



PRAGUE BRITISH
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

IGCSE AT PBIS





DEAR PARENTS

This is the first time in their school life that students have the opportunity to take control of a significant part of their academic learning. Moving into the IGCSE programme in Year 10 is an exciting time where students take more responsibility for their own progress and make their own decisions on what and how they learn. IGCSEs are an important educational milestone for your child as they move towards the IB Diploma Programme in Year 12 and begin to consider their future pathway to university and their careers.

The IGCSE years are a time of progression and development. Whilst they are a stepping stone to further study, it is vital to remember that these courses are wonderful in their own right, and present an excellent opportunity to develop solid academic foundations upon which later life-long learning will be built.

We hope that the information allows you to make the right choices that will see your child succeeding over the next two years and beyond.

Danielle Mashon - Deputy Head Academic





WHAT IS IGCSE?

The International General Certificate of Secondary Education is an international qualification which prepares students aged 14-16 for further academic study. It is taken in over 3000 schools in more than 160 countries. It is recognized around the world by employers and universities as evidence of academic ability, and used at PBIS to prepare students for IB by helping them identify their main strengths and interests. Unlike the GCSE, examination boards have developed subject content to make it more relevant to students in an international setting. The specifications have been created specifically for an international student body and to avoid cultural bias.

ASSESSMENT

There are many types of assessment to suit different learners – oral, coursework and practical; but international examinations are normally held in May/June each year. As you look carefully at the assessment sections in the options booklet, we encourage you to consider your strengths – Do the assessments contain coursework, exams, essays, or short questions?

Grades range from A* to G. A* is the highest grade. Universities only recognise A* - C grades. The school reserves the right to refer to mock results when finalizing exam entries.

For IB entry purposes, at least a grade B is normally required for progression to Higher Level courses, and grade C for Standard Level courses.



CHOOSING YOUR SUBJECTS

It is important that you choose your subjects wisely. On the whole, your best choices will be the subjects that you enjoy most and in which you think you are most likely to be successful. Things to consider when making subject decisions include:

Your level of interest in the subject

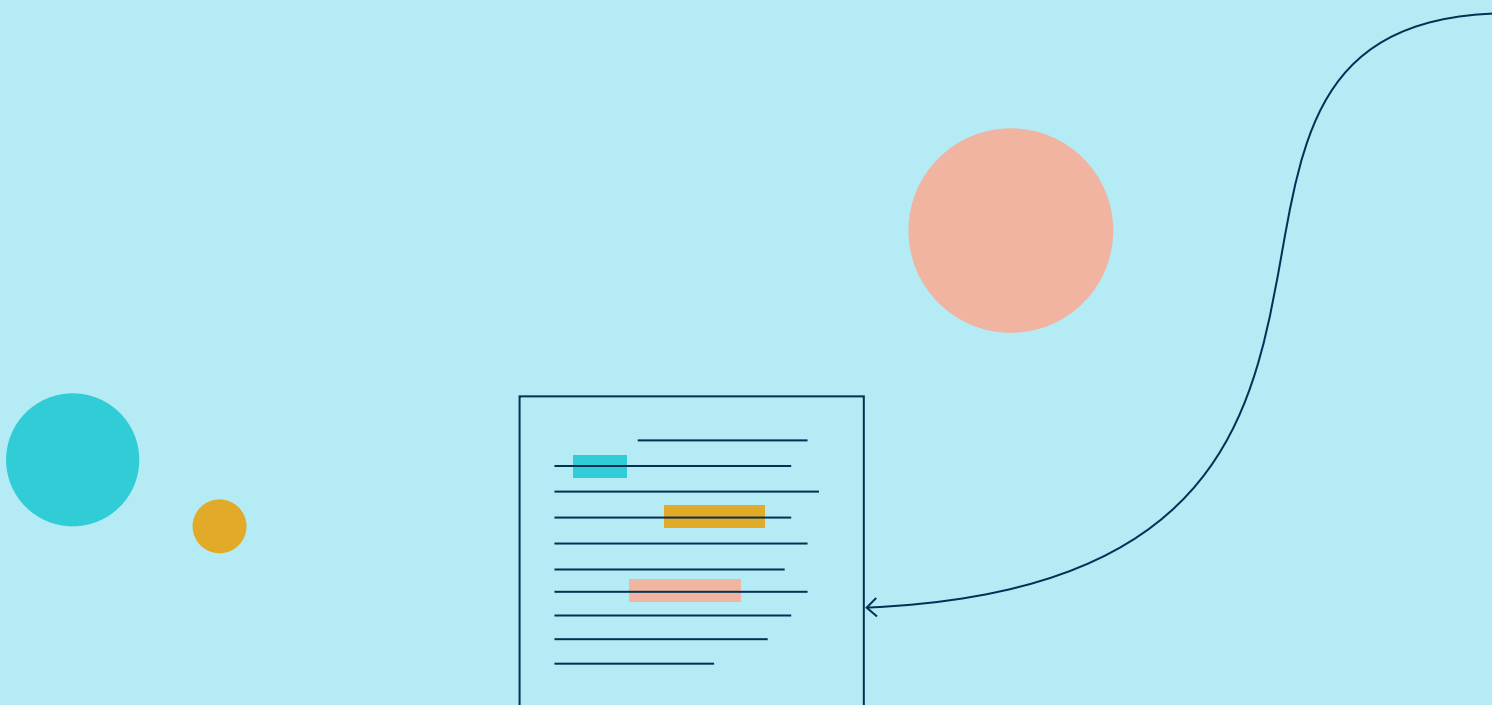
Does a subject really interest you, and why? You need to be interested in the subject matter and enjoy the skills involved in it. For example: does it involve extended writing? Is it a more practical subject? In addition, consider how the subject will be assessed: will there be any coursework?

Possible IB Diploma choices, university and career choice implications

Although the IB Diploma is more than two years away, it is helpful to consider the IGCSE as one step along your pathways towards the IB and your university / post-secondary applications. As the IB Diploma is a broad and balanced programme, selecting subjects and courses that contribute to a wider variety of course options at the IB Diploma level may serve you.

Exploring new challenges and opportunities

The IGCSEs are an opportunity to try new subjects you haven't previously experienced and to go further in subjects you are familiar with. The wide variety of IGCSE subjects and courses available mean that you have space to take on new challenges and explore new interests.



REASONS FOR CHOOSING A SUBJECT

When you finally choose, please bear the following in mind:

Do choose a subject because:

- You will enjoy it
- You have a strong interest in it
- It may guide you in your future career aspirations and plans
- You believe that you will succeed in it
- You are interested to try something new

Do not choose a subject because:

- Your friends have chosen it
- You think it will be easy
- You have been told it involves less work
- Relatives or friends tell you to do it without a good reason

CAREERS

It is never too early to start thinking about what you might do when you leave school. The combination of subjects that you choose to study at KS4 has some influence on university admissions and prospective careers programmes. In general, at this level, it is advisable to retain a broad range of arts and science subjects, but you must be aware of the following guidelines:

- English and Mathematics IGCSEs are required for most higher and further education courses, as well as by most employers.
- Taking an additional language contributes to international mindedness and active global citizenship. The further you go with additional language acquisition during the IGCSE years, the greater success you will have as you enter the IB Diploma programme, as well as longer term careers and university programmes.
- The number of IGCSE qualifications taken is not as important as the quality of earning progress and achievement in each subject area.

WILL I DEFINITELY GET TO STUDY ALL THE SUBJECTS I CHOOSE?

Please know that our Options selections process is supported by interest / demand and to maximise the chances of you being able to make the combination of subjects that you want. The initial selection you make will allow us to build the timetable. In some circumstances, due to timetabling restrictions, a student will not be able to take their first choice subject combination.

KEY PEOPLE

At PBIS we care about your future, and we are here to support you throughout your journey to the university of your choice. Before making your choices, make sure you approach the following key people who will give you advice on your subject selection and will draft possible pathways with you:



Ms Danielle Mashon

Deputy Head -
Academic



Mr Mark Buckley

Deputy Head -
IB Coordinator



Dr Elizabeth Wilburn

University Counsellor



IGCSE SUBJECTS ON OFFER AT PBIS



LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The two English IGCSE courses offered are two-year courses, which develop students' skills and passion for English. Through the ***study of a variety of texts, students will explore different genres, cultures and essential themes***. As a result of this exposure students will become more insightful and perceptive individuals. The courses provide opportunities for students to foster an appreciation of real world skills and encourage them to become independent, reflective, curious and creative learners.

IGCSE First Language English

The course enables learners to

- develop the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively when speaking and writing
- use a wide range of vocabulary, and the correct grammar, spelling and punctuation
- develop a personal style and an awareness of the audience being addressed
- Learners are also encouraged to read widely, both for their own enjoyment and to further their awareness of the ways in which English can be used

Assessment Overview

Students will sit two externally assessed examination papers focusing on Reading and Writing.

Why Study This?

Students with a first-language level in English will find that this course equips them with a range of skills and understanding for communicating professionally in English in a wide variety of scenarios and contexts. This will support all of their future studies, especially the IB English A course.

IGCSE World Literature

Cambridge IGCSE World Literature encourages learners to **explore literature from different countries and cultures**. Through study of great novelists, poets and dramatists from around the world, learners acquire lifelong skills in interpreting and evaluating texts. They learn how to develop and communicate an informed personal response to literature.

Assessment Overview

Students will submit two written assignments during the course and then will sit two externally assessed terminal examination papers.

Why Study This?

Aside from opening students' minds to the holistic and creative possibilities of literature, the course gives students an international perspective on many issues. It is excellent preparation for the IB Language and Literature course.



2 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

IGCSE English as a Second Language

This course offers learners the opportunity to **develop practical communication skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking**. Learners will be presented with a variety of texts that will build up their skills in reading and writing. They will learn to select relevant details, understand the difference between what is directly stated and implied, and practise writing for different purposes and audiences.

Learners will listen to a range of spoken material, including talks and conversations, to develop listening skills. Learners will engage in conversations on a variety of topics and develop their skills in responding to different situations and audiences with a degree of accuracy and clarity.

Assessment Overview

All candidates take three components.

Marks for the speaking component do not contribute to the overall grade candidates receive for the written components. Instead, where candidates perform to an appropriate standard, certificates record separately the achievements of candidates, with grades 1 (high) to 5 (low) for speaking.

Why Study This?

Second Language English gives students the essential grounding in the depth and breadth of English they need in all of their academic subjects, both in their concurrent IGCSEs, and then in future IB courses. All non-native students who have not yet demonstrated the required competency are expected to follow this course. Students may go on to study English A or English B in their IB courses depending on the level they achieve in this course.

IGCSE French, German, Spanish - Foreign Language

This syllabus is designed for learning a foreign language. The aim is to develop an ability to use the language effectively for purposes of practical communication. The course is based on the linked language skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing, and these are built on as learners progress through their studies. The syllabus also aims to **offer insights into the culture and civilisation of countries where the language is spoken**, thus encouraging positive attitudes towards language learning and towards speakers of foreign languages.

Assessment Overview

All candidates take four papers which each assess their developing skills in the different areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Why Study This?

The IGCSE course is an essential prerequisite for entry into an essential language at IB level, even if the student does not intend to study languages beyond senior school. Students will find the course equips them with a general range of skills in regular communication in the target language, giving them a good foundation as well as fostering international-mindedness.

3 HUMANITIES

IGCSE History

The Cambridge IGCSE History syllabus looks at some of the major international issues of the twentieth century, as well as covering the history of regions in more depth. The emphasis is on both historical knowledge and on the skills required for historical research.

Learners develop an ***understanding of the nature of cause and effect, continuity and change, similarity and difference and find out how to use and understand historical evidence*** as part of their studies. Cambridge IGCSE History will stimulate any learner already interested in the past, providing a basis for further study, and encouraging a lifelong interest in the subject.

All candidates take three components ranging from structured questions to in depth studies and source analysis.

Why Study This?

History is one of the great subjects in life. A solid appreciation of history provides fundamental skills in research, balance of argument and critical thinking. It also develops students' abilities in preparation and presentation of reasoned written responses. So, in addition to supporting progress into the IB history course, this IGCSE option will be beneficial to students with interests in many other areas such as literature, politics, the arts and geography.

IGCSE Geography

Through the Cambridge IGCSE Geography syllabus, learners will ***develop a 'sense of place' by looking at the world around them on a local, regional and global scale***. Learners will examine a range of natural and man-made environments, and study some of the processes which affected their development. They will also look at the ways in which people interact with their environment and the opportunities and challenges an environment can present, thereby gaining a deeper insight into the different communities and cultures that exist around the world.

Assessment overview

All candidates take three components which separately assess their understanding and adaptation of themes, skills and understanding from the course.

Why Study This?

Geography at this level is not totally necessary for further study at IB, however it is naturally a very good preparation. Its themes and concepts give students a global outlook and encourage critical thinking on a range of contemporary issues. This course is a good stepping stone for entry into business, economics, geography and global politics.

IGCSE Business Studies

The Cambridge IGCSE Business Studies syllabus develops **learners' understanding of business activity in the public and private sectors, and the importance of innovation and change**. Learners find out how the major types of business organisations are established, financed and run, and how their activities are regulated. Factors influencing business decision-making are also considered, as are the essential values of cooperation and interdependence. Learners not only study business concepts and techniques but also enhance related skills such as numeracy and enquiry. The syllabus provides both a foundation for further study and an ideal preparation for the world of work.

Assessment overview

All students sit two papers which test their knowledge and understanding of business on different levels.

Why Study This?

Students will often use this as a springboard for the IB Business Management course, and then go on to pursue Business or Management at university. It is also a good foundation for study in economics, as well as further study in courses like marketing, communication and finance. At its heart, it is about understanding the decision-making processes used in organisations of various scales around us.

IGCSE Economics

The Cambridge IGCSE Economics syllabus develops an **understanding of economic theory, terminology and principles**. Learners study the economics of different countries and how these interrelate. They also learn to work with simple economics data and to use the tools of economic analysis. Learners apply understanding of economics to current economic issues.

Assessment overview

All students sit two papers, assessing a range of different economic approaches, from knowledge and technique, to application and development.

Why Study This?

Economics helps students begin to understand and answer some of the big questions they have about society, commerce, government and the organised world around them. This course is excellent preparation for IB courses such as business management, geography and, of course, economics.

IGCSE Global Perspectives

Cambridge IGCSE Global Perspectives encourages learners to think about and *explore solutions to significant global issues*.

The Syllabus

- develops learners' ability to consider significant global issues from different perspectives
- encourages learners to work collaboratively and individually and to apply their knowledge in different contexts
- develops transferable skills to complement learning in other curricular areas

Assessment overview

All candidates take three components, ranging from short to medium length answer questions to research and group projects..

Why Study This?

The Global Perspectives course opens students' minds to a range of complex and interrelated global issues. Requiring collaboration, research and balanced thought, it prepares students well for courses to come in IB, including economics, geography, history and global politics.



4 SCIENCES

IGCSE Co-ordinated Sciences (Double Award)

Cambridge IGCSE Co-ordinated Sciences (Double Award) gives learners the opportunity to study ***Biology, Chemistry and Physics, each covered in separate syllabus sections.*** It is a double award qualification, earning two grades.

The Syllabus

- helps learners to understand the biological and technological world in which they live, and take an informed interest in science and scientific developments
- includes the basic principles and concepts that are fundamental to science, some current applications of biology, chemistry and physics, and a strong emphasis on practical skills
- helps learners also develop an understanding of the scientific skills essential for progression to the IB Diploma

Assessment Overview

All candidates take three papers, one in each of the sciences.

Why Study This?

Success in the Co-ordinated Science course (and/or its individual components) opens the door to further study in the individual sciences at IB level. On a more holistic level, the course provokes in students a curiosity in the natural world around them, which leads to skill development applicable in further scientific subjects, and in general academics.



5 MATHEMATICS

IGCSE Mathematics

An essential subject for all learners, Cambridge IGCSE Mathematics **encourages the development of mathematical knowledge as a key life skill, and as a strong basis for more advanced study**. The syllabus aims to build learners' confidence by helping them develop competence and fluency with mathematical concepts, methods and skills, as well as a feel for numbers, patterns and relationships. The syllabus also places a strong emphasis on solving problems and presenting and interpreting results. Learners also gain an understanding of how to communicate and reason using mathematical concepts.

Assessment Overview

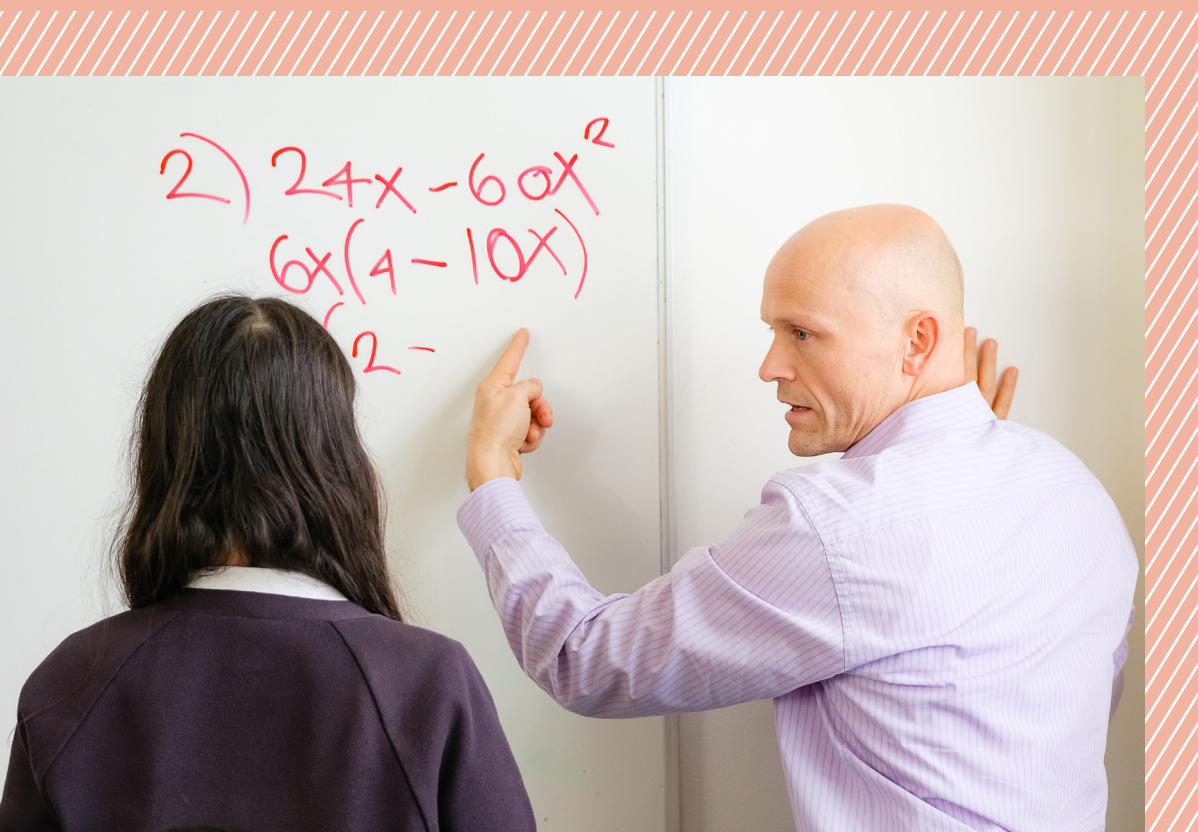
All candidates take two papers.

Candidates who have studied the Core syllabus content, or who are expected to achieve a grade D or below, should be entered for Paper 1 and Paper 3. These candidates will be eligible for grades C to G.

Candidates who have studied the Extended syllabus content and who are expected to achieve a grade C or above should be entered for Paper 2 and Paper 4. These candidates will be eligible for grades A* to E.

Why Study This?

All students require a range of mathematical skills and abilities in their future studies across the curriculum, not to mention their selection of IB mathematics course. IGCSE maths grades are taken into account when students consider applying for IB physics, chemistry, biology, economics and computer science. It is therefore a vitally important foundation on which future pathways may be built.



IGCSE Computer Science

Learners following the Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science syllabus develop their understanding of the main principles of problem solving using computers. They can apply their understanding to ***develop computer-based solutions to problems using algorithms and a high-level programming language.***

Learners also develop a range of technical skills, as well as being able to effectively test and evaluate computing solutions. Studying Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science will help learners appreciate current and emerging computing technologies, the benefits of their use and recognise their potential risks. Cambridge IGCSE Computer Science helps learners develop an interest in computing and gain confidence in computational thinking. It is an ideal foundation for further study at and teaches skills that can be used in other areas of study and in everyday life.

Assessment Overview

All students sit two papers: one on systems, the other on programming.

Why Study This?

The course is more than just Information Technology, and therefore an essential introduction for those interested in coding or programming later in their studies/careers. Students should be ready for a challenge though. The course introduces some complex approaches and skills that will provide great intellectual stimulation.



6 THE ARTS

IGCSE Art & Design

The Cambridge IGCSE Art & Design syllabus aims to **encourage a personal response by stimulating imagination, sensitivity, conceptual thinking, powers of observation and analytical ability**. Learners gain confidence and enthusiasm as they develop technical skills in two and three dimensional form and composition, and are able to identify and solve problems in visual and tactile forms. They also learn how to develop ideas from initial attempts to final solutions. An ideal foundation for further study, Cambridge IGCSE Art & Design also develops a greater awareness of the role played by the visual arts in society and in history, broadening cultural horizons and individual experience.

Assessment Overview

All candidates take two compulsory components that consist of a portfolio of developed artwork around a theme or starting point.

Why Study This?

Visual Arts help to develop creativity, presentation and focussed study of an area. Students taking this course will naturally be considering IB visual art, and careers in art, design, architecture etc. But that is not an essential end in itself. This course can be taken as a creative outlet to supplement a student's overall IGCSE course selection.

IGCSE Drama

Through practical and theoretical study, learners develop an understanding and enjoyment of drama, **developing group and individual skills and studying ways to communicate ideas and feelings** to an audience. They learn how to discover the performance possibilities of a text and other stimuli and devise dramatic material of their own. Learners also develop their performance skills, the demonstration of which will form part of the final assessment.

Assessment Overview

All candidates take two components consisting of a range of theoretical and practical assessments.

Why Study This?

A natural precursor to the IB theatre course, drama is highly beneficial in its development and practice of the softer skills valued across academia and the world of work. Students of drama become better collaborators, listeners and communicators.

IGCSE Music

When studying the Cambridge IGCSE Music syllabus, learners listen to, perform and compose music, encouraging aesthetic and emotional development, self-discipline and, importantly, creativity. As a result, learners ***enhance their appreciation and enjoyment of music, an achievement that forms an ideal foundation for future study and enhances life-long musical enjoyment.***

Learners study music of all styles; each style is placed in its historical and cultural context, and they are encouraged to be perceptive, sensitive and critical when listening. Although the majority of the syllabus examines Western European music, the music of other cultures is always represented.

Assessment Overview

Students are assessed on their listening, performing and composing through separately weighted examinations.

Why Study This?

Studying music will primarily enhance personal creativity and skill in chosen instruments. Further, it is an excellent source of transferable skills in analysing and understanding patterns and sequences in the world around us. This course is naturally a very good preparation for the IB music course.



7 PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

IGCSE Physical Education

The syllabus provides learners with an opportunity to study both the practical and theoretical aspects of physical education. It is designed to encourage enjoyment in physical activity by providing learners with an opportunity to take part in a range of physical activities and develop an understanding of effective and safe physical performance. This helps learners to develop an appreciation of the necessity for sound ***understanding of the principles, practices and training that underpin improved performance, better health and well-being.***

Assessment Overview

All candidates take two compulsory components covering both the theoretical and practical side of PE.

Why Study This?

This course extends the regular exercise and health benefits of weekly sports, giving students a more theoretical and scientific understanding of exercise, skills and performance. It is very useful to students who prefer to study sports science instead of one of the classic main sciences at IB level.





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