

Science setting FAQs

If you have a question about your child's Science set, you should be able to find the answer below. All setting decisions are based on assessment data and are made with the best interests of the individual student at heart. Students at WBS make excellent progress in Science regardless of the set that they are in.

My child is moving into year 9 and has been placed in a higher or lower set than they expected. Will they now remain in this set all year?

When students go into year 9 they are placed in sets based on their year 8 test scores. The sets are not fixed, they are adjusted as the students sit further assessments. It is possible for students to move up or down sets throughout the year until they are in the right set for them.

My child is moving into year 9 and has been placed in one of the lower sets. Will their progress be limited by this?

The level of challenge and aspiration at WBS is always high. Our students are well above the national average in terms of their ability. In all sets students will be pushed towards and then beyond their target grades. Even in the lower sets at WBS students will achieve high grades at GCSE. We regularly have students from set 4 who are awarded grade 7 and those in set 5/6 often achieve a grade 5. The suggested target grades given for each set are for guidance only.

If my child is in a lower set, does this mean they won't be able to study Triple Science, take Science A Levels or pursue a Science based career?

No decisions are made in year 9 about the final GCSE pathway that students will take. All groups are taught the same content, so that students can transfer between groups. It is not until the end of year 10 when students will need to be in one of the higher sets to study Triple Science (as there is more content to cover so the pace of this course is quicker). If students take Double Science then they are still very well equipped to take A level Sciences and go on to further study. Many schools do not offer Triple Science and therefore the A level courses are structured so that having taken the Double Science route is not a disadvantage.

My child is moving into year 10 and has moved down a set. Are their options now limited?

In year 10 most groups continue to be taught all the content needed for GCSE Triple Science. This gives students opportunities to move between groups throughout the year, as the setting is adjusted based on assessments. The exception to this is students in set 5 and 6, for whom Double Science is more appropriate. All students, even in lower sets, are given the opportunity to sit Higher Tier papers in their assessments if it is appropriate for them.

How and when will decisions be made about Triple/Double Science?

At the end of year 10 students sit a mock GCSE exam. This exam, together with all their assessments from year 10, is used to decide their set for year 11. Going into year 11, students in set 1-3 will continue with Triple Science. Those in set 1 and 2 will be likely to be entered for Triple Science when the final exam entries are made around Christmas. For those in set 3 there is flexibility about whether Triple Science will be the correct route and decisions will be discussed with the students. Students in set 4-6 going into year 11 will do Double Science, but can still access the full range of grades by taking the Higher Tier papers if appropriate.

What is the difference between Double and Triple Science?

In Double Science (properly called Trilogy Combined Science) students study Biology, Chemistry and Physics. They sit two 1h15m exams in each subject at the end of year 11. The scores from all 6 papers are combined to give an overall grade. They are awarded two GCSEs in Science and can achieve grades 1-9 (1-5 on Foundation paper).

In Triple Science students study Biology, Chemistry and Physics. They sit two 1h45m exams in each subject at the end of year 11. The scores from the two Biology exams are combined to give them an overall Biology grade, and the same in Chemistry and Physics. They are awarded three GCSEs (in Biology, Chemistry and Physics) and can achieve grades 5-9 (Higher Tier only).