

Year 9 into 10

Options Brochure

2026 - 2027



Dear Parent/Carer,

Year 10 Courses and Options 2026 - 2027 (Level 2 qualifications)

During Year 9, your son/daughter has had the opportunity to engage in a number of enrichment subjects alongside the compulsory core curriculum. It is now time for Year 9 students to make their option choices which will lead to Level 2 qualifications and public examinations in GCSE and equivalent courses.

As a reminder, all students will take a set of **core subjects** following national guidelines in **English, Mathematics, Science, PE and RE**. In addition, a significant number of students will also be expected to study either a **Modern Foreign Language or History or Geography**. We refer to this as the EBacc Pathway.

This booklet provides details of the subjects available to our students in Years 10 and 11 together with the options process and timescale for choices to be made. We want each student to choose wisely, having considered their own aptitudes and abilities and hope that parents/carers will be able to support their children in making these important educational decisions.

We recommend that families consider what lies beyond Key Stage 4 when making choices. All students will progress to Post-16 education: whether they follow A Level and equivalent subjects, or move to work-based learning such as an apprenticeship; so it is important to plan ahead when making choices for Year 10. We will guide students along one of **four pathways** according to their current performance at school to ensure they are stretched and challenged but also able to cope with the demands of their Level 2 courses. We would strongly recommend that all students continue to study an arts / practical based subject in Year 10 to continue to develop a broad breadth of skills and experiences.

This booklet provides details of the options process, timeline, frequently asked questions and subject pages. If you have any subject specific questions after you have read through this brochure then please email the appropriate class teacher or subject leader. Mrs Harvey, Deputy Headteacher, will oversee the overall process and help students arrive at the final option choices. Please remember that, whilst we will do our utmost to provide all the subjects offered and to accommodate all reasonable choices, financial, staffing or timetable constraints can occasionally make this impossible. We will engage you throughout the process and enter into a dialogue should we need to revisit option choices.

This is a crucial period for your child and I cannot stress too strongly the importance of the decisions being made. The Option Choices Form will be available on the school website and must be completed no later than **16th March 2026** and confirmation of choices will be made as soon after this as possible.

Yours faithfully,



Gary Mullings
Headteacher

Important dates in the Options Process

Wednesday 21st January 2026	Year 9 Options Information Presentation Evening
Thursday 22nd January 2026	Options Brochure available in the Student Zone on the school website along with Presentation
Friday 27th February 2026	Progress Reports Issued
Monday 2nd March 2026	Options Form Opens - Recommendation of pathway letter, including a link to the relevant application form.
Thursday 12th March 2026	Year 9 Parents' Evening
Monday 16th March 2026	Deadline for completion of online options choices
By Friday 1st May 2026	Once the initial allocation of students to courses has been processed and timetabling constraints have been identified, individual student meetings will take place if all of their option choices cannot be allocated
Summer Term	Option choices confirmed. Please bear in mind that, before choices can be confirmed, final timetabling and staffing viability checks must have been completed which may affect some choices.

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum

Curriculum Structure

The Key Stage 4 curriculum covers all Year 10 and 11 courses. It consists of core subjects and optional subjects. All students study the core subjects. Students will study **up to** four optional subjects (dependent on their recommended options pathway).

Non examination courses

Students will continue to follow a Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme, consisting of themes that form a natural progression from Year 9. These include, but are not limited to, personal development focusing on social and moral responsibility, Relationship and Sex Education, Mental Health Education and First Aid.

Careers/Work-Related Learning aims to ensure that students are fully prepared for the next stage of their educational journey as well as the world of work, while the Vyners Learning Journey supports researching and planning for the future. This revolves around the school's policy of building social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding (SMSC).

All students do Physical Education. Students who have a particular interest in PE may also study it as an option at Level 2 (GCSE PE or OCR Cambridge Nationals Sport).

All students will study Religious Education and Ethics. The RE and Ethics course leads to a GCSE (Short Course) qualification at the end of Year 10. The full GCSE RE course is no longer available as an option.

Examination courses

Most examination courses lead to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and some courses lead to the Level 2 BTEC award or Cambridge Nationals.

GCSE Information

Science, Maths and Languages GCSE courses are examined at two levels – Higher or Foundation. The highest grade available at Foundation level is a 5. Subject teachers will advise students and will make the final decision regarding the level of entry during Year 11. Some courses involve NEA non-exam assessment (coursework) which will count towards the final qualification.

Grading

All GCSE qualifications are graded 9 to 1. It is possible to fail a GCSE by getting a U (Ungraded) result.

Vocational subjects results are generally graded Distinction*, Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail. A Distinction is equivalent to a GCSE grade 7 and a pass equivalent to a GCSE grade 4.

The English Baccalaureate

What is the English Baccalaureate?

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) was introduced as a performance measure in the 2010 school performance tables. It is not a qualification in itself. The measure recognises where students have secured a grade 4 (standard pass) or a grade 5 (strong pass) or better across a core of academic subjects - English, Mathematics, History or Geography, at least two Sciences and a Modern Foreign Language.

Why have these subjects been chosen for the English Baccalaureate?

The subjects included are designed to ensure that all students have the opportunity to study a broad core of subjects, ensuring that doors are not closed off to them in terms of their future progression. For example, for students hoping to go to university, **The Russell Group of 24 top universities guide on making informed choices for Post-16 education** gives advice on which subjects can be most beneficial for students to choose depending on their aspirations. The English Baccalaureate is intended to give students greater opportunity to study in and beyond the vital core of English, Mathematics and the Sciences.

The English Baccalaureate is not intended to restrict options to just this academic core or to force these qualifications on students for whom they are not suitable. The core has deliberately been kept small to allow the opportunity for additional study - whether that is in other GCSEs or vocational qualifications.

To obtain the English Baccalaureate, current criteria wholly and exclusively comprise **six** GCSEs of grade 4, (grade 5 for strong pass) or higher, i.e. in **each** of the following:

- English Language & Literature
- Mathematics
- At least 2 GCSEs in Science (which can include Computer Science)
- **plus**
- **One Humanity** (this currently means either Geography or History; no other subjects are counted)
- **plus**
- **One Modern Foreign Language**

Options Pathways

As part of our commitment that all students be given the most effective guidance throughout the options process we have four options pathways. Each student in Year 9 will be guided onto one of these pathways based upon a range of information including their academic progress throughout Key Stage 3, their learning style and their aptitude in specific subjects. **Parents will receive notification of the recommended pathway for their child before the options process opens.** The pathways are outlined below; please refer to the table on the next page for further clarity.

Triple Science Pathway

Students studying on this pathway will study GCSEs in Mathematics, English Language and English Literature, and the separate Sciences - Biology, Chemistry and Physics (Triple Science) as well as Short Course RE. This pathway has been designed to adequately prepare students for A Level study and progression to university or degree apprenticeship. Students who wish to study sciences at A Level and beyond should follow this pathway. A student offered Triple Science does not have to do this; they can select the EBacc Pathway and if they do we expect them to take a Humanities and a Language.

EBacc Pathway

Students on this pathway will study the core subjects (Mathematics, English Language, English Literature and Combined Science rather than Triple Science). Students on this pathway will study **one language** and **one humanities** subject. These students have been identified as very able and as such should be studying a language and humanities subject. This pathway will adequately prepare students for A Levels or Level 3 vocational qualifications in order to progress to university or other Post-16 routes such as alternative vocational qualifications or apprenticeships.

Open Pathway

Students on this pathway will also study the core subjects (Mathematics, English Language, English Literature and Combined Science). This pathway will adequately prepare students for A Levels or Level 3 vocational qualifications in order to progress to university or other Post-16 routes such as alternative vocational qualifications or apprenticeships.

Core Pathway

Students on this pathway will study the core subjects (Mathematics, English Language, English Literature and Combined Science). In addition, students on this pathway will complete the Level 2 Functional Skills Qualification in English and Maths. It is strongly recommended that at least one option choice is vocational.

Please use this link to find out more about the different Key Stage 4 subjects at Vyners.

Vyners School - Subject Information Booklet

Summary of Options Pathways

Use this page to plan your choices

<u>Pathway</u>	<u>Core Subjects</u>	<u>Option 1</u>	<u>Further Options</u>
<p><u>Triple Science Pathway</u> You will be told by the Head of Science if you can take this pathway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics • English Language • English Literature • Biology • Chemistry • Physics • RE (Short Course) 	<p>Select one from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> History <input type="checkbox"/> Geography <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish 	<p>Select three additional subjects in priority order, of which you will be allocated two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> History <input type="checkbox"/> Geography <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Art & Design <input type="checkbox"/> Drama <input type="checkbox"/> Music <input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts BTEC <input type="checkbox"/> Photography <input type="checkbox"/> BTEC IT <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Science <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Education <input type="checkbox"/> Design & Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Food Preparation and Nutrition <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Studies
<p><u>EBacc Pathway</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics • English Language • English Literature • Combined Science • RE (Short Course) 	<p>Select one from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> History <input type="checkbox"/> Geography <p>And select one from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish 	<p>You can only select one of these subjects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology <input type="checkbox"/> Business Studies <input type="checkbox"/> Economics

<u>Pathway</u>	<u>Core Subjects</u>	<u>Option 1</u>	<u>Further Options</u>
<u>Open Pathway</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics • English Language • English Literature Combined Science • RE (Short course) 	<p>Select one from:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> History <input type="checkbox"/> Geography <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish</p>	<p>Select four additional subjects in priority order, of which you will be allocated three:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> History <input type="checkbox"/> Geography <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Art & Design <input type="checkbox"/> Drama <input type="checkbox"/> Music <input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts BTEC <input type="checkbox"/> Photography <input type="checkbox"/> BTEC IT <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Science <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Education <input type="checkbox"/> Design & Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Food Preparation and Nutrition <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Studies</p>
<u>Core Pathway</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics • English Language • English Literature Combined Science • RE (Short Course) 	<p>Level 2 Functional Skills (Maths and English)</p>	<p>You can only select one of these subjects:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psychology <input type="checkbox"/> Business Studies</p>

Processing Students' Options Preferences

When completing the options form Option 1 will always be an EBacc Subject. Students then need to select options in order of preference. This selection will be used to allocate choices in order of preference as far as possible. We aim to build the timetable as best we can to reflect all students' choices. The form must be completed no later than **16th March 2026**

Health and Safety dictates that in certain practical subjects a maximum group size be observed. These restrictions make subscription to such courses more competitive.

Significant under-subscription to a course may render it unviable, in which case the school reserves the right not to run the course.

What to do now

Read about all the core courses and the options courses available: [**Vyners School - Subject Information Booklet**](#)

Once course preferences have been arrived at, students should complete the Google Form that will be emailed with their recommended pathway on Monday 2nd March 2026. This **must** be completed by **Monday 16th March 2026**.

Option choices completed late will be processed after those received on time and may result in a restricted choice, so please ensure you complete the online form on time.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who should parents contact if they have questions or concerns prior to the options form submission regarding (a) specific subjects or (b) choices generally?

- Questions relating to a specific subject should be addressed to the subject teacher or Subject Leader.
- Questions regarding the options process should be addressed to the Year Leader, Miss John, in the first instance.

Some people mistakenly see vocational subjects as an easier option, but what are the main differences between these and GCSEs and are they easier?

- At Vyners we offer three vocational courses, IT (BTEC), Performing Arts (BTEC) and Sport (OCR Cambridge Nationals). These are robust qualifications that have developed over time. They are made up of a number of units. To complete each unit students' work is assessed along the way, pulling together skills, knowledge and understanding. This ongoing assessment allows students to analyse and improve their own performance through their course in much the same way as they would in the workplace.
- Vocational subjects offer a vocational pathway with more emphasis being placed on practical skills and may be suited to those with particular career routes in mind.
- Vocational subjects are not easier than GCSEs - they offer alternative content and assessment modules that are designed for students with an interest in vocational subjects.

What is the next step if my son/daughter does not get all of his/her first option choices?

- Students will select options in priority order and this will be used when allocating places on courses. If students wish to discuss this once their courses have been confirmed, then they should speak to the year team as there may be an opportunity to change their choices if necessary.

Who should parents contact in the first instance if they have questions or concerns following the options outcome?

- If parents have any concerns following the options allocation they should contact the Y9 Year Leader, who will work with them as far as possible to achieve a satisfactory outcome.
- The options process is not undertaken lightly and timetabling and staffing constraints have an impact on what we can offer. Inevitably, some students will not get exactly what they would like but we will work with parents and students to achieve the best possible outcome.

Year 10 Core Subjects

- **English**
- **Mathematics**
- **Science**
- **Religious Education**
- **Core PE**

All of these subjects are compulsory:

English leads to two GCSE qualifications in GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature.

Mathematics leads to GCSE Mathematics.

Science – the course followed may lead to a GCSE double or triple award, worth two and three GCSEs respectively.

Religious Education - the GCSE short course in RE will continue into Year 10, which was started at the beginning of Year 9. All Year 10 students will take the Short course RE GCSE public exam in Summer 2025.

Year 10 Option Subjects

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• History• Geography• French/German/Spanish• Art & Design• Drama• Music• Performing Arts BTEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photography• BTEC IT• Computer Science• Physical Education• Design & Technology• Food Preparation and Nutrition• Sports Studies
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New Subjects that can be picked in Year 10 (one only):

- **Business Studies**
- **Economics**
- **Psychology**