YEAR 9



KEY STAGE 4

2027 – 2029

Contents

Introduction from the Headteacher 3

Course Descriptions – Core Subjects 4 - 6

- RE
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- French

Enrichment Subjects 7 - 8

Course Descriptions – Optional Subjects 9 - 18

- Fine Art
- Art and Technology
- Business
- Child Development
- Computer Science
- Drama
- Food Preparation and Nutrition
- Geography
- History
- Media Studies
- Music
- Physical Education

Options Timeline 19

Introduction

Our aim at Loreto is to help you achieve your full potential in your studies and in other aspects of school life. You are now approaching a point in your education where you are able to have some choice in the subjects you will study, and we want to help you make confident decisions about this.

This booklet provides a brief outline of the subjects we intend to offer in the forthcoming year. Study this information carefully before making any decisions about your future. You might also wish to refer to the subject pages on the school website, which can be accessed via the "curriculum" tab:

https://www.loreto.herts.sch.uk/Curriculum/Welcome/

If you have not already done so, start to consider what you hope to achieve in the long-term, and focus on what is right for you personally. It is important that you think about your options seriously and seek out all the helpful advice you can.

The decisions you make about your future must be based on what is right for you personally. Therefore, if you are not sure what path you want to take, talk to the adults who know you best, and ask them for advice.

You might also find it helpful to receive some advice from the Careers Advisor. If you would like to make an appointment in school, please let your Form Tutor know.

Mrs L Thompson
Headteacher

Course Descriptions – Core Subjects

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

All pupils take Religious Studies for G.C.S.E. We use the AQA specification. The subject is tested by examination at the end of Year 11, which involves two written papers. Paper 1 is on Catholic Christianity. Pupils learn 6 units for this paper and 4 will come up in the examination. Paper 2 is on Judaism (2 units) and Themes (2 units). As there are no tiered papers everyone will sit the same exam.

For further information, please contact Miss Jeffrey

ENGLISH

All pupils take English Language and English Literature. We use the AQA specification. Both subjects are tested by examination at the end of Year 11, and both Language and Literature involve two papers. In English Language, the students explore different ways to read unseen non-fiction and fiction texts, as well as producing their own creative, descriptive and persuasive writing. There is also a separate Speaking and Listening element, which receives a separate accreditation but does not contribute to the overall English Language grade. Literature includes examination on modern drama, a Shakespeare play, a 19th century novel and prepared and unseen poetry. Throughout the course, pupils are taught and encouraged to use standard English in speech and writing, to discuss and share ideas and interpretations, to write fluently and accurately and to read with understanding and enjoyment as widely as possible.

For further information, please contact Mrs Harris.

MATHEMATICS

All pupils study GCSE Mathematics using the Edexcel specification. Mathematics is a core subject and is compulsory for all students through to the end of Year 11. Pupils are taught in ability-based sets to ensure they are appropriately supported and challenged. The tier they are entered into is based on attainment, progress, and confidence. Pupils are reviewed carefully throughout the course to ensure each student is entered for the tier that gives them the best chance of success Sets 1–3 follow the Higher Tier course (grades 4–9). Set 4 is taught the Higher Tier content, with careful ongoing monitoring throughout Year 10 and Year 11 to ensure pupils are entered for the most appropriate tier at the end of the course. Sets 5 and 6 follow the Foundation Tier course (grades 1–5) Assessment takes place at the end of Year 11 and consists of three written examination papers. Paper 1 is a non-calculator paper, and Papers 2 and 3 are calculator papers. Each paper assesses a broad range of mathematical topics, including number, algebra, ratio and proportion, geometry and measures, statistics, and probability Throughout the course, pupils are taught not only how to arrive at correct answers, but

also how to clearly explain their reasoning, show full working, and apply mathematics to real-life contexts. Strong organisational skills and logical presentation of written work are essential for success. The course aims to develop confidence, resilience, and problem-solving skills, all of which are essential for further study, apprenticeships, and future careers.

For further information, please contact Miss Airstone-Thompsom.

SCIENCE

In Year 10, students will study either combined science or single science.
GCSE Combined Science incorporates elements of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. This course is worth two GCSEs and is assessed through four external examinations.
Students who have already demonstrated a high level of attainment in Science may be offered the opportunity to study GCSE Separate Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics). This pathway is worth three GCSEs and is assessed through six external examinations, with two examinations in each subject.
Further details about these courses can be found on the school website.
Students have already been placed in GCSE Science sets in Year 9, however, these groups may change going into Year 10 based on student attainment in the Year 9 assessments.
Students have started the GCSE OCR 21st Century Science curriculum and have studied B1, B2 C2, P1 and P2. They continue the course in Year 10 through to Year 11.

For further information, please contact Miss Gordon.

FRENCH

The vocabulary in this qualification enables students to communicate across a range of engaging and relatable thematic contexts, which are relevant to their current and future needs.

The language taught in Key Stage 4 is French, which builds on the learning which has taken place in Key Stage 3. The Edexcel specification consists of six themes:

· My personal world

· Lifestyle and wellbeing

· My neighbourhood

· Media and technology

· Studying and my future

· Travel and tourism

Assessment

Paper 1: Speaking in French (*Paper code: 1FR1/1F and 1H)

25% of the qualification

Task 1: Read aloud (12 marks)

Task 2: Role play (10 marks)

Task 3: Picture task (12 marks) with conversation (16 marks)

Paper 2: Listening and understanding in French (*Paper code: 1FR1/2F and 2H)

25% of the qualification

Section A: Listening (40 marks)

Section B: Dictation (10 marks)

Paper 3: Reading and understanding in French (*Paper code: 1FR1/3F and 3H)

25% of the qualification

Section A: Reading and Understanding (40 marks)

Section B: Translation into English (10 marks)

Paper 4: Writing in French (*Paper code: 1FR1/4F and 4H)

25% of the qualification

(Foundation: Question 1: picture-based task

Question 1: one of two open-response questions, set in informal context

• Question 2: one of two open-response questions, set in formal context

• Question 3: translation into French

For further information, please contact Mrs Fitzsimons.

Enrichment Subjects

As part of the Key Stage 4 curriculum all students will also follow a course in Physical Education PSHE and in Careers Education

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Key Stage 4 PE aims to prepare pupils for their future involvement in sport, and to promote the benefits of fitness and a healthy balanced lifestyle. They will follow a health-related exercise programmes as well as continuing with games and athletic activities. Emphasis will be on participation as well as organisational, leadership skills and personal performance. Students will also explore the facilities available to them for sport in their community.

PSHE

At Key Stage 4, the themes of mental health, well-being and goal setting are taught and healthy relationships are developed further. Opportunities for discussion are encouraged within forms. We look at the role of marriage and family relationships, as well as women's health issues. Topics such as sexual harassment, (including child on child,) consent, the dangers of pornography, coercive control, and stalking, are all raised. Students are directed to areas of support. We also study prejudice and discrimination, bullying and the role of the equal opportunities act. We teach about the issues around drugs, including vaping and alcohol, and the growing problem of county lines. There is a greater emphasis on careers and the world of work, as students move towards adulthood. We invite in representatives from the workplace to share their experiences and offer work placement opportunities. Post 16 and post 18 educational opportunities are highlighted and more "life skills," such as managing money and how to run a budget are shared.

CAREERS

Throughout Key Stage 4 students are supported academically and pastorally as they develop the skills and knowledge needed for future pathways and post-16 education. All students benefit from impartial careers advice provided by a Hertfordshire County Council Services for Young People (SfYP) careers specialist and are taught how to independently research career options. In Year 10, students also take part in a one-week work experience placement, supported by SfYP, offering valuable insight into the world of work through high-quality, meaningful opportunities.

Robust tracking systems support students in reaching their full potential through regular progress reviews, target setting, and discussions about future career plans with senior leaders. Students are prepared for post-16 pathways through the Sixth Form Information Evening, guidance on CV writing and applications, and encouragement to build strong CVs, UCAS, and apprenticeship applications via work experience and external skills opportunities such as Unifrog MOOCs. Information on post-16 options from the National Careers Service is also shared through the homework diary and embedded within the PSHE programme.

Course Descriptions – Optional Subjects

Students will choose 2 optional subjects

ART **Edexcel G.C.S.E Fine Art**

This course is designed to encourage self-expression and creativity through a number of individual projects. Two internally set coursework projects constitute 60% of marks for the course and the remaining 40% of marks are made up from an externally set exam project which is released in January of year 11.

Fine Art students focus on traditional techniques such as drawing, painting and printmaking. They are also expected to research and write about the work of inspirational artists in a way that links to their practical work.

Students choosing G.C.S.E Fine Art should be enthusiastic about the subject, keen to explore their own creativity and willing to try new things!

For further information, please contact Ms Jaques.

ART, CRAFT & DESIGN Edexcel G.C.S.E Art, Craft & Design

This course is designed to encourage self-expression and creativity through a number of individual projects. Assessment is through coursework (60%) and a practical exam project (40%).

- Art, Craft and Design students will cover a range of practical techniques in textiles, metal, plastic and wood, such as machine embroidery, reduction lino print, casting in pewter and resin, etching metal, CAD and CAM.
- They will work to a brief, investigating artists, drawing and taking photos and designing and making their own piece in response to the brief. They may choose the techniques which most suit their ideas, so there is a great deal of creative freedom.
- Students choosing Art, Craft & Design should be enthusiastic about the subject, keen to explore their own creativity and motivated to lead their own project.
  For further information, please contact Mrs Bailey.

BUSINESS

This subject is ideal for students who wish to explore real business issues and understand how businesses work. It provides opportunities to explore theories and concepts in the most relevant way, through the context of events in the business and economic world. Students will develop knowledge and understanding of areas such as business in the real world, influences on business, business operations, human resources, marketing and finance. The knowledge and skills gained from this qualification will provide a firm foundation for the further study of business. Assessment will be two written exams sat at the end of Year 11; each is worth 50% and is 1 hour and 45 minutes in length:

- Paper 1: Influences of operations and HRM on business activity
- Paper 2: Influences of marketing and finance on business activity

For further information, please contact Mr McCarthy.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT OCR LEVEL 1/LEVEL 2 CAMBRIDGE NATIONAL

Pupils study three units over two years.
In the first unit pupils learn about the importance of being healthy before and during pregnancy and creating conditions in which a child can thrive. They also learn how to prevent and manage childhood illnesses and how to create a safe environment. This will be assessed by an exam.

In the second unit they will learn more about the importance of creating a safe environment for children in a childcare setting, and learning the nutritional needs of children from birth to five years.

In the third unit pupils learn about children's physical, intellectual and social development, and children's play. They will also plan and evaluate play activities for a child. Units two and three are assessed by coursework.

This course is ideal for pupils who want to progress onto other related study, such as qualifications in Childcare or Health and Social Care.

For further information, please contact Mrs Caulfield and Ms Waite

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Students will study OCR GCSE Computer Science, a course that develops strong problem-solving, logical thinking, and computational skills. Learners will gain experience in creating efficient and logical solutions to problems while developing a solid understanding of core computing theory and how computer systems work.
Computer Science is a highly practical and creative subject. Students will learn to design, write, test, and refine programs, applying their knowledge to solve real-world problems. The course encourages creativity, precision, and resilience, helping students to think critically and work independently as well as collaboratively.
Throughout the course, students will complete a programming project that allows them to apply their coding skills in a meaningful way. While this project is not formally assessed, it plays an important role in preparing students for the examinations and developing confidence in programming.

Assessment

Assessment for the OCR GCSE Computer Science qualification consists of two written examination papers, both of which are sat at the end of Year 11.

Component 1: Computer Systems

This paper assesses students' understanding of computer systems, including hardware, software, networks, data representation, and cyber security.

- Written examination
- 1 hour 30 minutes
- 50% of the qualification

Component 2: Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming

This paper focuses on problem solving, algorithms, programming concepts, and computational thinking.

- Written examination
- 1 hour 30 minutes
- 50% of the qualification

For further information, please contact Ms Pervez.

DRAMA

Course Content

Students will study the AQA Specification, acquiring and developing skills in performance, staging, interpreting as well as delivering a range of Drama Styles.

What is Drama GCSE about?

Drama is about discovering your ability to deliver and analyse performance across acting, live theatre, and creating original theatre of your own. There are a range of influences that will enrich your dramatic expressiveness and understanding.

Assessment

There are three components for GCSE Drama

1. Understanding drama: 1 hour and 45-minute written exam equating to 40% of the final grade
2. Devising drama: A written log which is 30% of the final grade and a devised performance which is 10% of the final grade
3. Text in practice: Performance of two extracts from one play (students may contribute as a performer or designer) this is 20% of the final grade

Do I need experience in Drama to take this option?

No, not at all. However, any knowledge you have is welcome. You should be prepared to go above and beyond for each other in terms of rehearsal time and to take advantage of productions both locally and in London.

For further information, contact Miss El-Alwan

Food Preparation and Nutrition

Food Preparation and Nutrition is an engaging and challenging course that places strong emphasis on developing practical cooking skills. Students gain a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of ingredients, alongside the science behind food preparation and cooking processes.

The course has a significant practical focus. In Year 10, students prepare and cook a different dish each week, allowing them to develop and refine a wide range of essential skills. As a result, parents/carers should be aware that most ingredients will need to be provided from home.

Through both theory and practical work, students develop the knowledge and

confidence to make informed food choices and learn how to prepare nutritious, affordable meals for themselves and others, skills that are valuable now and throughout later life!

The core topics studied include:

- *Food, nutrition and health*
- *Food science*
- *Food safety*
- *Food choice*
- *Food provenance*

Assessment:

- *50% written exam (1hour 45mins)*
- *50% practical coursework known as "Non-Examination Assessments" (NEA 1 worth 15% & NEA 2 worth 35%)*

This qualification provides a strong foundation for further study and can lead to apprenticeships or careers within the catering, hospitality and the wider food industries.

For further information, please contact Ms Aherne.

GEOGRAPHY

The Geography G.C.S.E course is an exciting and very relevant course which studies both human and physical themes.

Students will travel the world from their classroom, exploring case studies in the United Kingdom, Higher Income Countries, Newly Emerging Economies and Lower Income Countries. Topics of study include climate change, 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.

Living with the Physical Environment

- Natural hazards including earthquakes, volcanoes and hurricanes.
- Extreme weather in the UK.
- Climate change.

- Physical landscapes including Rivers and Coasts.
- The living world including Tropical Rainforests and Cold Environments such as The Arctic and Antarctica.

Challenges of the Human Environment

- Urban issues and challenges including the challenges of the growth of cities in the developing world.
- The changing economic world including ways to reduce the development gap and how development is leading to social and cultural change.
- The future of the UK economy.
- Resource management and the problems of managing either food, water or energy.

Fieldwork

Pupils will undertake 2 pieces of fieldwork during the course, one based on urban areas and one on coastal areas.

For further information, please contact Mrs Mason-Clark.

HISTORY

Students will follow the AQA History syllabus. This course covers the major world events of the twentieth century and some of the great changes that took place in British society to give students a broad historical understanding that is crucial to understanding our current world.

Students will study the content of two Papers. Paper 1 and 2 are both assessed in exams at the end of Year 11. There is no coursework or Controlled Assessment.

Paper 1: Understanding the modern world

This Paper helps students understand key developments and events in modern world history, many of which link with current world events.

· America 1920-1973: Opportunity and inequality - this unit is a mixture of social and political history and focuses on the experience of different groups within American society in this 50-year period. Topics covered include developments in the rights and positions of women, the Civil Rights movement and actions of MLK Jr and Malcolm X, the impact of WW1 and WW2 on American society and the development of teenage culture in 1950s America.

· Conflict between East and West, 1945-1972 - this topic covers the first half of the Cold

War, beginning with its development after WW2 and ending with the period of detente in the 1970s. Students will consider why tensions between America and the USSR arose, how developments in nuclear weapons furthered this conflict and how events such the Korean War, Cuban Missile Crisis and division of Berlin worsened this conflict.

Paper 2: Shaping the nation

This Paper enables students to understand key developments and events in the history of Britain.

· Britain: Health and the people c1000 to the present day - in this topic, students will identify how and why medicine has developed over the course of British history. Beginning with medicine in the Middle Ages, students will consider approaches to disease and surgery, as well as beliefs about the causes of epidemics such as the Black Death. Students will then chart the progress of medical understanding through the Renaissance, Industrial Revolution and Modern Day to identify the key individuals, events and factors that have enabled us to achieve the medical knowledge we have now.

· Elizabethan England, c1568-1603 (this includes a Depth Study of an historic site connected to Elizabethan England) - the final unit studied in year 11 is a deeper examination of Elizabethan England. Building on some of the content covered in year 8, students will consider key themes and events in Elizabethan England, such as her approach to marriage and the issue of succession, how she tackled religion and her response to the Spanish Armada. Students will also have a chance to study society at this time, considering things like Elizabethan theatre, fashion and architecture.

Throughout the two years of study students will be given extensive guidance on exam structure and technique by studying past exam questions and having extensive opportunities to practice these questions in preparation for their exams. The GCSE course builds on the skills that students have been developing throughout KS3, such as their explanation of key events, their analysis of source and the consideration of historical interpretations.

For further information, please contact Mr Knowles

<u>Media Studies GCSE – Eduqas</u>

This course is for students who are curious about the media they see, hear and use every day, and who want to find out how it is made and why it affects us. GCSE Media Studies gives you an insight into the creative media industries, including film, television, music, newspapers, magazines, radio, video games and online media. It gives you an introduction that keeps all your options open and helps you make an informed decision about your future learning and career.

The course enables you to develop your knowledge and understanding of how media products create meaning, how audiences are represented and targeted, and how media companies produce and distribute their work. You will also develop key skills such as analysing set products, comparing texts, writing in extended responses, planning and

producing your own creative work, and reflecting on your progress. In addition, you will build transferable skills such as critical thinking, time management and communication. The course combines theory and practical work: two written examinations are worth 70% of your grade, and a creative production worth 30% lets you apply what you have learned. The coursework briefs are open and flexible, so you can follow your own creative ideas.

Component 1: Exploring the Media (Year 10)
You will develop your understanding of how media products create meaning for their audiences, and explore media language, representation, industries and audiences through a range of print and other media forms. This is assessed through a written examination worth 40% of the qualification.

Component 2: Understanding Media Forms and Products (Year 11)
You will study television and music (including music videos and online media) in depth, and explore how contexts, industries and audiences shape the products you enjoy. This is assessed through a written examination worth 30% of the qualification
.
Component 3: Creating Media Products (Year 10)
You will apply your planning and production skills to create your own original media product in response to a brief set by Eduqas, such as a television sequence, a music video, film marketing or a magazine. This is non-exam assessment (coursework) worth 30% of the qualification.

For more information, please contact Miss El-Alwan.

MUSIC

Course Content
We follow the Edexcel specification. This covers the musical skills of performing, composing and listening, which are taught by exploring various topics ranging from *Queen* to the *Theme from Star Wars* to *Purcell*. Students are expected to listen widely to all kinds of music and to draw links between different types of music and musical styles.

What is G.C.S.E. music about?
Anyone with a genuine interest in any aspect of music making would find the G.C.S.E. Music course a valuable and challenging experience, as it is about making and listening to music.

Assessment
The course is divided into 3 papers, with 60% of the course being teacher assessed and 40% marked externally.

Would I enjoy G.C.S.E. Music?
Do you already learn an instrument or taking singing lessons?
Do you enjoy learning about music?
Do you find composing music challenging and interesting?
Are you interested in knowing more about a wide range of different music?
Do you want to find out how music works?

If the answer is 'yes' to any three of the above, then you have the potential to undertake the course. However, although music is an enjoyable subject, you must be prepared to work consistently hard to achieve a good result.

What could I do next with G.C.S.E. Music?
G.C.S.E. Music is a good preparation for further musical study, such as A Level Music or it can be taken for its own sake, perhaps to form the basis of future interests or to show that you have developed good creative thinking skills. You may also be interested in one of the many careers in the music industry, where you will need to show experience of music and may need to use the skills developed during the course. These might include careers in areas such as: music publishing, record production, music management and sound engineering as well as jobs in teaching, entertainment and the wider media or any job where you need well developed communication and expressive skills.

For further information, please contact Mrs Carter.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

We will be following the OCR course which is delivered through both practical and theoretical lessons. G.C.S.E Physical Education can help your learning in other subjects, increase teamwork and leadership skills, keep you active and is desirable in many career options, for example: Physiotherapy, Sports Psychology, Teaching, Sports Ergonomics, Sports Journalism, Personal Trainer, Sports and Leisure Industry, Tourism Industry, Events Management, National Governing Bodies and Sports Councils e.g. Sport England

The non-examination assessment is worth 40%. Students will be assessed in their ability to select and perform a range of skills consistently with control and fluency and make effective decisions in authentic competitive environments in 3 activities. There must be one team, one individual and one other activity from either category. We offer netball, trampoline, badminton and athletics, but it is also possible to include an activity that is performed outside of school to a high standard (but must be filmed) e.g. swimming, horse riding, football etc. Each activity is worth 10% of the GCSE. In

addition to the 3 activities, students will also be required to write a controlled assessment on analysing performance of a sporting activity. This piece of work is worth 10% of the GCSE marks

The theory examinations are worth 60% of the G.C.S.E. marks and consists of two papers (both worth 30%) which are taken in the summer of Year 11.

Paper 1 - Physical factors affecting performance.
This paper will assess:
- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Physical training

Paper 2 - Socio-cultural issues and sports psychology.
This paper will assess:
- Socio-cultural influences
- Sports psychology
- Health, fitness and well-being

It must be stressed that participation in extracurricular activity is an essential part of this course. If you have a genuine interest in Physical Education and enjoy the subject, then this is the course for you.

For further information, please contact Miss Baxter.



TIMELINE

Options Evening 1 (9F, 9J and 9S):	**Thursday 7th January 2027 4 till 6pm**
Options Evening 2 (9T and 9Y):	**Wednesday 13th January 2027 4 till 6pm**
Letter home to select Options:	**Friday 15th January 2027**
Options Letter to be returned:	**Monday 8th February 2027**
March 2027:	**Options confirmed.**