



St. Katherine's School



# St Katherine's School

## Year 9 Options

**2026-2028**



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# Timeline

<b>9th February</b>	Assembly about option process
<b>9th February – 13<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Tutorial time discussion on options
<b>11<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Options Evening 5.00pm-7.00pm
<b>16<sup>th</sup> – 20th February</b>	Half Term
<b>Early March</b>	Deadline for completing the online options form
<b>16<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Students invited for interview from 16 <sup>th</sup> March
<b>Late May</b>	Options confirmation letter sent out to parents/carers
<b>June</b>	Draft timetable completed
<b>July</b>	Timetable finalised

We wish you well in making your choices as a family. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions about the process.

# Introduction

Preparing for Key Stage 4 is an exciting opportunity to choose those subjects that you will study in Years 10 and 11, and possibly beyond. For the first time in your education, you will have a real say in your learning pathway. You will make very important decisions about what you want to achieve by the end of Key Stage 4 and you should not consider taking these decisions alone.

Outlined below are some of the questions you may have about KS4 Options. Please take time to read this section carefully.

## **Why must I choose?**

There is not enough time in Years 10 and 11 to enable you to do justice to all subjects. You may also be more interested or talented in some subjects than others – each person has his or her own special aptitudes and interests.

## **What types of course are on offer?**

We offer a wide range of GCSEs and vocational courses. Many of the subjects are already familiar to you.

## **What subjects are compulsory?**

Next year all students will study the core subjects listed below. This is to ensure you are well prepared for life after St Katherine's. You must continue to study English and mathematics as the ability to speak and write clearly, and to understand numbers and quantities is essential in all walks of life. In addition, all students will continue to study science as, in an increasingly technological world; this is an important area of knowledge for all.

### **Core (qualification courses):**

English

Mathematics

Science

### **Core (non-qualification courses):**

Physical Education

Society and Culture

Work Experience

## **Why should I choose from a broad range of subject areas?**

Like many young people of your age, you may have very little idea of what you want to do after you leave school. This means it is very important for you to study a **broad and balanced range of subjects**. Doing this will enable you to keep as many opportunities as possible open to you in the future. However, if you **do** have a particular career in mind already it is **essential** that you check with your subject teachers and tutor that your choice will enable you to follow this career. Your choices **NOW** can affect your career opportunities later on so **check your facts carefully**.

## **How many subjects can I choose?**

You need to choose between **History & Geography** and then **select four other subjects** you will be asked to rank them in order of preference. You will **study four options**.

## **Will I get my first four (1-4) subject choices?**

We try to give as many first choices (1-4) as possible and construct a timetable which will work for you and the school. The vast majority of students get their choices, taking into account the fifth preference, although this is not always possible. Sometimes we do not have enough interest in a subject for us to run it and **all option subjects will run subject to sufficient numbers**.

## **What examinations will be involved?**

All courses involve at least one written exam, excluding performing arts. Check the course outline later in the booklet for the assessment methods for each qualification.

## **Changes to GCSE grading**

From September 2017 all GCSE courses became linear which are assessed through written examinations at the end of Year 11 and graded 9-1.

## **Who can help me choose?**

You are making important decisions so do not be afraid to ask for help and advice from your teachers, tutors and others; the best decisions are made when you are well informed. Use every opportunity to ask questions of the following:

### **Your Parents and Carers**

They are a very important influence on you and are aware of your interests and potential.

### **Tutor & Head of House**

Your head of house and tutor are key people in this process and can give you a good idea of your overall progress to date and help you to see yourself in perspective. If you are unsure, ask them for help.

### **Subject teachers**

They can tell you whether you will have the aptitude, talent and appropriate level of skills to enable you to succeed in their subject.

<b>Options Evening</b>	This provides an opportunity to discuss subjects with staff and to obtain additional information - make sure you ask any questions you have.
<b>Year 9 progress check</b>	This may highlight some of your strengths and weaknesses.
<b>Options interview</b>	You may have an individual interview to review your choices.
<b>Careers advice</b>	Impartial and up to date careers advice is available via <a href="http://careerpilot.org.uk">careerpilot.org.uk</a> including information on future career choices.

### **How should I choose my options?**

- Read this booklet carefully.
- Attend the Options Evening.
- Ask questions of yourself, e.g. which subjects do I like most? Which subjects do I do well in?

Think about:

- What will I learn?
- How will I learn?
- How will I be assessed?
- What qualification will I get?
- What could I go on to do when I finish?

**If you have a firm career idea**, choose subjects that you will need for the next stage of your career journey i.e. the subjects you need to go into Further or Higher Education or into an Apprenticeship (see the Jobs4u website listed below for more information). Think ahead, what qualifications or subjects will you need?

**If you do not have a firm career idea**, choose subjects that will allow you to keep your options open. Get to know yourself. Do some research about different careers; learn what people do at work, and find out how much they earn.

Useful websites:

- **For help choosing options:** [www.careerpilot.org.uk](http://www.careerpilot.org.uk)
- **For finding out more about careers:** <http://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> or [www.icould.com](http://www.icould.com)
- **For thinking about what careers might suit you:** [www.cascaid.co.uk/kudos](http://www.cascaid.co.uk/kudos)
- **Visit the Youth Employment Services (YES):** [www.facebook.com/YESNSC](http://www.facebook.com/YESNSC)
- **Email our careers leader, Sara Gardiner to book an appointment.** [gardiners@skdrive.org](mailto:gardiners@skdrive.org)

### **Good reasons for choosing a course:**

- ✓ You are good at the subject
- ✓ You think you will enjoy the course
- ✓ You are interested in the knowledge and skills it develops
- ✓ It will give you plenty of choice in the future
- ✓ You think that you might want to continue studying it after Year 11 e.g. at A Level
- ✓ It goes well with your other choices

### **Bad reasons for choosing a course:**

- ✗ Your friends are doing it – don't pick something just to be the same as other people
- ✗ People say it is easy
- ✗ You like the teacher you have now (someone else might teach you next year)
- ✗ Someone else thinks it is a good idea but you disagree
- ✗ You did not have time to research your options properly
- ✗ You think it is a good course for a boy or a girl

Remember that alongside the formal curriculum there will be many opportunities to continue personal development beyond the classroom. These will include trips and visits, work experience, sporting fixtures and performances.

### **Remember!**

- *Do* select subjects you *enjoy* studying.
- *Do* select subjects at which you are successful.
- *Do* ask for advice and *find out about a subject*, as you will be studying it for two years.
- *Do not be influenced by the choices made by your friends*. Their plans for the future, along with their interests and skills, will not necessarily suit you. *Do not* select a subject because you like a teacher. You may have a *different* teacher.

### **If in doubt.....ask**

You will find it helpful to talk to: your parents or carers; subject teachers; other relatives and friends; your Form Tutor or Head of House. You may also have an interview with Mr Francis-Black where you will be able to discuss your choices.

### **Allocating options**

We will make every effort to allocate to students their preferred option choices. However, there are occasions when this will not be possible. For example:

- Too few students have selected a particular subject;
- In the professional opinion of staff the student would not be suited to the subject selected
- It is simply impossible to timetable all the combinations selected by students.

If this happens, we will inform the students and help them explore other possibilities.

# Qualifications

There are different types of qualifications available and more detail is available on the following pages for each subject area. The different types of qualification are:

## GCSE

GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) are highly valued by schools, colleges and employers. These qualifications mainly involve studying the theory of a subject, combined with some investigative or practical work. GCSEs are usually assessed by a combination of written exams and controlled assessment.

### **Changes to GCSE grading in 2017 for all subjects**

From September 2017 all subjects adopted the new 9-1 GCSE qualification.

The main features of the new GCSE are:

1. A new grading scale of 9 to 1 will be used, with 9 being the top grade. This will allow greater differentiation between students and will help distinguish the new GCSEs from previous versions.
2. Assessment will be mainly by exam, with other types of assessment used only where they are needed to test essential skills.
3. There will be new, more demanding content, which has been developed by the government and the exam boards.
4. Courses will be designed for two years of study – they will no longer be divided into different modules and students will take all their exams in one period at the end of their course.
5. Exams can only be split into ‘foundation tier’ and ‘higher tier’ if one exam paper does not give all students the opportunity to show their knowledge and abilities.

## **Vocational qualifications:**

Vocational courses are work related qualifications suitable for a wide range of students, built to accommodate the needs of employers and allow progression to university. They provide a more practical, real-world approach to learning alongside a key theoretical background. Assessment is mostly on-going throughout the course with one externally assessed exam.

### **Vocational Grading**

L2 Distinction\*

L2 Distinction

L2 Merit

L2 Pass

L1 Pass

**The English Baccalaureate:** Whilst not a qualification in itself, the English Baccalaureate was introduced by the Government in 2010 to promote the uptake of academic subjects, especially those most likely to be required or preferred for entry to degree courses, especially for the Russell Group of universities. The English Baccalaureate remains a key focus of government policy and is promoted in the 2016 reforms and beyond. English Baccalaureate recognises where students have secured a 5 grade or better across a core of academic subjects – English, mathematics, science, history or geography and a language. At St Katherine's all students will be asked to include either History or Geography as one of their options.

# *English*

Exam Board: English language AQA GCSE 9-1 / English literature AQA 9-1

Qualifications: English Language and English Literature

Staff Contact: Ms Jefferson

## **Introduction**

During the English language and English literature courses you will gain unique creative and technical skills that will help you understand more about yourself, your community and the world you live in.

You will study the practical aspects of fluent writing, as well as discuss how characters respond to the situations and the societies they are in, becoming proficient at 'reading between the lines' to understand the inference that underpins human communication.

## **Assessment**

100% examination at the end of Year 11: you will complete four examination papers, two in English language and two in English literature.

There is also a compulsory speaking and listening assessment. This is not part of the final examination grade but appears on your certificate and can be included on your curriculum vitae.

## **Course Outline**

- Comprehension and analysis of a range of 19th and 21st century fiction and non-fiction texts
- Writing in a range of forms and styles for a wide variety of purposes
- Creative writing - descriptive, narrative and transactional
- Detailed study of a Shakespearean play, a nineteenth century novel, a twentieth century text and poetry from the Romantic period through to the twenty first century

## **Will it suit me?**

English is an essential communication tool. Strong English skills help us to build and maintain relationships in our personal and work life, achieve goals, understand others' points of view and enjoy fluent reading, writing and speaking. English is at the heart of everything we do

## **Progression**

Many Level 2 college placements and employers require a good pass in English, defined by the government as grade 5. St Katherine's English literature A-Level course, which has a track record of excellent results and opens up Further Education placements from journalism to teaching and management, is highly popular. Many English students progress to top universities

# *Mathematics*

Exam Board: Edexcel GCSE 9-1

Staff Contact: Mr Lee

## **Introduction**

GCSE Mathematics is a natural progression from Key Stage 3. Students have begun working towards the demands of the new GCSE course during Year 9 mathematics lessons. There is a greater emphasis on problem solving and reasoning, essential skills for all areas of study.

## **Assessment**

- Three written exams each 90 minutes
- Two papers using a calculator and one without a calculator
- Each paper is worth 80 marks
- No controlled assessment
- Students will be entered at either Foundation or Higher tier:

Higher: grades 3 to 9

Foundation: grades 1 to 5

Exam questions will cover three assessment objectives:

Topics	H tier	F tier
Using and applying standard techniques	40%	50%
Reasoning, interpreting and communication mathematically	30%	25%
Solving non-routine problems in mathematical and non-mathematical contexts	30%	25%

## **Course Outline**

The five content areas are:

- Number
- Ratio, Proportion and Rates of Change
- Algebra
- Geometry and Measures
- Statistics and Probability

## **Progression**

For those considering further study of maths or maths related subjects, the higher level course leads directly to A level maths.

# *Combined Science*

Exam Board: AQA Combined Science: Trilogy

Staff Contact: Mrs Ivey

## **Introduction**

If you do not select Triple Science as an option then you will automatically be entered for this course. You will still study all three Sciences, but they will be combined for assessment purposes so you will receive two overall grades for Science. The course will be supported with a comprehensive range of online resources.

## **Assessment**

There will be six exams at the end of Year 11, each of which will cover discrete aspects of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Biology, Chemistry and Physics are all weighted equally towards the final grade. The exams will contain multiple choice, structured, closed short answers, and extended writing questions. There will be no coursework, instead students will study 21 required practicals that they will be tested on in the final examinations, this will be worth 15% of the final grade. The course will also require mathematical skills for science, which will be worth 20% of the final grade. Students will be taught foundation tier content. Foundation tier covers grades 1-1 to 5-5. Students will receive a double grade from 9-9 to 1-1 and this will count as 2 GCSEs. Students aiming to take higher tier (grades 4-9) are strongly advised to take triple science rather than combined science.

## **Course Outline**

Students will study several biology, chemistry and physics topics in Year 9, 10 and 11. Topics will include cell biology, organisation, infection, bioenergetics, homeostasis, inheritance, evolution, ecology, atomic structure, the periodic table, bonding and structure, quantitative chemistry, chemical change, energy change, rates of reaction, organic chemistry, chemical analysis, chemistry of the atmosphere, resources, forces, energy, waves, electricity, magnetism, and the particle model. In most cases students will have a separate biology, chemistry and physics teacher.

## **Will it suit me?**

If you do not study triple science you will study combined science.

## **Progression**

Combined Science gives a foundation for some further scientific courses. Most students taking combined science are likely to be targeted at foundation level (grades 1-1 to 5-5). Students aiming to take higher tier (grades 4-9) are advised to take triple science.

# *Art and Design*

Exam Board: AQA GCSE 9-1

Staff Contact: Ms E Tallis

## **Introduction**

The art and design course is a great choice for those who enjoy practical activities, although there is a requirement to complete relevant analytical writing too. It caters for a broad range of interests and is very good preparation for further study in art A Level (the GCSE results for art and design are always high and many Year 11 students decide to follow with A Level art in Year 12). The creative industry is one of the largest in Britain and many students who began with GCSE Art and Design at St Katherine's have since progressed to earning a living as creative professionals in teaching, graphic design, television production and illustration, for example.

## **Assessment**

Art staff provide regular feedback using various methods including constructive advice during lessons and tutorials, written targets and comments and assessment grades. These accompany the school's usual reporting structure. The **coursework** element of this course constitutes **60%** of the marks available in the final assessment and the **exam project**, the remaining **40%**.

## **Course Outline**

A full range of 2 and 3 dimensional tasks embrace drawing, painting, collage, photomontage, photography, printing, and ICT and construction methods, including ceramics. Coursework sheets, used like sketchbooks, form a crucial part of this GCSE. Used throughout Year 10 and Year 11, students use A3 sheets like a visual diary to record their creation and development ideas, make notes on gallery visits, research works by artists and designers, and provide evidence of experimentation with media and techniques. Staff lead workshops in lessons to demonstrate practical techniques and then provide coursework projects that encourage students to apply techniques they have learned to the realisation of creative and skillful outcomes.

## **Will it suit me?**

KS3 study in art and design prepares students very well for GCSE work. Artistic ability and a creative awareness are obviously important if a student is to be successful on this course. If you are in doubt as to whether you are suited to this course, ask for advice from an art teacher. We will be pleased to help you.

## **Progression**

A Level Art and Design

Higher education courses e.g. costume, animation, game design, illustration.

# **Business Studies**

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Business

Staff Contact: Mrs Reade

## **Introduction**

With 5 million self employed workers in the UK and 60% of all employment in small to medium businesses there has never been a more important time to learn the skills and knowledge of business. You will start by exploring the world of small businesses through the lens of an entrepreneur. How and why do business ideas come about? What makes a successful business? Then you'll move on to investigating business growth. How does a business develop beyond the start-up phase? You'll learn about key business concepts and issues and decisions you need to make when growing a business and working in a global business.

## **Assessment**

Your final grade is based on two written exam papers at the end of year 11. Both papers are weighted at 50%, each paper comprises multiple choice questions, short answer questions and extended writing. Both Paper 1 and Paper 2 will have sections that are based on real life, relevant business contexts and examples. There is no coursework, however throughout the course you will be assessed by completing end of topic assessments and homework tasks based on exam questions.

## **Course Outline**

### **Theme 1: Investigating small business:**

This theme will be assessed in Paper 1 and is worth 50% of the qualification.

You will learn about:

- Enterprise and entrepreneurship and spotting a business opportunity.
- Putting business ideas into practice and making businesses effective.
- The influences of the external environment on business.

### **Theme 2: Building a business:**

This theme will be assessed in Paper 2 and is worth 50% of the qualification.

You will learn about:

- Growing a business
- Making marketing, product, financial and human resource decisions

## **Will it suit me?**

If you enjoy communicating and explaining your ideas, thinking creatively and making decisions, working with numbers to solve business problems and learning about the world of business through real and relevant local and international brands. Then the GCSE Business course is the right subject for you. This course is designed to help develop business-focused enterprising minds.

## **Progression**

GCSE Business is a great step preparing you for further and higher education such as A levels and vocational courses. A GCSE Business course can help prepare you for an entrepreneurial role and help you to gain an understanding of what is involved in a business-related profession, like accountancy, law, marketing or the leisure and tourism industry.

# *Computer Science*

Exam Board: OCR GCSE 9-1

Staff Contact: Mr Cook

## **Introduction**

There are two parts to this course, theory and practical. You will learn theoretical knowledge to understand how the hardware inside a computer works and the implications for programming a computer to carry out tasks. Through the study of computer programming, the course will help learners develop critical thinking, analysis and problem solving skills. For many, it will be a fun, interesting and challenging way to develop these skills, which can be transferred to other subjects and even applied in day-to-day life.

## **Assessment**

- Section 1: J277 (01) Computer systems - Written Examination (50%)
- Section 2: J277 (02) Computational thinking, Algorithms and Programming - Written Examination (50%)

## **Course Outline**

A GCSE in computing enables students to;

- undertake programming tasks during their course of study which allows them to develop their skills to design, write, test and refine programs using a high-level programming language. Students will be assessed on these skills during the written examinations, in particular component 02 (section B)
- develop their understanding of current and emerging technologies, understanding of how they work and apply this knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts
- use their knowledge and understanding of computer technology to become independent and discerning users, able to make informed decisions about the use and be aware of the implications of different technologies
- acquire and apply creative and technical skills, knowledge and understanding of computer systems in a range of contexts
- develop computer programs to solve problems
- develop the skills to work collaboratively

## **Will it suit me?**

- Are you interested in how computers work?
- Would you like to learn how to solve problems using a programming language?
- Do you like carrying out research into computer technologies?
- Computing is a scientific discipline and students studying the course would benefit from having a secure foundation of mathematical understanding.

## **Progression**

GCSE computing course prepares you for life in a world where computers are everywhere. Students who study GCSE Computing would be well positioned to harness the power of automation in many lines of work. Students can progress on to further study of Computing, including Computer Science at university.

# *Drama*

Exam Board: EDUQAS GCSE 9-1

Staff Contact: Mrs Collins

## **Introduction**

Drama GCSE is an invaluable subject to undertake as it has many transferable skills which span across all kinds of disciplines, careers and life experiences. Students will have the opportunity to read set texts, critique the work of themselves and others, and produce professional theatre. Furthermore, it teaches students the multidisciplinary skills of collaboration, cooperation, design, public speaking and creative response to stimulus; this in turn helps build confidence and social skills and reliability, which are essential qualities for GCSE Drama students.

## **Assessment**

- **Component 1: Devising theatre 40%**
- **Component 2: Performing from a text 20%**
- **Component 3: Interpreting theatre 40%**

## **Course Outline**

The course offers students the opportunity to explore drama as a practical art form in which ideas and meaning are communicated to an audience through choices of form, style and convention. Students will be introduced to key practitioners, theoretical influences and influential playwrights whilst developing and building their core practical performance skills. Students will also have opportunities to see live theatre allowing them to become thoughtful and informed audience members.

## **Will it suit me**

- Do you want to expand your theatrical knowledge and learn new dynamic styles within theatre?
- Do you want to explore characters and storytelling to participate in live performances?
- Do you consider yourself to be disciplined, organised, a good listener full of passion and interest?

## **Entry requirements**

- To be have been involved or currently involved with external clubs connected to drama and the performing arts
- To attend weekly rehearsals outside of lesson time
- To take part in 2 extracurricular clubs or showcases at school across the 2 year course during year 10 and 11
- To complete an audition process showcasing their performance skills in the form of a monologue.

## **Progression**

- Vocational qualifications in performing arts
- A Level drama / degree level drama / performing arts
- Teaching
- Management responsibility in the workplace

# *Food Preparation and Nutrition*

Exam Board: Eduqas GCSE 9-1

Staff Contact: Mrs Jenkins

## **Introduction**

If you are interested in what you eat, and/or you are interested in a career in the Food Industry, then you should consider taking food preparation and nutrition GCSE. Food preparation and nutrition enables you to make connections between theory and practice so that you are able to apply your understanding of food science and nutrition to practical cooking.

## **Assessment**

**Written Examination 50%:** The paper will test a candidate's knowledge and understanding of food preparation and nutrition. (1 hour 45 minutes)

### **Controlled Assessment:**

There will be 2 assessed practical tasks that take place in Year 11. Students will be required to produce a portfolio showing their research, designing, making and evaluations of the foods produced.

**NEA 1:** Written or electronic report (1,500–2,000 words) including photographic evidence of the practical investigation.

**NEA 2:** Written or electronic portfolio including photographic evidence. Photographic evidence of the three final dishes must be included.

## **Course Outline**

- Food commodities
- Principles of nutrition
- Diet and good health
- The science of food
- Where food comes from
- Cooking and food preparation

## **Will it suit me?**

Students will need to be prepared to try new and different recipes, prepare ingredients for lessons approximately once a week, and spend some time at home practising culinary skills. Students must remember that there are 2 controlled assessments so written work is also required.

*You will need to buy ingredients for a range of practical investigations and dishes once a fortnight. This can be costly and therefore we would ask you to speak to us in advance if there is likely to be any issues with this cost as there may be support available. To be successful on this course, it is essential that you have some prior ability in cooking. You will also need a proven track record of bringing ingredients to KS3 food lessons.*

## **Progression**

It is an ideal GCSE course for any students: attracted to a health or medical related career; interested in sport and health; or wishing to enter the catering, hospitality and food production industries.

# French

Exam Board: AQA GCSE 9-1

Staff Contact: Mr. Sequeira

## Introduction

Being able to speak another language genuinely opens doors. A GCSE gives you the confidence to handle real-life situations — booking holidays, ordering food, chatting with locals, and even communicating in professional settings. It is not just about words and grammar, but the *use* of the language in everyday life. Along the way, you'll also develop powerful language-learning strategies that make picking up future languages easier. It's a skill that keeps growing long after your exams.

## Assessment

- Paper 1: Listening exam 40 marks (Foundation Tier), 50 marks (Higher Tier) 25% of GCSE
- Paper 2: Speaking Non-exam assessment 50 marks (for each Tier) 25% of GCSE
- Paper 3: Reading 50 marks (for each Tier) 25% of GCSE
- Paper 4: 50 marks (for each Tier) 25% of GCSE

## Course Outline

The GCSE course develops the language knowledge and skills you built in KS3. You will deepen your understanding of vocabulary and grammar so that you can express and justify your opinions, describe past and future events, and discuss themes such as identity, local area, holidays, school, work and global issues. Learning will involve a variety of activities, including listening and reading tasks, speaking practice such as role plays and photo cards, writing for different purposes, online interactive work, alongside structured textbook support.

## Will it suit me?

At GCSE, you'll continue with either French or Spanish, and if you speak another language at home, the school may be able to support you in taking a GCSE in that language too, provided that there is an exam board that runs an exam for that language.

A GCSE in languages is perfect for you if you're looking for something that's both exciting *and* challenging. You might enjoy taking a language if you:

- want to stand out in the future job market, where employers increasingly value people who can communicate in more than one language
- enjoy a mental challenge—languages are academic, and success comes from steady practice, concentration and a willingness to push yourself
- want to build lifelong skills such as memorisation strategies, clear communication, and active listening.

## Progression

A GCSE in French at a Grade 6 or more can give you access to an A level languages course. Some universities are considering making a language GCSE an entry requirement, one of the Russell Group universities has already done so (UCL). In addition, having a foreign language in your curriculum can make you stand out from other candidates that are applying to the same course. With a GCSE in a language you could take up an A level course at a later date at higher education level to combine with other subjects.

# Further Maths

Exam Board: AQA Level 2 Certificate

Staff Contact: Mr Lee

## Introduction

AQA Level 2 in Further Maths is designed to stretch and challenge high achieving mathematicians. It is equivalent to a full GCSE course, but it doesn't cover the full Key Skills (KS4) programme of study, which must still be covered. It is not an optional subject, but an **additional course** for appropriate students in addition to their other subjects.

It complements GCSE Maths by encouraging students' higher Mathematical skills, particularly algebraic reasoning. Students who have GCSE Maths and AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Maths can move onto deeper material of AS and A2 Level Maths and Sciences knowing they will be fully stretched and challenged.

AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Maths emphasises higher order technical proficiencies, problem solving skills and rigorous argument. Students are introduced to calculus and matrices, and develop further their skills in Trigonometry, graphs and functions.

## Assessment

The course is assessed by one non calculator 105 minute exam and one 105 minute calculator exam.

## Course Outline

Further maths is an additional course that won't count as an option subject. It is offered to students in Set 1 and some Set 2 students, to broaden their mathematical experiences and improve their knowledge of the topics required for study at A-Level. It runs after school on a Tuesday, until 4pm, for the two years, and students must be prepared to commit to all of the after school lessons in order to succeed in the course.

## Will it suit me?

Eligible students will be sent a letter during term 5 of year 9 to see if they are interested and prepared to commit the time, as it will run after school on a Tuesday during year 10 and year 11.

## Progression

During this course you will have acquired important skills required for studying other subjects, including biology, psychology, economics, geography, engineering and archaeology. Many aspects of the course overlap with Science and Geography GCSE.

If you continue with mathematics at A Level you will find that you have been prepared for a significant amount of the content of the pure units in year 1.

# Geography

Exam Board: AQA GCSE Geography

Staff Contact: Mr Jones

## Introduction

Outside of being a highly valued qualification by employers, Geography GCSE offers the chance to answer and ask some of the world's greatest questions. Within our physical topics, questions can range from: "Why should I be careful about buying a house near the coastline?" to "Why do Hurricanes only ever hit North and South America?". In our human topics, we question why some parts of the world are significantly poorer than the rest. How do we solve global inequalities, and who is to blame? If you want to prepare yourself for a life of active interest in how the world works, Geography is the subject for you.

## Assessment

Three 90 minute papers to be taken at the end of Year 11. They contain a mixture of questions ranging from 1 to 12 marks. In class assessment and exam preparation will take place throughout the two years. There is no coursework requirement.

## Fieldwork

Students undertake two days of fieldwork, to include an investigation along a river and an urban investigation in Bristol.

## Course Outline

### **Paper 1: Living with the physical environment:**

- A) The challenge of natural hazards
- B) The living world
- C) Physical landscapes in the UK

### **Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment**

- A) Urban issues and challenges
- B) The changing economic world
- C) The challenge of resource management

### **Paper 3: Geographical applications -**

- A) Issue evaluation
- B) Fieldwork

## Will it suit me?

Geography investigates what is happening right now on our planet. If you are curious about why the world is as it is, why decisions in one country affect another and what we can do to help the world's most vulnerable people, then you are a Geographer.

## Progression

Geography works well with many subjects, including Maths, Biology, Business, History, Philosophy & Belief, Engineering and PE. Geography is an Ebacc subject and is highly regarded by Russell Group Universities. Pathways could include finance, public sector work, non-profit charitable work, environmental conservation, development, teaching, travel and tourism, sustainability, engineering or international/national development.

# History

Exam Board: Edexcel GCSE 9-1

Staff Contact: Mrs Cavanagh

## Introduction

Passionate about History? Our GCSE History course covers an exciting variety of historical periods and topics, which develop your skills and depth of knowledge as a historian. Learn about migration to Britain since the medieval period, and how that has shaped our multicultural society today. Interested in the Tudor period? We examine the relationship between Henry VIII and his ministers which resulted in numerous marriages and the development of a religious rollercoaster, which still affects us to this day. Additionally, the Middle East paper will provide you with the opportunity to examine the conflict which is dominating news headlines. Our final exam paper focuses on the USA: home and abroad from 1954-1975 examining the civil rights movement and the impact of the war in Vietnam.

## Assessment

There are 3 exams to complete and these will all be taken at the end of Year 11. There will be a mixture of in-class assessments and homework set throughout the year to prepare you for this.

## Course Outline

**Unit 1 – A Thematic study and historic environment** – Migration in Britain, c.800 - present and Notting Hill, c1948-c1970

**Unit 2 – A Period study of international history and a British depth study** – Conflict in the Middle East 1945-1995 and Henry VIII & his ministers, 1509- 40

**Unit 3 – A Modern depth study** – The USA: conflict at home and abroad, 1954-1975

## Will it suit me?

Do you:

Love a challenge?

Like to understand how the world works?

Enjoy working with evidence?

Enjoy reading?

If so, maybe history is the subject for you at GCSE!

## Progression

History is one of the most highly regarded subjects by employers.

It is a useful qualification for:

• Teaching	• Law	• Police
• Museum work	• Journalism	• Library & Archives
• Local Government	• Civil Service	• International Relations

# Music

Exam Board: Edexcel GCSE 9-1

Staff Contact: Miss Adams

## Introduction

GCSE Music is a challenging and varied course involving composition, performance, musical theory and listening work. It covers a wide range of music from Bach and Beethoven to the Beatles and beyond! It should only be considered by students who play an instrument (including voice) to around grade 3 standard or who can play whole pieces of music fluently.

## Assessment

**Component 1: Performing** - coursework assessed by teacher and externally moderated (30% of final grade)

**Component 2: Composing** - coursework assessed by teacher and externally moderated (30% of final grade)

**Component 3: Appraising** - 1 hour 45 min written/listening exam. Externally marked (40% of final grade)

## Course Outline

**Component 1: Performing** - one solo and one ensemble (group) performance.

**Component 2: Composing** - two compositions; one free choice and one to a set brief.

**Component 3: Appraising** - students develop their listening and appraising skills by studying a range of music from the following Areas of Study; Instrumental Music 1700-1820, Vocal Music, Music for Stage and Screen, Fusions. There are also set works from each Area of Study which students must know in detail.

## Will it suit me?

The course would suit anyone who loves music; however, you do need to play an instrument to a good standard (this can be voice). You need to be confident to perform in front of others. Remember that you are expected to compose music as well so GCSE music would be a great choice if you enjoy composing and using software like Soundtrap. You also need to be prepared to study a wide range of different types of music, from classical to world music to musicals.

## Progression

GCSE Music allows progression to AS and A level Music courses. It would also be suitable for those interested in careers in the Music Industry. The course is viewed very favourably by further education establishments and employers as it is academic yet also requires a range of transferable skills such as communication, group work, self-discipline and confidence.

# ***Philosophy and Beliefs (Religious Studies)***

Exam Board: Edexcel GCSE 9-1 in Religious Studies (B)

Staff Contact: Ms Huzzey

## **Introduction**

Religious Studies is about developing the ability to think and reason about some of the most fundamental questions of human existence. The course draws upon thousands of years of human thought to consider how we should live and understand the world as citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It considers a number of philosophical and ethical positions on a variety of topics, from both religious and non-religious perspectives. The religious perspectives on the world chosen for study will be Christianity and Buddhism.

## **Assessment**

- 1x 1 hour 45 minutes examination (Religion and Ethics)
- 1x 1 hour 45 minutes examination (Religion, Peace and Conflict)

## **Course Outline**

Philosophical and Ethical Issues include:

- Relationships (families, sex, marriage and gender equality)
- Life and Death (the origin of life, the value or otherwise of human and animal life, Life after Death, Abortion and Euthanasia)
- Crime and Punishment (religious attitudes towards crime and punishment, forgiveness, the death penalty)
- Peace and Conflict (just war, pacifism, holy way, weapons of mass instruction)
- We also study the beliefs and practices of the two religions.

## **Will it suit me?**

If you enjoy thinking, discussing, arguing and debating then this course is for you. If you have a curious mind that is interested in philosophical questions such as what happens when we die, ethical questions such as should abortion be made illegal and if you have an interest in religion and its role in the modern world, then this course is for you. If you want to develop as a thinker and improve your all round ability to reason, evaluate and build an argument in this and other subjects then this is definitely the course for you.

## **Progression**

Besides developing the important skills of thinking and reasoning, this course leads naturally to A-levels in Philosophy, Religious Studies and Critical Thinking. It also supports progression to Psychology, Sociology, English, Politics, History and Geography A-Levels. This GCSE is beneficial for any student looking to go into Law, Journalism, Teaching, Medicine and Politics, the Civil Service or any other job that requires logical and creative thinking.

# *Photography*

Exam Board: AQA GCSE 9-1

Staff Contact: Mr Frullo

## **Introduction**

A chance to demonstrate your creativity, develop a skill in using Adobe Photoshop and take your camera off the auto setting to see the world from a new perspective. You will be given a variety of different briefs, have opportunities to work independently and with others, explore artistic techniques and study the world of creative digital art.

## **Assessment**

Staff provide regular feedback using various methods including constructive advice during lessons and written targets and comments and assessment grades. These accompany the school's usual reporting structure. The **coursework** element of this course constitutes **60%** of the marks available in the final assessment and the **exam project**, the remaining **40%**.

Students will get to grips with using the DSLR cameras and learn how to use various settings through a series of set briefs before progressing towards their own independent project. They will experiment with shutter speed, lighting and aperture and also learn how to navigate Adobe Photoshop to enhance their work.

## **Will it suit me?**

If you enjoy being creative, having an independent approach to your work, learning new skills, exploring artists' work and learning new techniques, then this is the course for you. As well as exploring Adobe Photoshop, we look at other techniques and processes and you will be encouraged to create your own digital portfolio to showcase your work. You will be guided through all the stages but have the freedom to shape your own ideas along the way.

## **Progression**

The course will contribute to other GCSE courses and support further progression towards A level and alternative Level 3 study. The course complements the majority of subjects but might naturally link to further study in: computer design, graphics, photography, art, fashion, media and film.

# Spanish

Exam Board: AQA GCSE 9-1

Staff Contact: Mr. Sequeira

## Introduction

Being able to speak another language genuinely opens doors. A GCSE gives you the confidence to handle real-life situations — booking holidays, ordering food, chatting with locals, and even communicating in professional settings. It is not just about words and grammar, but the *use* of the language in everyday life. Along the way, you'll also develop powerful language-learning strategies that make picking up future languages easier. It's a skill that keeps growing long after your exams.

## Assessment

- Paper 1: Listening exam 40 marks (Foundation Tier), 50 marks (Higher Tier) 25% of GCSE
- Paper 2: Speaking Non-exam assessment 50 marks (for each Tier) 25% of GCSE
- Paper 3: Reading 50 marks (for each Tier) 25% of GCSE
- Paper 4: 50 marks (for each Tier) 25% of GCSE

## Course Outline

The GCSE course develops the language knowledge and skills you built in KS3. You will deepen your understanding of vocabulary and grammar so that you can express and justify your opinions, describe past and future events, and discuss themes such as identity, local area, holidays, school, work and global issues. Learning will involve a variety of activities, including listening and reading tasks, speaking practice such as role plays and photo cards, writing for different purposes, online interactive work, alongside structured textbook support.

## Will it suit me?

At GCSE, you'll continue with either French or Spanish, and if you speak another language at home, the school may be able to support you in taking a GCSE in that language too, provided that there is an exam board that runs an exam for that language.

A GCSE in languages is perfect for you if you're looking for something that's both exciting *and* challenging. You might enjoy taking a language if you:

- want to stand out in the future job market, where employers increasingly value people who can communicate in more than one language
- enjoy a mental challenge—languages are academic, and success comes from steady practice, concentration and a willingness to push yourself
- want to build lifelong skills such as memorisation strategies, clear communication, and active listening.

## Progression

A GCSE in Spanish at a Grade 6 or more can give you access to an A level languages course. Some universities are considering making a language GCSE an entry requirement, one of the Russell Group universities has already done so (UCL). In addition, having a foreign language in your curriculum can make you stand out from other candidates that are applying to the same course. With a GCSE in a language you could take up an A level course at a later date at higher education level to combine with other subjects.

# Textiles

Exam Board: AQA GCSE 9-1  
Staff Contact: Miss Everard

## Introduction

GCSE Art & Design (Textiles) teaches students about the development of Textiles-based art and contemporary fashion. The course leads to an Art GCSE and follows the same pattern of projects and assessment as students will be familiar with from Key Stage 3 Art and Textiles. Example outcomes might include fabric prints, sculptural clothing designs and textural/experimental jewellery.

The overall aim of the course is to encourage an adventurous and enquiring approach to art and design which is informed and developed through study of both historical and contemporary art practice. In turn this should enable students to embrace and explore a range of ideas in their work of both a personal and an objective/analytical nature and, in so doing, harness a meaningful appreciation of visual culture

## Assessment

Both of the units are marked by the school and moderated by the Examination Board. Assessment is based on four Assessment Objectives which are designed to measure pupils' progress in terms of their development of Knowledge and Understanding. All four are equally weighted and are as follows: 1. Research & Develop 2. Experiment & Refine 3. Recording Ideas and Observations 4. Final piece making connections with artists & showing understanding All projects will show these because the teacher will provide guidance throughout.

## Course Outline

The course is made up of two units of work:

**Component 1: Portfolio of Work (60%)** Pupils must produce and submit for assessment a selection of work representative of their course of study. The course can be adapted to suit your skills and preferences. This must contain work from at least two projects done in year 10 and 11. The work from each project will be marked as a whole

**Component 2: Externally set Task (40%)** Question papers containing a selection of starting points are set by the examination board and issued to candidates. Pupils are given a preliminary period of time to research and plan for the production of either a single response to their chosen starting point, or a series of responses. Pupils then produce their personal response during a 10 hour supervised examination

## Will it suit me?

Textiles work is often time consuming and may need to be completed outside of lesson time. This is an art course and students will need to draw and paint as an element of their NEA.

## Progression

The course will support you progressing to A Levels such as Art and Design Textiles, or a vocational course and eventually an Arts degree such as Fine Art, Fashion and Theatre Design, or university degrees in disciplines like Architecture, Advertising, Animation, Film and Media, Marketing, Illustration, Education or Museum Work.

# *Triple Science*

Exam Board: AQA GCSE 9-1

Qualifications: Biology, Chemistry and Physics

Staff Contact: Mrs Ivey

## **Introduction**

Triple science allows students to study a wider range of scientific principles. Triple science is well regarded by employers, colleges and universities. Students will develop STEM skills that are in high demand in the workplace such as problem solving, research and analytical skills. It is estimated that in the future, 75% of all jobs will require STEM skills. There is a shortage of people with STEM skills, with employers unable to fill 43% of positions. National data shows that students who take Triple Science, rather than Combined Science, are significantly more likely to study Science subjects at A Level and degree level, even when controlling for variables such as prior attainment. Specifically, students who take Triple Science rather than Combined Science are 3.9 times more likely to go on to take at least one science subject at A Level, while students who take Triple Science are 1.8 times more likely to go on to study a science subject at degree level. When controlling for prior attainment and student characteristics, students who achieved at least one grade 7 in Triple Science had higher lifetime earnings than those who achieved at least one grade 7 in Combined Science. Furthermore, the lifetime earnings return from achieving at least one grade 4 in Triple Science is substantially higher than achieving at least one grade 4 in Combined Science.

## **Assessment**

Each qualification is assessed by two exams at the end of Year 11. The exams will contain multiple choice, structured, short answer and extended writing questions. There is no coursework instead students will study 28 required practicals, which will be assessed in the final examinations, this will be worth 15% of each GCSE. Students will receive an extra 5 lessons of Science to allow them the time to study extra topics. The course will also require mathematical skills for science, which will be worth an average of 20% of the final grades. Students will be entered for either foundation or higher tier. Foundation tier covers grades 1 to 5 and higher tier covers grades 4 to 9. Students can take different tiers for Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Students will receive separate GCSE grades for each qualification.

## **Course Outline**

**Biology:** cell biology, organisation, infection, bioenergetics, homeostasis, inheritance, evolution, ecology. Plus the following extra topics: the eye, plant diseases, monoclonal antibodies, growing bacteria, the brain, the kidney, thermoregulation, types of reproduction, DNA structure, cloning, the history of genetics, Charles Darwin, speciation, decomposition, food production and the impact of climate change.

**Chemistry:** atomic structure, the periodic table, bonding and structure, quantitative chemistry, chemical change, energy change, rates of reaction, organic chemistry, chemical analysis, chemistry of the atmosphere, resources. Plus the following extra topics: nanoparticles, fuel cells and batteries, titrations, alloys, the Haber process, polymers and DNA structure.

**Physics:** forces, energy, waves, electricity, magnetism, and the particle model. Plus the following extra topics: infrared radiation, nuclear fission and fusion, moments, levers and gears, forces and safety, light and lenses, pressure, transformers, electromagnetic devices, seismic waves, solar systems, stars and the universe.

### **Will it suit me?**

You should select this course if you are curious about the world around you and would like the opportunity to study STEM qualifications post 16. Your science teacher will be able to give you an individual recommendation.

### **Progression**

Triple Science is the best preparation for any future science qualification including A-levels in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Students who study triple science tend to make a more successful transition to A-level science. Triple science is preferred / required by universities for some courses such as medicine, nursing, veterinary science and engineering

# *Engineering Design*

Exam Board: OCR L1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in Engineering Design  
Staff Contact: Mr Simmons or Mr Fey

## **Introduction**

Engineering is everywhere. Look out of the window and you will probably see something that has been engineered. It's fundamental to our modern economy and key to driving change and innovation. The Cambridge National in Engineering reflects this and will provide you with a solid foundation for understanding and applying this subject in your future working life. Engineering design is a process used to develop and enhance new products and systems as a response to market opportunities. This qualification will help you to develop a design specification and study the processes involved in designing engineered products. You will use skills such as drawing, computer modelling and model making to communicate design ideas. The qualification will also encourage you to consult with a client and, with practical focus, will engage them in producing, testing and evaluating a prototype in the form of a model.

## **Assessment**

This qualification is 120 Guided Learning Hours and is equivalent to a GCSE in both size and rigour.

## **Course Outline**

This award course being offered by St Katherine's is made up of the following 4 units:

R038 Written exam 40%

R039 Coursework task 30% - Communicating Designs

R040 Coursework task 30% - Design, Evaluation and Modelling

## **Will it suit me?**

This course is suitable for students that seek careers or have interest in the design, engineering fields or simply want to show their problem solving skills.

**Please note that this course is an engineering DESIGN course and there is only a small amount of practical in one of the units, practical only accounts for 10% of the marks and about 15 lessons over the two years.**

## **Progression**

The course will support you progressing into A Level's such as Product Design, Cambridge Technicals in Engineering, Apprenticeships or other Further Education courses. Progression with this qualification will be greatly enhanced when complemented by GCSE Mathematics, Physics or other Science options.

# *Health and Social Care*

Exam Board: OCR L1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in Health and Social Care

Staff Contact: Miss Wilsher

## **Introduction**

This qualification gives an introduction into the health and social care sector. You will study the role the sector plays in the health, wellbeing and care of individuals. As well as looking at the practitioner roles within these settings. It also introduces you to knowledge and skills needed to work in various care settings.

## **Course Outline**

- **RO32 Principles of care in health and social care settings.** This unit is assessed by an exam and is worth 40% of the final grade. In this unit you will learn about the key topics that are important when caring for and protecting people in health and social care including
  - The rights of service users in health and social care settings
  - Person-centred values of care
  - Effective communication in health and social care settings
  - Protecting service users and service providers in health and social care settings
- **RO33 Supporting individuals through life events.** This unit is assessed by a Set Coursework Assignment and is worth 30% of the final grade. In this unit you will learn about growth and development through the life stages. You will also learn how to understand the needs of individuals who have been affected by life events and how to recommend support to meet their needs.
- **RO35 Health promotion campaigns.** This unit is assessed by a Set Coursework Assignment. In this unit you will research health promotion campaigns and learn about their benefits to society. You will also plan and deliver your own health promotion campaign.

## **Will it suit me?**

Are you considering a career in health care, possibly nursing, midwifery or physiotherapy? Are you looking at working with the social care system?, or possibly looking to work with young children in a nursery setting? This course would be ideal for you to study, there are many different progression options from this course

## **Progression**

- Further study of Health and Social Care at Level 3
- A Levels in Psychology, Sociology & Biology
- Apprenticeships in Adult care work, Allied Health Profession Support, Health and Social Care, Healthcare science assistant, Maternity and Paediatric Support
-

# *Sport*

Exam Board: OCR Cambridge National Sport Studies

Staff Contact: Mr Cook

## **Introduction**

Sport has proved to be a popular and successful course for a number of years. The majority of the course is assessed via internally set and marked coursework assignments (60%). There is a balance between practical lessons and theory lessons. Please read the information below for more details.

## **Assessment**

40% exam - 1 unit assessed via 1 x 75 minute written examination sat at the end of Year 11  
60% coursework - 2 units assessed via coursework assignments set & marked by staff

## **Course Outline**

This course is made up of the following units:

- **R184 | Contemporary issues in sport** - participation, barriers, popularity, emerging sports, values in sport, Olympic & Paralympic movement, initiatives & campaigns, behaviour & etiquette, performance enhancing drugs, major sporting events, national governing bodies, technology in sport
- **R185 | Performance and leadership in sports activities** - skills and techniques in sporting activities, tactics & strategies in sporting activities, decision making, managing performance, improvement methods, planning and leading sports activities, reviewing leadership
- **R186 | Sport and the media** - sources of media including broadcast, print and online, advantages of media types and disadvantages of media types

## **Entry Requirements \***

- Positive reports from attitude, approach and engagement in core PE
- Playing sport outside of school or for the school on a regular basis
- Willingness to complete important assignments continually throughout the course

\* Requirements offer us a guide when making decisions about the suitability of a student for a course

## **Suitability**

- Do you play sport and have an interest in the sporting world?
- Are you interested in sport and the sports industry?
- Do you enjoy working as part of a team or leading others?
- Are you well organised and able to complete work independently?
- Do you enjoy learning about the practical and theoretical aspects of sport?

## **Progression**

- Further sports related courses at Level 3
- Sports based apprenticeship opportunities
- Jobs in the sport industry i.e. sports coach, PE teacher, personal trainer
- Ability to demonstrate transferable skills & wider employability skills

## Notes