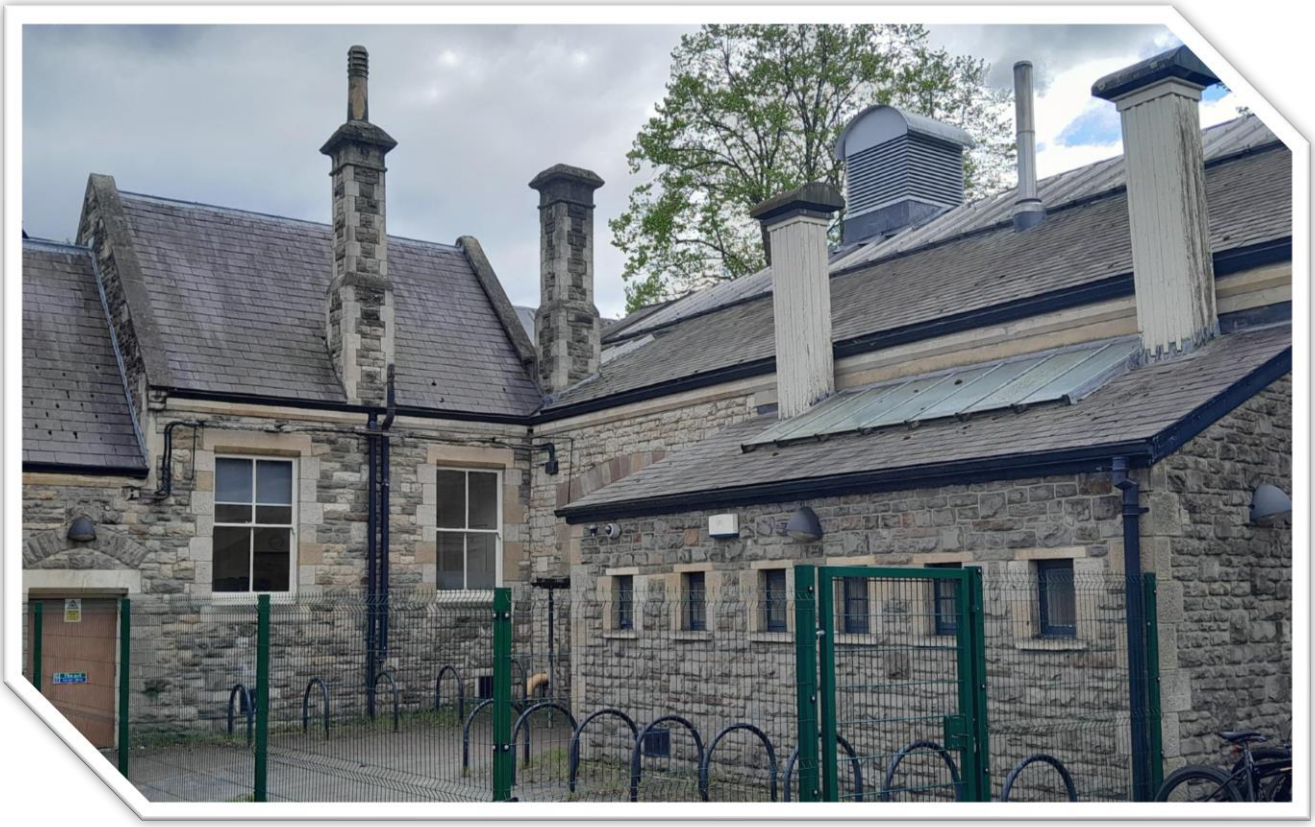

Links Curriculum Booklet

2025-2026

CHURCHWARD SCHOOL

Recognising Strengths, Building Skills, Achieving Success

Contents

Welcome 3
Maths – GCSE/Functional Skills/AS Core Maths 5
English Language 7
English Literature 10
Sociology 12
PSHCE & RSE 14
higher Project Qualifaction 15
Art and Design 17
Trinity Arts Award 19
Coding and Computer Science 20
Computer Science GCSE 21
Esports 22
Science 23
Notes 25

Welcome

Our goal is to provide a tailored academic provision for students aged 16 -19 that will prepare them for further study, independent living and vocational pathways.

Links campus provides a safe and relaxed social setting where students can connect with their peers. We have established a range of clubs and activities which students can access throughout the week as well as giving students the opportunity to express what they would like to see in their educational setting.

Whilst we are a standalone building in the centre of Swindon, we are very much a part of the Churchward School family and follow the same policies and procedures. Our daily timetables and term dates also follow the same structure. This allows us to access the wealth of resources and expertise across all 3 school sites, whilst simultaneously, creating a clear step between 'school life' and 'college life'.

Our school values of Recognising Strengths, Gaining Skills and Achieving Success are a consistent thread, as is our commitment to the Thrive approach and a robust PSHCE curriculum. All students at Links will take part in PSHCE, RE and weekly Health and Wellbeing sessions which will include a range of sport and activity options.

Preparation for Adulthood and Careers progression as outlined in the Gatsby Benchmarks are at the heart of our curriculum. All students will have the opportunity to attend regular work experience sessions and we liaise closely with local employers and careers hubs to source appropriate and exciting work opportunities.

We look forward to welcoming you to Links!

Maths – GCSE/Functional Skills/AS Core Maths

Course titles and levels of qualification: GCSE/Functional Skills/AS Level

Course outline

Maths opens up a world of possibilities and expands your choices in the future. No matter how the world changes, maths will always be at the heart of life. Maths not only helps you understand the world, it also opens up an array of opportunities. Maths teaches you ways that people have developed to make life easier for themselves and also teaches you to think logically. This helps you solve all sorts of problems. Solving problems is satisfying, useful and highly valued – and so is maths. Maths gives us the chance to make the world a better place.

There are three strands of Maths that we study in order to gain a qualification:

- Functional Skills
- GCSE
- Core Maths (AS level)

At Links, we also give you the opportunity to improve the grade you got at GCSE, including sitting the higher tier exam if you are ready to. You will need to take maths at Links unless you got a 4 or higher but you can still choose it even if you got a 4 or higher. If you have already gained a grade 5 at GCSE, you can study the Core Maths curriculum which achieves an AS level qualification.

Course title	Exam board	Qualification	Method of assessment
Functional Skills Maths	NCFE 603/5057/X 603/5053/2 603/5061/1	Entry 1,2,3	Two papers under exam conditions: EL1 20 minutes & 60 minutes EL2 25 minutes & 75 minutes EL3 30 minutes & 75 minutes
	NCFE 601/1090/9 601/1091/0	Level 1 & 2	Two papers under exam conditions: 30 minutes and 90 minutes *On demand throughout the year*
Course outline	Functional Skills aims to prepare learners for life and work, while creating a steppingstone to further studies such as GCSE Maths. It takes a real-life approach to learning, with problem-solving questions about personal finance, planning and organising activities and the world of work.		

Course title	Exam board	Qualification	Method of assessment
GCSE Mathematics	AQA 8300	GCSE	Three 1 ½ hour papers under exam conditions [June 2023] A mix of question styles, from short, single-mark questions to multi-step problems. The mathematical

			demand increases as a student progresses through the paper.
Course outline	GCSE Maths develops your understanding of mathematics and gives you the confidence to tackle problems in education, the work place and everyday life. It is organised into broad topic areas; Number, Algebra, Ratio, proportion and rates of change, Geometry and measures, Probability and Statistics.		

Course title	Exam board	Qualification	Method of assessment
Core Maths	AQA 7356	AS Level	
Course outline	Core Maths is a level 3 course equivalent to an AS level. It provides students with a practical understanding of mathematics and supports their other subjects. Core Maths is for students who have achieved at least a grade 5 in GCSE maths and is usually studied alongside 3 A levels or a BTEC/T level. It is equal in size to an AS level qualification and is graded A-E.		

Career and Progression

Both Functional Skills and GCSE Examinations help students to progress to further study, training and skilled employment. When applying for Higher Education courses at local colleges, they will usually be looking for evidence of a relevant qualification in Maths. This is to demonstrate that you have the necessary skills to take on the demands of the course, including basic numeracy skills.

A basic maths qualification is a requirement for most jobs, irrespective of field or level of role. Whichever career path you decide is best for you, keep your options open with maths.

With a maths qualification you could be involved in developing new types of mountain bikes, computer animation, music technology, mobile phones and protecting the environment for future generations. Mathematicians also work in banking, law and publishing.

English Language

Course titles and levels of qualification: GCSE

Course Outline

We know that not everyone loves English. Unfortunately, over the past few years, English exams have become more and more of a box-ticking exercise, which means that English *lessons* often focus on teaching you to tick the boxes. Furthermore, people often see English as pointless – if you can already speak it in your daily life, why should you do lessons on it at school?

Here at Links, our focus is bringing the joy back to English. Whichever course you are taking, we are determined to help you overcome any barriers that might be stopping you from fulfilling your potential. The first step on this journey is helping you to enjoy the subject!

If you didn't get that 4 in GCSE English Language, you will need to work towards it at Links (as you would anywhere else). If the GCSE just isn't for you, then you will need to work towards an English Functional Skills qualification instead. However, you can be safe in the knowledge that this is an opportunity for a fresh start with the subject.

In fact, we are so convinced that you will enjoy our English lessons that we are offering AS English Language as well! Any student who comes to Links with a 5 or above in GCSE English Language will be given the option to study this fascinating linguistics course where we look at topics such as how language is used to represent different social groups, and how language use varies according to gender, region, sexuality and occupation.

Course title	Exam board	Qualification	Method of assessment

English Language	AQA 8700	GCSE	Two written exam papers, each lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes: Non-Examination Assessment: Spoken Language
Course outline	We will explore a range of fiction and non-fiction texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st Centuries, developing our skills in reading comprehension, language analysis and critical evaluation. We will also practise writing a range of different types of writing, such as narrative and persuasive, focusing on improving our vocabulary, grammar, and use of stylistic conventions. At the end of the course, students will complete two written exams: - Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing - Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives Students will also prepare and deliver a presentation on a topic of their choice to fulfil the Spoken Language Endorsement, which is marked and graded separately.		

Course title	**Exam board**	**Qualification**	**Method of assessment**
English Language	AQA 7701	AS	Two written exam papers, each lasting 1 hour and 30 minutes
Course outline	We will begin the course by studying different areas of language, including phonetics, graphology, pragmatics and discourse, deepening our understanding of linguistic concepts. We will then explore the concepts of audience, purpose, genre, and mode, and how these shape the ways in which language is produced and received. We will apply these core elements to a range of texts, examining the ways in which different social groups are represented and how identity is constructed. In the second module of the course, we will look at the ways in which language varies because of personal, social and geographical contexts such as age, sexuality, gender and region, and explore attitudes towards language diversity. At the end of the course, students will complete two written exams: - Paper 1: Language and the Individual - Paper 2: Language Varieties		

<table>
<tr><th>Course title</th><th>Exam board</th><th>Qualification</th><th>Method of assessment</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">English</td><td rowspan="2">Pearson</td><td>Functional Skills Qualification at Entry Level 1/2/3</td><td>Two written assessments:
- Reading (45 minutes)
- Writing (50 minutes)

One spoken assessment</td></tr>
<tr><td>Functional Skills Qualification at Level 1/2</td><td>Two written assessments:
- Reading (60/75 minutes)
- Writing (60 minutes)

One spoken assessment comprising two tasks</td></tr>
<tr><td>Course outline</td><td colspan="3">We will work towards developing students' skills and confidence in the three key areas of reading, writing, and speaking and listening in order to ensure that they have the fundamental skills and knowledge required to apply English to employment and everyday life. Across the course, we will read and write a range of different text types, supporting students to improve their planning, drafting, editing and comprehension skills.

At the end of the course, students will sit two written assessments:
- Reading
- Writing

Students will also complete a spoken assessment:
- At Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2 and Entry Level 3, this involves short spoken activities and a group discussion;
- At Level 1 and Level 2, this involves the delivery of a talk/presentation and a linked question and answer session.</td></tr>
</table>

Career and Progression

To access the next level of education, whether through college or an apprenticeship, students are expected to have a minimum of a Grade 4 in GCSE English Language (or show that they are working towards this or Functional Skills).

But a qualification in English is worth so much more than this! Every day, all around the world, people are bombarded with information – with language! We will focus not just on the basics – reading, writing, and speaking and listening – but on the importance of applying these skills in the real world.

English Literature

Course titles and levels of qualification: GCSE

Course Outline

We also know that some students love English! GCSE English Language is often prioritised in school as colleges, apprenticeships and jobs require a Grade 4 in GCSE English Language. This is understandable, but it means that some students will not have had the awesome experience of studying classic novels, plays and poetry.

At Links, however, any student who arrives with a Grade 4 in GCSE English Language will have the opportunity to study GCSE English Literature over one year.

Course title	Exam board	Qualification	Method of assessment
English Literature	AQA 8702	GCSE	Two written exam papers, one lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes, and one lasting 2 hours and 15 minutes.
Course outline	We will study four key texts over the course of the year: - Shakespeare's *Macbeth* - J.B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls* - Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* - The 'Power and Conflict' cluster of poetry from the AQA GCSE English Literature Poetry Anthology (15 poems), and unseen poetry For each of the texts, we will explore the social and historical contexts in which they were written, forming connections between their production and the messages that the writers were trying to convey. We will also look at how these writers made choices regarding language, form and structure in order to achieve their goals. At the end of the course, students will complete two written exams: - Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th Century Novel - Paper 2: Modern Texts and Poetry		

Career and Progression

An additional English GCSE is always beneficial on college, work and apprenticeship application forms, but there are so many more positives to studying English Literature! You will see how stories and storytelling have progressed through time and have the chance to discuss themes and ideas which are still relevant today. You will be able to develop the skills that you learned in GCSE English Language, applying them to a range of texts and diving into the depths of the writer's message.

Sociology

Course titles and levels of qualification: GCSE Sociology (AQA)

Course outline

Sociology is the fascinating study of society, human relationships and social behaviour. This course invites you to look beyond the surface of everyday life and explore how social structures, institutions, and cultural norms shape who we are and how we live. Have you ever wondered why people from different backgrounds may experience life differently? Or why some social issues seem persistent despite efforts to tackle them? Sociology equips you with the tools to investigate these questions through a critical and analytical lens.

Sociology is not just about understanding society; it's also about developing your own perspectives and forming reasoned arguments. You will learn to assess evidence, interpret data, and construct balanced viewpoints. It requires you to be curious, open-minded and reflective about the world around you. It is ideal for those who enjoy engaging with current social debates, questioning the status quo, and exploring how human behaviour is influenced by wider social forces. By the end of the course, you will not only have gained a deeper understanding of the world but also developed valuable skills that will support your academic and professional ambitions.

Course title	Exam board	Qualification	Method of assessment
Sociology	AQA	GCSE	Two exam of 1 hr 45 min each. Paper 1: The sociology of families and education Paper 2: The sociology of crime and deviance and social stratification
Course outline	In year 1, students will cover: Sociological Approaches, Research Methods, Families and an Introduction to Education. In year 2, students will cover: Education, Crime & Deviance and Social Stratification. The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives. • AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods. (40% of overall grade) • AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods. (40% of overall grade) • AO3: Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence and methods in order to construct arguments, make judgements and draw conclusions. (20% of overall grade)		

Career and Progression

This qualification will aid students who would like to go to further education to study A Levels, for example in the social sciences. This will also allow pathways to employment in the following sectors:

- Community Development Worker
- Police Officer
- Teacher
- Social Researcher
- Youth Worker
- Adult Pathway Advisor
- Marketing Executive
- Human Resources Officer
- Social Worker

PSHCE & RSE

Why is PSHCE & RSE a core subject at Churchward School Links Campus?

At Links, we uphold PSHCE & RSE as one of the core pillars to the development of our young people. It will provide you with the essential knowledge, tools and cultural capital needed to be educated citizens in employment and in relationships. We recognise the need to ensure that our young people are equipped with the knowledge and the skills to stay safe, on and offline and develop healthy, happy and equal relationships with a focus on LGBTQ+. We see that preventative education about relationships can allow young people to make safe and conscious choices, both on and offline and that is our focus - to have safe, healthy and happy students now and in the future.

What will you cover in KS5?

In this final stage, the focus shifts to preparing students for adulthood and global citizenship. You will explore body image, resilience, financial decision-making and employment rights. Topics such as sexual health, parenthood, cultural diversity and managing stress prepare you for independent living. Practical skills like budgeting, writing CVs and understanding workplace responsibilities are key components, ensuring your readiness for the next stages of your life. All of our Links students will attend two PSHCE & RSE lessons per week.

Are there any assessments in PSHCE?

Formative assessment in PSHCE is an integral part of ensuring students' progress and understanding of the curriculum. We use a variety of methods to monitor and evaluate learning, ensuring students can apply knowledge to their lives meaningfully. Teacher uses individual questioning, group discussions, role plays and formal debates to assess students' comprehension and critical thinking skills during lessons. Tools like mind maps, created before and after learning, help visualise knowledge growth, while self-assessment activities encourage students to reflect on their understanding and personal development. Questionnaires and student feedback provide insights into their engagement and retention of key concepts. Additionally, baseline assessments at the start of each topic gauge prior knowledge and a RAG-rated tracker is maintained weekly to monitor student progress and gaps in learning. Lessons are also revisited when necessary, using the spiral curriculum to ensure deeper understanding and retention of core themes over time. These diverse assessment strategies ensure PSHCE's impact is both measurable and meaningful for all students.

Will I gain a qualification from PSHCE & RSE?

PSHCE does not offer formal qualifications, focusing instead on equipping you with essential life skills that prepare you for adulthood.

HPQ – Higher Project Qualification

Course titles and levels of qualification: AQA Higher Project Qualification. Equivalent to half a GCSE.

Course outline

For the higher project qualification, you will complete either a 2000-word project including all references and working log, or an artifact with a 500 word project report, including reference to the complete process and project log. What makes this project qualification so engaging for our learners, is that you get to choose what you base your project on and what you will do, whether that's a longer report, or an artifact and report.

Being for our older leaners at Links, our intent is to grow leaners who love to investigate and explore topics that interest them; to grow learners that know how to write a complete report including references, bibliography, idea and contents pages. Learners that know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it; that grow their own interests through self-directed study with the support of the teacher who is the facilitator of the course and who guides the students on their journey of discovery and creation.

The intention of this project qualification is to help you develop and grow as an independent learner, fuelled by your own interests and choices. With this, you will become more responsible for your own learning and what you produce, helping you in turn to become a responsible young adult, developing your own life, interests and choices.

Course title	Exam board	Qualification	Method of assessment
HPQ	AQA	Half a GCSE	**A01** **Manage 20%** Identify the topic • identify project aims and objectives • produce a project plan • complete the work applying organisational skills and strategies to meet stated objectives **A02 Use resources 20%** obtain and select from a variety of resources

			• analyse data • apply information relevantly • demonstrate understanding of appropriate links **A03 Develop and Realise 40%** • problem-solving • decision-making • creative thinking • to achieve planned outcome **A04 Review 20%** • communication skills • convey and present evidenced outcomes and conclusions • evaluate own learning and performance
Course outline	Term 1 - Learn about HPQ and develop own ideas. Lessons taught by teacher each week on how to complete a project. Including ethical research and Harvard referencing. Term 2 - Continue to have formal teaching as well as begin research on project and develop ideas. Clarify ideas and begin sources ideas and information from websites and books. Term 3 and 4 - Develop and realise the project. Students to produce project and complete course log. Teacher to assess according to the above objectives. Term 5 - Complete and evaluate project. Make improvements and present presentation. Projected submitted to AQA.		

Career and Progression

The HPQ sits alongside your GCSE portfolio and will support whatever direction you wish to go in as it is led by you!

Art and Design

Course titles and levels of qualification:

Course outline

If you have taken GCSE Art and Design as a two-year programme, you enjoyed it but didn't quite get the grade you wanted, you can now re-take it at Links, producing component one on site here with the support of a qualified Art teacher, and then take your exam at Tadpole in the spring. As you know the GCSE studies history of art and artistic forms however looks at a larger project and brief to pass the qualification, this supports your ability to show future employers you are able to work to a set brief and produce fantastic artistic and creative outcomes.

The GCSE is marked in a slightly different way and is based on course work submission and a timed exam. If you wish to re-take GCSE art, then you will need to be motivated as you cannot use previously assessed work, so the content of your component 1, with 2 portfolios will need to be produced in 6 months – but if you love art and have experienced the course already, then you can complete this challenge!

Course title	**Exam board**	**Qualification**	**Method of assessment**
GCSE Art and Design		GCSE	Component 1 Portfolio x 2 Two individual sustained projects where the learner responds to a topic title. This will include Researching artists Sketching ideas Experimenting with techniques and materials Showing the examiner 'a journey' through their exploration Component 2 Formal exam 10 hours of formal assessment within the art room Responding to a topic title.
Course outline	This qualification is designed for learners who want an introduction to art and design that includes a vocational and project-based element. The qualification will appeal to learners who wish to progress onto further study.		

Career and Progression

Careers or qualifications you may wish to follow:

- A Level or BTEC Art and Design
- Graphic design
- 3D design
- Digital design
- Photography
- Performing arts

Trinity Arts Award

Course titles and levels of qualification: Trinity Arts Silver Award

Course Outline

Silver Arts Award gives young people the chance to take on an artistic challenge and a leadership role too. As well as being about creativity, it's about becoming a reviewer, researcher and project manager. Participants build a broad range of transferable skills as they complete their portfolio and gain a Level 2 qualification.

There are two strands to Silver Arts Award – one focusing on artistic practice and the other on arts leadership. Completing both successfully requires teamwork and independence, creativity and critical thinking, leadership and collaboration, confidence and communication. Take a look at our short video to see Silver Arts Award in action.

To achieve Silver Arts Award, young people create a portfolio, in a format of their choice, presenting evidence that they have completed all the tasks within the award's two units:

Unit 1: Arts practice and pathways

- planning an arts challenge that develops their skills
- implementing and reviewing the success of their challenge
- reviewing arts events and sharing their views
- researching careers and future opportunities in the arts

Unit 2: Arts leadership

- identifying an arts leadership role and planning an arts project
- being an effective arts leader, including dealing with practical issues and working effectively with others
- reviewing their project and leadership abilities

Coding and Computer Science

Course titles and levels of qualification: NCFE Understanding Coding alongside Using Python for Cryptography

Course outline

Computers are central to everything we do on a daily basis. Every time you buy anything, use the internet and travel, you will use computers. Computers are used for gaming, watching videos and lots of other forms of entertainment. We communicate with computers using a programming language.

The NCFE Understanding Coding course will teach you the theory behind how we code and will talk about different languages used. The course is assessed by written coursework.

Alongside the NCFE course you will have practical lessons on coding using Python, where you will learn the basics of using Python and we will then apply our learning to a mini project on Cryptography. You will also have the opportunity to complete some coding challenges to use your newly learned skills.

Course Title	Exam Board	Method of Assessment
Understanding Coding	NCFE	5 Units of written Coursework

This qualification is designed for learners who want to gain knowledge of coding. The qualification may also support progression into further study in coding or other topics within the digital sector.

Career and Progression

This course is a great stepping stone to move onto studying GCSE Computer Science.

Coding and computer science can help you towards a career in anything tech based. It also develops your problem solving skills which is important for any job you want to do.

Computer Science GCSE

Taught at UTC

Course titles and levels of qualification: Computer Science GCSE

Course outline

Computers are central to everything we do on a daily basis. Every time you buy anything, use the internet and travel, you will use computers. Computers are used for gaming, watching videos and lots of other forms of entertainment. We communicate with computers using a programming language.

During GCSE Computer Science, you will learn about different aspects of computers. You'll be learning about coding and algorithms as well as databases and security. This course is assessed over one 2 hour exam and one exam lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Course title	Exam board	Qualification	Method of assessment
Computer Science	AQA	GCSE	**Paper 1 – Computational thinking and programming skills (2 hours)** **Paper 2 – Computing Concepts (1 hour 45 mins)**

Career and Progression

Coding and computer science can help you towards a career in anything tech based. It also develops your problem solving skills which is important for any job you want to do.

Esports

Taught at UTC

Course titles and levels of qualification: BTEC Extended Certificate in Esports

Course outline

Esports is defined as organised competitive gaming, which is human versus human, either as individuals or in teams. The esports industry is a fast-growing global industry. In February 2019, Newzoo published its 2019 Global Esports Market Report. This stated that, in 2018, the global esports market was valued at U.S. $655 million. This rose to nearly U.S. $865 million in 2019 and is projected to reach U.S. $1.79 billion in 2022.

Many professional sports clubs have developed an Esports team and employ professional Esports players.

Learners taking this qualification will study four mandatory units:

• Unit 1: Introduction to Esports.

• Unit 2: Esports Skills, Strategies and Analysis.

• Unit 3: Enterprise and Entrepreneurship in the Esports Industry.

• Unit 4: Health, Wellbeing and Fitness for Esports Players.

Course title	Exam board	Qualification	Method of assessment
Esports	BTEC	Extended Certificate	**Coursework assignments**

Career and Progression

The primary focus of the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Esports is to progress to employment across a range of roles within esports, but it might also be taken alongside other vocational qualifications or A Levels.

Jobs that are available in these areas include:

• esports player

• team coach

• data analyst

Science

Taught at UTC

Course titles and levels of qualification: GCSE combined science (AQA Synergy)/Entry Level Certificate

Course outline

Studying Science allows you to think big. You will gain the confidence to question everything, solve problems, manage risk and develop your own answers to questions. From the smallest sub-atomic particles to the largest features in the Universe, you will gain an understanding of what, why and how the natural world is and how we interact with it.

Science is a practical subject and your learning will take place in a 21st Century Science Lab. You can take part in experiments and demonstrations to help your understanding, curiosity, motivation and sometimes just for fun.

Course title	Exam board	Qualification	Method of assessment
Entry Level Certificate	AQA	Entry Level Certificate (Single/Double Award)	There are 2 different types of assessment: 1.Externally set assignments (ESAs) consist of a short written test 2. Teacher devised assessments (TDAs) consist of a short piece of practical work
	The course comprises six components which span all three major science disciplines. Through the Entry level course students will acquire vital content knowledge and practical skills that will allow them to broaden and secure their understanding about how their world works. Students will evidence their learning by submitting a portfolio of their written and practical work within various components: **Biology** Component 1- The human body Component 2 - Environment, evolution and inheritance **Chemistry** Component 3 - Elements, mixtures and compounds Component 4 - Chemistry in our world		

	Physics Component 5 - Energy, forces and the structure of matter Component 6 - Electricity, magnetism and waves

Career and Progression

Careers in science or with science qualifications are wide and varied and can include:

Engineers, technicians, archaeologists, working with animals, nursing, journalism.

It is hard to find a career which does not involve science.

Notes

We welcome students to tell us what they want to study and we will always do our best to facilitate this. We use alternative provisions where we cannot provide the subject ourselves – such as History GCSE and GCSE Business studies.