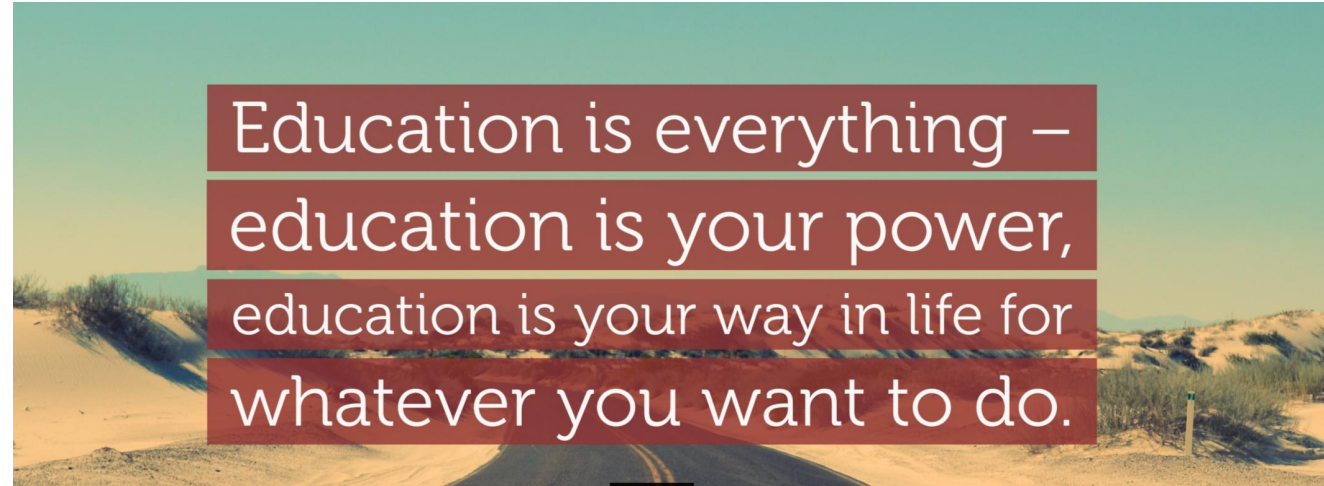


Welcome to the Year 8 Options Information Evening

'Pupils overwhelmingly value the range of opportunities available to them at school. This includes a broad selection of subjects they can study and opportunities outside the curriculum to pursue their talents or new interests.' Ofsted, 2023

'Over recent years, the school has redesigned its curriculum. It now offers a broad and ambitious curriculum to all pupils. In Year 9, pupils begin to study subjects they have chosen. The subjects they can choose are wide and varied. There is a strong academic core alongside more practical choices.' Ofsted, 2023.



Monday 1st December 2025

Emma Jordan – Deputy Head Teacher

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Key Aims

- Initial information about the Options process
 - Explanation of Pathway opportunities
 - Support available

What we want for all our pupils

Be aspirational:

- All Woodlands pupils will be well-informed, fully prepared to take the next steps in their education, employment or training. Pupils are encouraged to strive towards **Russell Group universities, higher apprenticeships** and **high-level employment**, both in London and further afield.
- All Woodlands pupils will gain the **cultural capital** to ensure they are rounded, well-informed individuals who have seized the same cultural opportunities as their peers from the wide range of educational backgrounds.
- All Woodlands pupils, especially those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, will be equipped with the **vital life skills** required to flourish and excel in adult life.

What we want for all our pupils

Be resilient:

- All Woodlands pupils will be **emotionally and physically healthy**, equipped to keep themselves safe in the modern, digital world.
- All Woodlands pupils will possess the depth of character and **resilience** to cope with set-backs and rise to challenges, whatever life throws at them.

What we want for all our pupils

Take opportunities:

- All Woodlands pupils will be **highly literate and numerate**, fully confident in applying these core skills to new contexts.
- All Woodlands pupils will be **excellent orators**, equipped with the impressive communications skills so sought after by high-level employers.
- All Woodlands pupils will take opportunities to fully immerse themselves in the wider life of the school, engaging in a range of enriching activities that both help **foster positive relationships** with peers and adults and take them **out of their comfort zone**.

What we want for all our pupils

Be excellent:

- All Woodlands pupils will excel in a **wide range of subjects**, with a **strong academic core**, that supports their academic, creative, technical or vocational ambitions.
- All Woodlands pupils will become **experts in their subjects**, and possess the **metacognitive skills** to continually improve their knowledge and skills.
- All Woodlands pupils will **read widely** and appreciate the value of **lifelong learning**.

The Aims of our KS4 Curriculum

- An **inclusive** curriculum for **pupils with SEND**.
- A **broad** and **balanced** curriculum for all.
- A **wide variety of subjects** to choose from – allowing pupils' learning to be **personalised** and suited to their own learning needs.
- **Academic rigour** – everyone is challenged at the appropriate level.
- A **meaningful AROE (PSHE)** curriculum that develops the whole child.

Options 2025: how are GCSEs graded?

Some of the recent changes:

- Assessments are at the end of all the courses in Year 11.
- Exams will form 100% of the assessments in *most* subjects.
- Coursework and controlled assessments still form part of some KS4 courses.
- The grading system for GCSE is 9-1, with 9 being the highest.

Department for Education

GCSE Grading	
New Grading Structure	Old Grading Structure
9	A*
8	
7	A
6	B
5	
Standard Pass → 4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

What are Level 2 Qualifications?

- Equivalent of GCSE qualifications
 - Vocational courses
- Often more NEA (non-exam assessment)
- Accepted by colleges and Sixth Forms

Level / Qualification Grade	Grade Equivalent
Level 2 / Distinction*	8.5
Level 2 / Distinction	7
Level 2 / Merit	5.5
Level 2 / Pass	4
Level 1 / Distinction	3
Level 1 / Merit	2
Level 1 / Pass	1.25

Year 9 Curriculum

Year	Pathway	English	Maths	Science	MFL	Geography	History	PE	AROE	CRE	Option 1	Option 2
9	Red	4	4	4	2	1/3	1/3	1	1	1	2	2

Red Pathway Curriculum

- This is an ambitious, academic curriculum which keeps young people's options open for further study and future careers.
- It is the curriculum that 95% of pupils will follow in Year 9.
- It includes: Maths, English Language/Literature, Combined Science, a Modern Foreign Language and either History or Geography.
- Year 9 pupils will study both History and Geography but will opt to focus more on one than the other. They will then continue with one of these subjects in Year 10 and 11.

Options Available – all pupils select 2 (and 2 reserves)

- GCSE Art, Craft and Design
- GCSE Drama
- GCSE Film Studies
- L2 Constructing the Built Environment
- L2 Creative iMedia in IT
- L2 Designing the Built Environment
- L2 Hair and Beauty
- L2 Health and Social Care
- L2 Hospitality and Catering
- L2 Child Development
- L2 Music Performance or L2 Music Technology
- L2 Retail Business
- Sports Course (L2 Sports Studies or GCSE Physical Education)*
- GCSE Business Studies*
- GCSE Citizenship*
- GCSE Computer Science*
- GCSE Philosophy, Religion and Ethics*
- GCSE Sociology*
- GCSE Statistics*

*These Options choices include an Options Assessment

Options Assessments

- If pupils opt for a subject which has been identified as particularly challenging, they will be required to sit a short Options Assessment later in the term.
- This is nothing to worry about; it is simply a short assessment to see whether a pupil will be able to meet the demands of the course.
- Teachers will discuss any concerns they have with pupils well in advance of final decisions being made, and will be able to offer advice to pupils who may wish to consider a similar, alternative course.
- Subjects that require Options Assessments to be sat have been indicated as such with an asterisk (*) on the Options Form.

Red Pathway

2. Pupils will select two 'free' options and two reserve options

1. The core subjects Red Pathway pupils will study

2025-26 Woodlands School Year 8 Options Form - Red Pathway

Please take some time to complete this form carefully.

Pupils will study the following core subjects until the end of Year 11:

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Combined Science (some pupils may go on to study Triple Science in Y10 and Y11)
 - Core Physical Education
- AROE (Personal, Social and Health Education)

Pupils on the Red Pathway will also study the following subjects in Year 9:

- French/German/Spanish (dependent on Language studied during KS3)
- History and Geography (but pupils will select which of these they wish to focus on, in a 3 hour/1 hour split)
- Citizenship, Religion and Ethics

3. Pupils will select their 3/1 Humanities focus: History, Geography or no preference

8. In Year 9, pupils study 4 hours of History/Geography, but they select which subject to focus on in a 3 hour/1 hour split. Which subject would you prefer to focus on? *

- I have no preference
- Geography
- History

- GCSE Art, Craft & Design
- GCSE Drama
- GCSE Film Studies
- L2 Constructing the Built Environment (note: you cannot study both Designing the Built Environment and Constructing the Built Environment)
- L2 Architecture - Designing the Built Environment (note: you cannot study both Designing the Built Environment and Constructing the Built Environment)
- L2 Creative iMedia in IT (note: you cannot study both Computer Science and Creative iMedia)
- GCSE Computer Science* (note: you cannot study both Computer Science and Creative iMedia)
- L2 Hair and Beauty
- L2 Health and Social Care
- L2 Hospitality and Catering
- L2 Child Development
- L2 Retail Business (note: you cannot study both Retail Business and Business Studies)
- Sports Course (this will be either Level 2 Sports Studies or GCSE Physical Education - decided by staff after assessment)*
- GCSE Business Studies* (note: you cannot study both Retail Business and Business Studies)
- GCSE Citizenship*
- GCSE Philosophy, Religion and Ethics*
- GCSE Sociology*
- GCSE Statistics (set 1 and 2 pupils only)

Red Pathway (Years 10-11)

- Pupils will cease to study core Citizenship, Religion and Ethics and will pick up an extra hour of Science.
- Pupils will pursue one Humanities subject to the end of the GCSE course: History or Geography.

Purple Pathway (Years 10-11)

- At the end of Year 9, teachers advise who should remain on the Red Pathway and those that will study the Purple Pathway.
- This means they would drop *either* their Humanities subject *or* their Modern Foreign Language.
- Instead, they will be offered one further option, from a small selection of suitable courses.
- This will ensure all pupils achieve the **best possible grades**.
- It will be at the teachers' discretion who will move onto the Purple Pathway, although no pupil will be forced to.
- Pupils will still receive the same number of qualifications as those on the Red Pathway and the breadth of subjects they study still meets government guidance.

Blue Pathway

- Suitable for some of our pupils with SEND.
- Pupils will study the same core curriculum as the Red Pathway.
- Pupils will receive an extra hour of both English and Maths.
- Pupils will study three hours of Humanities in Year 9 and receive an Entry Level Certificate.
- Pupils will study an hour of Spanish in Year 9.
- Pupils will select two “free” options, which will be in the same classes as Red Pathway pupils.

What informs our Pathway recommendations?

- KS2 Prior Attainment data
 - Current pupil progress
- Advice from Aspirations Faculty (SEND department)
 - Pastoral information

Year 9 Curriculum

Year	Pathway	English	Maths	Science	MFL	Geography	History	PE	AROE	CRE	Option 1	Option 2
9	Red	4	4	4	2	1/3	1/3	1	1	1	2	2
	Blue	5	5	4	1	3		1	1	1	2	2

Options Available – all pupils select 2 (and 2 reserves)

- GCSE Art, Craft and Design
- GCSE Drama
- GCSE Film Studies
- L2 Constructing the Built Environment
- L2 Creative iMedia in IT
- L2 Designing the Built Environment
- L2 Hair and Beauty
- L2 Health and Social Care
- L2 Hospitality and Catering
- L2 Child Development
- L2 Music Performance or L2 Music Technology
- L2 Retail Business
- L2 Sports Studies

Blue Pathway

2. Pupils will select two 'free' Options and two reserve Options

1. The core subjects Blue Pathway pupils will study

2025-26 Woodlands School Year 8 Options Form - Blue Pathway

Please take some time to complete this form carefully.

Pupils will study the following core subjects until the end of Year 11:

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Combined Science
- Core Physical Education
- AROE (Personal, Social and Health Education)

Pupils will also study the following subjects until the end of Year 9:

- Humanities (Entry Level Certificate)
- Citizenship, Religion and Ethics
- Spanish

4. Please select your choice from the W block. *

- GCSE Art, Craft & Design
- GCSE Drama
- GCSE Film Studies
- L2 Constructing the Built Environment (note: you cannot study both Designing the Built Environment and Constructing the Built Environment)
- L2 Architecture - Designing the Built Environment (note: you cannot study both Designing the Built Environment and Constructing the Built Environment)
- L2 Hair and Beauty
- L2 Health and Social Care
- L2 Hospitality and Catering
- L2 Music (Performance or Technology)
- L2 Retail Business
- L2 Sports Studies
- L2 Child Development

Blue Pathway (Years 10-11)

- Pupils will cease to study core Citizenship, Religion and Ethics, Spanish and Humanities.
- Pupils will pick up an extra hour of Science each week.
- In Year 10, pupils will begin a third “free” option from a small selection of suitable courses.

Pitfalls to Avoid!

- Picking a subject because you like the teacher.
- Picking a subject because your friends are doing it.
- Picking a subject because you think it is “easier”.
- Missing Options Taster Sessions or Options Assessments.
- Assuming a subject will be the same in Years 9-11 as it has been in Years 7 and 8.
- **Picking your Options too early in this process!**
- Not discussing your choices with anyone!

FAQs

What should pupils consider when they select their Options?

It is important that pupils make their choices using the following guidance:

- Find out as much information as you can about the subjects you are considering choosing.
- Subjects are not always the same in Key Stage 4 as they are in Key Stage 3.
- Choose subjects which you enjoy doing.
- Choose subjects which fit your learning needs.
- Choose subjects you think you could do well in.

Why do pupils start their Options in Year 9?

'Over recent years, the school has redesigned its curriculum. It now offers a broad and ambitious curriculum to all pupils. In Year 9, pupils begin to study subjects they have chosen. The subjects they can choose are wide and varied. There is a strong academic core alongside more practical choices.' Ofsted, 2023.

- The school fulfils the KS3 National Curriculum in most subjects by the end of Year 8.
- There are no “gimmicks” in Year 9.
- We want our pupils to have a personalised curriculum, where they have taken some ownership over the subjects they want to study.
- Providing more time to study Options subjects means our pupils benefit from a greater depth and knowledge over the courses they have chosen.
- Year 9 is **not** a “GCSE” year; the courses pupils study are **pre-GCSE**. They may contain elements and introductions to GCSE/Level 2 study, but the breadth of the Year 9 curriculum extends beyond simply preparing pupils for exams in Year 11.

Why can't my child select a certain combination of subjects?

- It is not possible for pupils to study certain combinations of courses.
- This is because Ofqual consider the courses to be too similar to provide pupils with a sufficiently broad curriculum.
- This will have been outlined on the Options Forms and in the Options Booklets.

Do other schools get to select more Options?

- Woodlands pupils receive an average of 9 qualifications, which is typical of schools.
- Pupils select **two “free” options**, where they can select any subjects they wish. There are no blocks restricting choice.
- By Year 10, pupils will choose between History and Geography – a **third option**.
- Red Pathway pupils will continue to study their Modern Foreign Language – a **fourth option**.
- Purple and Blue Pathway pupils will select an alternative subject as their **fourth option** in place of *either* their Humanities subject or Modern Foreign Language.

Can my child study two Modern Foreign Languages, or both History *and* Geography?

- Modern Foreign Language and Humanities subjects are in Bucket 2, which recognises the academic demand of these courses. There is a great deal of content and skills to be covered.
- We would not normally recommend that a pupil study both History and Geography as this can overburden them in Year 11.
- Likewise, we do not recommend pupils picking up a second Modern Foreign Language in Year 9, which they may not have studied for some time.
- However, we will be willing to discuss possible routes with parents/carers if there is a well-considered reason behind this desire.
- Pupils can indicate this via the final question on the Options Form.

Can my child change their Options?

- This decision is an important one, which is why we provide pupils with so much support and time to consider different subjects carefully.
- Once pupils have selected their Options, this will have an impact on the school's staffing and rooming decisions for the next academic year.
- Furthermore, changing courses once they have begun will likely disrupt a pupil's progress and disrupt the curriculum for others.
- As such, we strongly ***discourage pupils changing their Options*** in Year 9. (Any requests to change options must be in writing from the parent/carer and within 4 weeks of the course commencing).
- It's important to get this right first time round!
- **For this reason, Options Forms will not be sent to parents/carers until pupils have attended all the Options Assemblies** – so they have considered every Option carefully!

Is my child guaranteed to get their chosen Options?

- Last academic year, over 85% of pupils received their first two choices.
- However, no course is guaranteed to run.
- There may be staffing changes, timetable clashes, course changes or a subject may not receive enough selections to run.
- Pupils select two reserve choices to avoid disappointment.
- We will contact any parents/carers directly if a pupil cannot pursue their two chosen subjects, to confirm they are still happy with their reserve choice.

Will my child's Post-16 or career options be affected by their Options?

- Pupils should be starting to think about it, but at this stage of your school career it is important you give yourself as broad a curriculum as possible through your Options choices.
- In making Option choices, there are very few careers which you rule out by choosing the “wrong” subjects for Key Stage 4. It is true, however, that to study a subject at A-Level, it would be beneficial to have studied it at GCSE.

What support will my child be given throughout this process?

- Options Booklet
- Options Assemblies
- Options Taster Sessions
 - Tutor Time
 - Heads of Department
- Ms Jordan – available to see at the Year 8 Parent/Carer Consultation Evening (Thursday 4th December, 4.00-7.00pm)

Key Dates to Remember

Thursday 4th December: Year 8 Parent/Carer Consultation Evening (it may be a good idea to ensure you speak with teachers delivering the Options subjects your child is interested in)

Friday 5th December - Thursday 18th December: Options Assemblies

Friday 5th December - Thursday 18th December: Options Taster Sessions (lunchtimes)

Thursday 18th December: Options Forms sent to parents/carers via e-mail

Monday 19th January: deadline for final Options to be submitted (via Microsoft Forms)

Monday 2nd February - Monday 9th February: Options Assessments (for specific subjects)

Thursday 26th March: Options choices confirmed to pupils and parents/carers

Taster Sessions

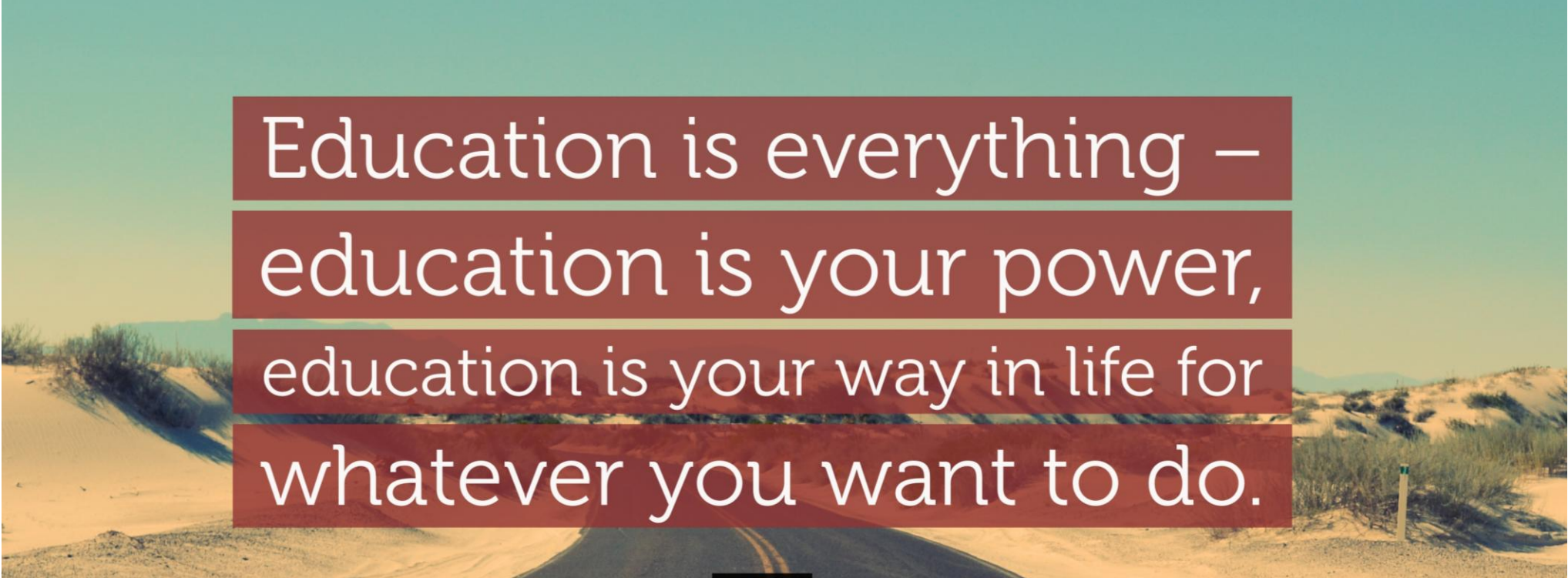
1.35-2.05pm

	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
08/12	Film MU2	Health and Social Care & Child Development T5	Sociology M20	Construction CON	
15/12	Business Studies M14 Retail Business M16	Philosophy G10	Hair and Beauty HS	Citizenship G7	

1. Decide which taster sessions you will be attending- you should attend as many as possible
2. On the day of the taster session, collect a lunch queue pass at the end of assembly
3. Line up for your lunch in the courtyard (between the Yr7 and Yr11 queue).
4. Be prompt to the taster session

What do I do next?

- **Discuss with your child** what sort of subjects they enjoy, what they feel they are doing well in and what sorts of things they may be interested in doing when they leave school.
- **Go through the Options Booklet** with your child and read the information carefully. Pupils will receive this tomorrow, and you will be sent a digital copy of the Options Booklet, along with a copy of this presentation.
- **Decide which Options Taster Sessions** they are going to attend (the schedule will be shared in the assemblies next week).
- If there is any confusion, contact Ms Jordan via e-mail or at the Year 8 Parent/Carer Consultation Evening.
- When your child is sure on their choices, **complete the Options Form**, which will be sent out on **18th December**, after the final Options Assembly/Taster session.



Education is everything –
education is your power,
education is your way in life for
whatever you want to do.

Emma Jordan – Deputy Head Teacher :
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