

Coombe Dean Post-16 Prospectus 2026



“Build on the foundations laid at GCSE to explore new and/or familiar subjects in depth as you look towards the future that suits you.”

Welcome From Mr Jacks, Assistant Headteacher and Leader of Post-16

It is my privilege to lead the Post-16 provision at Coombe Dean School and to welcome you to our prospectus.

We are proud to be a close-knit community, united by a shared commitment to helping each other achieve our best. Our learners demonstrate integrity every day: they approach their studies with determination, embrace challenge, and benefit from expert, inspiring teaching.

We are equally committed to providing rich opportunities that help students become confident, well-rounded young adults. Through academic study, personal development and tailored guidance, we prepare our learners to take their next steps - whether that is university, further training or the world of work - with ambition and purpose.

In 2025, our Year 13 cohort achieved an average progress score that placed our Post-16 centre at the top of the city's rankings, outperforming other local providers, including the grammar schools. This outstanding achievement reflects three years of continued and sustained improvement in overall academic attainment, driven by a well-designed curriculum, high-quality teaching and learning, and exceptional pastoral support.

We welcome applications not only from Coombe Dean students but also from learners across the city who are looking for a fresh start in a supportive and high-performing environment. Every year, many join us from other schools and thrive.

We look forward to meeting you, learning about your aspirations, and supporting you and your family throughout this exciting and important stage of your educational journey.

Mr C Jacks
Assistant Headteacher and Leader of Post-16



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Coombe Dean Post-16 Curriculum Offer

Students in Year 12 and 13 choose from a broad range of courses.

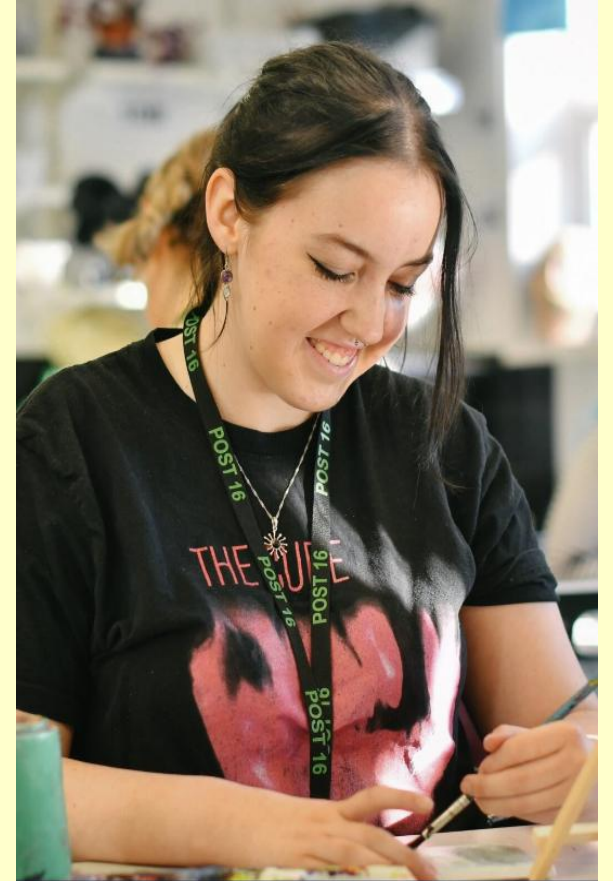
All students select **three full time A level or Applied General courses**, each with five taught hours a week plus around five hours of independent study. This amounts to roughly 30 hours of subject learning each week.

Some students choose to add a fourth option. This may be another full A level or BTEC, or a part time course such as Level 3 Mathematical Studies or the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

Most courses have specific GCSE entry requirements, which you can find in each subject's Course Information page later in this prospectus.

Further Information on specific course entry requirements can be found here: [Coombe Dean School - Course Information](#)

From September 2026, **all students will follow a [Level 3 course in Personal Finance](#)**. This course results in a recognised qualification and attracts UCAS Points. We are delighted to be offering this newly created course which will significantly increase students' financial literacy and understanding of aspects of finance and money-management which we believe will affect them positively throughout their lives.



Coombe Dean Post-16 Curriculum Offer

We offer 18 courses here at Coombe Dean but we work with our consortium partners – Hele’s School and Plymstock School – to broaden the offer. Whilst most students will opt for three courses which run solely at Coombe Dean, some choose to study two subjects at Coombe Dean and one other subject at a consortium school.

We align our timetables and run a free minibus service to make this possible. Applications should be submitted through Coombe Dean School; there is no need to apply to both schools. We will organise the logistics where a consortium subject has been chosen.

Subject Offered At Coombe Dean:

Art	English Literature	L3 Core Maths
Biology	Film Studies	Music
Business Studies	Further Maths	Physics
Chemistry	Geography	Psychology
Computer Science	History	Sociology
Criminology	Maths	Sport

Subject Offered At Consortium Partner Schools:

Photography	Applied Science
Religious Studies	Drama and Theatre Studies
Physical Education	Product Design
Health and Social Care	Languages
Travel and Tourism	Media Studies

Wider Personal Development

Our Sixth Form offers a rich and purposeful programme designed to help students grow into confident, resilient and socially responsible young adults. Alongside academic study, students are supported to develop the independence, curiosity and character needed to thrive in their next steps.

A structured programme of **supported study** provides the foundation for strong learning habits. Weekly sessions help students refine their study strategies and stay organised, while **independent study skills are explicitly taught through Critical Thinking and weekly tutorial sessions.**

Personal development also encompasses physical wellbeing. **Weekly supervised sport** encourages students to lead healthy, active lives while taking part in activities they enjoy and can progress in, supporting balance alongside academic pressures.

Our **Community Participation and Volunteering Programme** gives students meaningful opportunities to contribute to the wider school. Through roles such as teaching assistants or literacy and numeracy ambassadors, Year 12 students support younger pupils, act as positive role models and develop leadership, empathy and communication skills. These experiences strengthen future applications and nurture a strong sense of social responsibility.

The **Critical Thinking curriculum** further broadens students' horizons. Through study skills, ethical debates, IT skills, revision strategies and preparation for interviews and UCAS, students learn to analyse ideas, express themselves clearly and engage thoughtfully with the world around them.

Together, these elements create a vibrant and supportive Sixth Form environment where students are inspired to develop academically, personally and socially, preparing them to flourish in their future pathways.



Post-16 Tutor Groups and Tutor Time

The day begins at 08.40 for Post-16 learners, who spend 30 minutes each morning with their tutor. Our tutors are experienced specialists who stay with their groups throughout the Post-16 journey, offering consistent support across all aspects of sixth-form life, including the tutor programme, UCAS applications, careers guidance, wellbeing, and general day-to-day queries.

The Post-16 tutor programme runs on a two-year cycle and explores a wide range of themes as part of our commitment to developing well-rounded young people. It helps learners deepen their sense of identity, beliefs, and values, while also strengthening their readiness for future steps, careers, and ambitions. **Below is a sample of a typical weekly cycle of tutor time activity.**

	Year 12	Year 13	Detail and Intent
Monday	Week A = Tutorial		Tutorial: Planning and mapping independent study for the week. Tutors monitoring student planners and coaching/guidance. Important announcements.
	Week B = Assembly		Assembly: Year 12/13 in the main hall. Variety of topics as part of the 'Interested and Interesting' programme.
Tuesday	'Interested and Interesting' – Current Affairs and Debate		Current Affairs and Debate: Weekly engagement in current affairs and adjacent debate issues. Developing critical thinking skills and articulation of thoughts/beliefs/arguments. Part of the 'interested and interesting' programme.
Wednesday	Careers	PSHE/RS	Careers: A programme of support for Post-16 students to explore and understand future career routes and support with preparation for next steps. PSHE/RS: Linked to the 'interested and interesting' programme – A curriculum contributing to the development of rounded students preparing for healthy and informed adulthood.
Thursday	PSHE/RS	Careers	
Friday	Friday Challenge		Friday Challenge: Weekly community activity – competitive but aimed at relationship building within tutor groups and across the Sixth Form. Variety of quiz/game-based activities each week.



Volunteering and Work Experience

Volunteering and work-related learning sit at the heart of our commitment to preparing students for their next steps. These experiences help students explore future pathways, develop confidence and build the wider skills that universities, apprenticeship providers and employers consistently value.

All Year 12 students take part in our **Wider Participation and Volunteering Programme**, choosing a regular activity that contributes positively to the community while supporting their personal growth.

We additionally offer an annual, part-funded TEFL qualification, enabling students to assist with English as an Additional Language and opening doors to future travel or work abroad.

Work experience further strengthens students' career readiness. **All Year 12 students undertake a five-day work experience placement**, usually in the summer term, using our guidance and extensive contacts to secure opportunities that match their ambitions. This process builds independence, professional confidence and a clearer sense of direction for life beyond Sixth Form.





Where do Coombe Dean students go next?

	University	Apprenticeships	Employment or gap year
2022	62%	18%	20%
2023	64%	18%	18%
2024	74%	13%	13%
2025	57%	20%	23%

We are proud of the diverse range of post-18 routes that our learners take. We believe that all learners should have the chance to attend university if they wish to, but that each learner should be exposed to all possible routes and wide-ranging sources of information to help them decide upon next steps in conjunction with their families.

Where Can I Find More Information?

This prospectus gives a brief introduction to Post-16 at Coombe Dean School. We hope you have enjoyed reading it so far.

Please follow the links below for further information as required.

You are invited to be in touch with our Post-16 Administrator, Ms Stapleton, by email at [sstapleton@coombedean.co.uk](mailto:ssapleton@coombedean.co.uk) at any time. We are more than happy to arrange a time to speak by phone or in person with interested students/families.

[Coombe Dean School - How To Apply](#) – *information on the application process and open events.*

[Coombe Dean School - Student Bursaries](#) -*information on financial support available.*

[Coombe Dean School - Post 16 Senate](#) – *Information on our student leadership group.*

[Coombe Dean School - Post-18 Pathways \(Next Steps\)](#) – *information on support and guidance offered towards careers and next steps in education.*

[Coombe Dean School - Learning Snapshots](#) - *Information on how we report progress to parents/carers.*

[Coombe Dean School - The Coombe Dean Medicine Pathway](#) – *information about how we support students interested in courses/careers in the medical arena.*

[Coombe Dean School - Key Documents](#) - *including our code of conduct and student handbooks.*

[Coombe Dean School - Supra Curriculum: Interesting and Interested](#) – *information about our ‘supra’ curriculum event; an inspirational opportunity for all our learners.*

Subject Course Information

The following pages outline each of the courses currently on offer at Coombe Dean.

More information, including short videos from our teaching teams, can be found on the [school website](#). The relevant link is provided on each subject page.

Please note, courses are subject to change – if a course does not have sufficient applicants, it may not run. If this is the case and you have applied for that course, we will contact you with other options to consider.



Art A level



Exam board: Edexcel - A Level Art, Craft and Design

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 6 in Art or an equivalent portfolio of work in a creative subject.

Skills required: Students are expected to have studied or have had experience of a creative course which includes drawing or mixed media approaches. Aspirational students should be able to produce independent research and develop ideas independently. An analytical inclination is desirable.

About the course: Learners opting for Art, Craft and Design develop practical and critical/contextual work through a range of 2D and 3D processes. Component 1 is coursework completed across Year 12 and the first term of Year 13. Component 2, the Externally Set Assignment, requires a response to an exam board brief, leading to a 15-hour timed piece.

Areas of study may include painting, drawing, mixed media, digital art, printmaking, photography, animation, conceptual work, and sculpture. After an initial period of skill-building and workshops, learners can develop their work across multiple endorsed titles. This broad course offers considerable flexibility in content and approach.

"The art course gives you a completely different set of skills to any other subject. You get to work independently a lot of the time." Year 13 student
"Art is my happy place." Year 13 student

Career paths: Art and Design professionals work across many industries, producing media and design that attract varied audiences.

The UK's Creative Industries add nearly £13 million to the economy every hour and are expanding over five times faster than the national average. Those with artistic skills and training can explore opportunities in architecture, fashion, illustration, animation, graphic design and more, alongside traditional crafts such as ceramics, painting, silversmithing and glassblowing. Creative roles span numerous sectors, combining imagination with technical ability and offering solid earning potential.

Course outline/assessment

Unit 1: coursework includes a personal investigation, a portfolio of practical work and a personal study (written).	60%
Unit 2: externally set assignment is set by the exam board and is a mixture of practical work and investigation with a final 15-hour piece in exam conditions.	40%

Biology A level



Exam board: Edexcel - Edexcel A Level <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/as-and-a-level/biology-7401-7402/specification-at-a-glance>

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 6 in sciences - separate or combined. GCSE grade 5+ in Maths.

Skills required: Students need strong Maths and Science skills, analytical and observation skills, an enquiring mind and the ability to think logically.

About the course: Biology is a two-year A level course with no external examinations until the end of year 13. The course builds on the foundations of many of the units covered at GCSE. The course is wide ranging, encompassing biochemistry, plant and animal physiology, genetics, environmental biology, evolution and conservation.

"The biology course is challenging, but really interesting. My favourite part was the biodiversity unit." Year 13 student

"The course is hard, but the teachers give you lots of support." Year 12 Student

"I enjoyed all the practical work and field work" Year 13 student

Career paths: Biology is a key subject for lots of STEM careers, particularly in healthcare, medicine and jobs involving plants or animals. The list is long and includes nursing, dentistry, forensic science, psychology, physiotherapy, botany, environmental science, zoology, geology, oceanography, pharmaceuticals, energy, teaching, science writing, genetics, research, chemical engineering, chemistry, materials science, nursing and midwifery, occupational therapy, optometry, sports science, conservation and speech therapy.

Course outline/assessment

Biology is assessed through three externally assessed exams at the end of year 13.

Paper 1: Advanced Biochemistry, Microbiology and Genetics

30%

Paper 2: Advanced Physiology, Evolution and Ecology

30%

Paper 3: General and Practical Principles in Biology

40%

Business Studies Level 3



Exam board: OCR Cambridge Technical Qualification

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 4+ in English and Maths.

Skills required: To succeed in Business Studies, you will need strong communication skills, both spoken and written, as well as confident reading and ICT abilities. You should be an independent enquirer and creative thinker, able to explore ideas and solve problems. Being a reflective learner is important, reviewing your work and identifying improvements, along with managing your time well and contributing effectively to group tasks.

About the course: Businesses face fast-changing and competitive conditions, driven by rivals, political and economic shifts, and advancing technology. This course develops your insight into how organisations function, looking at different types and structures and how ownership connects with their aims. You will explore major business functions and how they interrelate; understand legal, financial, ethical and resource limits on decision-making; and consider how firms react to economic, social and technological developments, including the need for planning. You will also examine stakeholder impact and learn to assess business performance.

*"I really enjoyed the Business Course. It's really practical and independent. I've been able to use what I learnt in starting up my own business now"
"The teacher is really helpful. The way the course is set out helps you to stay on track. "*

Career paths: Whether you aspire to be a business professional, manager, charity worker or entrepreneur, understanding the business environment is key to ensuring that the business in which you work reaches its full potential. The business course develops the transferable skills needed for working in a business environment. Careers can be pursued in Sales and Marketing, Finance and Accounting, Research and Development and Human Resources. You will also build up the skills to start your own business and become an entrepreneur.

Course outline/assessment Business Studies is a two-year course with external examinations and internal assignments spread across the two years.

• The Business Environment	Externally Assessed Exam 34%
• Working in Business	Externally Assessed Exam 16%
• Customers and Communication	Internally Assessed Assignment 16%
• Marketing and Market Research	Internally Assessed Assignment 16%
• Introduction to Human Resources	Internally Assessed Assignment 16%

Chemistry A level



Exam board: Edexcel - Edexcel A Level <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/chemistry-2015.html>

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 6 in sciences - separate or combined. GCSE grade 5+ in Maths.

Skills required: Students need strong Maths and Science skills, analytical and observation skills, an enquiring mind and the ability to think logically.

About the course: Chemistry is a two-year A level course with no external examinations until the end of year 13. The aims and objectives of the Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Chemistry are to enable students to develop:

- essential knowledge and understanding of different areas of the subject and how they relate to each other
- a deep appreciation of the skills, knowledge and understanding of scientific methods
- competence and confidence in a variety of practical, mathematical and problem-solving skills
- their interest in and enthusiasm for the subject, including developing an interest in further study and careers associated with the subject
- an understanding of how society makes decisions about scientific issues and how the sciences contribute to the success of the economy and society.

"The chemistry course is really challenging, but it's all worth it. I'm now putting in my applications to study medicine!" Year 13 student

Career paths: Chemistry helps us to understand the world in which we live and underpins a wide range of science-based degree courses and careers. Success with A level chemistry will prepare you for a future in chemistry, pharmacy, pharmacology, chemical engineering, biochemistry, biomedical sciences, medicine and dentistry.

Course outline/assessment

Chemistry is assessed through three externally assessed exams at the end of year 13.

Paper 1: Advanced Inorganic and Physical Chemistry	30%
Paper 2: Advanced Organic and Physical Chemistry	30%
Paper 3: General and Practical Principles in Chemistry	40%

Computer Science A level



Exam board: OCR – A Level <https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-and-a-level/computer-science-h046-h446-from-2015/specification-at-a-glance/>

Entry Requirements: Grade 6 in GCSE Maths (Several topics require higher ability logic and mathematical processes); Grade 6 in GCSE Computer Science (Foundation skills required for subject)

Skills required: Completing GCSE Computer Science will give a good basis of knowledge and ability to build on for this course including foundation skills of programming. Strong mathematical and logical skills are also important, as is an ability to study and make progress independently to meet deadlines, with work completed both in and out of lessons.

About the course: Computer Science is a two-year A level course. The course consists of several parts. Component 1 focuses on the technical understanding of hardware including the internal workings of the (CPU), data exchange, software development, data types and legal and ethical issues. Component 2 builds on this to include computational thinking and problem-solving, including skills of abstraction, programming and algorithms. Component 3 is a programming project where students are expected to apply the principles of computational thinking to a practical coding programming project independently chosen by the student. They will analyse, design, develop, test, evaluate and document a program written in a suitable programming language.

"This course is hard but so worth it! The teaching is clear and incredibly well-organised, supporting you every step of the way. I've been able to accept a place at university to study it further." Alumnus 2024

Career paths: A Level Computer Science is a naturally strong subject to take if you wish to continue onto degree level in studying courses such as computer science, software engineering, or information technology/systems. After university, there are numerous fields of study and professions available which computer science can lead into, including robotics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, cloud computing, big data processing, networking, ethical hacking, computer game development, cyber-security, home automation or even teaching.

Course outline/assessment

Computer Science is assessed through two externally assessed exams at the end of year 13 and a Non-Exam Assessment completed in year 12.

Component 1: Computer Systems

Externally Assessed Exam 40%

Component 2: Algorithms and programming

Externally Assessed Exam 40%

Component 3: Programming Project

Internally Assessed Project 20%

Criminology Level 3 Diploma



Exam board: WJEC Level 3 Applied Diploma in Criminology <https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/21xjkr24/wjec-applied-diploma-in-criminology-spec-e-22-06-22-1.pdf>

Entry Requirements: Grade 4+ in GCSE Maths and English

Skills required: To study Criminology at Coombe Dean, you should be interested in how the British criminal justice system operates, as well as current affairs and political issues. Aspiring criminologists will enjoy exploring types of crime and will possess strong analytical and evaluation abilities. They will think critically, undertake independent case research, and stay motivated, as much of the course involves thorough note-taking and independent study to prepare for assessments and exams.

About the course: The course explores various crimes and their effects on individuals and society. Students will create an awareness campaign focused on hidden crimes, producing supporting materials. They will examine how the media portrays crime and how this shapes public perception. The programme also covers explanations for criminal behaviour, including biological, sociological and psychological factors. Students will follow the criminal process from the offence to court and sentencing, assessing how effective each stage is and reviewing the work of key professionals such as police, forensic specialists and the Crown Prosecution Service.

"Criminology is for anyone with even a vague interest in society, crime, or psychology... it is a nice blend of the other two social sciences whilst also coming into its own, to create an engaging workload which is spread out evenly over the 2 years you will study it. I couldn't recommend criminology enough to anyone!" Year 13

Career paths: Criminology can lead to a variety of careers within the criminal justice system, such as the police, probation, lawyers and barristers and prison staff. It can also lead to a degree in criminology/criminal justice/sociology and psychology.

Course outline/assessment

Computer Science is assessed through two externally assessed exams at the end of year 13 and a Non-Exam Assessment completed in year 12.

Unit 1: Changing Awareness of Crime	Internally Assessed Controlled Assessment 25%
Unit 2: Criminological Theories	Externally Assessed Exam 25%
Unit 3: Crime Scene to Courtroom	Internally Assessed Controlled Assessment 25%
Unit 3: Crime and Punishment	Externally Assessed Exam 25%

English Literature A level



Exam board: AQA Level 3 Advanced GCE in English Literature B <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level/english-literature-b-7716-7717>

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 6+ in English Language and/or Literature

Skills required: Students who enjoy this course are interested in people – how they act, how they feel, why they do what they do. They have questions about humanity, society, morality and creativity. They enjoy thinking critically, questioning assumptions and looking for alternative viewpoints. They love reading and stories of all kinds. They have a keen eye for detail and are interested in the ways that writers use their skills to convey messages and manipulate emotions.

About the course: The course covers a variety of modern and historical Prose, Poetry and Drama texts from Shakespeare and to Ian McEwan, with many more along the way. The content is designed to introduce students to a range of challenging and interesting texts so that students are able to discuss literature holistically within its context and through a range of critical approaches. In addition to 'set texts' which you have to study, you will be expected to explore your own interests: a willingness to 'read around' texts is essential.

"Studying English Literature provides me with a range of challenges from reading and studying difficult texts to class debates. It's a very interesting and rewarding A level."

Career paths: English Literature is a highly respected A level and is a facilitating subject for Russell Group Universities. As well as an English Literature degree itself, students of Literature might go on to study for degrees in a range of subjects including History, Sociology, Psychology, Drama and Theatre Studies and Law. Medical Schools value the subject highly. It is also very effective in developing transferrable skills such as communication, close analysis, and the ability to construct a well-argued case. These are highly valued in a range of graduate careers such as Teaching, Business and Finance, Journalism, Publishing, Law and Politics.

Course outline/assessment

English Literature is a two-year A-level course with no external examinations until the end of year 13.

Paper 1: Elements of Tragedy	Internally Assessed Controlled Assessment 40%
Paper 2: Elements of Crime Writing	Externally Assessed Exam 40%
Non-exam Assessment: Theory and Independence (two essays)	Internally Assessed Controlled Assessment 20%

Film Studies A level



Exam board: Eduqas A-level

<https://www.eduqas.co.uk/media/sxdcwwck/eduqas-a-level-film-studies-spec-from-2017-e-04-02-2021-1.pdf>

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 5+ in English Language and/or Literature

Skills required: Students must have a desire to deepen their understanding of film, a dedication to directed and independent study and an enthusiasm for creativity and discussion. They should enjoy film, cinema and story-telling and have good analytical and literacy skills.

About the course: Students will study a range of films from silent cinema, modern American film, British and World Cinema, documentaries and experimental film. Students will ultimately demonstrate their knowledge with two examinations at the end of Year 13 with elements of practical and theoretical coursework.

"If you like different types of film, it's interesting and very entertaining. And you get a chance to be creative when it comes to the NEA."

Career paths: Employment in the screen industries has grown by over 20% since 2009. Career paths for students of Film may include practical 'film-making' avenues such as Directing, Producing and Editing, but also allows movement into Film Criticism, Journalism and Teaching, among others. Universities view Film Studies as an academic subject and is a relevant A Level for further study or entry to reading Humanities and arts related disciplines.

Course outline/assessment

An Introduction to Film	British Cinema
Global Cinema	Film Movements: Silent Cinema
Hollywood	Film Movements: Documentary Film

Geography A level



Exam board: Edexcel A level

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/geography-2016.coursematerials.html#%2FfilterQuery=category:Pearson-UK:Category%2FSpecification>

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade6+ in Geography. 5+ in English and Maths.

Skills required: Students need to show evidence of being able to: explain and analyse key geographical information; research and keep up to date with relevant and topical global affairs; contribute to geographical debate and discussion; argue and evaluate geographical concepts ; make informed decisions based on evidence; carry out primary and secondary data collection for geographical fieldwork, to then present and analyse for a Non-Examined Assessment

About the course: This specification for the discipline of geography encourages students to gain enjoyment, satisfaction and a sense of achievement as they develop their knowledge and understanding of the subject. This A Level course will enable students to be inspired by their geographical understanding, to engage critically with real world issues and places, and to apply their geographical knowledge, theory and skills to the world around them. Students will grow as independent thinkers and as informed and engaged citizens, who understand the role and importance of geography as one of the key disciplines relevant to understanding the world's changing peoples, places and environments.

*"The course work is really fun - you get to explore your own favourite parts of the subject."
"I love this subject. I like the teachers and the way they teach: there's lots of variety in the lessons."*

Career paths: Geography continues to be the most employable degree, with the subject allowing students the flexibility to branch into a varied range of career paths, to include: Economic Developer, Location Analyst, Retailer, Regional Developer, Transport Manager, Weather Presenter, Disaster Manager, Flood Prevention Officer, Risk Assessor, Logistics Officer, Water Supply Coordinator, Estate Manager, Forestry Ranger, Environmental Consultant, Pollution Analyst, Conservation Officer, Planner, Social Worker, Market Researcher, Housing Officer, Estate Agent.

Course outline/assessment

Three papers taken at the end of the course plus Non-exam assessed project.

Dynamic Landscapes

Externally Assessed Exam

Physical Systems and Sustainability

Externally Assessed Exam

Global Development and Connections

Externally Assessed Exam

Non-exam assessed Independent Research Project

Internally Assessed Project 20%

History A level



Exam board: AQA, A Level, Level 3 Advanced GCE in History

Entry Requirements: GCSE grade 6+ in History and English

Skills required

Essay writing, PEEL, reaching a judgement, source analysis (3Cs), source evaluation (3Ps), independent research skills, time management.

'I chose to study History at Coombe Dean because I love the subject and knew that I would be so well supported by my teachers. I have felt confident joining in Year 12 because our teachers embedded the skills for A Level early with us at GCSE. History is great because you get to learn such a wide range of knowledge that can be applied to current situations. We debate, work in groups and independently. I love that I really have the time to delve into the subject in such great detail. The topics are really interesting, and the teachers are really enthusiastic, knowledgeable and supportive.'
Isabelle, Year 12.

Career paths

Studying history provides students with cultural awareness and an understanding of how to learn from the successes and mistakes of the past. History equips students with skills that are not confined to the study of the past. Skills of analysis are invaluable in many jobs; the ability to analyse and prioritise information is vital to decision making. There are a wealth of career opportunities available to history students, from media to business, research, law, education and government intelligence. Studying history endorses independence in young people and provides a skill set for students to be able to keep their career options open.

All topics, aside from the coursework, are examined at the end of Year 13. Prior to this, students will complete assessments within their lessons alongside mock exams.

Paper 1C: The Tudors, England, 1485-1603

40% A level Exam

Paper 2Q: The American Dream: reality or illusion?
1945-1980

40% A level Exam

Coursework- Civil Rights in the USA, 1860-1965

20% assessed by your teachers

Languages at A level

A levels are available in French, German and Spanish across the consortium of Coombe Dean, Plymstock and Hele's Schools. A subject will run in one of the schools as long as there is sufficient student interest. Students who take a language A level will be supported by teachers at the host school as well as the Coombe Dean post 16 team. A minibus runs throughout the day to enable students to access lessons in each school.

To study a Modern Foreign Language at A level, applicants should have achieved a level 6 in that language at GCSE.

For more information, please see the video and course booklet on the Coombe Dean website.

<http://www.coombedean.co.uk/sixth-form/post-16-courses/modern-foreign-languages>



Mathematics A level



Exam board: AQA Level 3 Advanced GCE in Mathematics

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/mathematics/as-and-a-level/mathematics-7357>

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade6+ in Mathematics. F

Skills required: Students who get the most out of their Mathematical studies have good problem-solving skills and can use these to identify the knowledge required to answer a question and how to apply this knowledge. These students are also highly organised and can plan and schedule when they are going to complete work. They are pro-active learners who will actively seek help if necessary.

About the course: Students will be taught an approach to Mathematics that will enhance their problem-solving skills in this subject as well as help to equip them for A levels in a variety of other areas. All the content for A-level is compulsory and will focus on topics from pure maths, statistics and mechanics. Topics which will be new to most students include calculus, series, logarithms and coordinate geometry from pure maths; binomial probabilities and hypothesis testing in statistics; motion of a particle and the forces acting on it in mechanics. Also included in the new specification is an emphasis on proof as well as the use of technology to help solve problems.

"Maths has helped me so much with my other lessons such as Psychology and Biology. It has been applicable to all my lessons and help improve my grade in my other subjects. The calculator we use for A Level maths is a must have for my other subjects!" Emily J, Year 13

"Maths gives you a strong foundation for any university course you are trying to aim for." Jude, Year 13

"Maths is very enjoyable. It expands my knowledge on the subject very well and you discover new topics. Furthermore, it is a very good subject if you are unsure what to do in the future, as it is required for many courses." Ruby, Year 13

Career paths: Popular career choices for those with A Level include engineering, computing, accountancy, economics, banking, business, retail management, surveying, psychology, air traffic control, architecture, cartography, psychology and teaching.

Many students continue to university courses in physics, business studies, psychology, computing, engineering, many stipulate Mathematics as essential.

Course outline/assessment

Exam 100%: Three papers taken at the end of the course.

Paper 1: Pure Maths

Externally Assessed Exam

Paper 2: Pure Maths and Mechanics

Externally Assessed Exam

Paper 3: Pure Maths and Statistics

Externally Assessed Exam

Further Mathematics A level



Exam board: AQA Level 3 Advanced GCE in Further Mathematics

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 7+ in Mathematics. **Further Maths should only be taken as a fourth option in addition to A level Mathematics.**

Skills required: This course is best suited to students who have a natural aptitude and a real love of mathematics. Students who get the most out of their Further Mathematical studies enjoy solving longer and more complex problems, can identify the knowledge required to answer a question and understand how to apply this knowledge. Further Mathematics students are highly organised and can plan and schedule when they are going to complete work. They are pro-active learners who will actively seek help if necessary.

About the course: Further Mathematics builds on the concepts taught in A level Mathematics helping to increase students' depth of understanding of the topics covered. As well as digging a little deeper into some familiar topics, students will also be introduced to new ideas, such as imaginary and complex numbers, matrices and infinite series. In Year 12 some of the compulsory content for pure maths includes topics such as imaginary and complex numbers, roots of polynomials, curve sketching and inequalities, infinite series, conics and calculus. There is some flexibility in the applied topics studied, with the option to extend the work done on statistics or mechanics, or to study topics from discrete mathematics.

Thomas "I find further maths very interesting, as the teachers teach you more than just the simple ways to solve a problem. They show you that there is more than one way to look at a problem and everything can be solved but the answer may not always be clear to see! Because of this, teachers have shown me that life is so much more than can be seen, and this is why it is my favourite subject."

Hannah "Taking Further maths has strengthened my Oxford application greatly. The analytical thinking of mathematics helps us understand the complex world around us and makes the impossible possible!"

Career paths: The Russell Group of leading UK Universities describes Further Mathematics as a "facilitating subject". It lists the subject as one that "can give me the most options" The subject is useful for further studies or careers in Biochemistry, Physics, Aeronautical Engineering Actuarial Science, Chemical or Electrical Engineering, Mathematics, and any form of medicine.

Course outline/assessment

Exam 100%: Three papers taken at the end of Year 13.

Paper 1: Pure Maths

Externally Assessed Exam

Paper 2: Pure Maths

Externally Assessed Exam

Paper 3: Discrete Mathematics and Mechanics

Externally Assessed Exam

Level 3 Maths Studies



Exam board: AQA Level 3 Mathematical Studies

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/mathematics/aqa-certificate/mathematical-studies-1350/specification-at-a-glance>

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade4+ in Mathematics. **This course is ½ an A level and should only be studied as a fourth option.**

Skills required: This course is designed for students who have achieved a pass at GCSE and would like to continue studying maths at Level 3 to support their other subjects or just to enhance their skills from GCSE so that they can confidently use maths in other disciplines.

About the course: Maths is for everyone. It is diverse, engaging and essential in equipping students with the right skills to reach their future destination, whatever that may be. This Level 3 Mathematical Studies qualification will consolidate students' mathematical understanding, build their confidence and competence in applying mathematical techniques to solve a range of problems and introduce them to new techniques and concepts that will prepare them for further study and future employment within a broad range of academic, professional and technical fields. Mathematical Studies aims to prepare students for the mathematical demands of higher education and work where there is a distinct mathematical or statistical element, but where the mathematical demands do not stretch to a requirement for A-level mathematics.

Tom, 2023 "The maths course was just what I needed to support my Business and science courses, and it will help me with the engineering apprenticeship I'm planning to take up after sixth form."

Career paths: Students who take this course go on to do follow whole range of different career paths, from Business Management to Biomedical Science to Healthcare.

Course outline/assessment

Exam 100%: Two papers taken at the end of Year 12.

Paper 1:

Analysis of Data

Maths for Personal Finance; Estimation

Externally Assessed Exam

Paper 2:

Critical Analysis of Data and Models

Critical path analysis and risk analysis

Expectation

Cost benefit analysis

Externally Assessed Exam

Level 3 Diploma in Music



Exam board: RSL Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma for Music Practitioners (Performance Pathway)

Entry Requirements: GCSE English Grade 4+

Skills required: This course is suited to musicians who work well independently as all of the work is coursework. If you get your best results working over a period of time rather than in an exam situation then this is the course for you. Learners should be able to play an instrument or sing to a performance standard.

About the course: This course is worth 1.5 A-Levels and trains learners in a range of musical and vocational disciplines. Learners will continue in areas they are familiar with such as performance and musical arrangements and will develop new skills from scratch like studio engineering and business planning. Students are encouraged to also pursue work experience opportunities with local professionals. This course combines practical ability with planning and reflective skills to develop rounded musicians and learners. This overwhelming focus of this course is performance and development. There is no theory unit.

"This course is amazing for any aspiring musician and covers a range of valuable skills. It has been fantastic for my confidence as a musician whilst adding plenty of new skills to my repertoire. It is the perfect combination of independent learning and classroom teaching, with amazing support all the way through" Chloe, 2022

Career paths: Music is a subject which develops a huge number of transferable skills, making it beneficial to students who want to go into the world of work or onto further study at university. With a weighting of 1.5 A-Levels, this course is very valuable in terms of UCAS points (a Merit equates to an A grade at A-Level and a Distinction or Distinction* achieves more UCAS points than an A-Level offers). Whether you want to progress onto a career in music or another field, a vocational course such as this opens a host of doors.

Course outline/assessment

100% Coursework – No Exams.

30% Externally Assessed: 70% Internally Assessed

Topics

385 Improving Instrumental Performance

387 Rehearsing and Performing

362 Lead Performer

303 Music Arrangements

370 Studio Sound Recording

Physics A level

Exam board: AQA A Level

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/as-and-a-level/physics-7407-7408/specification-at-a-glance>

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 6 in sciences - separate or combined. GCSE grade 5+ in Maths.

Skills required: Students need strong Maths and Science skills, analytical and observation skills, an enquiring mind and the ability to think logically.

About the course: A level Physics gives you the opportunity to explore the phenomena of the universe and to look at theories that explain what is observed. This subject combines practical skills with theoretical ideas to develop descriptions of the physical universe.

"The physics course is really interesting. It gives you a different perspective on how maths is used in the real world"

Career paths: Physics is especially helpful for jobs that involve building things and developing new technologies, including: engineering (flight, buildings, bridges, space, you name it...), astronomy, robotics, renewable energies, computer science, communications, space exploration, science writing, sports and games technology, research and nanotechnology (that's engineering on a seriously tiny molecular scale).

Course outline/assessment

Physics is assessed through three externally assessed exams at the end of year 13.

Paper 1	34%
Paper 2	34%
Paper 3	32%

Psychology A level

Exam board: AQA Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology

Entry Requirements: GCSE grade 5+ in English and Maths. GCSE grade 6+ in Sciences (particularly Chemistry and Biology).

Skills required: Students need strong Maths and Science skills, analytical and observation skills, an enquiring mind and the ability to think logically.

About the course: A variety of topics are covered including introductory topics such as different perspectives, cognitive psychology and memory, developmental psychology and attachment, social psychology, psychopathology and mental illness (such as OCD, depression and schizophrenia), neuroscience, research methods the nature of relationships and forensic psychology. Throughout the course, there is the continued discussion of the nature nurture debate and relevant influences on human behaviour.

"A really interesting subject – quite challenging, but you get loads of support from the teachers"

"Psychology really opens your minds and gives you a wider perspective"

"New and awesome things every lesson. Really challenging."

Career paths: Psychology can be used in any career where people are involved. It can lead to a degree in psychology which is the first step in becoming a psychologist. It can also support studies in other areas such as teaching, law, criminology, zoology and various health professions.

Course outline/assessment

Psychology is a two-year course assessed through three exams at the end of year 13.

Paper 1: social, memory, attachment and psychopathology

Externally Assessed Exam

Paper 2: approaches, biopsychology and sleep, research methods

Externally Assessed Exam

Paper 3: issues and debates, schizophrenia, relationships and forensic psychology

Externally Assessed Exam

Sociology A level



Exam board: AQA Level 3 Advanced GCE in Sociology

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 5 in English Language and/or Literature.

Skills required: Students who enjoy this course are interested in finding out how and why people behave in different ways in various parts of society. They are intrigued by differing perspectives, such as feminism, Marxism and postmodernism. They have questions about why some groups of people have better outcomes from education and health care than others and are interested in ways in which the government acts to help sections of society. They are intrigued by crime and deviance and wish to understand and explain types of crime and why some groups of people are more likely to be arrested and sent to prison. They enjoy reading, watching documentaries and looking at the way in which the media is used to inform and persuade people.

About the course: The course looks at ways in which Sociologists investigate people in social groups and issues of social change in recent times. It is concerned with challenging issues facing society today including crime rates, homelessness, education, disabilities and illness and inequalities between different social classes, gender and ethnic groups. The content is designed to stimulate discussion and debate about society today and help students become critical in their thinking and socially aware.

"Sociology is a fascinating subject that really goes deep into different aspects of society, looking at education, the family, crime and societal behaviour. We're learning about what is happening right in front of us in society now, and it has made me so much more aware of real-world issues. It's interesting to me to see how different perspectives clash and see the world differently. Sociology goes hand in hand with humanities and other social sciences and is a very academic and valuable subject to have under your belt".

Career paths: A strong and respected A level for a broad range of careers including Journalism, Nursing, Midwifery, Paramedic, Police, Social work, Law, Teaching, Youth work, Probation Officer and Local Government. Our students have progressed to a multitude of excellent University courses leading to professional and rewarding jobs.

Course outline/assessment

Sociology is a two-year course assessed through three exams at the end of year 13.

Paper 1: Education and Research Methods

Externally Assessed Exam

Paper 2: Health Studies, Media Studies, Global development.

Externally Assessed Exam

Paper 3: Crime and Deviance, Theory and Methods.

Externally Assessed Exam

Sport Level 3 Extended Certificate



Exam board: Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sport

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 3+ in English and Maths. BTEC/CNAT L2 Merit+ or GCSE PE level 5+

Skills required: An interest in sport and recreation is essential, with current club or county representation within a sport strongly advised. Students who enjoy this course are sports enthusiasts, who often have an interest in a career within the sports sector. They are athletes with good practical and theoretical ability who can research, analyse and evaluate performance in order to improve it.

About the course: The BTEC L3 allows students to further explore theory and pathways within the sports sector. Students will develop more in-depth knowledge and understanding of anatomy and physiology and will apply sports science concepts to case studies where a healthy, active lifestyle is not being met due to a person's environmental factors. Students will also take on roles of instructors, leading clients through fitness testing processes. They will also further explore their own future employment options and pathways within the sports industry.

"The Sport course was really good. Practical and informative. Now I'm going to HE to study to be a Sports therapist."

Career paths: With a broad range of topics covered throughout the course, students will be equipped to transfer their skills within a range of sports sectors. This may include employment within the leisure industry, the armed forces or advancement to University courses in sport science, development, coaching or teaching. Students may also advance within nutrition, health and social care or medical routes. Due to the nature of units studied, the course also effectively develops leadership and communication skills, in conjunction with close analysis and evaluative skills. Students will be equipped with further knowledge of leading healthy, active lifestyles within any route they may choose.

Course outline/assessment

Unit 1: Anatomy and Physiology	Written examination.
Unit 2: Fitness Training and Programming for Health, Sport and Well-being	Set and marked externally and completed under supervised conditions. Written submission.
Unit 3: Professional development in the Sports Industry	Coursework submission & scenario interview assessment
Unit 5: Application of fitness testing	Coursework submission & practical assessment

The Coombe Dean Post 16 Centre is a both part of and separate from the rest of the school. Post 16 students have access to a Post-16 Common Room for study and social time, Post 16 Study rooms and bespoke post-16 classrooms.

This enables Post 16 students to form an aspirational community within a community – leading the way for the next cohort while having the opportunity to study at the highest level in a quiet, focused and well-resourced environment with access to expert support.





YOU ARE INVITED!

Find your next steps at the
Coombe Dean Post 16 Open Evening

8 JANUARY 2026
5:00 PM

SCAN HERE



to book a place

"Build on the foundations laid at GCSE to explore new and/or familiar subjects in depth as you look towards the future that suits you."

