



SAINT MARTIN'S

Catholic Academy

Year 9 Final GCSE Options Booklet



2026—2028

Welcome to our Options Booklet	5
The Year 9 Options Process	6
Interim Options Subjects	
Art and Design	8
Business Studies	9
Computer Science	10
Construction	11
Dance	12
Design Technology	13
Drama	14
Enhanced Learning-English, Maths & Science	15
Food Preparation and Nutrition	16
Geography	17
Health and Social Care	18
History	19
Music	20
Performing Arts (New for 2026)	21
Physical Education	22
Spanish	23
Options Choice Practice	25

INDEX

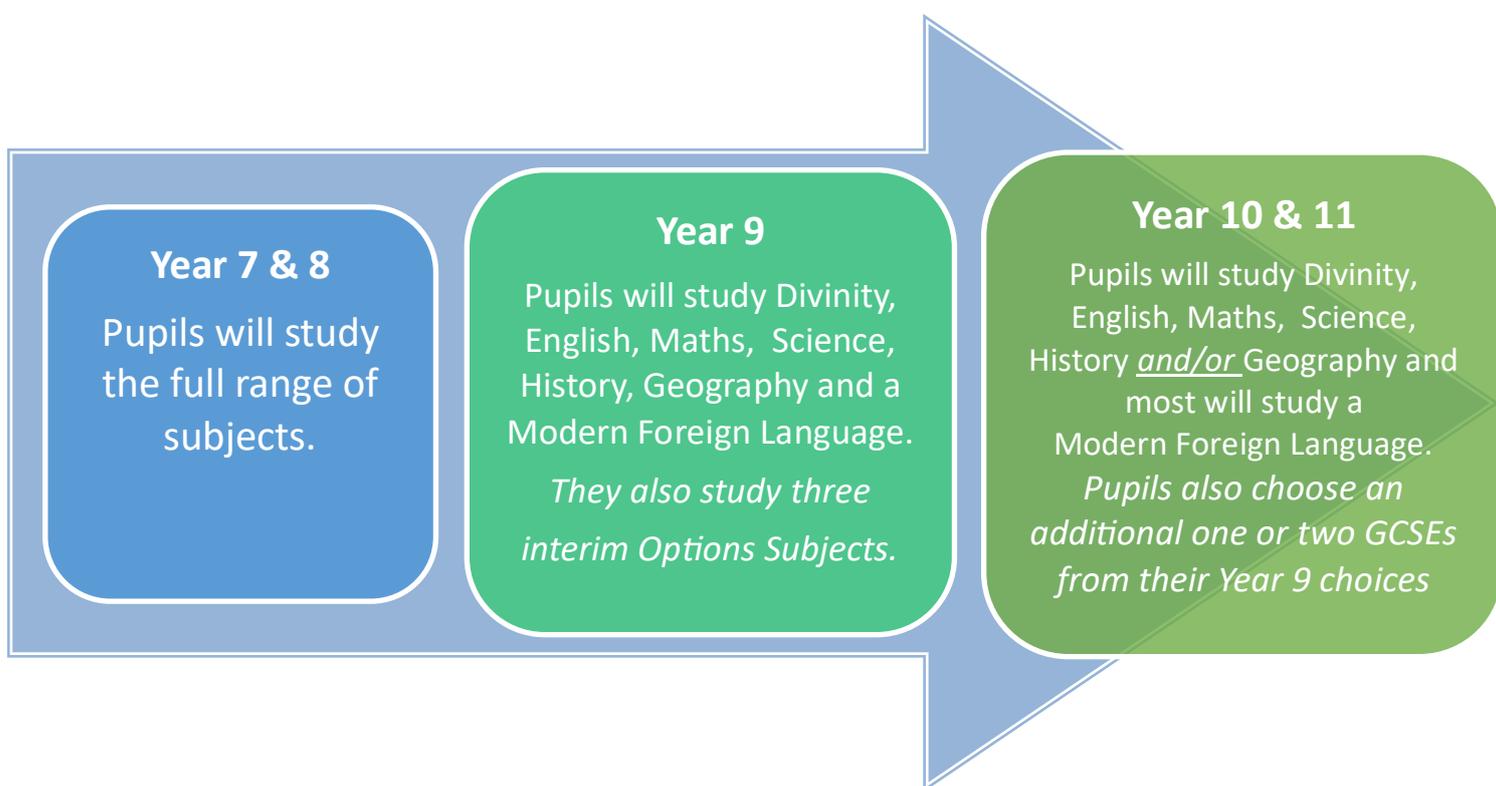
Welcome to our Year 9 Final Options Booklet

‘Learning the best that has been thought and said’

Our aim at Saint Martin’s is to enable pupils to ‘Learn the best that has been thought and said’, in other words, to leave us, having received an outstandingly rich curriculum where they explore the greatest ideas and discoveries known to humanity. Our ambition is that pupils will be really well read, have studied some of the best literature, be proficient mathematicians and scientists, have explored the deepest philosophical questions in life, be able to speak a foreign language, to have a deep understanding of history and the world we live in.

Over their five years at Saint Martin’s, pupils will delve deeper and begin to specialise in specific subjects. The Year 8 and Year 9 Options Process is part of that journey.

The diagram below outlines the range of subjects and expertise that pupils will develop at Saint Martin’s:



The Year 9 Options Process

Last year, pupils selected three interim options to study in year 9. This year, pupils will narrow that down further and make their final selection for subjects they will study at GCSE in Years 10 and 11. This year we are simplifying the process and removing specific Pathways.

We want pupils to learn a rich and diverse curriculum; a really well educated person will not only have expertise in English, Maths and Science, but will have studied theology and philosophy (In Divinity), History, Geography, and learn a Foreign Language.

All pupils will therefore study Divinity, English, Maths, Science, History and/or Geography and we would expect the most able pupils to choose a language.

Languages are a really high status subject so we encourage pupils to study Spanish, French or sit a GCSE in a foreign language that they may already speak at home, for example Polish or Italian.*

The choices will be as follows:

Option 1

History or Geography

Options 2 and 3

- Spanish
- Art and Design
- Business Studies
- Computer Science
- Construction
- Dance
- Design Technology
- Drama
- Food Preparation and Nutrition
- Geography
- Health and Social Care
- History
- Music
- Physical Education
- Enhanced Learning**

It is advised that you read, and study carefully, the information in this booklet, on all of the subjects available, to find out as much as possible about the options available which your child may choose.

** Enhanced learning is designed for pupils who may struggle to achieve a grade 4 or above in Maths, English and Science. Our SENCO will liaise with the families where this is the case.

* If this is the case, we can arrange an additional exam entry & support, although this would not be one of your child's Options Subjects.



GOOSE OPTIONS

This GCSE foundation course is designed to bring Art and Design to life and to help students develop their artistic skills, improve their knowledge and expand creativity. The possibilities for personal expression are endless and can lead to a range of design based careers such as Illustration, Graphic Design, Web Designer, Fashion, Furniture Designer and many more.

Head of Department

Mrs Simpson

Qualification

GCSE

Examination Board

OCR

Exam

Art & Design 'Fine Art'

Assessment

Controlled Assessment 60%

Practical Exam 40%

Benefits of studying Art & Design

Art & Design is both a form of communication and a means of expression for ideas and feelings. Students will build on the knowledge and skills mastered at KS3 to become proficient artists, able to draw and paint realistically and eventually design their own art work with imagination and self-expression. Students will improve their understanding of art history and well as their practical skills, powers of observation and analytical ability.

The full GCSE Course Outline

Unit 1: Art and Design Portfolio

For this unit students need to produce a portfolio of work showing their personal response to either a starting point, brief, scenario, or stimulus such as 'Portraits' which will be devised and provided by the Art Department. The portfolio is presented as continuous controlled assessment tasks carried out in year 10.

The course aims to encourage visual and aesthetic awareness through practical skills.

Students will be required to develop the following:

- show a personal response to a given theme
- record from direct observation, and draw with accuracy
- acquire and use the appropriate technical skills in order to communicate well in visual forms
- work independently to organise your time effectively
- select, research, analyse and communicate relevant information
- develop intuitive and imaginative abilities
- show that they are aware of cultural, historical and environmental influences in art

Unit 2: Art and Design OCR-set Task

For this unit, a number of starting points are provided by the exam board as a terminal task, completed in Year 11. From these, one must be selected, upon which to base their personal response. Students must produce a portfolio of preparatory work such as research, planning and developed ideas to support the creation of a final piece of artwork during the 10 hour supervised sessions.

Progression

The course is good preparation for progression to A Level in Art and Design and a range of design courses and careers, such as Graphic Design, Textiles and Photography.

In an increasingly dynamic and competitive world, knowledge of business activity is an important part of the survival kit for any modern student. This is an exciting yet demanding course that enables you to explore real business situations and understand the role of the entrepreneur and business in today's diverse society. You will gain an insight into the main areas of business and will analyse many different well-known organisations. You will also be encouraged to think like business men and women in order to participate in realistic problem solving and decision making.

Benefits of studying Business

- You will become critically aware of current affairs and the cultural diversity of business and society.
- You will acquire knowledge which will support important life decisions such as buying a house; taking out a loan; applying for a credit card or overdraft; and calculating how much tax you will pay.
- It will develop you as a critical and reflective thinker.
- You will develop skills of investigation, analysis and evaluation and the ability to make informed judgements.
- It will equip you with the knowledge required to run your own business.
- It will support the development of your literacy and numeracy skills.
- You will gain an insight into how businesses operate and the psychology of consumer behaviour which influences marketing activity.
- You will understand the impact that ethical and environmental issues have on business and society.
- You will learn how to effectively manage people and change; something that will support any future career whether in Business or not.

The full GCSE Course Outline

You will study 6 topics over the 3 years, all of which are assessed through 2 written exam papers. Each paper is 1 hour 30 minutes and worth 50% of the qualification.

Business 1: Business Activity, Marketing and People

Business 2: Operations, Finance and Influences on Business

Subject Leader

Mr Davidson

Qualification

GCSE

Examination Board

OCR

Exam

GCSE Business Studies J204

Assessment

Written Exam 100%



Progression

Many students who study Business at GCSE go on to study if further at A Level or equivalent, e.g. BTEC. However, Business is the just the first step on the route to a wide variety of further qualifications. The next stage for some students may be to progress onto an Economics A Level or equivalent. Beyond this, Business students may aspire to degrees and eventual careers in Law, Accountancy, Politics, Journalism, Teaching, Sport/Fashion Management, Sociology and, of course, Business or Economics. Although studying Business is not a guaranteed route into becoming a business owner and making a million, it does equip students with the knowledge required to run their own business and compete in such a dynamic and fast changing world.

Computing and Computer Science have changed all of our lives in ways that were unimaginable only ten years ago. Developments in Artificial Intelligence have led to cars that can almost drive themselves, “chat bots” that are capable of producing works of literature indistinguishable from a human author and helped scientists make huge gains in medicine and medical research.

Why Study Computer Science

Developments in technology, whilst creating great opportunity and success for some, have created new ethical and moral dilemmas for the next generation. Who is ultimately to blame when an automated vehicle crashes? Will there be a time when AI is dangerous or sentient? What if we create the technology to accurately reproduce a human brain? These questions and more will have to be considered and decided upon in coming decades.

Closer to the current day, more and more jobs are being created which require an understanding of

computing and associated technologies. As a country, the UK has moved to a “knowledge based economy” meaning fewer and fewer jobs rely on manual skills and more on the ability of a workforce to create and operate new computer based systems. You only need to look at a self service checkout in a supermarket to see this in action.

There is currently a huge shortage of computing literate workers in our country and the demand for employees with programming, development and computer aided design skills is only growing. AI is not going to replace all jobs, but in your working life it will remove the need for some lower paid positions and “entry level” tasks. New jobs will be created to compliment the use of AI and other computer systems and to develop the systems themselves.

Therefore, it has never been more important for students to be equipped with a general knowledge of computing, and the technical skills necessary to meet the future demands of the workplace.

Subject Leader

Mr Davidson

Qualification

GCSE

Examination Board

OCR

Exam

GCSE Computer Science J277

Assessment

2x written exams. No coursework.

Progression

An understanding of Computing and Computer Science is essential to so many potential career pathways that they are too numerous to list in full. However, some common career and future study paths for Computing students are: Games designer, Computer Science or other relevant degree, Cyber security researcher, Programmer / App designer, Web developer, Digital forensics / police investigation work, A range of technology and networking based apprenticeships. Computer Science GCSE also compliments other career and future studies, such as those wishing to develop an understanding of: Engineering, Product design, Financial services or investment banking, Renewable energy, TV, Film and Media and Medical research and development.

The full GCSE Course Outline

The Computer Science course offers an excellent introduction to many of the main current fields of study in Computing. You will learn about how a computer works, down to the circuit level and how simple logic based on yes or no decisions can be combined to create unimaginably powerful systems.

There are a broad range of topics to study including:

- Networks and how the internet works
- The history of computing and how computers are designed
- Legal, moral and ethical issues surrounding the use of computers
- Logic and number systems
- How data is stored, transmitted and converted from real world form into something a computer can process and understand
- Learning how to break problems down and structure solutions
- Computer programming

There are two exams that assess all topics in the GCSE, both 1 hour and 30 minutes each. There is no coursework element.

Benefits of studying Construction

Construction and the Built Environment is for learners who want to acquire sector-specific applied knowledge and skills through vocational contexts. This qualification enables learners to develop their knowledge and skills, such as using tools and materials safely with vocationally correct techniques and understanding elevation drawings and designing for clients.

The full BTEC Course Outline

Students will have the opportunity to develop subject specific knowledge and skills through realistic vocational contexts. Learners will have the opportunity to develop applied knowledge and practical skills in the following areas:

- construction technology
- construction in practice
- construction and design.

The course involves a degree of practical work associated with aspects of the construction industry and you will be required to work with timber, using a selection of different tools and processes.

Students will be taught to :

- Understand the work of the construction industry
- Understand tools , materials and equipment used in carpentry and joinery
- Develop practical skills using safe techniques to produce a timber-based product specified by the exam board

Assessments will be carried out through the use of an externally marked examination, assignments and by externally set projects. Some assignments will be

Progression

This programme is designed for you to gain a nationally recognised qualification and offer you a choice of career routes into the construction industry.

BTEC Construction shows you have many study skills integral for progression into a high-quality apprenticeship, A Levels or other Post 16 pathway including Level 3 BTEC or NVQ's, and into employment. Time management, teamwork and independent study are just a few of the skills you will gain on this popular, engaging and challenging course.

Subject Leader

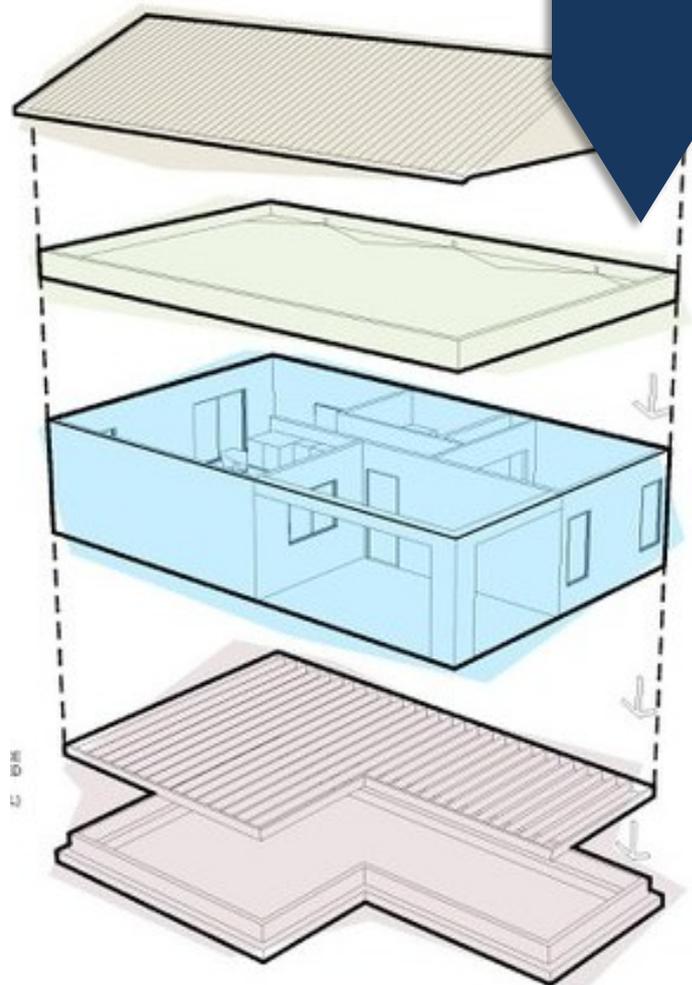
Mr T Del Busso

Qualification

BTEC

Examination Board

Pearsons Edexcel



DANCE

GCSE Dance offers performance, choreographic, leadership and analytical opportunities. Students who opt for Dance must enjoy the practical discovery and physical mastery of physical theatre and dance.

Head of Department
Mr S Issitt

Subject Leader
Mrs C Harris

Qualification
GCSE

Examination Board
AQA

Exam
GCSE Dance 8236

Assessment
Practical 60%
Theory 40%

Benefits of studying Dance

GCSE Dance will develop your ability to engage in different types of dance, and to develop your involvement in physical activity as part of a healthy, active lifestyle. You will be able to develop knowledge and understanding of a range of dance styles through the process of performing.

Progression

GCSE Dance helps to develop students creativity and confidence, it also allows them to work collaboratively with their peers. Many GCSE Dance students have gone on to continue their learning in Performing Arts, others have transferred these skills into other career paths such as education, law, events management and many more.

The full GCSE Course Outline

The GCSE Dance course is split into 3 units. Each unit will require you to focus on a different area of the specification.

Performance—30% of GCSE

Set phrases through solo performance (approximately one minute in duration)

Duet / Trio performance (three and a half minutes in duration)

Choreography—30% of GCSE

Solo choreography (two minutes in duration)

Group Choreography with 2 to 5 dancers (three minutes in duration)

Dance Appreciation—40% of GCSE,

Written Exam—Knowledge and understanding of choreographic processes and performing skills, analysing different dance works in hip-hop, ballet, contemporary and physical theatre.



In year 9 Design and Technology course will be combined with the Construction Course.

Benefits of studying Design & Technology

Design & Technology helps students develop the ability to design and make products with creativity and originality, using a range of materials and techniques. It develops students interdisciplinary skills and the capacity for imaginative and innovative thinking. In year 9 it will be combined with the Construction Foundation Course.

Course Outline

During the course students will study a wide range of materials including papers and boards, timber, metals, polymers and textile fibres and fabrics. They will also develop their understanding of systems, programmable components and mechanisms to support any potential design solutions for the assessed project in Unit 2

Assessment will be as follows:-

Unit 1: Design and Technology in the 21st Century

Written examination: 50% of qualification

A mix of short answer, structured and extended writing questions assessing candidates' knowledge and understanding of one area selected from:

- engineering design
- fashion and textiles
- product design

Unit 2: Design and make task

Non-exam assessment: approximately 30 - 40 hours 50% of qualification

A sustained design and make task, based on a contextual challenge set by the Examination Board, assessing candidates' ability to:

- identify, investigate, analyse and outline design possibilities
- design and make prototypes and evaluate their suitability for purpose

Progression

Design and Technology links to all other subjects of the curriculum and is a stepping-stone to a whole range of opportunities such as Product Design or more industry-based courses such as Construction or Engineering. Employers in any related industry value this GCSE qualification in Resistant Materials for its grounding of the design process in the technical and theoretical dimensions of the course. The ability to design creatively and produce quality products for specific needs is a much sought after skill in all areas of design and manufacture. Designers and manufacturers influence everything we use on a daily basis and, with technology, this continuously evolves.

Subject Leader

Mr T Del Busso

Qualification

GCSE

Examination Board

WJEC

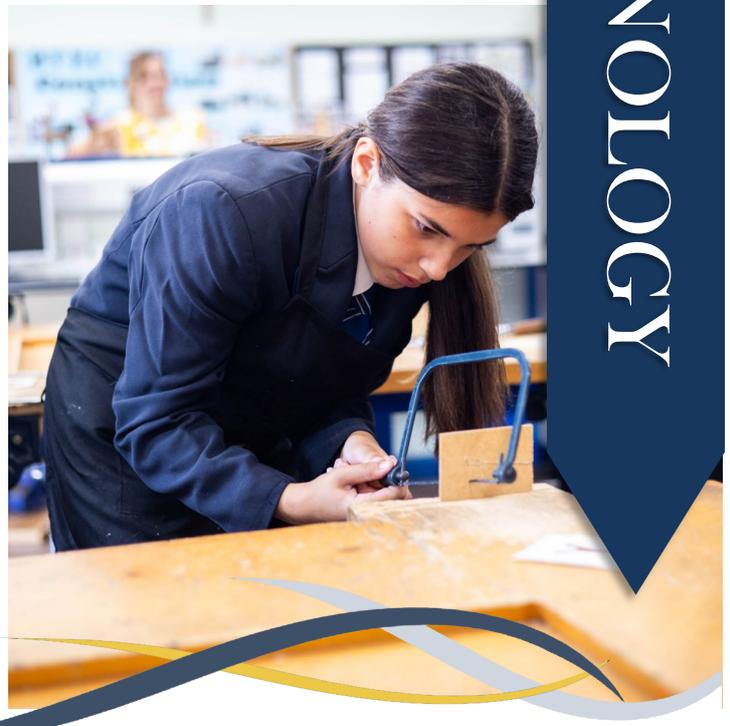
Exam

Design and Technology

Assessment

Practical 50%

Theory 50%



Why Study Drama

- Saint Martin's redesigned drama curriculum for KS3 takes our students from the origins of theatre in ancient Greece and Rome to the morality plays of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the golden age of Elizabethan theatre. Our new chronological approach from Year 7 ensures that students have a thorough grounding in drama before their GCSE study begins in Year 9. From the first lesson of the GCSE course, students will learn about the development of theatre over time, its rich history, and the influence of the practitioners of the past on modern theatre and practice. They will learn about Shakespeare's world and experiment with dramatic conventions of the Jacobean period before moving on to study, and explore through practical approaches, the theatre of the 19th century, the Theatre of Ideas, and the advent of modern theatre that often railed against both the conventions of the past and the political and social oppression at the time of writing.
- Drama is all too often side-lined, pigeonholed as a purely practical subject that lacks academic rigour, yet alongside the many opportunities for creativity and experimentation with theatrical styles, forms and techniques through the ages, sits detailed and robust exploration of performance texts (such as *The Lord of the Flies* and *An Inspector Calls*) that perfectly complement the study of English and English Literature GCSE's. With over 70% of drama GCSE marks awarded to written work, it is an excellent choice to accompany English as it not only aids students' understanding of texts but develops and hones their written and vocal expression.

Head of Department

Mrs E Smart

Subject Leader

Mr M King

Qualification

GCSE

Examination Board

Edexcel

Exam

GCSE Drama 2DR01

Assessment

Component 1: 40%

Devising

Component 2: 20%

Performance from text

Component 3: 40%

Theatre makers in Practice

Progression

Communication is at the heart of drama, and our students learn to communicate with confidence via scripted and devised performances, using the vocal and physical performance skills they have learnt to move the hearts and influence the minds of their audience. Shakespeare famously wrote that 'All the world's a stage'. Our aim is for our students to develop the knowledge and confidence that will allow them to play any and many roles, not just in performance spaces but in life. Whilst drama GCSE is an excellent springboard into A Level Drama and performing arts courses, it is also the perfect grounding for the extensive range of professions where communication, presenting and working collaboratively and creatively are important.

The full GCSE Course Outline

Component 1, Devising: Having studied the conventions, forms, styles of theatre through time and developed their use of performance skills, students will be armed with the knowledge and expertise to develop their own devised performance. The process and evolution of the piece will be documented in individual portfolios that will be marked by teachers and moderated by examiners.

Component 2, Performance from a Text: Students will perform two key extracts from *The Lord of the Flies* (a theatrical adaptation of Golding's novel, and one to which he gave his seal of approval). Performances will be assessed by an external examiner.

Component 3, Theatre Makers in Practice: For this component, students first study *An Inspector Calls* through the lens of a performer, designer, and director before moving on to watch and evaluate a live theatre performance. Both elements are assessed through a final written exam in Year 11.

ENHANCED LEARNING

Curriculum/Subject Leader

Mrs E Smart, Mr N Cassidy & Mr J Molloy

Qualification

To support GCSE English, Mathematics and Science

Examination Board

See English, Mathematics and Science

Exam

See English, Mathematics and Science

Assessment

Assessed in English Language, Mathematics and Science

Support will be tailored to the needs of the individual student

English Language:

To support GCSE English Language (AQA specification).

In these lessons, students will be given specialist teaching and support for their GCSE English qualifications. They will also have additional tuition to support their understanding of the set texts for the Literature component of the exam.

Mathematics:

The course will target support to help students achieve a GCSE in Mathematics (AQA 8300). The lessons are based on topics from the syllabus, and will allow students the opportunity to:

- Ask additional questions or gain clarification on areas in which they are having difficulty.
- Gain additional practice in the module they are studying at the time.
- Improve their Mathematics in all areas by constant reinforcement of basics/essential knowledge.
- Have access to additional exam practice.

Science:

Enhanced Learning in Science will target support to help students achieve a GCSE in Science (AQA).

This will involve:

- Additional practise for Maths skills used in Science.
- Improve Scientific knowledge in all areas by constant reinforcement of basics/essential knowledge.

Pathway 3 Compulsory Subject

Benefits of studying EL

Any students that do not achieve an English or maths grade 4 by the end of Year 11 will be expected to re-take the GCSE exam until they do (or are over 18 years of age). Hence it is of great importance that those considered at risk of not reaching this vital benchmark obtain additional support in order for them to secure that grade at the earliest possible opportunity (Year 11). As such, these lessons will be mandatory for any student who may struggle to achieve a grade 4.

This course is targeting

- Those who may benefit from additional study time spent on English, Mathematics & Science
- Those who may struggle with the workload of three option choices
- Those who are on course to attain a Grade 4 or below in English, Mathematics and / or Science at GCSE (students who are on course to attain a Grade 4 may benefit from these lessons as they should help ensure that they do actually reach this key, extended benchmark)



The Food Preparation and Nutrition GCSE is an exciting, interesting and creative course which focuses on nutrition, health, food science alongside development of practical cooking skills. The course will ensure students develop a deep understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials. At the heart of the qualification is a focus on developing high levels of knowledge alongside practical cookery skills and a strong understanding of both nutrition and the science behind food, leading into many potential career fields.

Benefits of studying Food

Food Preparation and Nutrition will enable students to develop many desirable skills that both employers and universities seek. Primarily students develop their practical cookery skills through making a wide variety of recipes and practicing key culinary techniques alongside developing these skills students will develop their communication, teamwork, problem solving and analytical skills. The course will help students develop an understanding of the future of food, the role it plays within society and how as consumers we have the power to make moral and ethical decisions that can make a difference. Students will need to show that they are able to manage their time, be highly efficient, work continuously on coursework and shows commitment to a rewarding subject.

Unit 2: Two Non – exam assessments

- **NEA 1** – Food Investigation Assignment 15%

Students will conduct experiments on a given brief and write a short report on their understanding of the scientific principles that underpin the preparation and cooking of food.

This is completed between September to November of Year 11 as the brief of this assignment won't be released before then.

- **NEA 2** – Food Preparation assessment 35%

Students will plan, prepare, cook and present a three course menu within 3 hours. A detailed 20 page written portfolio including research, planning, nutritional analysis, costing and evaluations are produced as part of this work. This second piece is completed from November the 1st in Year 11, when the brief is released by the exam board and will take 20 hours of class time to complete. This will include the 3 hour final assessed practical and subsequent evaluation. Students will be encouraged to commit to staying for Intervention support sessions afterschool on a regular basis in Year 11 in order to ensure timely completion of this work to a high standard. Parental support is essential in ensuring attendance at these weekly sessions.

Subject Leader

Mrs S Robinson

Qualification

GCSE

Examination Board

AQA

Exam

Food Preparation and Nutrition 4545

Assessment

Exam 50%

Assessment 50%

The full GCSE Course Outline

You will be assessed in **two units**:

Unit 1: Written examination: worth 50% of the qualification. This consists of a **1 hour 45 minute** written exam taken in the summer term of Year 11 on the Principles of Food Preparation and Nutrition.

This is broken down into two parts:

- Section A: 20 marks - Multiple choice questions on course content
- Section B: 80 marks - 5 questions varying between long and short answer questions.

Progression

Food Preparation and Nutrition can be used as a stepping stone to a number of rewarding careers & also those directly linked with the food industry. It can also help to support applications to a wide range of further education courses such as Food Science, Product Development, Food and Nutrition, Sports Science, Midwifery and Nursing, Medicine, Dietetics, Catering and Hospitality, Food Journalism and PR, Food Styling and Photography, Food Retail, Environmental Health and The Food Standards Agency. It is a good contrast to have alongside other 100% exam based subjects. Similarly, it can be taken as a GCSE and entirely different post 16 routes can be taken.

This GCSE course will inspire students to become global citizens, giving them an opportunity to explore their place in the world, their values and their responsibilities to other people.

Benefits of study

With engaging and topical content that is a stimulating blend of tradition and contemporary, Geography students have the opportunity to develop:

- Communication skills
- Graphical and cartographical skills
- Technological skills including for example, ICT and Geography Information System (GIS)
- Interpersonal skills through debate and discussion
- Related literacy and numeracy skills
- Entrepreneurial skills and awareness of career possibilities

Head of Department
Mr M Van Bergen

Qualification
GCSE

Examination Board
AQA

Exam
AQA A Linear 8035

Assessment
3 Examinations as outlined

Course Outline

Method of Assessment:

There are three examinations, all at the end of Year 11, There are no Controlled Assessments or Coursework in this subject.

Paper 1:

Physical Geography— 35% GCSE, 90 minute exam, 88 marks (inc. 3 SPAG)

Topics: Natural Hazards (tectonics, tropical storms, extreme weather in the UK, climate change), Physical Landscapes in the UK (coasts, rivers), Ecosystems (tropical rainforests, hot deserts).

Paper 2:

Human Geography— 35% GCSE, 90 minute exam, 88 marks (inc. 3 SPAG)

Topics: Urban Issues and Challenges (growth of urbanisation, urban planning, sustainable living), The Changing Economic World (the development gap, cultural and social change, employment patterns), Resource Management (distribution and management of food, water and energy, the demand and management of resources).

Paper 3:

Geographical Issues and Fieldwork — 30% GCSE, 90 minute exam, 76 marks (inc. 6 SPAG)

Topics: Fieldwork based on the above topics and an exam to test the knowledge of how to carry out fieldwork and analyse data.

Progression

Geography is a useful, broad qualification showing a range of skills and values which employers and universities value; it incorporates and combines elements of both Arts and Sciences with wide-ranging skills providing varied and flexible career opportunities. Common destinations include Law, Banking and Finance, Accountancy, Business, Journalism, Teaching, Tourism, Conservation and Academic Research.

This course will be suitable if you have an interest in health and social care, and how it impacts on people.

Subject Leader

Mrs S Moore

Qualification

Technical Award

Examination Board

OCR

Exam

Level 1/2 Cambridge
National Certificate in
Health and Social Care

Assessment

Combination of Written
Examination and Internal
Assessment

Benefits of studying Health & Social Care

This course actively encourages students to understand various aspects of the health and social care sectors.

It examines issues which affect the nature and quality of human life including an appreciation of equality, diversity and rights.

In studying this course for 3 years, students will have explored the following:

- Investigating and evaluating a range of health care services and organisations.
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Researching the different work and contributions of various professionals in the health and education sectors.
- Developing communication and interpersonal skills, and self-confidence.
- Becoming more self-reliant and better organised as the course progresses.
- Developing skills to be increasingly more mature and independent at work.

The Full Exam Course Outline

Year 9

Unit R033 Supporting individuals through life events.

Unit R032 Principles of care in the health and Social Care setting

Year 10 and Year 11

Unit R032 Principles of care in the health and Social Care setting.

and

Unit R034 Creative and Therapeutic activities

OR

Unit R035 Health promotion campaigns.

Progression

This course of study equips students to enter the world of work or to progress into further education to 'A' Level and degree standard. Gaining this qualification demonstrates a range of transferable skills valued by various employers. Especially in a career in a health care or an educational setting.



Studying history helps us understand and grapple with complex questions and dilemmas by examining how the past has shaped (and continues to shape) global, national, and local relationships between societies and people.

Benefits of study

History is highly regarded by educational establishments and employers alike. It develops the transferable skills they want! Such as communication and writing skills, argument construction, research & problem solving, investigation techniques as well as analysis and interpretation. It teaches you how and why the world came to be whilst dealing with the big issues e.g. racism, power, war, politics, discrimination and terrorism.

Students studying History will gain:

- The skills to explore and analyse the most exciting events that have ever happened to Humankind.
- The ability to examine and evaluate evidence whilst assessing continuity and change overtime.

Learn to:

- Evaluate how individuals have been able to topple entire regimes.
- Question and interrogate why events have been interpreted in certain ways.
- Polish and improve the ability to present information in precise, balanced and persuasive ways.

Course Outline

The History GCSE will now cover topics:

- from three eras: Medieval (500-1500), Early Modern (1450-1750) and Modern (1800-present day).
- on three timescales: short (depth study), medium (period study) and long (thematic study).
- in three geographical contexts: a locality (the historic environment), British and European.

Therefore there will be 5 key units of work over the 3 years:

- 1 x Thematic study: Power, Monarchy & Democracy C. 1000-2014
- 1 x British depth study: The English Reformation C.1520-1550
- 1 x Non-British depth study— Germany 1925-1955: The People and the State
- 1 x Period study: International relations C. 1918-1975
- 1x Local Study Kenilworth Castle c1100-1750

Progression

The strengths of History as a qualification lie in the possibilities and opportunities it opens up. Employees and educational establishments will appreciate the variety of transferable skills provided through study of the subject; chiefly the ability to understand and analyse issues and events to a high level of competence. Success in the subject provides students with the ability to express their views and opinions (both oral and written), to put forward well-researched ideas and arguments in a concise manner, to investigate and assess a variety of materials, and to organise such material in a logical and coherent way. The list of careers that studying History gives you is endless.

Head of Department
Mr R Law

Qualification
GCSE

Examination Board
OCR

Exam
Modern World History A

Assessment
3 Examinations as outlined

Music qualifications are highly regarded by Colleges of Further Education and employers alike, as musicians are trained to work methodically and to be self-disciplined.

Head of Department

Miss L Clarke

Qualification

GCSE

Examination Board

OCR

Exam

Music J536

Assessment

Integrated Portfolio (30%)

Practical component (30%)

Listening and Appraising (40%)

Benefits of studying Music

OCR's Music GCSE provides a contemporary and creative education in Music with an integrated approach to the three main elements – performing, composing and listening. Students are encouraged to be creative and to broaden their musical horizons and understanding, with a variety of Areas of Study. In GCSE music students explore performance and composition with a focus on their own instrument and music choices with the opportunity to explore new instrumental skills. Through the various genres, styles and eras contained in each Areas of Study the course explores musical history, musical styles, performance, composition skills, computer skills and working together collaboratively.

OCR's Music GCSE is designed to cater for, a wide range of interests, instruments, personalities and directions. Students will have the opportunity to explore instruments and Areas of Study depending on their personal preference and ability.

The full GCSE Course Outline

During the course, students will study a variety of musical activities which will give them a deeper understanding of the mechanics of music and the many ranging genres surrounding it. Time will also be given for students to focus on their own instrument and to develop their solo and ensemble performance skills. For the composition section of the syllabus students can choose to work on a variety of programmes such as Logic Pro or Dorico or compose directly on their instrument.

Area of Study 1 – My Instrument

Area of Study 2 – The Concerto Through Time

Area of Study 3 – Rhythms of the World

Area of Study 4 – Film Music

Area of Study 5 – Conventions of Pop

Entry Requirements

An ability to play an instrument or song is essential. Individual music lessons are advantageous but not mandatory. The OCR GCSE music encourages self-taught students and therefore there is no requirement to read traditional music notation.

Progression

Music qualifications are highly regarded by Colleges of Further Education and employers alike, as musicians are trained to work methodically and to be self-disciplined. Students may wish to use GCSE Music as a basis for further study; such as AS/A2 Music or a BTEC course based on performing arts. Progression to further study from GCSE will depend upon the number and nature of the grades achieved. Broadly, learners who are awarded mainly grades 3–1 at GCSE could either strengthen their base through further study of qualifications at Level 1 within the National Qualifications Framework or could proceed to Level 2. Learners who are awarded mainly grades 9–4 at GCSE would be well prepared for study at Level 3 within the National Qualifications Framework.

The BTEC Tech Award in Performing Arts is a practical, vocational qualification designed for students at Key Stage 4 who enjoy performing or creating and working collaboratively. It allows learners to develop real-world performing arts skills while gaining a qualification recognised alongside GCSEs.

Head of Department

Miss L Clarke

Qualification

BTEC

Assessment

60% Coursework (Components 1 & 2)

40% External assessment (Component 3)

There is no written exam.

Assessment focuses on practical work, rehearsal processes, performance/design outcomes and reflection.

Course Outline

The qualification is studied over two years and consists of three components:

Component 1: Exploring the Performing Arts

Students explore professional performing arts work by analysing:

Different styles and genres, Roles and responsibilities in performance and production, How performances communicate meaning to an audience, This component builds understanding of how professional performances are created.

Component 2: Developing Skills and Techniques

Students develop and refine practical performance or design skills through:

Rehearsals and workshops, Reproducing existing repertoire, Performing or presenting design work, Reviewing and improving their own skills, Students keep a logbook/portfolio to track their development.

Component 3: Responding to a Brief

Students work in groups to:

Respond to a realistic performance brief, Create a workshop performance, Evaluate their creative process and final outcome, This is the only externally assessed component and takes place at the end of the course.

Entry Requirements

No prior performing arts qualifications required, an interest in performance or design, willingness to work practically and collaboratively.

New for 2026

Benefits of study

Throughout the BTEC Tech Award in Performing Arts, students develop a wide range of valuable skills through practical, creative learning. These include performance or design skills, creativity and imagination, confidence and presentation skills, effective communication, teamwork and collaboration, time management and organisation, and the ability to respond positively to feedback.

Students also develop resilience, self-discipline and reflective skills by reviewing their own work and setting targets for improvement. These transferable skills are highly valued in further education, training and employment, and support success both within the performing arts and beyond.

This course is ideal for students who:

- Learn best through practical, hands-on work
- Enjoy performance, rehearsal and creative projects
- Prefer coursework and practical assessment rather than written exams

Progression

Successful students can progress to:

- Level 3 Performing Arts or Production Arts courses
- BTEC Nationals
- A Levels
- Apprenticeships or further creative training
- The course also supports transferable skills useful in any career pathway.

The GCSE Physical Education course will give students a good understanding of the principles behind physical activity. Students will cover a range of theoretical topics gaining a greater understanding of how to live and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle.

Head of Department

Mr S Issitt

Qualification

GCSE

Examination Board

Edexcel

Exam

GCSE Physical Education 1PE0

Assessment

2 Written Exams (60%)
Controlled Practical Assessment (30%)
Written Coursework (10%)

Progression

As well as being the ideal preparation for A Level Physical Education course, GCSE PE allows possible progression to related vocational qualifications, such as BTEC Level 3 Sport and Exercise Science. The course develops key and transferable skills that employers are looking for and can lead to a wide variety of employment opportunities. These can include further training in such areas as sports science, psychology, nutrition and coaching.

The full GCSE Course Outline

The course is split into 4 components;

Component 1: 1hour 30mins EXAM worth 36% of overall GCSE grade. Topics include anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training and use of data.

Component 2: 1hour 15mins EXAM worth 24% of overall GCSE grade. Topics include health, fitness and wellbeing, sports psychology, socio-cultural influences and use of data.

Component 3: Practical Performance, moderated on 3 sports, each sport equates to 10% of overall GCSE grade.

One individual, one team and one from either individual/team.

Component 4: Coursework worth 10% of overall GCSE grade. The purpose of this component is to assess students' ability in analysing and evaluating performance through a Personal Exercise Programme.



Are you an ideal candidate for GCSE PE?

The majority of GCSE PE is theory based learning. Students must and have a desire to learn more about the human body and brain in sport and exercise, students will find GCSE Physical Education exciting, informative and stimulating. In order to be successful on this course students will need to:

- Be competent in English, Maths and Science, particularly in Biology.
- Have a good understanding of how the mind & body responds to exercise.
- Compete outside of school in at least one team or individual sport.
- Understand that you will be assessed on practical ability but assessment is heavily weighted towards your academic ability to answer extended writing, short answer and multiple-choice questions.

Spanish is a world language with over 500 million speakers worldwide. Students who opt for GCSE Spanish will gain the skills and knowledge to be able to understand and communicate in the target language, as well as learning about the culture of Spanish-speaking countries in the wider world.

Head of Department

Mrs V Virgo

Qualification

GCSE

Examination Board

Edexcel

Exam

Edexcel 2Sp01

Assessment

Examinations in Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking each worth 25% of the total mark.

Benefits of studying Spanish

Learning Spanish is about far more than memorising vocabulary and grammar; it develops valuable skills that support success across all subjects. Studying a language builds resilience, as students learn to persevere, practise regularly and grow in confidence when tackling challenges. It also strengthens logical thinking and problem-solving, encouraging pupils to spot patterns, make connections and think carefully about how language works. Alongside these transferable skills, Spanish gives students the ability to communicate with millions of people worldwide, opening doors to new cultures, opportunities and future careers.

Progression

GCSE Spanish offers a suitable progression onto A Level Spanish, and can facilitate the study of other languages in the future, especially at university and beyond. Having any language at GCSE can greatly enhance employability and salary prospects in the future. For students who are looking to go to university in the future, the study of a language is strongly encouraged. With the UK rejoining the Erasmus scheme in 2027, students who have at least a GCSE in a language, are likely to be well placed to take advantage of the scheme and the opportunities it provides, for students in all subject areas, to study and train abroad.

Course Outline

Students will develop their language skills in the 4 target areas: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

- Topics covered will include:
- My Personal World
- Lifestyle and Wellbeing
- My Neighbourhood
- Media and Technology
- Studying and my Future
- Travel and Tourism

Examinations in Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing are taken at the end of Year 11.



Notes

Student Y9 GCSE Options Choice Practice Form

Name:	
Form Group:	

You will study *Divinity, English Literature, English Language, Maths, Science*, as well as either *History* or *Geography*
 And then you will choose *Two* additional subjects from those you are already studying.

Humanities Subject	Choose 1	Humanities CHOICE
History		
Geography		

OPTION SUBJECT	Choose 2	Option CHOICES
Art and Design		
Business Studies		
Computer Science		
Construction		
Dance		
Design Technology		
Drama		
Enhanced Learning *		
Food Preparation and Nutrition		
Geography		
Health and Social Care		
History		
Music		
Performing Arts		
Physical Education		
Spanish		

Make sure you are choosing subjects from the list that you have already studied in Year 9.

* Enhanced learning is designed for pupils who may struggle to achieve a grade 4 or above in Maths, English and Science. Our SENCO will liaise with the families where this is the case, you will be told if Enhanced Learning should be listed as one of your Option Choices.

Options will be completed online via the school website: www.saint-martins.net
 You will receive a personalised letter with your log in details.