



Hardenhuish School
A High Performing Academy

Key Stage 3 Options Guide

*A guide to the curriculum being offered to
Year 9 pupils in September 2026*



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INTRODUCTION TO YEAR 9 OPTIONS

Timeline for the Year 9 Options process:

-  **Thursday 12th February — PPCE Meetings:** Virtual Parents' Evening with all subjects.
-  **Monday 2nd March — Options Launch Assembly:** Assembly to introduce the options process to students.
-  **Tuesday 3rd March — Options Booklet Issued:** Students receive their booklet in tutor time. Also published on the website with a link sent home.
-  **Wednesday 11th March, 6:00pm — PIAG Evening:** In-person Presentation BSC and the Year team. *Peter Thompson Hall, E Centre.* (No subject-specific presentations.)
-  **Thursday 12th March — Options Form Sent Home:** Forms sent home the day after PIAG.
-  **Thursday 26th March — Options Forms Due:** Completed forms must be returned by this date

You have reached a very exciting time in your education because you now have some choice of the subjects you study in Year 9, the year in which you will complete Key Stage 3 and choose your subjects for GCSE. The introduction of some choice at this stage is a special feature of the Harderhuish curriculum, which gives you the opportunity to try subjects you might want to do for GCSE or spend more time doing subjects you particularly enjoy and find interesting.

You will all continue with the following subjects which will account for up to 26 of your 30 periods per week.

English	Maths	Science	ICT	PSRE Geography History	PE	Modern Foreign Language(s)
4 periods	4 periods	4 periods	2 periods	2 periods each	2 periods	Up to 4 periods

All pupils have two option choices from the full range of courses on offer. Information about the option subjects is found on the subsequent pages of this booklet listed in alphabetical order. All option subjects have two lessons per week, so in total your two option choices will make up 4 lessons on your timetable next year.

Pupils may choose any combination of option subjects with one restriction; pupils may choose only one Design Technology combination (see page 10 for details). It is important to also state a reserve choice because we cannot guarantee that all pupils will get their option choices. For example, if there are too few pupils choosing a particular option it may not be possible to offer that subject.

If a pupil currently does only one modern foreign language (or no foreign languages) and do extra English/Literacy instead, that will continue in Year 9. For those currently studying 2 foreign languages, the vast majority will continue to do so in Year 9. There will be some pupils who will be added to the Literacy Plus groups in Year 9 in place of one of their foreign languages, and they will be informed and asked to choose which foreign language they want to continue with later in the year. A pupil's progress and achievement in English and modern foreign languages will be carefully considered to decide which pathway is best for them and you will be contacted separately if this applies to your child.

We do not insist on pupils studying Year 9 option courses for access to any particular GCSE. Some subjects say that 'it would be an advantage if you wish to do at GCSE', but pupils can still choose a GCSE subject they have not studied in Year 9. The only exception to this is that you will not be able to choose to study a modern foreign language for GCSE if you do not study it in Year 9.

Please carefully read the information about the choices open to you and seek further advice and information from your tutor and subject teachers who will deliver presentations about the courses in this booklet during lesson time. **We strongly recommend that you and your parents attend the Options Information Event in the Peter Thompson Hall on Wednesday 11th March 2026 at 6pm.** You will then be able to make well informed decisions about which courses to choose.

Please complete and submit your online options form no later than **Thursday 26th March 2026**.

ART AND DESIGN

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

Work is project based (Street Art, Identity & Childhood and War & Conflict) and will cover four main areas:

- Drawing, painting, and work in mixed media.
- Ceramics - you will learn new techniques and create your own sculptures.
- Print making and stencil cutting.
- Creation of personalised sketchbooks.

All of these new projects will develop your individual skills and fire your imagination – you will be introduced to a huge range of stimulating artists, craftspeople and designers and be encouraged to approach Art from a more independent perspective. We love taking the opportunity to visit galleries when we can to see Art in a different context and generate ideas.

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

You will:

- Be taught a huge range of practical skills including those listed above.
- Be encouraged to develop as a confident and creative individual and to use your initiative to make informed decisions about your work.
- Have opportunities to be inventive and use your imagination.
- Learn how to manage your own projects and work independently.
- Gain the confidence to take risks and be adventurous when experimenting with materials and ideas.

We hope these attributes will not only lead to exciting artwork but will also help you with your studies in other areas of the curriculum.

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

This course would provide excellent preparation for GCSE Art and a fantastic range of creative careers, but it will also stand as an exciting year of artistic adventure. Check out our Instagram for new pupil work: @hardenhuishartdepartment



COMPUTER SCIENCE

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

You will:

- Learn to become an advanced computer programmer using software such as Python to really get an idea of how software developers create both programs and games.
- Create games in programs such as Scratch and Construct 3, allowing more time to develop your coding skills and bring your ideas to life.
- Use software like Minecraft for education to learn how to code and solve problems in a familiar setting.
- Develop web design skills and learn to build websites.
- Get hands on with App development and build apps using software such as Thunkable.
- Understand the logic behind a computer, looking into the concepts of binary and logic gates to really understand how a computer thinks.
- Consider how data is transferred in and around a computer system, looking at concepts such as computer networks and the Internet.
- Use physical hardware such as Microbits to expand your learning of coding and problem solving.
- Have the opportunity to take part in various competitions and challenges.

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

- Problem solving will be a key area to this course as programming will allow you to unravel a problem and figure out a logical way to fix it.
- Design skills will be a focus point, looking at the 'bigger picture' when it comes to planning, developing, and testing software/media related products.
- Understanding how a computer actually works will allow you to see the endless possibilities that computers have in our lives today.

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

If you are genuinely passionate about computers and have a real interest in understanding how they work, then this course will be perfect for you. As well as developing new skills you will strengthen knowledge that you already have allowing you to become a more competent and independent computer user. If you are thinking of choosing the Computing GCSE then this course is perfect, allowing you to get a flavour of what the subject has to offer and making the decision easier when it comes to making those all-important GCSE choices.

Although this course is not a requirement for taking a Computing GCSE, it will give you an amazing head start!

DANCE

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

- Learning and performing a range of dance styles eg, street dance, contemporary, musical theatre.
- Developing fitness and performance skills e.g., stamina, posture, control, flexibility, focus.
- Gain the *Bronze Arts Award* (a national qualification which recognises how young people develop as dance leaders and artists).
- The study of professional dance works e.g., *West Side Story*, *A Linha Curva*.
- Creating dances individually and in groups.
- Developing composition techniques e.g., dance relationships such as unison, canon and contact work.
- Watching and evaluating dances.
- Health and safety for dance, leading your own warm up.
- Creating a group dance for the annual dance production: Spring Loaded.
- Theatre trip.
- Workshops with external companies such as Motionhouse.

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

- Improved fitness and wellbeing.
- Team building.
- Creative skills.
- Appreciation skills.
- Evaluating skills.
- Interpretive skills.
- Leadership/directing.
- Organisational skills.
- Rehearsal skills.
- Communication skills.

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

- An advantage if you wish to do GCSE Dance.
- Lower school leadership (lunch-time clubs).
- Silver Arts Award.



Pupils choosing design and technology will study two specialisms from Food Preparation and Nutrition, Resistant Materials, Textiles, and Systems and Control.

DT – FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

Practical lessons every week covering:

- Recipe adaptation to meet individual preferences.
- Researching, preparing, and cooking food from different cultures.
- A deeper understanding of cooking methods and techniques.
- Development of practical skills to a higher level.
- Baking tasks to include technical, signature and showstopper challenges.
- Promotion of healthy diet and lifestyles.

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

- Independent, resilient, and inquisitive learning.
- Problem solving.
- Investigating and evaluating.
- Creative food presentation.
- Making quality products.
- Teamwork.
- Understanding of environmental and sustainable issues.
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles.
- Costing, budgeting, and planning.
- Confidence to participate in food competitions.

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

It would be an advantage and good preparation for doing a GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition or Level 1/2 Hospitality & Catering.



DT – RESISTANT MATERIALS

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

- Analyse products and research real users
- Design creative solutions for specific markets
- Develop ideas through sketching, modelling and CAD/CAM
- Prototype with card; manufacture with wood, and plastics
- Use workshop tools and digital equipment, including the laser cutter
- Test, refine and present your work in a professional A3 design folio

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

- Independent, resilient and curious thinking
- Creative problem solving and iterative design
- Confident making skills and safe workshop practice
- Strong presentation and communication
- Teamwork, evaluation and critical thinking
- Understanding of sustainability and material choices
- Awareness of influential designers and real-world design practice

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

This course prepares you brilliantly for GCSE Design & Technology, giving you experience of the design process, practical skills and confidence you'll need. It's a strong foundation for A-Level Product Design and a wide range of creative and technical careers, including:

- Product design
- Architecture
- Industrial design
- Engineering (mechanical, civil, aerospace, automotive)
- Furniture design and manufacturing
- Set design and prop making
- Carpentry and joinery
- Manufacturing and production roles
- Sustainability and materials innovation

DT – SYSTEMS AND CONTROL

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

- Building on knowledge of electronics and programmable components.
- Understanding mechanisms.
- Developing CAD skills.
- Understanding CAM.
- Using the laser cutter.
- Learning about famous product designers.
- Improving practical skills.
- Learn how to produce an A3 design folio.

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

- Independent, resilient, and inquisitive learning.
- Investigating and evaluating.
- Creative and iterative design work.
- Presentation skills including pitching ideas.
- Making quality products using electronics kits and the laser cutter.
- Teamwork.
- Manufacturing in a safe environment.
- Understanding of environmental and sustainable issues.
- Economic awareness knowing where products sit in the market.
- Important life skills.

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

It would be an advantage and good preparation for doing Design Technology at GCSE and further ahead at A-Level product design – with a view to careers in a huge range of design, manufacturing and engineering career routes.



DT – TEXTILES

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

- Fashion trends, influential fashion designers.
- Fibres and fabrics classification, identification, properties, and fabric construction.
- Fabric embellishment and fabric printing.
- Fashion sketching.
- Pattern drafting and garment construction techniques.
- Create your own wearable pieces.

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

- Independence, creativity, resilience, and inquisitive learning.
- Problem solving and trouble shooting.
- Researching and investigating, production planning and evaluating.
- Presentation skills - producing an impressive, high-quality portfolio.
- Making quality products.
- Teamwork.
- Manufacturing in a safe environment.
- Understanding environmental and sustainable issues relating to textile use.

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

It would be an advantage and good preparation for studying Art Textile Design or Design Technology at GCSE and further ahead at A-Level Product Design or A Level Art, Craft and Design.



DRAMA

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

- Spies, Alfred Hitchcock, genre, creating environment.
- Comedy: farce, black comedy, and status.
- Tim Burton, surrealism, physical theatre.
- Oliver Twist (script) – practically exploring the authentic version from the Lyric Hammersmith.
- Theatre Design (including lighting and sound).

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

- Vocal dexterity and variety.
- Movement & physical theatre skills.
- Scriptwriting and devising.
- Written Analysis & Evaluation skills.
- Technical – lighting, sound, costume.
- Wider understanding of theatre genres and styles.
- Collaboration for performance.
- Experience of performance and reflection.
- Experience of filming.
- Research.

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

It would be an advantage if you are wanting to pursue GCSE and A-Level drama, careers in performing arts and media, and develops confidence in public situations.



LAW, WAR AND MORE

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

Have you ever wondered why you must stay in education until you're 18? Who makes decisions that affect your life? What really happens inside a criminal trial? Why are some countries democracies while others are dictatorships? What does it mean to have 'human rights'?

If questions like these spark your curiosity, then **Law, War and More** is the perfect course for you. Throughout the year, we will answer questions like:

- What are human rights, what are my rights?
- Why do inequalities exist?
- How does the criminal justice system work?
- How are laws made?
- How should we punish lawbreakers?

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

As we journey into the world of Law, War and More you will learn to look at the world with curiosity and confidence. You will:

- Become more inquisitive, questioning how and why things happen.
- Build strong arguments using reliable evidence.
- Learn where to find trustworthy information—an essential skill for adult life.
- Develop your ability to debate, listen, and express your opinions clearly.
- Gain experience researching real-world issues and forming thoughtful conclusions.

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

This course has universal application to most academic GCSE courses. It is particularly relevant to those who are thinking about studying history or religious studies GCSE, but not essential.



MUSIC

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

- Topics such as song writing, music and art, ground bass, gaming music and more.
- Developing instrumental skills on a variety of different instruments.
- Composing in a variety of different styles as a group and individually.
- How to use music software to enhance composition.
- Performing as a small ensemble and as a class.
- Preparing performances for concerts.
- Developing an understanding of musical analysis and basic theory.

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

- Listening, analytical, composition and performance skills.
- Working with others cooperatively.
- Building confidence and self-esteem.
- Leadership skills.
- Sharing ideas with others.
- Self-motivation.

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

This course will be an advantage if you go on to the music GCSE course, by equipping you with all the necessary skills you need. It is a creative course that will develop your skills as a musician in performance, composition, and music appreciation.



PE SPORTS LEADERSHIP

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

This course leads to a Level 1 qualification in Sports Leadership, which covers the following areas:

- Plan, lead and review a sport or activity.
- Developing leadership skills.
- Lead activities that promote healthy lifestyles.
- Fair play in sport.
- The role of the official.
- Opportunities in sport and recreation.

Pupils will gain a formally recognised qualification and be able to lead and assist in the delivery of sport and physical activity sessions. Lessons are comprised of a mixture of discussion, exploration and practical learning delivered in and out of a classroom.

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

- Acquiring and developing new and existing practical skills.
- Leadership.
- Communication.
- Organisation.
- Teamwork.
- Problem solving.
- Officiating.

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

This course will be valuable for those of you hoping to study physical education at GCSE PE and Sports Studies. This course will also benefit those who wish to pursue a career in sport, leadership or working with children. The course is ideally suited to students with an interest in sport and who will be actively involved in any practical session. Please note however that the course is assessed via written coursework as well as practical leadership assessments.



PHILOSOPHY

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

Have you ever seen a film that has left you asking lots of questions and really made you think about life? Have you ever wondered where the universe comes from? Whether a machine might be able to think? Whether it is morally acceptable to design your children, or to hunt foxes? If so, you have begun to ask questions we ask in Philosophy!

Some of the topics covered are:

- **So, you think you're free?**

How much 'free will' do we really have? Is everything that happens in our lives predetermined and already laid out for us?

- **You are out of your mind?**

Where do your thoughts live, and how are they connected to your brain? Can a machine develop rational thought and if so, how would this have an impact upon society?

- **Enter the moral maze.**

How do we decide what is right or wrong? Would it be right to lie to your parents about going to a party they didn't give you permission to attend, but would make you really popular? Would you choose to save one member of your own family from a burning building whilst risking the lives of four strangers?

This course will be mainly activity based.

- You will consider philosophical questions from films, songs, and stories.
- You will get a chance to be creative through making models, creating posters and taking part in games.
- You will take part in team debates, discussions, and arguments.

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

The course will give you powerful thinking skills, which are needed in all subjects and all areas of life.

You will learn how to think for yourself, defend your own opinions, win arguments, and question what others take for granted.

You will learn active communication skills: being able to listen to others, how to agree or disagree with them, as well as how to express your own views with passion!

WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

This course has universal application to most academic GCSE courses. It is particularly relevant to those who are thinking about studying Religion, Philosophy and Ethics at GCSE, but not essential.

THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING THE COURSE?

The aim of the course is to give you an experience of the world of business so that you may better understand how companies, and the markets in which they operate, work.

The course is designed to involve you taking part in a different project every term, each of which focuses on a different aspect of business including marketing, production, finance, and human resource management. The projects include,

- Forming a small business that will run a successful stall at the Christmas Fayre.
- Designing and marketing a new pet product, with the winner judged by Jolly's Pet Store.
- Producing and working out the financial viability of a new chocolate bar.
- Having the opportunity to practice buying & selling company shares to experience how the stock market works.
- Taking part in a recruitment campaign and interviewing for a job role.
- Developing a business plan for a business that could run from a van at the Chippenham Folk Festival..

A typical lesson would involve learning about business theory in a practical way and will include lots of opportunity for teamwork.

WHAT SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEAR?

- Team working and leadership skills.
- Enterprise and initiative.
- Meeting deadlines individually and as a team.
- Dealing with customers and handling money.
- Completing basic financial accounts.
- Using creativity to design new products.
- Interview skills.
- Presenting your projects to an audience.



WHERE WILL THIS COURSE LEAD ME?

If you are interested in developing your knowledge of how businesses are successfully set up and managed, then this course will be perfect for you. You will learn about business theory whilst developing transferrable skills that are crucial to success in business. Although this course is not a requirement for taking GCSE Business, the course will give you a valuable insight and give you an ideal introduction to the subject.



NOTES

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