



# WHICH WAY NOW?

2024

How to choose  
your key stage 4  
options?

Help

Support

Advice

Your Choices

Your future

Name:

# Introduction

**Congratulations! You've reached the next stage of your education journey and it's time to choose your key stage 4 options.**

You probably feel as though you have only just got used to life at secondary school and now someone is asking you to choose your key stage 4 options. How will you choose what subjects to study? How will you decide which courses are right for you?

Don't panic. **Which way now?** is full of information, ideas and action points to help you choose well. To get the most from it, use it as a workbook. Start at the beginning and work through it from cover to cover.

## Don't forget ...

### There's help at Hand

Careers lesson. Parents. Pathway Parents Evening. Assemblies. Tutor Time. Online information. Subject teachers. Careers Adviser. 1-2-1 meeting with Mrs Corfield. They are all here to help you with your decision making. Make the most of them and ASK!

Your education and training will continue until you are 18, helping you to gain knowledge, skills and qualifications you need to get a job and enjoy your future. Your key stage 4 option choices are important but you don't have to have a career in mind at this stage. Concentrate on choosing options that suit your abilities and interests and that give you plenty of choice post 16.

### Involving others

Your parents or carers want the best for you but things have changed a lot since they went to school. Help them to understand what you are doing and how they can help you. Show them the parents and carers pages at the end of this booklet.





# Who can help you?



**Everyone needs a bit of help with decision-making. Make sure you get all the help and support you need – your option choices are too important to leave to chance!**

## Who knows you really well?

Talk to your parents or carers and subject teachers. Speak to the people who are helping you with other parts of your life – like friends, mentors, coaches, learning support staff and careers advisers. They want the best for you. They will tell you if they think that an option will suit you and explain why. They will also help you to explore and think about the alternatives.

## Who knows what you need to know?

Don't let teaching methods, workload and assessment come as a surprise. Find out what an option is really like, where it leads and how it could help you in the future. Check that it suits your abilities and interests. Read all the information you get. Browse your local colleges online 14-19 prospectus if available. Go to options events. Sign up for taster activities and visits. Talk to the people running the courses and the students doing them.

## Who can give you expert help if you're confused?

Speak to the people in charge of Information and Guidance (IAG) in your school Mrs Baggott as well as Mrs Corfield (Assistant Headteacher for Curriculum).

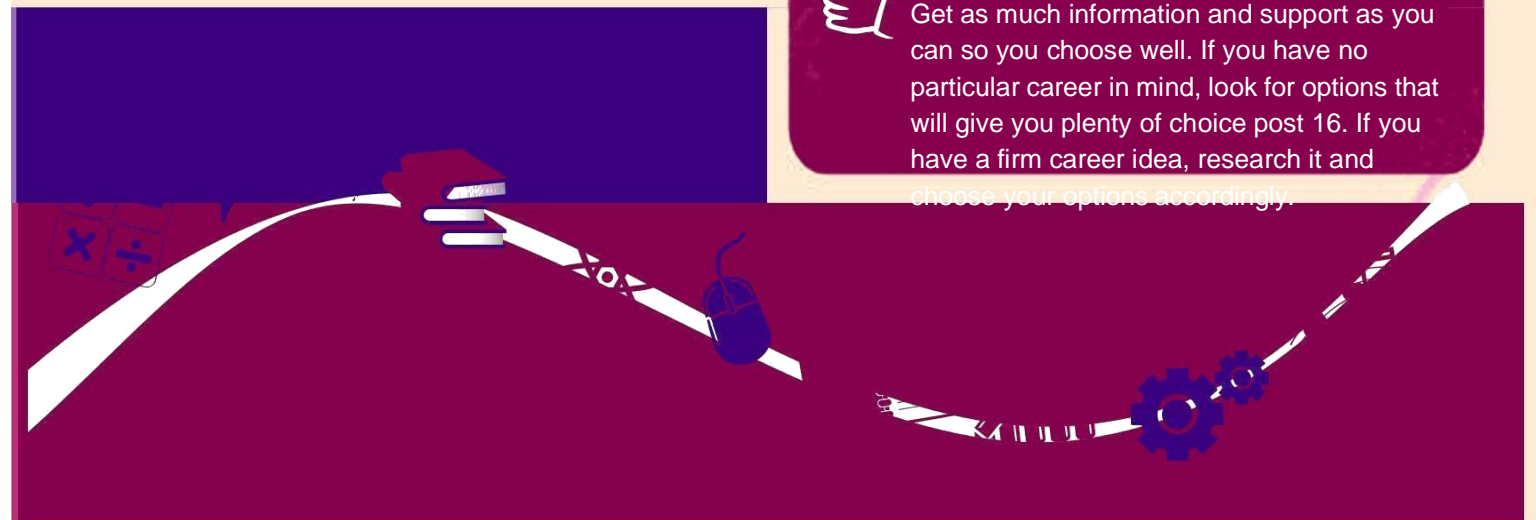
– They know a lot about what each option involves. They can tell you how it could help you in the future and where to get more information and help.

## Where should you look for information and advice on the internet?

Use the websites signposted in **Which way now?** Bookmark and browse the 'Education and learning' pages on **www.direct.gov.uk**. They have information and advice about education and training opportunities and careers written especially for you, with links to other useful websites



Get as much information and support as you can so you choose well. If you have no particular career in mind, look for options that will give you plenty of choice post 16. If you have a firm career idea, research it and choose your options accordingly.



# Your local choices

## What subjects are compulsory?

You can do very little in life without a good grasp of English, mathematics and science so everybody must study these subjects.

At **Redhill School** you are also expected to study either Geography or History as well as the language you have studied throughout KS3. You will also have the opportunity to study courses and activities that will help you understand the world around you and develop the knowledge and skills you need for adult life

– subjects like Computing, Business Studies, Music, Art & Design, Drama, Food Preparation & Nutrition, Design & Technology, P.E., Religious Education and PSHE for example

Whatever key stage 4 options you choose, you will be able to change direction at the end of Year 11. Remember though that all choices have consequences. What you choose to study at key stage 4 could make a difference to what you can do later on. So, don't close off options. Choose courses that give you the broadest range of options later on.

## Do your research

When you know exactly what your options are, you can research those that interest you. Use our checklist to make sure that you don't forget anything.

### Check List

- Read all the options information school gives me.
- Check what subjects are compulsory – the ones I have to do.
- Talk to the teachers to see if they think that it is a good idea for me to do their course.
- Talk to people who are taking the courses that interest me.
- Talk to my parents/ carers and find out what options they think I should do and why.
- Look up the careers that interest me in the careers resource centre and find out what subjects, qualifications and grades I will need for these careers.
- Use online prospectuses to get more information about local opportunities and see what subjects, qualifications and grades I need for the post-16 courses that interest me.
- Find out what Apprenticeships could offer me at age 16 or older, and what I would need to get one – see [www.gov.uk/browse/education](http://www.gov.uk/browse/education)
- Look up higher education courses that interest you on [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) and see what subjects, qualifications and grades I will need to do these courses.
- Speak to my careers adviser about my option choices and career ideas.
- Ask my careers adviser who I should speak to if I think that I will need extra help with my key stage 4 courses.

# Put yourself first

It is important to choose options that interest and motivate you. What interests you?

What makes you work hard?

Do our quiz to find out.



Tick anything you enjoy doing or think that you would enjoy doing

A

- building things
- being active and working outdoors
- making and fixing things
- using tools and machines
- solving problems

B

- designing and displaying things
- being on television
- writing a book
- playing in a band
- doing a makeover

C

- sorting out arguments
- helping people
- showing people what to do
- looking after people

D

- finding out how things work
- doing experiments
- researching and testing ideas
- designing a new computer game
- doing calculations

E

- organising parties and other
- social events
- buying and selling things
- running a business
- entering competitions
- campaigning for change

F

- making plans
- using a computer and calculator
- arranging things over the phone
- organising all your books/school work
- organising your money

# Check your score

## Mostly As

You seem to like practical work. Look for options where you can use your practical skills, do something active and work on different types of projects.

### Subject ideas:

*Construction and the built environment, design and technology, engineering, food preparation and nutrition and hair and beauty.*

## Mostly Cs

You seem to be a sociable person. Look for options where you can work with other people and find out more about how society works.

### Subject ideas:

*Citizenship studies, media, hospitality, religious studies, retail business, health and social care, travel and tourism.*

## Mostly Es

You sound like an enterprising person. Look for options where you can use your energy, communication, number and thinking skills to test your ideas about how to improve the world.

### Subject ideas:

*Business studies, citizenship studies, economics, computing, modern foreign languages, mathematics and psychology.*

**How many ticks did you get in each section? Write your scores in the boxes below. Most people have more than one interest so check out any score of three or over.**

## Mostly Bs

You sound creative. Look for options where you can express yourself and work on new ideas.

### Subject ideas:

*Art and design, media, dance, drama, hair and beauty, hospitality and music.*

## Mostly Ds

It seems that you like investigating things. Look for options where you can use your number and thinking skills to find out more about why things are the way they are.

### Subject ideas:

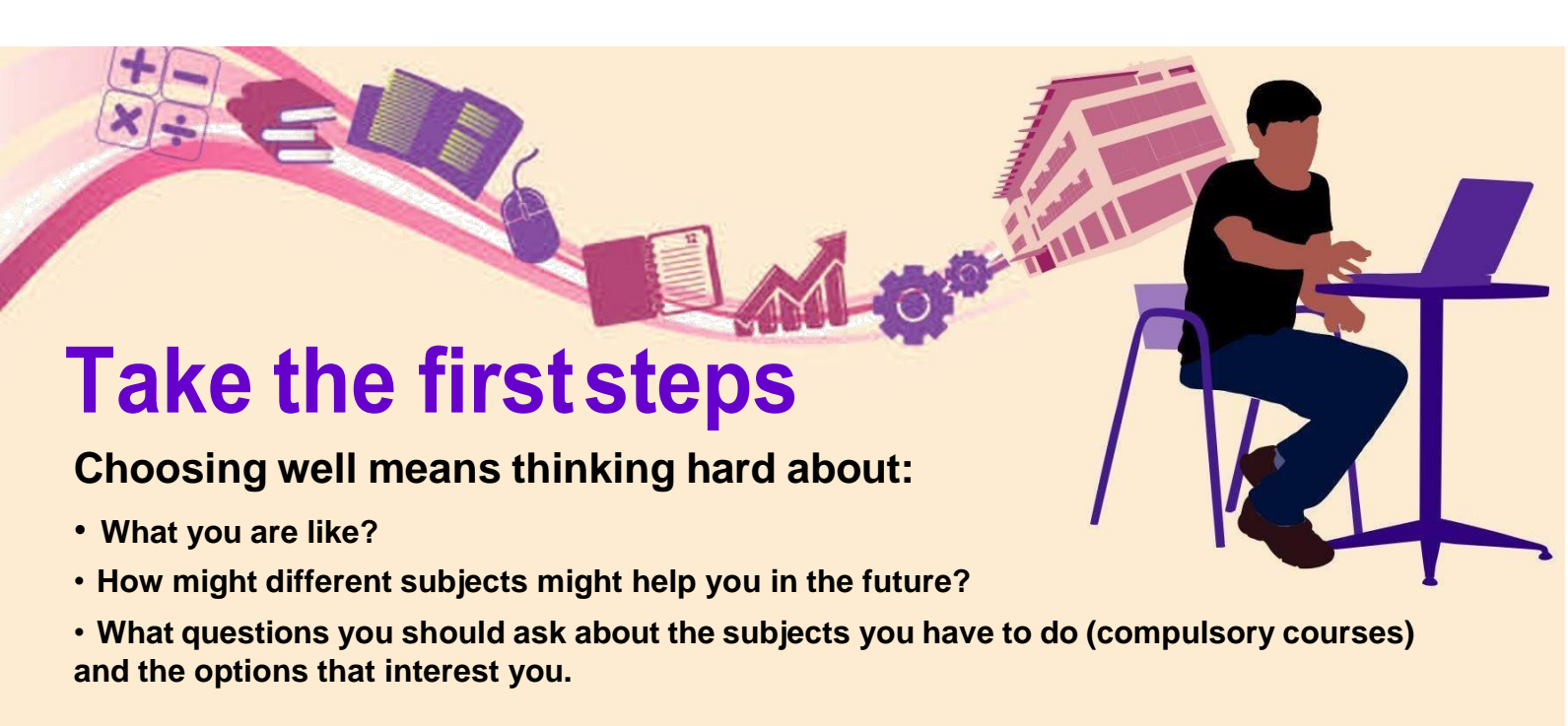
*Biology, environmental and land-based studies, chemistry, geography, history, mathematics, physics and statistics.*

## Mostly Fs

Being well organised seems important to you. Look for options where you can use your planning, communication and computer skills to find out more about the systems and structures that keep the world working properly.

### Subject ideas:

*Business studies, history, computing, information and mathematics.*



# Take the first steps

Choosing well means thinking hard about:

- What you are like?
- How might different subjects might help you in the future?
- What questions you should ask about the subjects you have to do (compulsory courses) and the options that interest you.



Use this activity to help you organise your ideas

### ME..... I AM

- Practical
- Creative
- Sociable
- Investigative

### I LEARN BEST BY .....

- Seeing and reading
- Listening and talking
- Touching and doing
- Doing projects
- Doing tests

### My Options

#### Subject I have to

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#### Subjects I don't like and why

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#### Subject I like and why study

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#### New subjects I'd like to try and why

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## How qualifications can help you in the future

There are six good reasons why you should take qualifications seriously.

**To give you a choice of jobs** – the number of jobs you can get without any qualifications is shrinking quickly. If you want a choice of jobs, you need good qualifications.

**To make sure you don't spend your life in a dead-end job** – without qualifications, it is hard to move on from a low paid, low skilled job.

**To improve your earning power** – there is a big pay gap between people with qualifications and those without them. If you want a well-paid job, you need good qualifications.

**To show other people what you can do** – qualifications show employers, universities and colleges that you have the attitudes, skills and knowledge they value. They tell them what you already know and can do. They also give them an idea of how well you might do in the future.

**To prove to other people that you can learn** – qualifications show people that you want to learn and that you can learn. Employers, universities and colleges look for people like this.

**To show yourself what you can do** – gaining qualifications boosts your self-confidence and self-awareness.



Choose one career or job that interests you. Look it up in your school's careers information resources and list the subjects and qualifications you will need to do it.

Career/job


Subjects and qualifications needed:


Now record the steps you need to follow to pursue a career in that job.

Step 1








# GCSEs

GCSEs are a key element of a broad education up to the age of 16. Find out more about them here.



## FACT FILE

### GCSE

General Certificate of Secondary Education.

### Qualifications

GCSE

### Subjects

Schools decide what subjects to offer. They can choose from over 50 different subjects. These range from English, mathematics and science to archaeology, citizenship studies and work-related subjects like leisure and tourism.

### Learning

Mostly classroom learning. Mix of theory and subject-based investigations. The amount of practical work depends on the subject.

### Assessment

- Mix of written examinations and internal assessment.
- Achievement is graded 1-9
- Some subjects have two tiers of assessment: Foundation and Higher. Your school will decide which tier you should do. Foundation tier leads to grades 1-5. Higher tier leads to grades 4-9

### What next

GCSEs will help you whatever you plan to do after key stage 4. You can use them to meet the entry requirements for level 3 courses, an Apprenticeship and other form of job with training. Having 5 GCSEs at grades 4 and above (including English and mathematics) gives you a much bigger choice of post-16 options.

### English Language and Literature

Developing and using speaking, listening, reading, writing and critical analysis skills. Applying knowledge and skills to express yourself creatively and imaginatively and communicate confidently and effectively in different situations. Essential for further learning, employment and wider adult life.



### Mathematics

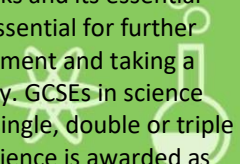
Developing and using knowledge and skills for working with numbers, measures, shape and space, data, statistics, algebra and probability. Improving problem-solving skills.

Acquiring the tools to help you understand science, engineering, technology and economics. Vital for employment, business and finance, and everyday life.



### Science

Developing and using knowledge and skills in biology, chemistry and physics. Using practical, enquiry and other skills to consider data, evidence, theories and explanations. Developing a critical approach to scientific evidence and methods. Investigating how science works and its essential role in society. Essential for further learning, employment and taking a full part in society. GCSEs in science are available as single, double or triple awards. Triple science is awarded as separate GCSEs in biology, chemistry and physics.



# A taste of GCSE's...

## Art and Design

In Art, Craft and Design GCSE students will explore ideas, experiences and respond to a theme or issue of personal significance. They will look at different approaches to art and use a variety of different media, techniques and materials including drawing, painting, sculpture, installation and mixed media.

## Business Studies

The GCSE in Business equips students with the skills and confidence to explore how different business situations affect decision-making. They develop their understanding of concepts, objectives and terminology, and the impact of contemporary issues on business operations.

## Design and Technology

This GCSE allows students to study core technical and designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials techniques and equipment. They will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth.

## Drama

The GCSE in Drama provides opportunities for students to understand and create drama as a practical art form. They develop a range of theatrical skills and work collaboratively to generate and communicating ideas and meanings through informed artistic choices.

## Food Preparation and Nutrition

This GCSE equips learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. It encourages learners to cook, enables them to make informed decisions about food and nutrition and allows them to acquire knowledge in order to be able to feed themselves and others affordably and nutritiously, now and later in life.

## Geography

Our GCSE enables a variety of teaching and learning approaches. This exciting and relevant course studies geography in a balanced framework of physical and human themes and investigates the link between them.

## History

Learning about key individuals, societies, events, development and understanding the issues and links between past and present.

## Digital Information Technology

This BTEC gives learners a broad introduction to several aspects of 'digital' – from UX and interface design to data management and IT systems – enabling to see what areas they are most keen on and keeping their options wide open for progression.

## Languages (French or Spanish)

French and Spanish will help students to develop their linguistic skills as well as their cultural knowledge of the world around them. A successful linguist must have an interest in learning a modern language and enjoy communicating with others and sharing ideas.

## Music

Our GCSE in Music provides an accessible and creative musical education, integrating the three main components: performing, composing and appraising.

## Physical Education

This GCSE :

- develops knowledge and understanding through practical application
- clear and accessible assessment for all students
- nurtures skills and knowledge for progression to further study.

## Religious Education

RE offers distinctive opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE lessons offer a structured and safe space during curriculum time for reflection, discussion, dialogue and debate.

## Alternative provision courses

### Triple Science

Pupils who are encouraged to study triple science will study all three sciences and end up with three GCSEs.

# Finding good information

Good information is the key to choosing well. Do you know where to get good information?

## Where to look

A great place to start looking for information is in your school's careers resource centre. It should have:

- people who can tell you where to find the information you want
- printed and multi-media information about careers and other things that affect your life the
- contact details of people and organisations who can give you expert help
- computer programs to help you work out your career interests and find courses and careers that might suit you
- internet access so you can use online prospectuses and databases, and the 'Young people' pages on [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)



<http://www.mybigcareer.org/>

<https://icould.com>

## Useful websites

<https://www.morrisby.com/students>

<https://www.cxk.org/services/career-guidance-young-people/>

<https://www.ucas.com/>



# Taking control of your decisions



Are you ready to make your own decisions? Or are you tempted to follow the crowd? If you let other people choose for you, you could end up studying subjects or courses that suit them better than they suit you. Use these tips to make sure that this does not happen to you.

Research all your options before making a decision.

- Don't fall into the trap of thinking that some subjects are only for boys and some only for girls – this is not true.
- If you have a firm career idea, choose the subjects you need to meet the entry requirements for future opportunities that interest you, including higher education.
- If you don't have a firm career idea, choose subjects that will give you plenty of choice post 16.
- Make the most of your careers lessons and ask for help from your family, friends, subject teachers, and careers adviser– you need good information, advice and guidance to help you choose.



Your choices don't have to be job-related. It's fine to choose some simply because you are good at them but make sure you choose a broad and balanced range of subjects.



## Do choose a course because:

- It fits your interests and abilities
- You are good at it and think you will enjoy it
- It goes well with your other choices
- It links to a career idea
- You think you might want to continue studying it post 16
- It will help you meet the entry requirements for the post-16 options that interest you.
- It will help to give you plenty of choice post 16.



## Do not choose a course because:

- You think it will be easy
- Your friends have chosen it
- You think it is a good course for a boy/girl to do
- Someone else thinks that it is a good idea for you to do it
- You like the teacher you have now
- You didn't have time to research your options properly or to get any information, advice and guidance from your careers adviser.

Use the space below to make notes about you, your skills and qualities.

You ....



# Frequently asked questions

**How do I know if I have chosen the right options?**

Have you researched and thought carefully about your choices? Have you chosen options that interest you and match your abilities? Have you chosen options that you think you will enjoy, that link to a career idea or that give you plenty of choice in the future? If so you can be confident that you have chosen well.

**Can I study something relevant to work that will help me to explore my career ideas?**

Not at this moment in time. Your GCSEs are not designed to narrow your curriculum but instead allow you to continue to have a broad and balanced curriculum before you make more career-based decisions for post-16.

**I like sports/creative subjects best – can I do just these?**

No. You must study our core (compulsory) subjects of English, maths and science. The majority of pupils will also be asked to study Geography/ History and the language they have studied at KS3. This will then leave you with 2 choices that you can choose P.E. and creative subjects.

**I have a career in mind, but my friends say I won't be able to do it because of my gender. How can I find out who is right?**

It is never a good idea to choose a career simply because of your gender. Speak to your subject teachers or make an appointment with your careers co-ordinator or careers adviser to discuss your concerns. They will help you think through your ideas and how well they match your interests and abilities. They may also be able to put you in touch with someone of your gender who is already doing the career

**I have a definite idea about the career I wish to follow and it is strongly linked to mathematics and science. Can I take more than one science?**

At Redhill you will study 3 sciences but the majority of pupils will only receive 2 grades (combined science). Some pupils will also have the opportunity to follow triple science where they will receive 3 GCSEs. Your science teacher will talk to you about this.

**Am I allowed to change my mind once I have selected my options?**

It is important to you and us that you are placed in the right subject area; one which you enjoy and have the opportunity to reach your full potential. It is for that reason that the options process has been carefully designed to happen over a period of time to support you in making the right decisions so we do not have to change them at a later date.