to study in the sixth form or their future career path. The best advice is to ensure that they make sensible choices that do not rule out particular careers. There should be enough flexibility in the subjects chosen to allow a change in direction later.

Core subjects

All students follow a core curriculum of the following subjects:

- English Language and Literature
- Mathematics
- Science

Most employers, universities and colleges will demand good GCSEs in Maths and English Language, and students who do not achieve a grade 4 are required by the government to resit these subjects into the 6th form.

All students take part in PE and sport and a PSHE and tutorial programme covering ethics, careers, and citizenship education.

Modern Foreign Languages

Almost all students are expected to study at least one Foreign Language to GCSE and may choose two. This is in line with the value the school places on active, global citizenship. The ability to speak a foreign language to GCSE level will open up more university and career opportunities in the future across a wide range of subjects.

For a very small number of students a modified curriculum involving greater [study](#) support will be in their best interests. If this is the case, the year team will discuss this with these students and their parents/carers in the next few weeks.

Students who can speak, read and write in a community language may also enter a GCSE in this at the end of Year 10 or Year 11.

Science options

There are two science courses; the choice is between Combined (Double) Science or Triple Science.

In Combined Science students study the three science disciplines, Biology, Chemistry and Physics, and it is equivalent to two GCSEs.

Triple Science consists of three separate GCSE qualifications in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. This is the recommended course for those who are considering studying science A levels and Engineering, Medicine or sciences at university. However, students can also study science A-levels at A Level with at least a 6 or above in Combined Science and Maths.

Computer Science is [offered as a GCSE subject a GCSE option](#). However, students can study Computer Science at A Level and beyond with high GCSE/A Level grades in Physics and Maths, and without a GCSE in Computer Science.

Humanities and Arts options

Students should study one of History, Geography, Sociology, Travel and Tourism, Business Studies or Economics. For Business Studies or Economics, students will be allocated to one of these subjects – they cannot choose both.

They should also consider studying one creative or performance-based subject: Art, Graphics, Drama, Music or PE.

English Baccalaureate

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is made up of five elements:

- English (language and literature)
- Mathematics
- a Modern Language
- History or Geography
- the Sciences (this can include computing)

This combination of academic subjects **can** provide a good basis for Key Stage 4 programme of study. It provides for the development of a breadth of skills and qualifications useful for future study and training, including Oxbridge and Russell Group universities if students achieve a strong pass (5+) in all subjects. Students studying the subjects listed above will still have two additional choices.

All subjects in our Key Stage 4 offer provide valuable qualifications, enriching experiences and develop vital skills. This includes those not named in the “EBacc”. **Students progress well in subjects that match their interests and where they are motivated to learn, and this**

should be the key consideration in their choices. The EBacc is not a separate qualification that is awarded to students.

Important note

The school reserves the right to change the specification taught and assessment method for any of the courses described in this booklet, and to withdraw courses offered if this does not meet the needs of the students and the school.-

The final decision rests with the Headteacher and depends, to some extent, on:

- the most appropriate course for the individual student, or group of students;
- the need for each student to study a reasonably broad and balanced range of subjects;
- the availability of teaching staff;
- accommodation and resources available.

What happens next?

Once students have given in their forms they will be checked for any errors or missing information. At this point the school may wish to discuss the choices made.

The school will do its best to give students their option choices, but this may not always be possible.

Courses that do not have enough students opting for them will not run and students will be placed in other subjects they have chosen.

Deadline

Complete the choices form ~~and return it to your form tutor/~~online by the deadline of **Thursday 20th March 2025** Wednesday 18th March 2026.

Choosing subjects – how to decide

Students and parents should spend some time reflecting together on the options ahead. Consider carefully the information about the various subjects carefully and ask questions if there are matters that you would like clarified.

Some dos and don'ts for students considering their options:

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose the subjects you enjoy and where you have particular interests. Choose subjects you are good at. Think about your future and choose subjects that that will help you get the qualifications you need. Choose subjects recommended by your teachers. Chose a broad range of subjects to develop a wide set of skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't choose a subject just because your friends have chosen it. Don't choose a subject just because you like the teacher. You may not have the same teacher for GCSE. Don't choose a subject you expect might demand less work from you. Choose subjects because you think you "should" do them, without speaking to subject teachers and your tutor.

Summary of Curriculum

Students studying 8 GCSEs (10% of students)	Students studying 9 GCSEs or additional courses	Students studying 10 or 11 GCSEs (20% of students)
Additional study support and Level 1 Prince's Trust course	French or Spanish	
	A second foreign language and/or a community language	
English Language, English Literature, Maths Combined Science (worth 2 GCSEs) non-examined: core PE and PSHE		
Three optional subjects - our suggested model is as follows/below Choose one subject from Humanities subject: History, Geography, Sociology, Business or Economics or Travel and Tourism. Choose one subject from Creative or Performance-based subject: PE, Art or Graphics, Drama or Music. Your final choice can be one of the subjects listed here or any subjects listed above or Triple Science, Computer Science.		

Thinking about your future

Do you have a particular career in mind?

If you are considering a particular career, you will find it useful to find out about the qualifications and training needed for that career. Some careers have specific qualifications that you need to achieve but the majority are more flexible. If this is the case, please contact Diana Lane (Careers Adviser) dlane@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Sixth Form

In two years' time you will be moving onto the next step of your education journey and progressing onto further education or possibly into an apprenticeship. The majority of you will stay onto LaSWAP, our sixth form consortium. The LaSWAP website has information about the courses and pathways that we currently offer and the qualifications required for each pathway. LaSWAP has an exceptionally broad sixth form offer. Although there will be changes over the next couple of years it would be worth looking at the courses and entry criteria for different pathways:

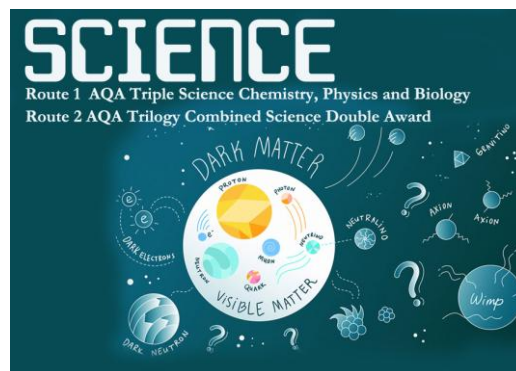
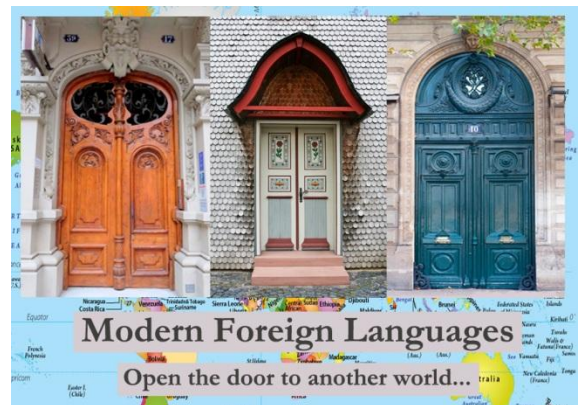
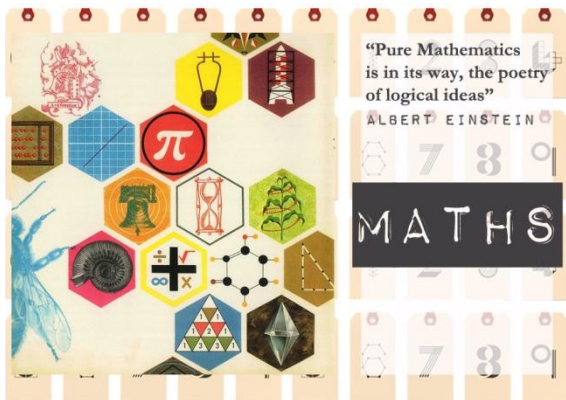
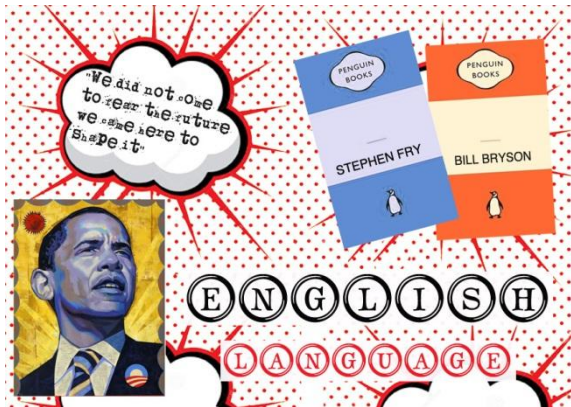
<https://www.laswap.camden.sch.uk/Pathways-Entry-requirements/index.asp>

Higher Education

If you are thinking about going to university, a useful website by the Russell Group universities called *Informed Choices* is useful:

<https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

Core Subjects



English (Language & Literature)

Exam board and specifications: AQA GCSE English Language (8700) and OCR GCSE English Literature (J352)

Head of English: Ms L Damms, ldamms@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

Most employers and further and higher education courses will demand good GCSEs in English Language and English Literature. Skills developed in English lessons – reading, writing, speaking and listening – are essential for life.

English Language

This subject is all about communication.

- Listening to other people, whether their words are spoken or written.
- Articulating what you think and saying it well.
- Sharing experiences and respecting what other people have to say. It is a subject that breaks down barriers and encourages you to be creative.
- Expressing your feelings and using your imagination.
- Becoming a critical reader of influential texts.
- Responding to unseen non-fiction texts from different time periods.

What will I study?

Unseen fiction and non-fiction texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, including personal writing, argumentative essays, travel writing, political speeches, newspaper articles, editorials.

The skills of imaginative writing and non-fiction writing for a range of different audiences and purposes.

How is this course assessed?

Two exams, both worth 50% at the end of Year 11.

Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing (8700/01) 80 marks: 1 hour 45 minute-written paper

Writers' Viewpoints and Perspective (8700/02) 80 marks: 1 hour 45 minute-written paper

English Literature

This subject involves studying a range of pre- and post-1914 drama, poetry and prose and learning how to make thoughtful and insightful responses to some of the most celebrated works of English literature.

What will I study?

A Shakespeare play, a 19th century novel, a modern British drama and a range of poetry from different time periods.

How is this course assessed?

Two exams, both worth 50% at the end of Year 11.

Exploring modern and literary heritage texts (J352/01) 80 marks: 2-hour written paper.

Exploring poetry and Shakespeare (J352/02) 80 marks: 2-hour written paper.

Mathematics

Exam board and specifications: EDEXCEL GCSE linear mathematics (1MA0)

Head of Mathematics: Mr G Vettiankal, gvettiankal@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

The aims and objectives in Mathematics are to enable students to:

- develop fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts
- acquire, select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems
- reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences, and draw conclusions
- comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context
- gain a strong foundation for further academic and vocational study and for employment
- to give students the appropriate mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding to help them progress to a full range of courses in further and higher education.

Mathematics is a compulsory subject for all students.

What will I study?

The assessments will cover the following content headings:

1. Number
2. Algebra
3. Ratio, proportion and rates of change
4. Geometry and measures
5. Probability
6. Statistics

How is this course assessed?

The qualification consists of three equally weighted written examination papers at either foundation tier or higher tier.

- All three papers must be at the same tier of entry and must be completed in the same assessment series
- Paper 1 is a non-calculator assessment; a calculator is allowed for Paper 2 and Paper 3
- Each paper is 1 hour 30 minutes long

The qualification will be graded and certificated on a nine-grade scale from 9 to 1 using the total mark across all three papers, where 9 is the highest grade. Individual papers are not graded.

- Foundation tier: grades 1 to 5
- Higher tier: grades 4 to 9

Science (Combined)

Exam board and specification: AQA GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy) 8464

Heads of Subject:

Biology: Mr M Scott, mscott@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Chemistry: Ms Z Laattoe, zlaattoe@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Physics: Mr S Fuller, sfuller@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

Science is around us every day. Global warming, disease prevention and cure, energy prices and crises, the latest smartphone technology and the discovery of gravity waves are just some aspects to hit the headlines recently. Students study science to understand these issues and to be able to distinguish unsupported claims from accepted fact.

What will I study?

Students will study all three sciences over the two years of the course. This course is about science-based issues, how science is applied to the wider world and forms a basis for further study. Each class has a biology, chemistry and physics teacher.

How is this course assessed?

The course will be examined at the end of Year 11 by 6 x one hour and fifteen-minute written exams. Practical work will be assessed throughout the course and examined in the written papers.

Other Useful Information

All papers can be studied at foundation or higher tier. The qualification will be graded and certificated on GCSE scale 9 to 1 using the total mark across all six papers. Students are issued 2 GCSE grades on a scale of 9-1 to 1-1, where 9-9 is the highest grade. Students will be able to apply for both A levels and BTEC Level 3 qualifications at LaSWAP with a combined science qualification.

French and/or Spanish

Exam board and specifications: AQA GCSE French 8658 & GCSE Spanish 8698

Head of Modern Languages Department: Ms U Rodgers, urodgers@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

Many companies have a European or International section and job requirements ask applicants to have knowledge of at least one European language. The study of a foreign language offers many opportunities for personal growth, work/travel opportunities, increased confidence, resilience and open mindedness, which are extremely significant as students prepare to move into the world as global citizens.

The skills associated with language learning are highly respected. Being able to speak another language shows you have developed good communication skills – you can speak, listen, read things carefully and put things in writing – there are very few jobs where these skills are not necessary. Some universities, such as UCL, require a good GCSE grade in a language regardless of the degree being studied.

What will I study?

Almost all students at WES must study a language at GCSE.

Students currently studying two languages are strongly advised to continue with both languages at GCSE (or to take up Mandarin alongside French or Spanish during Wednesday lunchtime), if they feel they can manage this. This does not use an option and thus these students will have an extra GCSE.

All other students will continue with either just French or just Spanish GCSE (the 'just Spanish' option only applies to students who are currently in the Year 9 doubles group).

You will build on the skills you have been developing already. You will learn how to manipulate the language by studying grammar in more depth so that you can be more imaginative and independent.

The topics covered are the environment, technology, hobbies & free time, your family & friends, healthy living, education & work, customs & festivals, celebrity culture and travel & tourism. You will also learn & read about the cultural aspects of countries where the languages you study are spoken.

How is this course assessed?

Each language is examined at the end of the two year course:

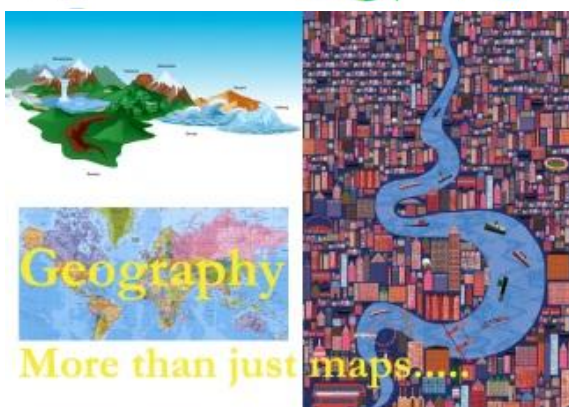
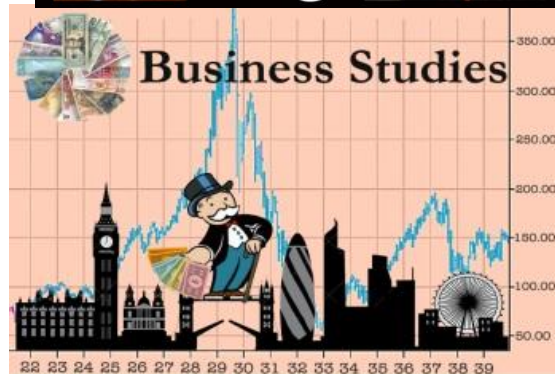
- Listening Exam – 25%
- Reading Exam – 25%
- Speaking Exam-25% (conducted by the student's teacher)
- Writing Exam – 25%

You will either be entered for foundation (grade 1-5) or higher (grade 4-9) tier. You must do the same tier for every skill.

Other Useful Information

75% of the world's population does not speak English. In 2001 51% of the traffic on the internet was in English, and in 2021 that proportion had dropped to 27%.

Optional Subjects



HISTORY

"STUDY THE PAST IF YOU WOULD DEFINE THE FUTURE"
CONFUCIUS

I had no idea that history was being made. I was just tired of giving up.

-Rosa Parks

Art and Design - Art

Exam board and specification: EDEXCEL GCSE Art, Craft & Design 1AD0

Head of Art, Craft and Design: Ms L Madsen, lmadsen@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

You should study Art if you enjoy being creative and like to experiment with different media and techniques. It is an opportunity to develop your own ideas visually and work independently.

Art leads to a range of careers like advertising, interior design, surface design, graphics, architecture and film. It teaches you the creative and problem solving process which is a key skill for many subject areas.

What will I study?

You will work in a range of media which may include drawing, painting, printing, 3-dimensional work, collage, photography and computer aided work. You will be expected to work in sketch books and will also produce larger work. You will be expected to show the development of individual ideas into 'final pieces'. You will also study the work of other artists, designers and crafts people and will produce your own work in response to their work. Initially you will be led and guided by your teacher to extend and develop your skills, knowledge and understanding. You will attend visits to galleries and museums to learn about the work of other artists and designers, and you will write about your work and the work of other artists and designers. By the end of the course you will be confident in expressing your own opinions and generating your own lines of enquiry.

How is this course assessed?

The course is made up of 60% coursework and 40% final exam.

Coursework is made up of two thematic projects, and the third project is set by the exam board.

(Every piece of work you do can count as coursework) The coursework and exam are marked internally and moderated by an external examiner. It is important that you can produce work independently and at home.

The exam project is 75% assessed on the work that you do in lessons, and the final 25% is the grade for your final artwork for the project.

Other Useful Information

It helps if you have some basic art materials at home as independent work / homework is an important part of the course. These might be; drawing pencils, felt tips, crayons, paints, glue.

During the course there will be trips to galleries and museums to understand the work of Artists and to generate responses and ideas. It helps if you enjoy going to galleries and museums to look at Art, Craft and Design first hand.

Students can study Art OR Graphics, but cannot choose both subjects.

Art and Design - Graphics

Exam board and specification: EDEXCEL GCSE Graphic Communication 1GCO

Head of Art, Craft and Design: Ms L Madsen, lmadsen@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

Graphics is intended for those candidates who are interested in Art & Design which relates to the appreciation of Graphic communication in advertising, illustration and in the promotion of ideas, information and new images. It is an opportunity to develop your own ideas visually and work independently. Work will include use of traditional and digital graphics, printing and web-based technologies. The course follows the same project themes as art, but the projects will have graphic outcomes.

Students completing the graphics course will gain the necessary skills to continue their artistic development at further or higher education level. The course offers a broad skills base including design, creative ICT applications, Photoshop and use of mixed media which equips students to go on to Graphics courses as well as Design courses.

What will I study?

Skills lessons include formal drawing techniques, typography, book illustration, print based study, working with Adobe Creative Suite: including Photoshop & Illustrator which are introduced at a beginner's level through to advanced. For coursework students will undertake two thematic projects that will build upon techniques learnt and prepare them for post 16 study. You will visit galleries and museums to help you to study other artists and designers' work. You will learn to write analysis of your work and the work of others.

The externally set project is a theme that is provided by the exam board, students interpret one of the starting points and respond to a brief to create this work. You need to be prepared to produce work independently at home or after school for your coursework and examination projects.

How is this course assessed?

The course is made up of 60% coursework and 40% externally set project.

Grades are based on learning a range of skills which will allow students to develop as artists and designers; they will produce two projects in response to a given brief or stimuli.

(Every piece of work you do can count as coursework. The coursework and exam are marked internally and moderated by an external examiner.

Other Useful Information

It helps if you have some basic art materials at home as independent/homework is an important part of the course. These might be; drawing pencils, felt tips, crayons, paints, glue.

During the course there will be trips to galleries and museums to understand the work of Artists and to generate responses and ideas. It helps if you enjoy going to galleries and museums to look at art, craft and design work first hand.

Students can study Art OR Graphics, but cannot choose both subjects.

Business

Exam board and specification: EDEXCEL GCSE Business 1BS0

Head of Economics and Business: Mr L Harris, lharris@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

Small businesses accounted for 99.3% of all private sector businesses in 2018. Therefore, Business and Enterprise is all round us.

In GCSE Business, there are TWO themes.

Theme one, concentrates on the key business concepts, issues and skills involved in starting and running a small business. It provides a framework for students to explore core concepts through the lens of an entrepreneur setting up a business.

Theme two, examines how a business develops beyond the start-up phase. Theme two also considers the impact of the wider world on the decisions a business makes as it grows. In this theme, students will be introduced to national and global business contexts and will develop an understanding of how these contexts impact business behaviour and decisions.

This **exciting** GCSE Business examines the **impact of social media** in Business and encourages an entrepreneurial outlook whilst fostering a growth mind-set to help further success in Business Enterprise or other aspects of school life. During Year 10 we run “WES Apprentice”, where students work in teams to complete a series of challenge-based tasks.

What will I study?

Theme 1: Investigating small business

Theme 2: Building a business

How is this course assessed?

The assessment is in the form **two written examinations**. Each exam is 1 hour and 30 minutes. Every 3-4 lessons we have mini challenges to ensure students are prepared for the written papers, along with lots of practical application and support. Students are issued with an assessment book. Regular assessments are completed throughout the course to ensure good examination preparation.

Other useful information

If you want to find out more about the skills you might learn or should develop when studying this course, watch programmes like *The Apprentice*, *Dragons' Den* and *Working Lunch*. You can easily find out about the course in detail by asking any of the business teachers, who will show you examples of student work.

Students can study Business OR Economics, but cannot choose both subjects.

GCSE Economics

Exam board and specification: OCR GCSE Economics J205

Head of Economics and Business: Mr L Harris, lharris@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

GCSE Economics has been designed to be an engaging and relevant specification for today's students. Economics is about people and their economic choices. This course enables students to appreciate we are all part of the economy and that Economics relates to every aspect of our lives – from the decisions of individuals or families to the structures created by governments and producers. It will develop learners' understanding of how economic issues affect choices about resources and markets and vice versa. In GCSE Economics students will learn how to explain and evaluate economic problems and possible solutions, learners will acquire a way of thinking as economists and develop a logical approach to thinking and reasoning. Finally, in GCSE Economics students will be able to become better-informed and more responsible citizens, consumers and producers, by allowing them to develop an awareness for the importance of the economic dimension to our lives. This will allow them to become more confident in the economic choices relating to their life and work.

GCSE Economics will encourage students to:

- understand how markets operate and the roles of consumers, producers or workers within markets
- understand how the economy works nationally and globally and the levers employed by governments to reach desired social and economic objectives
- actively engage in the study of Economics to develop as effective, self-motivated students, and as critical, reflective thinkers with enquiring minds, able to distinguish between fact and opinion
- understand and apply their economic knowledge and skills to investigate current and historical economic situations and issues in a range of national and global contexts
- build economic arguments, making informed judgements by using economic concepts and quantitative evidence through the use, application and interpretation of data
- understand the perspectives of different economic agents, including consumers, producers and government in relation to economic activity
- read economic articles to appreciate how leading economists approach economic problems
- consider moral, ethical and sustainability issues that arise as a result of the impact of economic activity

How is this course assessed?

The assessment is in the form **two written examinations**. Each exam is 1 hour and 30 minutes. Every 3-4 lessons we have mini challenges to ensure students are prepared for the written papers, along with lots of practical application and support. Students are issued with an assessment book.

Regular assessments are completed throughout the course to ensure good examination preparation.

Other useful information

If you want to find out more about the skills you might learn or should develop when studying this course, watch programmes like *Question Time*, and arrange to speak to Ms Mallick and/or Mr Harris. We also have a large number of year 12 and Year 13 economics student that will be able to discuss why GCSE Economics is becoming an increasingly important GCSE option.

Students can study Business OR Economics, but cannot choose both subjects.

Computer Science

Exam board and specification: OCR GCSE Computer Science J277

Lead Computing teacher: Mr P Arach, parach@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

Our lives are becoming more dominated by computers, smart phones and internet technologies. A good understanding of programming and how computers work will make you more employable after your education has been completed.

If you are considering moving into a profession which involves programming, you will get your first taste of the principles of good coding and an understanding of how programs function. GCSE Computing also provides a solid grounding if you are hoping to study Computer Science at A Level or degree level.

If you enjoy thinking logically, you will enjoy applying your skills to the variety of challenges that Computing offers. If you are considering A Level Computing, it will be good preparation and help you work out if Computing is a path that you want to follow.

What will I study?

As well as learning about the principles of programming you will find out about what happens inside a computer.

Topics covered include: systems architecture, memory, storage, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, protocols and layers, system security, systems software and moral, legal, cultural and environmental concerns.

You will learn how to use procedural programming languages such as Python. You will create algorithms and write code.

If you enjoyed the programming part of your Year 8 computing lessons, then this course is one you should consider!

How is this course assessed?

Two exams (50% each):

One exam on computer systems.

One exam on computational thinking, algorithms and programming.

Other useful information

Ask Mr Arach if you need to know any more about the course.

Visit the OCR website at www.ocr.org.uk and type J277 into the search box. Here you will have access to sample papers and the syllabus.

Drama

Exam board and specification: EDEXCEL GCSE Drama 1DR0

Head of Drama: Ms A Hughes, ahughes@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

- You have enjoyed the drama you have done in year 9 and made a positive contribution in lessons.
- You enjoy acting and want to improve your skills.
- You are creative and have a good imagination.
- You enjoy working with others.
- You are able to reflect on your drama both verbally and in writing.
- You are able to explore play texts and interpret them in an interesting way.
- You enjoy using drama to explore the world around us.

What will I study?

You will take part in drama workshops led by the teacher in which you will work on your performance skills.
 You will make and perform pieces of drama of various lengths.
 You will go to watch some professional performances of plays.
 You will watch performances by visiting theatre companies in school.
 You will do some practical work based on plays that you see and plays that you study.
 You will write about your work; about plays you read and about plays that you go to see.

How is this course assessed?

Component 1: Devising drama (40% of the GCSE)

- Create and develop a devised piece from a stimulus.
- Performance of this devised piece or design realisation for this performance.
- Analyse and evaluate the devising process and performance.

Component 2: Performance from texts (20% of the GCSE)

- Students will either perform in and/or design for two key extracts from a performance text.
- Centre choice of performance text.

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice (40% of the GCSE) -Written Examination Component

- Practical exploration and study of one complete performance text.
- Choice of eight performance texts – we do DNA by Dennis Kelly.
- Live theatre evaluation

You will be given plenty of time to complete this work and your teacher will organise the lessons, so you get maximum opportunity to do practical work and prepare your written work.

Other useful information

There will be regular theatre trips, starting in the summer of Year 9, and you are expected to attend them all.
 We usually organise opportunities for GCSE Drama students to spend some time out of school on a performance project.
 You must be prepared to work hard over two years, including attending extra lessons and rehearsals after school.
 Students are encouraged to take part in drama outside school, and there are some very good youth theatre groups in North London.

Geography

Exam board and specification: EDEXCEL GCSE Geography (Syllabus A) 1GA0

Head of Geography: Mr S Pomeyie, spomeyie@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

The course looks at the real world and encourages students to gain knowledge and understanding about the physical and human processes that shape our planet. This is a current and forward looking course. Just think...

- Why does the UK landscape look the way it does?
- What changes will regeneration bring to the Kings Cross site?
- What can be done to manage problems created by higher populations in cities?
- What are the main features of coasts and how do they form?
- How can rivers best be managed to reduce the flood risk?
- Will we go to war over water supplies in the future?

You will develop a wide range of geographical skills such as map reading, photo analysis, interpreting data, learn to empathise with people in different situations, graphicacy, communication and debating.

You will also develop your research, literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and information processing skills.

All of the above are essential skills in the dynamic, multi-disciplinary world in which we now live. Finally, fieldwork is a major feature of the course with trips in the local area, to the Kings Cross redevelopment site and The Mill, our outdoor activity centre in the Surrey Hills to study a small river.

What will I study?

Geography is a fascinating and dynamic course that has been updated to cover a range of topical issues. It is an academic course that will also help you to develop a wide variety of practical skills. The syllabus covers physical and human topics including: the changing UK landscape (coasts and rivers); weather hazards and climate change; ecosystems, biodiversity and their management; changing cities; global development and resource management.

How is this course assessed?

Assessment will involve exams at the end of the course. One exam (25%) is based on fieldwork undertaken in both rural (rivers) and urban areas.

Other useful information

Geography GCSE is excellent preparation for further study, a geographical career or a career in business, from tourism to the media industry, retail to accountancy, aviation to marketing, etc. Employers value good communication skills, teamwork skills, research and decision-making skills all of which are covered by Geography. Geography combines superbly with most other subjects and offers more key skills than any other subject, and in the current economic climate acquiring skills is very important. It is a very flexible subject that can be combined with both science and arts subjects at A-Level. Geography is an increasingly popular subject and, furthermore, geography graduates have a rapidly increasing rate of employment of any core subject.

History

Exam board and specification: AQA GCSE History 8145

Head of History: Mr T Edwards, tedwards@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

Apart from being interesting, history is very useful. Studying history means that:

- You can construct balanced arguments
- you are able to gather and read different kinds of information
- you can analyse information quickly to make inferences and comparisons
- you are able to look carefully at information and assess it for bias, accuracy and usefulness
- you can read maps, statistics, graphs and other diagrams and interpret a range of written and pictorial sources
- you are able to communicate clearly and have learned to express yourself verbally and on paper

History is a good qualification for budding journalists, TV researchers, lawyers, marketing, PR and accountants to name but a few possible careers.

“But I want to be a scientist...”

- remember that scientists have to communicate effectively, work with and manage other people.
- employers and universities like to see that you have followed a balanced course at school.

History is an important part of keeping that balance. History can give you the skills that most employers want – whatever the job you have in mind.

What will I study?

In Year 10 you will study:

- America, 1920–1973: opportunity and inequality
- Conflict and Tension in Asia, 1950-1975

In Year 11 you will study:

- Britain: migration, empires and the people: c790 to the present day
- Norman England, c1066–c1100

How is this course assessed?

Two exams:

- two exams at the end of Year 11
- each exam is worth 50% of the course and both are 2 hours

Other useful information

- History GCSE provides opportunities for extended writing that supports progress in English
- visit website www.aqa.org.uk for further information about this exciting course

Music

Exam board and specification: AQA GCSE Music 8271

Head of Music: Mr M Hansom, mhansom@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

Music is **unique** in that it is recognised as both an **academic** and **creative** qualification. The theory part is academically rigorous and yet its creative side activates different areas of the brain and can come as a welcome contrast to other subjects on the timetable. The process of studying Music has been proven to improve literacy, cognitive speed and thinking, as well as develop life skills such as performing in public. In a world where many traditional jobs will become extinct with the rise of automation and technology, the creative industries and subjects like Music which develop soft skills are becoming ever more important.

As a leading Music Technology provider in Camden, you will have access to outstanding technology facilities that will help increase your marks in composition and give the subject a more modern edge. You will also have access to a wealth of experience from our professional instrument teachers and teaching staff. Students have gone on to take A Level Music and Music Technology at LaSWAP and beyond and continue on to study the subject at university and go into the Music industry.

What will I study?

Music provides you with more breadth and depth of musical skills and knowledge.

The AQA syllabus allows students to develop their understanding of the basic building blocks of music: Rhythm, Harmony, Texture, Melody, Timbre, Dynamics, and Structure.

These are developed through **classical music**, **pop music** and other **music from around the world**.

If you cannot read music notation, you will need to learn with our help and in your spare time.

How is this course assessed?

Two Compositions – 30%

One solo and one ensemble performance (or music technology projects) – 30%

Formal listening exam – 40%

Other Useful Information

Students will need to study at least one instrument (including music technology), and can opt to study two, using our instrumental teachers.

In Year 11, we will record and assess the students' performances. There are lots of performance opportunities – we run several concerts each year. There are existing ensembles and groups for you to join, or you can form your own band, if you would like.

Physical Education

Exam board and specification: AQA GCSE Physical Education 8582

Head of PE, Sport and Activities: Mr J Levitt, jlevitt@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

- You have an interest in the science behind both amateur and elite sport.
- You enjoy learning the theory of how our bodies perform when playing sport, how they improve over time and training and how psychology plays a major part in sporting performance.
- You have a desire to work in sport as a career in roles ranging from a sports coach, to nutritionists, physiotherapists, fitness coach or one of many other roles.

What will I study?

- The course offers learners the opportunity to study key areas of sport science including anatomy and physiology linked to fitness, health, injury and performance; the science of training and application of training principles, and psychology in sport and sports performance.
- Students learn how to prepare participants to take part in physical activity so that they minimise the risk of injuries.
- Students develop knowledge and understanding of the principles of training and how to keep performers in peak physical condition. They apply practical skills in fitness testing and in designing bespoke training programmes to suit individual requirements.

How is this course assessed?

- Unit 1 and 2 are assessed by a written exam. Unit 1 and 2 are worth 60% of the overall grade.
- Units 3 is a written analysis and evaluation of your own performance. Unit 3 is worth 10% of the overall grade.
- Unit 4 is the practical unit. You will be assessed in 3 different sports. One must be an individual sport, one must be a team sport and the third can be either a team or individual sport. Unit 4 is worth 30% of the overall grade.

Other useful information

- GCSE PE is mainly taught in the classroom; it is not just a practical lesson. A good grasp of science is very important if you are considering choosing the course.
- Students will be given ample opportunity to complete all coursework (Unit 3) within lesson time although students will need to work independently to ensure completion of all tasks.
- Students who perform best in unit 4 are playing sport for a team regularly outside of school. However, this is not imperative.

Science (Triple)

Exam board and specification: AQA GCSE Biology 8461, GCSE Chemistry 8462 & GCSE Physics 8463

Heads of Subject:

Biology: Mr M Scott, mscott@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Chemistry: Ms Z Laattoe, zlaattoe@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Physics: Mr S Fuller, sfuller@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

Science is around us every day. Global warming, disease prevention and cure, energy prices and crisis, the latest smartphone technology and the discovery of gravity waves are just some aspects to hit the headlines recently. Students study science to understand these issues and to be able to distinguish unsupported claims from accepted fact. Students who think they may wish to take their study of science further would be suitable for studying this course, as the content will give an insight into some of the topics studied at A-Level.

What will I study?

Students will study all three sciences over the two years of the course. This course is about science-based issues, how science is applied to the wider world and forms a basis for further study. Each class has a biology, chemistry and physics teacher. The students will study each of the three sciences in more detail than the students undertaking the GCSE Combined Science course.

How is this course assessed?

The course will be examined at the end of Year 11 by **2 x one hour and forty-five-minute written exam papers for each subject**. This means they will sit 6 papers in total. Practical work will be assessed throughout the course and also examined in the written papers.

Other Useful Information

All papers can be studied at Foundation or Higher tier, although we anticipate all students sitting the Higher tier. The qualification will be graded and certificated on a nine-grade scale from 9 to 1 where 9 is the highest grade.

Sociology

Exam board and specification: AQA GCSE Sociology 8192

Lead Teacher: Ms E Kritz, ekritz@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Why should I study this subject?

Sociology is the study of how society is organized and how we experience life. Sociologists have conducted much ground-breaking research in major social issues such as poverty and crime. If you become a Sociology student you will not be provided with quick answers but what you will discover is how to think about these issues for yourself. If you choose to study Sociology you will gain a range of very valuable skills; for example, you will learn how to work independently; you will learn how to find information, extract what is important from it and turn it into a written argument. With newly acquired skills and insights into the workings of society it is not surprising that a wide range of employers see a Sociology qualification as being highly relevant; many students decide to continue their Sociology studies at college and then beyond to university to study a degree or postgraduate qualification in the subject. People who have studied Sociology open up a wide range of job markets and many become lawyers, journalists, social workers, teachers or politicians to name but a few examples.

What will I study?

In Year 10 you will study:

- Sociological research methods
- Families
- Education

In Year 11 you will study:

- Crime and deviance
- Social stratification

How is this course assessed?

Paper 1: The sociology of families and education. 1 hour 45 minutes, worth 50% of the GCSE

- The sociology of families
- The sociology of education
- Relevant areas of social theory and methodology

Paper 2: The sociology of crime and deviance and social stratification. 1 hour 45 minutes, worth 50% of the GCSE

- The sociology of crime and deviance
- The sociology of social stratification
- Relevant areas of social theory and methodology

Travel and Tourism (BTEC)

Exam board and specification: EDEXCEL BTEC First Award in Travel & Tourism 21474E

Head of Geography: Mr S Pomeyie, spomeyie@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

What will I study?

Students will investigate units ranging from UK & International Travel and Tourism Destinations to Customer Service. In order to make the course as business orientated as possible there are trips to tourist attractions and local services. One of the main purposes of BTEC qualifications is to help learners to progress ultimately into employment. The vast majority of employers are looking for employability skills to ensure that employees are effective in the workplace.

Why should I study this subject?

This is a vocational course aimed at providing students with an insight into the world of work. It focuses on the Travel & Tourism industry – now the UK's largest employer with over 5 million jobs.

The Travel and Tourism industry is dynamic, wide-ranging and fast-growing, and it offers a huge variety of business and employment opportunities for young people. The tourism industry is important to the UK and developing countries' economies, with job opportunities in many diverse areas.

Even if you do not want to work in the industry, studying Travel & Tourism makes an interesting addition to your portfolio of qualifications. The Travel and Tourism course will allow you to develop a wide range of skills that are important in the workplace and will help increase your employability. IT, research, time management, teamwork, communication and customer service skills are all vital components of the course.

How is this course assessed?

In this course 75% of the marks come through on-going coursework and 25% of the marks from performance in exams. Students are given regular feedback on how to improve their coursework and overall grade. Students will complete assignments in each unit, which are graded at Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction*. Deadlines are set for assignment completion that allows time for students to develop work through feedback before the final submission.

Other useful information

The new specification allows all students to gain equivalent to grade one GCSE. Typically students achieve more highly, which helps them to gain entry on to a desired post-16 course and ultimately succeed in a rewarding and challenging career.

Please use these pages to jot down any questions you might have – or answers you receive to questions – that will help you to make your decisions!

What if I want to.... **work in the computer science sector?**

- You do NOT need Computer Science GCSE, or even A Level.
- You DO need high marks in Maths GCSE, Maths A Level and Further Maths A Level.

What if I want to.... **work in medicine?**

- You do NOT need Triple Science GCSEs.
- You DO need high marks in Maths GCSE, and you will also need high marks in Chemistry and Maths A Level.

What if I want to.... **work in accountancy and finance?**

- You do NOT need either Business or Economics GCSE.
- You DO need to study EITHER Business, Economics or Maths at KS5: either A Level or BTEC would be fine.

What if I want to.... **work as a lawyer?**

- You do NOT need any specific GCSE subjects, or even specific L3 subjects (though History can help!)
- You DO need to get high marks in your GCSEs, especially in English GCSE.

What if I want to.... **go to Oxford or Cambridge, but I am not quite sure what I want to study yet?**

- You do NOT need any particular subjects at GCSE.
- You DO need high marks in all of your GCSEs, and you will also need to study the more traditional subjects at A Level.

Room Guide

French and / or Spanish	Room LO1
Art and Design – Art & Graphics	Room 40
Business & Economics	Room 33
Computer Science	Room 8
Drama	DS1
Geography and Travel & Tourism	Room 13
History	Room 14
Music	MS1
Physical Education	Room 10a
Science (Triple)	Room 37
Sociology	Room 11