



St John's School
LEATHERHEAD

ST JOHN'S SCHOOL LEATHERHEAD (I)GCSE OPTIONS 2024-2026

stjohnsleatherhead.co.uk

(I)GCSE COURSES

FAQS

CORE SUBJECTS

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS



(I)GCSE COURSES

During the two years of Fifth Form, St John's pupils study their chosen (I) GCSE courses. The Fourth Form maintains the broad and balanced Lower School curriculum and begins to introduce knowledge and skills required for success in (I)GCSEs; the options process, which takes place over the winter months of the Fourth Form, is the decision-making process which begins the phase of more specialised British education. This starts with the (I)GCSEs, is then developed at A level and culminates in pupils' higher education choices for life beyond school.

The St John's qualifications are a combination of GCSEs (regulated by Ofqual in the UK) and IGCSEs (the international equivalent). The choice of examination type, examination board and specification is made at department level to ensure the course chosen is the most appropriate available for our pupils and that it provides the best preparation possible for progression to the School's choices of A level courses.

At St John's, all pupils study a selection of compulsory subjects, which form a nationally recognisable core. These are English language, English literature, mathematics and the three, traditional sciences (biology, chemistry and physics). The first choice for pupils is to decide whether they wish to study the three sciences as three, separate (I)GCSEs or to complete the double award. The latter requires all three sciences to be studied but has less content; this course leads to a qualification worth two (I)GCSEs and so enables pupils to have an additional subject from the free selection.

Pupils then select three (if electing for separate sciences) or four (if opting for double award) other subjects from the full list below.

At St John's, the options beyond the core subjects remain a free choice. However, breadth and balance is the aim and the combination of a

modern foreign language, a humanity and a creative subject would achieve this. The School builds the timetable around these choices annually and, whilst not every subject combination may be possible, the School endeavours to enable all choices made before the deadline.

Some pupils may also take additional mathematics if they are in the appropriate sets and as a result of discussion with the Mathematics Department; this would add another qualification to their selection. An alternative, additional option is GCSE Greek which is available as a co-curricular option following discussion with the Classics Department.

Furthermore, some young people who speak and may be formally taught another language outside of school can be entered for and sit these examinations at St John's in a year of their choice. This can be arranged by the Examinations Office in conjunction with information from a pupil's language school or tutor which/who can advise which season of entry will be the most appropriate for their ability. This would provide an additional qualification for some pupils beyond those taught in school.

In order to make appropriate and enjoyable choices, there are a range of resources and contacts available to the Fourth Form and their parents/ carers:

- Academic reports and parents' evening
- Subject teachers and heads of departments
- Head of Careers, Ms Teunissen
- Pastoral staff (tutors and senior house staff)
- Assistant Head (Upper School), Mr Bass
- Deputy Head (Academic), Ms Hanley

A summary of the subject options are listed overleaf.

(I)GCSE COURSES

Core subjects (studied by all pupils):

- English language
- English literature
- Mathematics
- Science (biology, chemistry and physics) either as a double award (two (I)GCSEs) or three separate (I)GCSEs

Optional subjects (of which three or four are chosen depending on the selected science option):

- Art and design
- Classical civilisation
- Classical Greek
- Computer science
- Design and engineering
- Drama
- French
- German
- Geography
- History
- Latin
- Music
- Spanish
- Sports science
- Theology, philosophy & religion

N.B. Occasionally, if in the best interests of the curriculum and our pupils, subjects may change the examination board. This does not change the overall qualification but parents and pupils will be notified if this results in any topic changes.

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF CAREERS: MS TEUNISSEN

When selecting their (I)GCSE options, pupils are best advised to choose what they most enjoy or think they may come to enjoy, the subjects which play to their strengths and the options which demonstrate a breadth of skills.

It is also vital to consider possible requirements for entry to higher education or a future career. For example, it would be advisable for those intending to pursue a career in a science-related field, to select separate sciences. Whereas those interested in pursuing humanities would benefit from studying a combination such as history, geography and/or a language.

Please bear in mind, however, that most pupils change their ideas about their career plan several times between the Fourth Form and the Upper Sixth. Therefore, it is important to avoid closing doors at this stage and to be aware that virtually all the specific requirements for courses in Higher Education and for careers will be met by good (I)GCSE passes in our compulsory core subjects, followed by a suitable choice of courses during the A level options process in the Upper Fifth.

The choice of option subjects at (I)GCSE is not usually critical but the best array of grades across a breadth of subjects is what universities will take into account when making offers. Please also be aware that it is not usually practical to take up certain subjects in the Sixth Form or at university which have been dropped at the (I)GCSE stage, so your child should bear this in mind when selecting their options.

If any pupil would like careers advice, they should contact the Head of Careers via email lteunissen@stjohns.surrey.sch.uk or via Microsoft Teams. One-to-one appointments can be made. Parents are also welcome to contact the Head of Careers to arrange a meeting about their child's GCSE options if they wish to do so.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How and when do I decide which subjects to study?

It is wise for pupils to select subjects that they enjoy as they are more likely to want to dedicate time to these and therefore will probably be more successful in them. Achieving the best grade profile at the end of the Upper Fifth will, therefore, be very important.

Pupils should also consider strengths and weaknesses when making final choices. Studying at (I)GCSE level can be challenging and playing to strengths will help to ensure success across a range of subjects.

The deadline for subject choices is Friday 8 March 2024 via an online form.

Are some subjects more valued than others?

All subjects are highly valued and a balanced profile which demonstrates creative, linguistic, scientific and mathematical skills will impress. It is unlikely that (I)GCSE subject choices will preclude any pupil from any future courses but advice should be sought from key staff.

Do I have to do some subjects if I have a particular career in mind?

Through its core subjects, St John's ensures that, to a certain extent, pupils keep their options open and do not make choices which preclude any pupil from further study in any specific areas. This said, if architecture is being considered, it is advisable to study at least one of fine art and design and engineering. Design and engineering is also useful for engineers (but is rarely compulsory). Advice should be sought from the Head of Careers if in doubt.

Should I study a humanity?

We do not insist that pupils study a humanity subject (history, geography, religious studies) as this allows very creative pupils who intend to follow careers in the creative arts to specialise early on. However, a humanity is among most pupils' final choices, not only because the subjects themselves

are popular, but also because of the skills they develop, which are favoured by universities and employers.

Should I choose double or separate sciences?

The system has been devised to afford flexibility to pupils in their (I)GCSE choices. Double science gives pupils more breadth in terms of subject choices. Separate sciences involve more content being covered and so the subjects are studied in greater depth. Both options allow for pupils to study sciences at A level and both options are held in the same regard academically.



CORE SUBJECTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE >

ENGLISH LITERATURE >

MATHEMATICS >

BIOLOGY >

CHEMISTRY >

PHYSICS >



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ENGLISH LANGUAGE (IGCSE)

Examination Board: Edexcel

What will I study?

In Fourth Form, pupils will begin their work towards the English language IGCSE in the Summer Term, with a piece of creative writing contributing to their final coursework folder. Leading up to this, pupils will be taught the various skills necessary to write successfully and will also be encouraged to formulate their own short story idea. Rather than being given a specific prompt, pupils will be encouraged to write on something that matters to them, whether this be personal, political, topical, or otherwise.

In Lower Fifth, pupils will study a variety of short texts, both non-fiction and fiction, exploring such diverse subject matter as donkey races in Karachi, the Bosnian War and an excerpt from a classic gothic horror novel. With each text studied, pupils will be encouraged to consider how the writer shapes meaning, often exploring aspects such as the form and structure of the piece, as well as more subtle aspects such as bias. Pupils will also develop their skills in transactional writings tasks, particularly in letter writing and speech writing, putting into practice some of the skills that they have learnt in the analysis of texts.

In Upper Fifth, pupils will continue to study an array of short texts, as well as honing their skills for the particular demands of the English language examination.

How will I be assessed?

Two pieces of coursework, each with a draft permitted. Each piece is worth 20% of the final grade. The first is the creative writing coursework, and the second is an analytical essay on a selection of texts (completed in Lower Fifth).

A final examination, worth 60%, will be sat in the final term of Upper Fifth.

Where will this course take me?

The English language IGCSE is vital in improving the written communication of pupils, both in terms of accuracy and style. This is a fundamental skill that will often underpin a pupil's success in other subjects, as well as helping the pupil access all possible avenues when seeking employment.

Natural career avenues would include roles within the media or publishing, but an ability to use language to manipulate and persuade lends itself to a multitude of careers.

ENGLISH LITERATURE (IGCSE)

Examination Board: Edexcel

What will I study?

In Lower Fifth, pupils will study two plays, honing their analytical skills and learning how writers evoke reactions in their audiences. In the winter term, pupils will study the modern drama *An Inspector Calls*, before writing a coursework essay analysing a particular theme or character within the text. The political nature of the play allows for topical discussions within class about our current society, and pupils will be encouraged to appreciate how a play can be a tool for social change rather than simply a form of entertainment. In the Summer Term, pupils will study a Shakespeare play, likely to be either *Macbeth* or *The Merchant of Venice*, depending on their teacher's preference. Similarly to the first term, pupils will then write a coursework essay on the play, exploring a particular theme or character within the play. Additionally, this study will also incorporate the context surrounding the play, considering how this may have helped to shape the play itself.

In Upper Fifth, pupils will study a modern novel and a collection of poetry, as well as honing their skills in analysing an unseen poem. Popular options for the modern novel include *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and the context surrounding the novel will form an important part of the course. The poetry anthology that will be studied is formed by Edexcel. It offers the pupils an eclectic collection of poetry by a diverse range of writers, including Shakespeare and Christina Rossetti, as well as more modern writers such as John Agard and Sujata Bhatt.

How will I be assessed?

Two pieces of coursework, each with a draft permitted. Each piece is worth 20% of the final grade. The first is the analytical essay on *An Inspector Calls*, and the second is an analytical essay on their Shakespeare play.

A final examination, worth 60%, will be sat in the final term of Upper Fifth. This will examine the pupils on the modern novel, the poetry anthology, and also require them to analyse a previously unseen poem.

Where will this course take me?

The English literature IGCSE will help pupils develop their critical thinking, their formulation of arguments, and the sophistication of their expression. It will also help pupils develop an appreciation of literature in terms of its political, social and artistic value. The skills it develops lend themselves to essay subjects at A level, but are frequently popular with pupils seeking careers in law or the media.

MATHEMATICS (IGCSE)

Examination Board: Edexcel Mathematics A IGCSE

What will I study?

Confidence in the use of numbers is an essential skill for everyday life. Mathematics also teaches pupils to think logically, approach problems from many different directions and analyse information effectively. A qualification in mathematics is a key requirement for many jobs, but even if a career path is not directly linked to mathematics, pupils will learn many important skills that are highly valued in the workplace. The course aims to develop knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and techniques, instil an enjoyment and confidence in using and applying these to solve problems and to ingrain a foundation of mathematical skills for further study in the subject or related areas.

Number and algebra - The number and algebra unit includes number system, calculations, solving numerical problems, equations, formulae and identities, sequences, functions, graphs, set theory, calculus, quadratics and proof.

Geometry and measure - The geometry and measure unit involves geometrical reasoning, transformations and coordinates, measures and constructions, Pythagoras, and trigonometry and vectors.

Probability and statistics - The probability and statistics unit involves representing and processing data, histograms, measures of spread and probability.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment takes the form of two 2-hour written papers both allowing the use of a calculator. The total number of marks for each paper is 100.

Assessment objectives

AO1: demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills in number and algebra

AO2: demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills in shape, space and measures

AO3: demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills in handling data

Where will this course take me?

As a core subject, mathematics is a good accompaniment to many A level subjects. In particular, mathematics will support the further study of physics, chemistry and economics.

SCIENCE (IGCSE)

Examination Board: Edexcel

Which option should I chose?

Two Edexcel programmes are followed at St John's. The first option is the IGCSE in science (double award), which constitutes two IGCSE grades. The second is the individual science route leading to three IGCSE examination grades (one in each of biology, chemistry, and physics).

Whatever programme pupils follow, they will be stretched and stimulated and will gain a clear understanding of science and its relevance to the modern world. Pupils will gain practical skills, develop their numerical skills, and have a grounding in scientific theory suitable for further study. Both options allow for pupils to study sciences at A level and both options are held in the same regard academically.

Double award - Double science has a lesson allocation equivalent to two GCSEs.

Separate sciences - Pupils who are eager to study sciences in greater depth can choose to study biology, chemistry, and physics as single certificates. This will lead to three separate IGCSEs. The content of these courses is as given below but, in addition, there is a paper of extension material, which covers wider aspects of each subject.

What will I study?

Biology: the nature and variety of living organisms, the structures and functions in living organisms, reproduction and inheritance, ecology and the environment and use of biological resources.

Chemistry: principles of chemistry, inorganic chemistry, physical chemistry, and organic chemistry.

Physics: forces in motion, electricity, waves, energy resources and energy transfer, solids, liquids and gases, magnetism and electromagnetism, radioactivity, and particles and astrophysics.

How will I be assessed?

Double science: The examination will consist of three 2-hour papers, one for each of the three sciences.

Triple science: The examination for each subject will consist of a 2-hour paper as above and a 1 hour 15-minute paper which includes extension material.

Where will this course take me?

While the separate sciences provide a wider coverage and are thus highly recommended for those wishing to continue their studies in science to A level, a pupil who performs well in the double award will still be suitably prepared to study one or more science subjects at A level. Those with an interest in pursuing scientific careers, including engineering, medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, and other healthcare careers, will benefit from the additional exposure of separate sciences.

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION >

CLASSICAL GREEK >

COMPUTER SCIENCE >

DESIGN AND ENGINEERING >

DRAMA >

FINE ART >

FRENCH >

GEOGRAPHY >

GERMAN >

HISTORY >

LATIN >

MUSIC >

SPANISH >

SPORTS SCIENCE >

THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION (TPR) >



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CLASSICAL CIVILISATION (GCSE)

Examination Board: OCR

Why should I choose classical civilisation?

It is great for pupils who have interest in the Greeks and Romans and covers a diverse and fascinating range of topics within the classical world.

There is a huge focus on Greek and Roman mythology, which many pupils find appealing, and we also study what the daily lives of the Romans entailed, including housing, slavery and entertainment.

There is the opportunity to learn about different cultures whilst strongly building upon literary, analytical and essay-writing skills.

What will I study?

Lower Fifth Year

Unit 1 - Mythology and Religion (50% of GCSE)

Topics covered include:

- Gods
- The universal hero: Heracles/Hercules
- Religion and the city: temples
- Myth and the city: foundation stories
- Festivals
- Myths and symbols of power
- Death and burial
- Journeying to the underworld

Upper Fifth Year

Unit 2 - Roman City Life (50% of GCSE)

Topics covered include:

- Roman housing
- The Roman home and members of the Roman family
- Roman society including citizenship, slavery and politics
- Leisure and entertainment including features of the Colosseum, the Circus Maximus and the political purposes behind entertainment
- Roman theatre
- Roman baths

How will I be assessed?

Two externally examined written papers on Myth and Religion and Roman City Life.

Where will this course take me?

It is excellent preparation for A levels in classical civilisation, English, history, and any other essay-based subject. It will also serve any pupil well who is planning to undertake a humanities or law degree at university.

CLASSICAL GREEK (GCSE)

Examination Board: OCR

Why should I choose classical Greek?

It is a highly prestigious academic subject, which trains mental rigour and precision throughout one's studies, develops core linguistic skills and knowledge transferrable to many other languages; it allows pupils to study and discuss original Greek literature first written two and a half millennia ago.

If you are in pursuit of academic excellence, this is regarded as one of the most academically challenging subjects you can undertake at GCSE so will set you apart when it comes to future university applications. It complements Latin as well and taking both subjects would certainly be regarded as impressive by universities and employers.

What will I study?

Lower Fifth Year

The classical Greek course is an intensive language course for strong academics and linguists who have flourished in the Fourth Form Greek course. In the Lower Fifth year, pupils will continue their progress of grammatical understanding through language lessons. From the second half of the year, they will begin to meet and discuss original Greek literature. Pupils will prepare the first of two set texts: prepared translations of short extracts from Herodotus' Histories, about which they will answer questions in the GCSE examination.

Upper Fifth Year

In the first half of the Upper Fifth, pupils translate the second of two set texts, short extracts from Homer's Iliad, while meeting the final linguistic features of the Greek language. After this, pupils focus on perfecting their knowledge of the vocabulary list, and developing the necessary skills to score highly in the GCSE examinations. Pupils have a considerable period in which to consolidate their linguistic knowledge.

How will I be assessed?

Three externally examined written papers on Greek language, prose literature and verse literature.

Where will this course take me?

A level choices within the range of classical subjects are common beyond GCSE, and the skills learned are also excellent preparation for a wide range of other academic subjects, including modern languages, English, history, mathematics and the sciences.

This is also an excellent GCSE choice for those planning to undertake humanities, law, journalism or medical degrees. Classical Greek is a subject particularly highly regarded within the law profession due to much legal terminology having its roots in the Latin/Greek language as well the logical and analytical skills acquired through such an academically challenging course. The same applies to medicine.

COMPUTER SCIENCE (GCSE)

Examination Board: OCR

Why should I choose computer science?

The computer science course combines logical, mathematical, and scientific thinking and provides excellent preparation for various subjects after GCSE, especially A level computer science. The GCSE course followed at St John's is from the examination board OCR; the course builds upon the most popular aspects of current computing specifications and adds fresh features, including computational thinking, to provide an academically challenging programme of study for pupils of all ability levels.

What will I study?

Pupils will develop an understanding of current and emerging technologies and how they work in real life, for example being how data is collected, saved and processed by computer systems. Pupils will develop computer programs to solve problems within the course and evaluate the effectiveness of given computer programs and the impact of computer technology in society. The main topics are listed below.

1. Systems architecture
2. Memory and storage
3. Computer networks, connections and protocols
4. Network security
5. System software
6. Ethical, legal, cultural, and environmental impacts of digital technology
7. Algorithms
8. Programming fundamentals
9. Producing robust programs

10. Boolean logic

11. Programming languages and IDEs

Students are taught all programming techniques using Python.

How will I be assessed?

Pupils will be assessed by two externally examined written papers, detailed below.

Paper 1: Computational Systems

This assesses points 1 to 6. The examination is a 90 minute paper with 80 marks and is worth 50% of the GCSE. The style of questions is a mix of multiple choice, short answer and longer answer questions.

Paper 2: Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming

This assesses units 7 to 11 above. The examination is a 90 minute paper with 80 marks and is worth 50% of the GCSE. The style of questions is a mix of multiple choice, short answer, longer answer and extended response questions assessing programming skills and theoretical knowledge.

Where will this course take me?

Computer science complements pupils who may wish to study physics, mathematics, further mathematics or another science at A level and degree level. Qualifications in computer science will be beneficial to an extensive range of areas within the job market.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (GCSE)

Examination Board: AQA

Why should I choose design and technology?

If you enjoy being creative, want to increase your practical skills and improve your analytical, communication and research abilities, design and engineering is a great choice. The skills you gain make it a great complement to other subjects.

Studying design and technology encourages pupils to develop practical, design and thinking skills that open up a world of possibility, giving you the tools to create the future. The subject excites and engages pupils with contemporary topics covering the breadth of this dynamic and evolving subject. Design and technology is a subject that brings learning to life, requiring pupils to apply their learning to real-life situations. It relates to authentic real-world awareness of professional design practices and strategies used by the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries. Pupils will be required to use critical thinking, leading towards invention and design innovation, to design and make prototypes that solve real and relevant problems, considering their own and others' needs, wants and values.

What will I study?

We offer the design and technology GCSE qualification.

In the first two terms of Lower Fifth, all pupils follow a series of introductory projects which develop their practical, graphical and design skills. Alongside this, pupils have theory lessons to prepare them for their written examination.

How will I be assessed?

Course		Design and technology
Exam Board & Code		AQA 8552
Assessment Component 1	Title	Principles of design and technology
	Proportion of Mark	50%
	Format	Written theory examination with some application of maths and science.
Assessment Component 2	Title	Iterative design challenge picking one of three contexts that are set by AQA.
	Proportion of Mark	50%
	Format	Chronological portfolio and final prototype(s).

Where will this course take me?

You can continue design and engineering into A level where we currently offer the AQA product design course which prepares you well for careers in architecture, design and engineering.

DRAMA (GCSE)

Examination Board: Edexcel

Why should I choose drama?

Drama encourages and nurtures pupils through direct personal expression to expand their creativity, hone their analytical abilities, develop their performance skills and explore their imagination. This course appeals to those with a plethora of interests as we explore all aspects of theatre making, consistently creating, communicating, analysing or evaluating. The performing, writing, and directing elements of the course would appeal to those studying English, history and anyone interested in the insights into the human nature/psychology. We explore texts and playwrights from various countries and from different eras exploring the history and culture of theatre. The design aspects may appeal to those studying art, design and music and has now become an integral part of the GCSE. Drama GCSE will develop their interests and their enjoyment of drama through practical exploration, which compliments and informs their written work.

What will I study?

During the course of study, pupils are expected to engage maturely with complex texts, to make connections across different times, places and cultures and to communicate this learning through practical assignments, transferring some of their understanding onto the written page. Time is taken to build the necessary confidence in performance.

Pupils will study the set text *The Government Inspector* in a version by David Harrower and explore both design and acting elements of the play in preparation for their written exam at the end of their final year. In the Lower Fifth pupils will create an original piece of theatre devised from a stimulus. Pupils will also learn how to reflect upon and evaluate the quality of their process and their final

performance in a written portfolio. As they transition into the Upper Fifth they can choose to act or be a designer for two extracts from a published play, for performance as a piece of scripted drama.

Trips to the theatre are compulsory and an integral part of the course. They deepen pupils' awareness of the theatre as a site of production and reception and pupils are given the opportunity to evaluate the complex relationship between the two. In the written exam they will be asked to analyse and evaluate a play they have seen.

How will I be assessed?

Unit 1 - Devising 60 marks - 40% of the GCSE. Internally assessed and externally moderated.

Unit 2 - Performance from text 48 marks - 20% of the GCSE. Externally assessed by a visiting examiner and externally moderated.

Unit 3 - Theatre makers in practice 60 marks - 40% of the GCSE. Written examination of 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Where will this course take me?

GCSE drama could lead on to further study in drama, theatre studies, performing arts and expressive arts at A level and above, or other related subjects such as English, music, dance, art and design. Career opportunities for pupils who study drama at a higher level include; the media, theatre, television, radio, the film industry, arts administration, drama therapy and education.

FINE ART (GCSE)

Examination Board: AQA

Why should I choose fine art?

A GCSE art pupil will have a love of learning, be a creative thinker, be imaginative, have an enjoyment of the subject, have an inquisitive nature, have ambition, be keen to explore and be visually minded.

What will I study?

The course structure will enable pupils to explore a wide variety of art media and techniques.

The pupils will explore images, artifacts and resources relating to a wide range of art, craft and design, from the past and contemporary settings. They will respond to these through practical and critical activities. All pupils will explore visual ideas aided by various activities and workshops as well as trips to galleries and places of interest. Pupils work in a structured course which includes weekly tutorials, demonstrations, discussions and practical exploration.

A one-off charge in the region of £85 will be recharged to pupils, to cover the cost of a GCSE art pack.

The fine art course is a practical course which can accommodate a wide range of abilities and material requirements.

Unit 1: Personal portfolio

Pupils will be asked to produce a series of final outcomes (large pieces of work) supported by a variety of development work and sketchbooks for each project. Details of sketchbook work differ from project to project. All assessments are

made in conjunction with the AQA art assessment matrix.

Ongoing assessment plays an extremely important role in the monitoring of pupils' work and setting objectives for the future.

Unit 2: Externally set assignment (ESA)

Pupils will select one question from an examination paper. The work submitted for this unit will include preparatory work and sketchbooks and the final outcome will be produced under timed examination conditions (10 hours).

How will I be assessed?

Assessment 1 - Candidate portfolio (60%)

A series of projects set over the first four terms.

Assessment 2 - Externally set assignment (40%)

Externally set project running during the fifth term.

Both units of work are marked internally and moderated by AQA.

Where will this course take me?

This naturally leads to art A level and in the past few years, pupils have gone on to attain places on numerous foundation courses and art related degrees including, architecture, graphic design, photography and film, fashion and costume, marketing and illustration. Other design courses including 3D, product and model making as well as art history courses, require pupils to have studied art.

GEOGRAPHY (GCSE)

Examination Board: Edexcel A

Why should I choose geography?

Geography helps pupils to make sense of the world around them. Whatever their passion for the world whether it be a fascination with landscapes or concerns about sustainability; geography will provide pupils with knowledge and transferable skills to take forward. Studying geography will develop their knowledge about a range of contrasting places, people, resources, landforms and environments. Their growing awareness about the world will help them to deepen their understanding of physical and human processes at a range of scales. It is a subject that bridges the worlds of art and science, whilst providing pupils with the skills to debate changes and seek solutions to the world's biggest challenges.

What will I study?

GCSE Geography has a diverse range of topics which are outlined below. There is something that will appeal to all pupils in the course.

Component 1: The physical environment

Pupils will study the following three topics:

- Section A: The changing landscapes of the UK including coasts and rivers
- Section B: Weather hazards and climate change
- Section C: Ecosystems, biodiversity and management

Component 2: The human environment

Pupils will study the following three topics:

- Section A: Changing cities
- Section B: Global development
- Section C: Resource management including energy resources

Component 3: Geographical investigations: fieldwork and UK challenges

This section covers the practical geographical skills that are essential for all GCSE geography pupils. Pupils will also undertake fieldwork at the coast and in an urban setting for this paper.

- Section A: Physical environments fieldwork - coasts
- Section B: Human environments fieldwork - urban
- Section C: UK challenges - skills-based questions based around UK themes

How will I be assessed?

It is externally assessed through three examinations lasting 1 hour 30 minutes each, set and marked by Edexcel. The papers will contain a variety of question types, such as multiple-choice questions, short extended answer questions (longest question in paper 1 and 2 will be 8 marks), graphical and data questions, and practical enquiry questions (one 12 mark question in paper 3).

Where will this course take me?

As a subject linking science and the arts, geography is highly flexible in terms of what pupils can combine it with, both at GCSE and A level. Studying GCSE geography can be the starting point for a variety of careers such as energy, environmental management, urban development and engineering. Employers and universities see geography as a robust academic subject rich in skills, knowledge and understanding.

HISTORY (IGCSE)

Examination Board: Edexcel

Why should I choose history?

"It is useful to remember that history is to the nation as memory is to the individual. As a person deprived of memory becomes disorientated and lost, not knowing where they have been or where they are going, so a nation denied a conception of the past will be disabled in dealing with its present and its future". - Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.

History is an intellectual and respected qualification and is both useful and challenging to pupils. It enables pupils to analyse, evaluate and develop clear, substantiated arguments which are essential skills for later in life. By studying history, pupils will gain the confidence to articulate their views whilst also learning about how the past has shaped the present. Pupils will continue to develop their understanding of key historical concepts including causation, consequence, change and continuity and historical significance.

What will I study?

Topic 1 - Russia and the Soviet Union, 1905-1924 - The course addresses Tsarist rule in Russia and its collapse during the First World War; it then focuses on the Bolshevik Revolution and how the Communists consolidated power through the civil war and the New Economic Policy.

Topic 2 - Dictatorship and conflict in the USSR, 1924-1953 - The course charts communist rule in the Soviet Union following the death of Lenin, and Stalin's subsequent rise to power. Stalin's rule is then examined in detail, including his industrialisation and agricultural policies and his purges. The topic finishes with Stalin's death.

Topic 3 - A divided union: civil rights in the USA, 1945-1974 - The course follows the emergence of civil rights movements in the USA post-1945, addressing the reasons for the movements and the roles played by various groups and individuals, including presidents and civil rights leaders. It also considers the extent of change that was brought about.

Topic 4 - Conflict, change and crisis: China, 1900-1989 - The course addresses major change in Chinese society and government, from rule by the warlords, Japanese colonisation, civil war and communist revolution; it then follows changes in communist rule from Mao's reforms to the introduction of capitalist economics.

How will I be assessed?

There are two examination papers, both of which are one hour and thirty minutes in length:

Dictatorship and conflict in the USSR, 1924-1953 and A divided union: civil rights in the USA, 1945-1974 (50% of the IGCSE)

Russia and the Soviet Union, 1905-1924 and Conflict, change and crisis: China, 1900-1989 (50% of the IGCSE)

Where will this course take me?

IGCSE history is a well-respected qualification and is an intellectually rigorous course, enabling pupils to develop highly sought after transferable skills. Besides continuing with history at A level, this IGCSE complements other subjects including English, politics, economics, plus foreign languages and geography. Beyond school and university, history is useful for a number of careers including, but not limited to law, politics, banking and commerce, publishing, journalism and teaching.

LATIN (GCSE)

Examination Board: OCR

Why should I choose Latin?

It is a prestigious academic subject that trains mental rigour and precision throughout one's studies, develops core linguistic skills and knowledge transferrable to many other languages, and enables pupils to study and discuss original Latin texts first written two millennia ago.

There is a natural crossover with classical Greek, and the two subjects are often seen as markers of academic excellence.

What will I study?

Lower Fifth Year

Pupils will continue with GCSE language grammar using Taylor's *'Essential GCSE Latin'*. In the second half of the year, pupils will also have their first taste of Latin literature. In lessons, pupils will prepare the first of two 'set texts': prepared translations of short extracts from the Cambridge Latin anthology about which they will answer questions in the GCSE examination.

Upper Fifth Year

In the first half of the Upper Fifth, pupils translate the second of the two set texts, extracts from Virgil's *Aeneid*, while continuing to study the core features of the Latin language using Taylor's *'Essential GCSE Latin'*. After this, pupils will focus on perfecting their knowledge of the vocabulary list, and developing the necessary skills to score highly in the GCSE examinations.

How will I be assessed?

Three externally examined written papers on Latin language, prose literature and verse literature.

Where will this course take me?

A level choices within the range of classical subjects are common beyond GCSE, and the skills learned are also excellent preparation for a wide range of other academic subjects, including modern languages, English, history, mathematics and the sciences.

This is also an excellent GCSE choice for those planning to undertake humanities, law, journalist or medical degrees. Latin is a subject particularly highly regarded within the law profession due to much legal terminology having its roots in the Latin/Greek language as well the logical and analytical skills acquired through such an academically challenging course. The same applies to medicine.

MODERN LANGUAGES (GCSE/IGCSE)

Examination Board: AQA/Edexcel

Why should I choose modern languages?

Learning a foreign language is a skill for life. It is a real asset in our multicultural society and is increasingly important in the commercial world. In learning a modern foreign language, not only will pupils open doors to discover other cultures but they will develop their overall literacy and communication skills, which will assist them in all areas of the curriculum.

In their chosen language(s), pupils will gain confidence in speaking, writing and understanding the language while discovering and appreciating the native cultures and ways of thinking. They will be challenged intellectually and culturally, questioning how best we communicate with each other in our increasingly global community.

We believe that the new specifications of the GCSE and IGCSE courses produce a greater depth of linguistic expertise and prepares our pupils for a smoother transition between (I)GCSE and A level.

What will I study?

The AQA and Edexcel examination boards are centred on a variety of themes:

- Identity and culture (AQA)
- Local, national, international and global areas of interest (AQA)
- Current and future study and employment (AQA)
- Home and abroad (Edexcel)
- Education and employment (Edexcel)
- Personal life and relationship (Edexcel)

- The world around us (Edexcel)
- Social activities, fitness and health (Edexcel)

How will I be assessed?

The AQA and Edexcel GCSE/IGCSE examinations are wholly assessed externally and comprise of three papers (IGCSE) or four papers (GCSE) that are all taken at the end of the Upper Fifth year:

- Listening (25%)
- Speaking (25%)
- Reading (25%)
- Writing (25%)

Where will this course take me?

Languages complement all other subjects and particularly strengthen literary skills. They therefore combine particularly well with any humanity subject. It is also advisable to study more than one language, as the direct links between languages help the learning process. Languages are a versatile A level option and can be studied in single or combined-honours degree programmes.

MODERN LANGUAGES (GCSE)

FRENCH

Why should I choose French?

With approximately 100 million native speakers and 300 million secondary speakers, the significance of French as a world language is considerable. French is spoken in 55 countries and is the only language other than English to be spoken on five continents, making it truly global. Its influence on English over the years has been great; studying French involves many words that learners already recognise but it also enriches their knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary.

Whether pupils choose to study French for cultural reasons (France has the world's largest number of Nobel Prize winners for literature), for travel (more tourists visit France than any other country in the world and French is a melodious and attractive language) or for a future career (French is the official language of the United Nations and the International Red Cross, and is widely used in the diplomatic world), the wealth of opportunities on offer is virtually unrivalled. The French economy is one of the strongest in the world and France is, increasingly, a leader in technological innovation.

As a department we believe that immersive

and engaging school trips and extra-curricular experiences are key to engagement and effective teaching and learning. This is why we have organised an exciting trip to Paris, Versailles and EuroDisney, which will challenge, inspire and engage our pupils in the practical application of the target language. We have designed this trip to develop pupils' conversational and comprehension skills through a range of exciting target language-focused excursions and activities with a particular focus on cultural and enrichment experiences.

What will I study?

Pupils will study a number of exciting topics relevant to them, e.g. relationships, family and friends, technology, where they live, school etc. Pupils will study the vocabulary related to these topics so that they can understand and express key points, opinions, reasons in a variety of short and long spoken or written texts. Pupils will learn how to pronounce French words with a correct accent and pronunciation, including reading French texts out loud and performing short role-plays in different situations. Finally, pupils will develop an excellent understanding of how French works through the thorough exploration of grammar rules and translation of texts from and into French.

How will I be assessed?

At the end of the GCSE course, pupils will sit four papers: listening, speaking, reading and writing. During the two years, pupils will also sit some keystone assessments which will focus on their understanding of grammar and its application, as well as the four skills.

Where will this course take me?

Studying French at GCSE can lead to continuing to enhance linguistic and communication skills at A level. A modern language is useful in the world of business, law, journalism, leisure, tourism, linguistics/translation, and education. Looking beyond GCSE study, a number of UK universities ask for a modern foreign language at GCSE or above as part of their entrance requirements, even if the student is not planning to study a language. They feel that proof of studying a language shows great aptitude and flexibility. Also many employers look favourably upon a candidate offering a foreign language, particularly in the light of globalisation. As the world becomes more interconnected, the value placed on clear communication is only set to increase.

MODERN LANGUAGES (GCSE)

SPANISH

Why should I choose Spanish?

Spanish is one of the major world languages, spoken by hundreds of millions of people across the globe. Spanish-language culture, from Picasso and Dalí to Despacito and Shakira, is also one of the richest and most expressive in the world. Spain is an enormously diverse country, with landscapes ranging from volcanic islands with black beaches to snowy mountain ranges and oak forests. A Spanish GCSE will allow pupils to explore all of this with more confidence, and open up a new world that exists just outside the resorts. It is a practical course in which pupils will learn to communicate in Spanish whilst overseas, and understand what is going on around them. Pupils will also gain a better understanding of the structure of the language, and will find other Romance languages like Italian and Portuguese become more comprehensible too.

What will I study?

The course is divided into three themes:

- Theme 1: Identity and culture
- Theme 2: Local, national and international areas of interest
- Theme 3: Current and future study and employment

The GCSE textbook has eight chapters, of which the first three are completed in the Fourth Form. We complete the next three in the Lower Fifth, and then the last two by February in the Upper Fifth. We find this approach gives pupils plenty of time to revise and focus on exam skills.

At every point in the course, pupils practise the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as well as learning grammar and vocabulary.

How will I be assessed?

There are four papers in Spanish worth 25% each for reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Where will this course take me?

After the Spanish GCSE, pupils will be able to hold their own in everyday situations such as asking for directions, reading a menu, or listening for train announcements. Pupils will also have a greater understanding of Spanish culture. The course lays an excellent foundation for further development of their Spanish, and gives them a skill for life they can develop either through the formal education system or simply as a hobby.

The Spanish GCSE prepares pupils for the A level, after which pupils will begin to feel proficient in the language. At university, Spanish can be studied on its own or combined with other humanities, law,

economics, or business. Candidates who intend to study Spanish as part of their degree are extremely desirable to universities, and have a competitive advantage over candidates without language skills.

MODERN LANGUAGES (IGCSE)

GERMAN

Why should I choose German?

This course will suit those interested in language learning, and especially pupils who enjoy patterns and clear grammatical rules. As the most widely spoken first language in the EU, German is in fact easy to pronounce, being phonetic, and pupils are often reassured by the many commonalities with English.

As part of this course, pupils will have the opportunity to discuss a range of topics relating to the world around them and give their opinion on the things that matter to them most. Pupils will develop their ability to convey ideas effectively in the target language, using a wider range of structures appropriate to this level. Pupils will also be able to write creative passages and describe photos in German, with a flexibility of examination tasks on offer.

This course is great at developing key transferable skills including deciphering meaning, multitasking, problem-solving and enhanced social interaction. Crucially, language learning is a thoroughly enjoyable and life-long skill that enables pupils to discover new countries and cultures. Prior knowledge of this subject is required.

What will I study?

The IGCSE Edexcel German course comprises a range of different topic areas including holidays, family, friends, festivals, new media, home-life, school, food, hobbies, jobs, and the environment. We also explore aspects of Germany's history such as the Berlin Wall, with there being a regular residential trip to Berlin on offer in the Autumn Term. Pupils will acquire a secure understanding of these topics by developing the core skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and translation. The IGCSE course covers a range of key grammatical concepts, which are taught in parallel to the main topic areas: tenses, the cases, adjectival agreement, word order, prepositions etc.

The German Department places an emphasis on interactive learning, critical thinking as well as target language interaction.

How will I be assessed?

- Listening paper (externally examined)
- Reading and writing paper (externally examined)
- Speaking assessment (externally examined, but conducted by the teacher)

Where will this course take me?

On completion of this course, pupils will be able to express a range of ideas successfully in German

and be in a secure position to continue onto A level. This subject is regarded highly by top universities, including Oxbridge, and is valued by employers. German lends itself well to careers in business, marketing, journalism, translation, and a whole range of roles that benefit from having a linguist among the team.

MUSIC (GCSE)

Examination Board: Edexcel

Why should I choose music?

GCSE music is a rewarding and engaging qualification that promotes the key skills of performing, composing, listening and appraising. The course is appropriate for a wide range of musicians, from classical to popular, as well as a wide range of abilities and experience. Pupils will have the opportunity to appraise and comment on music from a wide range of historical and contemporary cultures. Pupils are expected to work towards the performance element of the course in their instrumental and vocal lessons outside of the classroom, with support and guidance offered at regular intervals along with performances opportunities, such as lunchtime recitals and music masterclasses. Pupils should seek to achieve a performing level of at least ABRSM (or equivalent) Grade 5 by the end of the course.

What will I study?

The music GCSE course content is extremely diverse in its range of topics and should have something to appeal to all pupils. The course guides pupils through music history from the Baroque period right up to modern day musical theatre, via musical fusions, world music and glam rock. Alongside this, pupils have the opportunity to compose their own music, having studied some of the fundamentals of composition. Recent compositions have included a cello sonata, club dance track and pop songs. The course is an excellent opportunity for providing transferable skills, such improving literacy, learning to construct arguments and write convincingly.

How will I be assessed?

- Coursework (60%)
- Performing music (30%) - Pupils perform two pieces, one solo and one ensemble performance with a combined duration of at least four minutes. Pupils can perform on any instrument and in any style.
- Composing music (30%) - Pupils produce two compositions, one in a response to a set brief.
- Exam (40%)

In the listening examination pupils are required to identify key musical features from the eight set works they have studied. Pupils are also required to write an essay, comparing one of the set works studied with an unfamiliar piece of music presented by the exam board.

Where will this course take me?

Pupils who complete this course will be in a good position to study music at A level. Pupils will be fluent in constructing coherent arguments based on analytical evidence which could prepare them for a wide range of other subject areas at A level. Due to the large coursework element of the course, pupils will develop excellent time management, self-discipline and motivation.

SPORTS SCIENCE (GCSE)

Examination Board: AQA

Why should I choose sports science?

A GCSE in sports science provides an opportunity for pupils to study the wider aspects within sport and physical education, with a large element on external factors that will impact both performance and participation. Pupils will develop knowledge, skills and understanding on a number of related topics ranging from anatomy and physiology to international sporting events.

The Sports Science Department at St John's embraces a holistic approach to developing our young people. The aim is to develop the physical, social and mental well-being of pupils in conjunction with the delivery and implementation of a comprehensive curriculum, embedded in core values such as respect, co-operation and hard work. Pupils are encouraged to value their own health and fitness and to experience a range of outcomes that include an increase in confidence, a sense of community and relatedness and to take pride in achievements in the classroom and on the playing fields.

What will I study?

The curriculum is enriched predominately through the application of real-life links to sport health and fitness. The course content is heavily linked to concepts in sport that pupils come across in their own experiences. For example, in the sports drugs and hooliganism topics there are discussions surrounding the pros and cons and the impact these have not only on the individuals involved, but also in the wider community. Many of the pupils are engaged in sport in and outside of school and can therefore appreciate the significance and relevance of what they are learning to their own well-being. Similarly, pupils learn ways to improve their own fitness in the 'principles of training' section and study how technology influences the sporting world.

How will I be assessed?

The course is assessed by means of practical and written controlled assessment which accounts for 40% of the overall marks and two 1 hour 15 minute examinations, accounting for 60%.

Pupils must perform in three practical activities: one from the individual list, one from the team list and one other from either. There are a wide range of sports that pupils may choose from.

Where will this course take me?

Pupils who finish the course will be in a great position to study a sport related degree at university. Examples include sports science, sport management and sport psychology. Sport is a high-profile and expanding industry and there is a growing need for qualified professionals and capable volunteers. There is a wide range of job roles to progress into such as physiotherapist, nutritionist, teacher, activity leader, sports coach and fitness instructor.

AQA Sports Science GCSE is a linear course that allows the department to not only realise our vision for the pupils' development but to put them in a favourable position to gain employment in the sports industry. It develops a wide range of highly desirable, transferable skills such as communication, problem solving, team working and performing under pressure.

THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION (IGCSE)

Examination Board: Edexcel

Why should I choose theology, philosophy & religion?

Theology, philosophy and religion (TPR) is about questioning, debating and arguing. TPR asks pupils to think outside the box on a range of controversial issues that affect everyday life and the wider world. Pupils will learn to think and write critically and evaluate a range of arguments from the death penalty to human rights.

What will I study?

Paper 1 includes 'The Universe, Creation and the Place of Human Beings', including the debate between religion and science, our responsibility for the planet and the problem of evil; 'Life and Death', including near-death experiences, abortion, euthanasia and family life; 'Peace and Conflict', including wars in the world today, crime and punishment and the death penalty; 'Rights, Equality and Social Justice', including human rights, gender and wealth inequality.

Paper 2 includes a study of Christianity.

How will I be assessed?

Two externally examined written papers, combining different length questions from 3 marks to 12 marks.

Where will this course take me?

Many pupils who study TPR have gone on to university to study English, languages, law, philosophy and theology and a range of other subjects. It teaches the analytical, debating and reasoning skills useful for a range of careers, ranging from the scientific, law and the arts.



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