All students embark upon the study of their GCSEs in Science subjects at the start of Year 9. They have 4 periods in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics per fortnight. The courses are based upon the AQA Specifications, and final assessments will be by means of a series of terminal question papers which contain a variety of question styles. As part of the course, students will perform a number of ‘required practicals’ (in addition to usual practical work); some examination questions will be related to these. There is no coursework component in any Science GCSEs.

Students are placed in one of five sets based upon the average of their Year 7 and Year 8 Science Assessment test performances, with sets 1-3 being parallel sets made up of the top 60% of the Year group, and sets 4 and 5 are parallel sets made up from the remaining students. All students will cover the same material in Year 9.

Assessment schedule

Towards the end of their Year 9, students will sit internal ‘mock’ papers in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. These are in addition to the shorter Assessment Tests which take place during the year. The Science programme followed by students in Years 10 and 11 will depend upon their overall performances in all of these assessments.

Separate Science route

Those students who perform well in the Year 9 assessments will follow a programme leading to the award of GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics. They will sit two 1 hour 45 minute papers in each Science subject, each paper being worth 100 marks and consisting of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open-response questions.

Combined Science route

Some students’ performances in Year 9 may indicate that it will be in their interests for them to be prepared for entry into GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy. This is a double award qualification; it is worth two GCSEs. Students will sit two 1 hour 15 minute papers in each Science subject, each paper being worth 70 marks and consisting of multiple choice, structured, closed short answer and open-response questions.

NB We will also have the flexibility to shift students who have embarked upon the separate Sciences to examination entry in GCSE Combined Science at the end of Year 10 if it becomes apparent that they would benefit from this. This shift can also take place in January of Year 11, after the mock examinations.

Support materials

Students have access to bespoke electronic textbooks for their Science courses on www.kerboodle.com, together with other resources. We hope that students will have the opportunity to purchase ‘hard’ copies of these textbooks at a discounted rate through the school should they wish; they are also available in the shops – look for Oxford separate GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics books, or the GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy books. Students can view and download the specification(s) and information about the courses from the website www.aqa.org.uk. Specimen examination papers are also available on the AQA website.

Mr P Jones
Head of Science | July 2020