

The Curriculum at KEY STAGE 4

GCSE Subject choices will be made at the end of Year 10 in consultation with subject teachers, parents and the Careers Department.

A wide range of qualifications is on offer, all accredited by Examination Bodies like CCEA and recognised by employers, further education and training providers. Each Student will be encouraged to choose the qualification most suited to their academic ability, skills, qualities and identified career path.

GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education)

This is the main public examination for 16 year olds

Most core and option subjects are offered at this level

Some subjects eg. Science are offered as a Double Award qualification. This means the course content is double that of a normal GCSE and students receive a double grade eg. AB; C*C etc.

Occupational Studies

This is a skills-based qualification being offered to pupils who may find traditional academic subjects and qualifications challenging and may be better suited to develop skills in the practical and occupational areas.

Pupils are largely assessed on practical performance

OCN

The Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCN NI) is an awarding organisation that advances education by developing nationally organised qualifications. In Loreto College this is offered in Religious Studies to some students as an alternative pathway to GCSE Religious Studies.

CORE SUBJECTS

All students must study the following subjects

English Language

Mathematics

Science

Religious Studies

Optional Subjects

Most students will be expected to study 9 subjects at KS4, therefore the additional five subjects will come from a range of academic and vocational subjects.

To be successful at GCSE it is essential that students choose the correct subjects which match their ability level, interest and career aspirations. The students will be given guidance by staff who will be in a position to assess their suitability for a particular subject. The student's performance in the Halloween and Christmas Exams and their CAT scores will be taken into consideration, the purpose being to ensure that the student achieves the best outcomes.

[The Academic Pathway](#)

Students who have excelled academically throughout Junior school will be strongly advised to follow the Academic Pathway in order to reach their full potential. They are advised to set high expectations for themselves, to research career aspirations carefully to ensure that they can meet the requirements of any future third level degree course.

[The Vocational Pathway](#)

Some students will benefit from studying Vocational subjects rather than the traditional academic GCSEs.

Vocational qualifications help students develop real-world knowledge, experience and skills. In these competitive times, having practical experience behind you can give you the edge in your job search. When you reach the end of your **GCSEs** you will have different educational options open to you.

If you have found it difficult to perform to the best of your ability when completing traditional exams, this type of qualification may suit you better as it is mainly assessed via course-work. The course is more practically based .and many students will move on to the world of work or further vocational study after completion of KS4.

The main type of Vocational Course offered by the College is Occupational Studies.

[The Cross Over Pathway](#)

[A combination of Academic and Vocational Studies.](#)

We would advise some of our students to choose the Cross Over pathway, studying mainly the traditional academic subjects along with one Occupational Studies course. This provides them with the opportunity to focus on subjects which they have enjoyed and excelled in, in Junior school but also study a more practical skills based subject which is assessed via course work, thus reducing the number of end of course exams.

The student will study (A) **4** core subjects: English Language, Mathematics Science: either Single Award or Double Award, RE: (either GCSE or OCN)

[Academic Subjects \(GCSE\) offered:](#)

- Art and Design
- Biology
- Business Communications Systems
- Chemistry
- HE – Child Development
- Computing
- Drama
- Economics
- English Language
- English Literature

- French
- Geography
- HE – Food and Nutrition
- History
- Irish
- Mathematics
- Further Mathematics
- Music
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Religion
- Science – Single Award
- Science –Double Award
- Science – Triple Award
- Spanish
- Technology and Design

LEVEL 2 OCCUPATIONAL STUDIES

EXAMINATION BOARD: CCEA http://ccea.org.uk/occupational_studies/

AIMS OF THE COURSE:

Occupational Studies encourages learners to be motivated and inspired by following a broad, coherent, and satisfying course of study. It gives them opportunities to sample work related learning within coherent occupational contexts and to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. It should also prepare learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and careers.

KEY FEATURES:

The Occupational Studies specification:

- has an occupational and employability focus;
- enables progression to other courses, training and employment;
- helps to raise levels of achievement, since learners are likely to be more motivated to achieve success through applying their knowledge in practical, work-related situations and contexts;
- emphasises learning by doing, which will help learners to develop the transferable skills necessary in a changing and dynamic working environment.

Our school offer Three courses;

1. Design and Creativity (Contemporary Cuisine and Patisserie and Baking)
2. Technology and Innovation (Bench Joinery and CAD)
3. Business Services (Child Care AND Using Office Technology)

GRADING:

The course is 100% portfolio and activity based and the grade boundaries are Pass/Merit/Distinction/Distinction* which are the notional equivalent to A*-C at GCSE.

THE PRINCES TRUST ACHIEVE PROGRAMME

EXAMINATION BOARD: Prince's Trust

<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/unlock-your-potential/explore-your-potential>

AIMS OF THE COURSE:

The Achieve Programme helps Students at KS4 develop the skills and confidence they need to engage and succeed in education, so they can reach their full potential. It allows Students to improve attainment, attendance and personal and social development.

OUTLINE OF THE COURSE and ASSESSMENT:

There are no examinations on the Achieve Programme. Students work towards a qualification in **Personal Development and Employability Skills**, which is recognised by all UK regulatory authorities in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The varied Achieve Programme curriculum can cover topics including:

- Skills for School
- Personal and Social Development
- Life Skills
- Active Citizenship
- Enterprise Projects
- Preparation for Work
- Plus enrichment courses in STEM, Literacy, Language and Numeracy, Arts, Sport or Employability

GRADING:

This qualification is 100% centre assessed using portfolios of evidence and graded as Pass or Fail. A Level 2 Certificate 'Pass' grade is the notional equivalent of two grade 'B's at GCSE.

In addition to their GCSE subjects, students also study the following subjects:

Learning for Life and Work
General PE
Careers