

ST MARY'S

GCSE options

2026-28 GUIDE



St Mary's
Colchester

GCSE options

**THIS BOOKLET IS
DESIGNED TO HELP
YOU MAKE INFORMED
DECISIONS WHEN
CHOOSING YOUR GCSE
OPTIONS.**

COMPULSORY SUBJECTS

You must study these.

GCSE:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Science - all girls take Combined Science (two GCSEs) OR select Separate Science as an option - Biology, Chemistry and Physics (three GCSEs)

Non-examination:

- PSHE
- Physical Education

OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

Below is the list of options you can choose from. Please note there is minimum number of pupils required for a subject to run.

GCSE/iGCSE:

- Art and Design: Fine Art or Photography
- Computer Science
- Drama
- Geography
- History
- Modern Language: French, German or Spanish
- Music
- Religious Studies

Cambridge O-Level:

- Fashion and Textiles

Level 1/2 Vocational Award - Technical Award

- Hospitality and Catering
- Physical Education: Sports and Coaching Principles

Making your choices

TO GET THE MOST OUT
OF YOUR GCSE STUDIES
YOU SHOULD MAKE
SURE THE FOLLOWING
POINTS ARE AT THE
FOREFRONT OF YOUR
MIND WHEN SELECTING
COURSES:

- You like the subject and find it interesting
- You are good at the subject
- Your future career plans require you to take the subject
- You think you will achieve well in the subject
- You can challenge yourself and develop new skills
- Taking the course will give you a sense of achievement and enjoyment
- Your teachers think it is a suitable choice for you
- It will combine well with other options and help your overall education
- You like the method of assessment and learning
- It is something you would like to progress in

Remember, choices which offer you a balanced range of subjects are always a good foundation for further studies.

Compulsory subjects

Subject	Board and code
English Language	Edexcel 1ENO
English Literature	Edexcel 1ETO
Mathematics	Edexcel 1MA1
Science: Combined or Separate	Edexcel 1SC0 or 1BIO, 1CHO & 1PH0
PSHE	No exam
Physical Education	No exam

English

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDEXCEL 1ENO

General aims

The aim of the English Language course is to enable all pupils to express themselves articulately and with confidence in a variety of speaking, listening and written activities. The course covers critical, personal and imaginative responses to a variety of genres. The GCSE English course encourages pupils to learn to read a range of texts fluently and with good understanding. Pupils read critically, using previous knowledge gained from wider reading to inform and improve their own writing. They write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately, using grammar correctly, punctuating and spelling accurately.

An aim of the course is for pupils to acquire and apply a wide vocabulary alongside knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.

Pupils learn to listen to and understand spoken language and to use spoken Standard English effectively. Spoken language will be reported as a separate grade on pupils' certificates; they are awarded either a pass, a merit or a distinction.

Content of the course and assessment

Paper 1 (40%) - Fiction and Imaginative Writing:

Writing: Pupils study a range of prose fiction, developing skills to analyse and evaluate 19th century fiction extracts. They develop imaginative writing skills to engage the reader and use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately.

Paper 2 (60%) - Non-fiction and Transactional Writing:

Writing: Pupils study and analyse selections from a range of non-fiction texts (including literary non-fiction) as well as exploring and developing transactional writing skills, for example letters, articles and reports.

ENGLISH LITERATURE EDEXCEL 1ETO

General aims

Pupils read a wide range of classic literature fluently and with good understanding, making connections with their reading. They read in depth, critically and evaluatively, so that they are able to discuss and explain their understanding and ideas.

GCSE pupils develop the habit of reading widely and often, learning to appreciate the depth and power of the English literary heritage. They write accurately, effectively and analytically about their reading, using Standard English, acquiring and using a wide vocabulary, including grammatical terminology and the literary and linguistic terms they need in order to be able to criticise and analyse what they read.

Content of the course and assessment

Paper 1 (50%) - Shakespeare and Post 1914 Literature:

Pupils study a Shakespeare play and a post-1914 British play or novel. They develop the skills to analyse how the language, form, structure and context of texts can create meanings and effects. Pupils also develop skills to maintain a critical style and informed personal response.

Paper 2 (50%) - 19th century novel and a range of romantic, heritage and contemporary poetry:

Pupils study a 19th century novel and a poetry anthology provided by the exam board. They develop skills to analyse how the language, structure, form and context of texts can create meanings and effects. Pupils also develop skills to maintain a critical style and informed personal response as well as comparison skills.

Mathematics

EDEXCEL 1MA1

General aims

The aims of this GCSE specification are to encourage pupils to:

- develop a positive attitude to Mathematics
- consolidate basic skills and tackle appropriately challenging work
- apply mathematical knowledge and understanding to solve problems
- think and communicate mathematically - precisely, logically and creatively
- appreciate the place and use of Mathematics in society
- apply mathematical concepts to situations arising in their own lives
- understand the interdependence of different branches of Mathematics
- acquire the skills needed to use technology, such as calculators and computers, effectively
- work co-operatively, independently and practically
- acquire a firm foundation for further study and assessment

The Edexcel GCSE in Mathematics is assessed through three equally weighted, written examination papers at either Foundation tier or Higher tier. The components of each tier and the grades available are shown below:

Foundation tier

Paper 1F (non-calculator)
Paper 2F (calculator)
Paper 3F (calculator)
1 hour 30 minutes each

Grades available: 5-1

Higher tier

Paper 1H (non-calculator)
Paper 2H (calculator)
Paper 3H (calculator)
1 hour 30 minutes each

Grades available: 9-3

Science

EDEXCEL 1SC0 OR 1BIO, 1CHO AND 1PH0

Why Science?

Science is an invaluable GCSE. It can be the launch pad for a huge variety of careers in sport, engineering, medicine and, of course, working for NASA. The Science Department follows the Edexcel GCSE course with a high standard of scientific content. Science is compulsory but there is an element of choice with two potential routes: Combined Science or Separate Science.

Combined Science: this is the most common option. Biology, Chemistry and Physics are studied with six examinations of 1 hour 10 minutes, resulting in two GCSE awards on the 9-1 grade scale.

Science at A Level can be studied with most colleges asking for a minimum of a Grade 7.

Separate Sciences: there are three separate GCSE awards - Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Naturally there is more content and some of this content is challenging. At the end of Year 11 there are six exams of 1 hour 45 minutes each.

Pupils who choose the **Separate Sciences** are usually very academically motivated and are happy to work independently where required. It is expected that these pupils should be

scoring consistently good grades in their assessments (as a guide somewhere around a Grade 6/7). They would also need to be confident with their Maths ability as each of the Sciences has a significant percentage of Maths content (Physics has 30%, Chemistry 20% and Biology 10%). A good reading ability and level of English is also desirable. Lastly, we would expect a good overall result for the end of year exams in Year 9, averaging out at around a Grade 7 in each Science, with a Grade 6 in Maths.

Separate Sciences are often a choice for pupils wishing to study more than one Science at A-Level (e.g. potential medics would choose this option) or pupils who are especially interested in the subject.

Higher and Foundation

Pupils will be guided to take either the Higher or Foundation tier. The Higher paper is taken by pupils who can comfortably achieve a Grade 5 and above. In the Foundation papers there are more multiple-choice questions and fewer long answer questions. You can reach a maximum of a Grade 5 if you sit the Foundation papers. It is worth noting your GCSE certificate will not detail which tier you sat. Most pupils will be taught the Higher content allowing pupils the opportunity for improvement across the course. The final choice of tiers is usually made halfway through Year 11 for improvement across the course.

	Combined	Separate Sciences
GCSE awards	2	3
Can I study A-level?	Yes (minimum Grade 6)	Yes (minimum Grade 6)
How many exams?	6 x 1 hour 10 mins	6 x 1 hour 45 mins
What grade can I achieve?	9-4 Higher	9-4 Higher
	5-1 Foundation	5-1 Foundation

Personal, Social and Health Education

NO EXAM

General aims

Personal, Social and Health Education aims to cover the following topics with a view to preparing pupils to make informed decisions at the appropriate stages in their futures:

- Life Beyond School
- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Staying Safe Online and Offline
- Celebrating Diversity and Equality

Content of the course

The final two years at St Mary's play an important part in preparing pupils for the future, and that includes all aspects, not only the academic ones. The approaches used in PSHE offer the opportunity for in-depth discussion and the ability to listen, which is of equal value to that of voicing your own opinion.

PSHE lessons provide an opportunity for pupils to discuss the more personal and social aspects of life in preparation for the future.

Careers advice is available throughout the pupils' time at St Mary's, helping them to make informed decisions. Specific skills in writing letters of application, compiling CVs (Curriculum Vitae), and attending interviews are developed in Year 11. Practice interviews are held in the autumn term.

Physical Education

NO EXAM

General aims

The aim of the PE Course in Years 10 and 11 is for the pupils to experience a wide range of popular sporting activities to stimulate an interest that may be continued after leaving school. We aim to develop practical abilities and knowledge to a level that will give pupils the confidence to join an outside organisation. Pupils are grouped in a variety of ways - by their own chosen social group, their chosen activity group, and sometimes by their ability to increase their social skills. Pupils are encouraged to begin to take responsibility for their own fitness and physical wellbeing.

Content of the course

Major games and activities: Consolidating the games/activities that have been studied in Years 7-9 (basketball, volleyball, netball, fitness, tennis, rounders, athletics). Personal skill levels are improved largely within game situations, while knowledge of the sport, tactics and teamwork are developed.

Introductory courses: new sporting activities may include badminton and golf. This leads pupils, where possible, to make their own selection of activities in Year 11, that they can follow over the two terms, allowing for greater depth of enjoyment.

It is hoped that sufficient interest and skill level will be achieved in one or more of these activities to inspire each pupil to want to continue with an activity that she enjoys after leaving school.

Optional subjects

Subject	Board and code
Art and Design:	
Fine Art	Edexcel 1FA0
Photography	Edexcel 1PY0
Computer Science	OCR J277
Drama	Cambridge 0994
Fashion and Textiles	Cambridge 6130
Geography	Edexcel 1GA0
History	OCR J411GF
Hospitality and Catering	WJEC Level 1/2 5409QA
Modern Languages:	
French	Edexcel 1FR1
German	Edexcel 1GN1
Spanish	Edexcel 1SP1
Music	OCR J536
Physical Education: Sports and Coaching Principles (Technical Award)	WJEC EDUQAS 5259QA
Religious Studies	Edexcel 1RB0ZK

Art and Design: Fine Art

PEARSON EDEXCEL 1FA0

What the course involves

GCSE Fine Art gives pupils the chance to explore a wide variety of materials and techniques, including drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture and mixed media. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own ideas, take creative risks, and build confidence in expressing themselves visually. They will explore the work of both traditional and contemporary artists to help inform and inspire their own projects.

Equipment and trips

Pupils are asked to purchase a small equipment pack, including a sketchbook and portfolios that will be used throughout the course. Each year, in January, we offer a visit to a London gallery, where pupils take part in a tailored tour designed to support their studies and inspire their creative work.

How you will be assessed

- **Component 1: Portfolio (60%)**
Coursework completed across Years 10 and 11, including observational studies, experiments, artist research, development work and a final outcome
- **Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40%)** A project set by the exam board in Year 11, culminating in a 10-hour practical exam to produce a final piece.

Skills you will develop

Pupils gain skills in drawing, composition, experimentation, independent working and critical analysis. They learn how to present ideas clearly, respond creatively to themes and refine their work through ongoing evaluation.

Who this course is for

This course suits pupils who enjoy practical work, problem-solving, and expressing ideas visually. It is ideal for imaginative, curious learners who are excited to explore creative techniques.

Where it can lead

Art and Design provides a strong foundation for A-level Art or related creative subjects. It also supports future pathways in fields such as architecture, illustration, design, animation, fashion, set design and visual communication.

Art and Design: Photography

PEARSON EDEXCEL 1PY0

What the course involves

GCSE Photography introduces pupils to creative, technical and experimental approaches to taking and editing photographs. Pupils will explore themes such as portraiture, landscape, still life, movement and abstraction. They will learn to use DSLR cameras, studio lighting, digital editing software and lens-based processes to develop a personal and meaningful body of work.

How you will be assessed

- **Component 1: Portfolio (60%)** A collection of photography coursework exploring techniques, artists/photographers, experiments, development and final outcomes.
- **Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (40%)** A themed project provided by the exam board in Year 11, ending with a 10-hour practical exam to create a final photographic piece or series.

Skills you will develop

Pupils will learn camera control (aperture, shutter speed, ISO), composition, lighting, digital manipulation and image analysis. They also develop independence, creativity, critical thinking and the ability to communicate ideas through imagery.

Who this course is for

Photography is ideal for pupils who enjoy working digitally, have a visual or design awareness, and possess some artistic skill. It also suits learners who are interested in capturing and communicating stories through images, and those who want to explore both the technical and creative processes involved in photography, art and design.

Equipment and trips

Pupils are asked to purchase a small equipment pack, including a sketchbook and portfolios that will be used throughout the course. Each year, in January, we offer a visit to a London gallery, where pupils take part in a tailored tour designed to support their studies and inspire their creative work.

Where it can lead

GCSE Photography provides progression to A-level Photography or creative subjects. It supports pathways into careers such as media, advertising, digital content creation, journalism, graphic design, film production, and other visual communication roles.

Computer Science

OCR J277

General aims

Computing is at the heart of modern life and by choosing to study computer science, pupils will explore how technology changes our lives. Computer science is not about sitting alone in a dark room coding. It's about creativity, collaborative working, problem-solving and making a real difference in the world. From developing apps that help people with disabilities to creating climate solutions, from designing the next big game to investigating cybercrime. Computing has transformed all our lives, the pace of change is only increasing, and this course will provide pupils with the skills to be part of the change.

Learning outcomes

This course will enable pupils to develop a wide range of skills that will enhance their future career opportunities. Pupils will gain an understanding of the core concepts in computer science, including computer systems, networks, software, data, security and the ethical, legal, cultural, and environmental impacts of digital technology.

Pupils will explore computational thinking, programming and problem-solving with innovative solutions. Building on this knowledge, pupils will learn to understand and build algorithms (the steps and processes for implementing coding solutions). Then, once the proposed solutions are planned, they will create code, run and test their programmes.

Combining knowledge of computing and practical creative programming skills, this exciting course will develop pupils into critical thinkers who can navigate and understand the digital world safely and effectively.

Bringing pupils' curiosity to understand how things work, persistence to keep trying when things are tricky, creativity to think of new

solutions and an open mind with a willingness to try something new. The course does not require prior coding experience as pupils will be taught everything they need to succeed. They will be provided with an excellent range of materials to support their learning and prepare them for success.

Assessment

The assessment will involve two exam papers to demonstrate learning throughout the course.

The first paper assesses computer systems knowledge, examining systems architecture, memory, networks, cybersecurity, software, and the ethical, legal, cultural and environmental impacts of digital technology.

Paper two examines the practical application of computer science through computational thinking, writing and testing algorithms and programming skills.

Careers

GCSE Computer Science can lead to many post-16 options, including A-level and Level 3 courses, and then onwards to degree and master's programmes. IT is a fundamental part of many sectors, including healthcare, media, education, law, finance, business and entrepreneurship.

There is a wide range of IT sector career options, including AI engineer, data scientist, cybersecurity analyst, machine learning engineer, web developer, IT project manager, data analyst, DevOps engineer, network architect, game/software/mobile developer, research scientist and many others.

Computing skills are in high demand and required in all sectors. Studying computing will open numerous opportunities in the UK and globally.

Drama

IGCSE CAMBRIDGE 0994

General aims

iGCSE Drama offers a creative and enriching opportunity for pupils to develop a diverse set of skills and expertise that will benefit them both on and off the stage.

Throughout the course, pupils will learn to express ideas through physicality and voice. Performance opportunities build self-assurance, which is invaluable at A level and for any career course that requires strong communication skills.

The course is flexible in its approach, enabling pupils to explore various forms of drama, from acting and improvisation to directing and design. Pupils will also gain a comprehensive understanding of dramatic styles, conventions, and significant playwrights. This knowledge provides a deeper appreciation of cultural and historical contexts in the arts.

Drama is inherently collaborative, so pupils learn to work as part of a team, respecting others' ideas and learning how to compromise, delegate, and support one another in their creative exploration. This course develops analytical and critical thinking through self-evaluation and reflection. Pupils also attend theatrical productions, sharpening their ability to assess, interpret, and critique with insight - skills that are valuable for academic and

professional success.

Content of the course and assessment

The specification requires pupils to study practical drama, text work and written analysis.

Paper 1: Understanding Drama (40%)

A written exam that tests pupils' knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre. It includes:

- study and analysis of extracts from two plays
- evaluation of a devised practical performance completed during the course.

Component 2: Practical Work (60%)

Pupils work in groups to create and perform a piece of theatre based on a given stimulus.

They are also required to:

- perform one monologue or solo piece from a play of their choice
- perform one group scene from a different play in a group of two to six pupils
- devised and perform in one play created in a group of two to six pupils.

This component is assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by a Cambridge Assessor.

Fashion and Textiles

CAMBRIDGE O LEVEL 6130

General aims

Fashion and Textiles provide a useful background for many creative career paths and is a valuable life skill. The project-based approach with emphasis on design and making, develops creativity, graphic communication, the application of ICT in the workplace as well as developing technical skills. Pupils must be self-motivated and dedicated. It is not necessary to be able to draw beautifully to take this course, but pupils should have a creative mind backed up with an ability to develop good practical skills and the ability to present work well.

Content of the course

The course builds on the basic skills taught in Key Stage 3 and aims to develop pupils' knowledge, skills, creativity and enjoyment of Fashion and Textiles. Pupils will learn to develop and use a design brief in response to varying consumer needs and contexts. They will explore the design principles of line, form and colour as well as develop and refine their practical skills, to produce high quality desirable textile products. Commercial practice, including the use of ICT (Information Computer Technology), CAD (Computer Aided Design), and CAM (Computer Aided Manufacturing), will be studied as well as contemporary fashion design and accessory design. This is a practical based course demonstrating both design and technical skills supported with theoretical knowledge.

Assessment

Component 1 Fundamentals of Fashion and Textiles Theory

Written Examination 50% externally assessed. The written exam is two hours and covers fibres and fabrics, manufacturing processes, surface decoration, CAD/CAM, health & safety, commercial practices and sustainability.

Component 3 Coursework (there is no component 2)

50% internally assessed and externally moderated.

The coursework project allows pupils to apply knowledge and understanding of textile materials, processes, techniques and design theory from Component 1, to create and develop textile designs and create a textile fashion garment and bag, which should be based upon the same theme and context chosen from the syllabus. The coursework items should be unique designs, allowing candidates to demonstrate creativity and experimentation with different construction processes, colour and decorative techniques. A single portfolio is required, outlining the research, design development, planning and evaluation carried out to produce the two coursework items.

This course will be graded A*- E and will be examined early in October 2027.

Geography

EDEXCEL 1GA0

General aims

Geography focuses on the issues that will face pupils as citizens of the future. For example:

- Will the Earth be able to provide us with all the resources we take for granted?
- What really causes 'natural disasters' such as floods, tropical storms and drought? How can people in different parts of the world cope with them?
- How do coastal processes affect or threaten our future and how - or indeed should - we manage them?
- How are our cities changing around the world? What are the problems we might face in cities in the future?

This course will be enjoyed by those who want to study a subject that:

- is relevant to the world we live in, and to our future
- encourages discussion of current affairs and issues
- focuses on the environment
- involves practical work outdoors
- is studied through investigation, not just listening and reading
- develops a full range of skills that will be useful in the other subjects and in employment.

Content of the course and assessment

The Physical Environment: The changing landscapes of the UK – including coastal and river landscapes; weather hazards and climate change - case studies of tropical storms and drought; ecosystems, biodiversity and management - case studies of tropical rainforests and temperate deciduous woodlands. This is 37.5% of the final grade (90 marks) for a 1 hour 45 minutes written paper.

The Human Environment: Changing cities - two studies including a UK city and a city in a developing or emerging country; global

development - a study of a developing or emerging country; resource management - a study of energy or water. This is 37.5% of the final grade (90 marks) for a 1 hour 30 minutes written paper.

Geographical Investigations: Fieldwork and UK Challenges:

Fieldwork: One physical and one human investigation; UK Challenges - a study drawing across knowledge and understanding from The Physical Environment and The Human Environment. This represents 25% of the final grade (60 marks) for a 1 hour 15 minutes written paper. The Examination Board expectation is that each pupil completes their field work for Paper 3 in a location that contrasts to where she lives. To meet this requirement, there will be a three-day residential trip to the North downs, Surrey; the cost for this will be approximately £400. This will take place in the summer term of Year 10.

History

OCR J411GF

General aims

History GCSE is a stimulating, challenging and wide-ranging option and we hope to inspire pupils to be open-minded, yet critical, citizens of the twenty-first century.

The aims of the GCSE course are:

- to make history meaningful - we encourage pupils to become curious, to develop their own opinions based on a respect for evidence and to build a deeper understanding of the present by engaging with and questioning the past
- to develop a wide and deep knowledge – pupils will gain knowledge of significant historical issues that will help them in their further study of history and in making sense of their world
- to engage in historical enquiry and understanding interpretations – pupils will be consistently encouraged to develop their own ideas and understanding by looking at the way the past is continually viewed from different points of view; this ensures that learners are consistently thinking about how and why it is possible to arrive at different interpretations of the same events
- to use historical sources – we will look at a range of authentic source material including eyewitness accounts, documents, historical sites, archaeological evidence and the writings of historians
- study diversity – we will look at a variety of periods from a variety of perspectives, to develop an understanding of social and cultural diversity within a local, British and global context
- discover about ‘History Around Us’ – we will study our local historic environment, which is a stimulating and life-enhancing way of engaging with history, and will enhance our pupils’ developing sense of identity
- encourage enjoyable and rigorous learning

Content of the course

The GCSE History course offers an exciting opportunity to gain a better understanding of the world in which we live and to fire our pupils’ enthusiasm for the past. At GCSE we try to explain some of the significant issues that have shaped the world, country and local area we live in:

- How has life in Britain changed over the previous centuries?
- What was the significance of crucial events in British history?
- How have local historical sites been developed, shaped and interpreted?
- What was it like to live under a dictatorship?
- How similar and different is the modern day to past eras?

Assessment

The GCSE is assessed solely by written examination. There are five strands to the OCR GCSE History B Syllabus, which are assessed over three examinations:

The first examination (1 hour 45 minutes paper) will contain the British Thematic study on Migration to Britain from c.1250 to the present day (20%) and the British Depth Study on the Norman Conquest, 1065-1087 (20%).

The second examination (1 hour paper) will be based on a site study analysing History Around Us, where we will look at the Kelvedon Hatch Secret Nuclear Bunker and the history of the Cold War (20%).

The third examination (1 hour 45 minutes paper) will contain the World Period Study studying the Making of America, 1789-1900 (20%) and the World Depth Study looking at Living under Nazi Rule, 1933-1945 (20%). As part of the course, all pupils visit Kelvedon Hatch Secret Nuclear Bunker to perform a local site study; they will also be offered the opportunity to visit Kraków and Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, to further their understanding of Living Under Nazi Rule.

History (continued)

OCR J411GF

Whilst History is not only a valuable subject in its own right, it also builds bridges to many other subjects and teaches skills that prove useful in working life:

- A greater understanding of current affairs and important events in the world
- Experience in judging the reliability of information
- Learning to look at problems and arguments in a balanced and unbiased way
- Developing skilful oral and written communication
- Becoming an independent thinker

Hospitality and Catering

WJEC EDUQAS LEVEL 1/2 VOCATIONAL AWARD - TECHNICAL AWARD AA 5409QA

General aims

This course focuses on two areas: The hospitality and catering industry, and hospitality and catering in action. Pupils develop knowledge and understanding of a range of topics: hospitality and catering provisions, how they operate, health and safety laws / legislations and food safety. Pupils learn about nutrition and develop food preparation, knife and cooking skills as well as the transferable skills of problem solving, organisation, time management, creativity and independence.

The practical element of this course requires pupils to bring pre weighed ingredients to weekly to lessons in Year 10.

Food is one of the fastest growing industries with many varied jobs of offer. Future career opportunities include becoming a chef, becoming a dietician, food journalist, working in product development, working as a home economist, or in events management, hospitality, front of house, conference management, as a buyer, production manager, public relations, hygiene control, working in health promotion, technical management, food quality, food preparation and retail.

Assessment

Unit 1 (40%): The hospitality and catering industry is externally assessed with a written examination that lasts 80 minutes.

You will be graded:

Level 1 Pass

- Level 1 Merit
- Level 1 Distinction
- Level 1 Distinction
- Level 2 Pass
- Level 2 Merit
- Level 2 Distinction
- Level 2 Distinction*

Unit 2 (60%): Hospitality and catering in action is internally assessed. This involves the completion of a piece of controlled assessment in school under examination conditions (NEA). Pupils are given a brief and must safely plan, prepare, cook and present dishes to satisfy the task.

Modern Languages

FRENCH EDEXCEL 1FR1 GERMAN EDEXCEL 1GN1 SPANISH EDEXCEL 1SP1

We live in a multilingual, multicultural world. Only 6% of the world's population speak English as a first language and 75% of the world's population don't speak any English at all. Being able to communicate in more than one language will allow pupils to become global citizens and will put them on a par with their multilingual international peers.

Learning a language is not just about being able to speak it; it is also about learning about your own and other cultures and developing your intercultural competence. Language learning is a multi-sensory experience in which pupils will be tested, equally, in their ability to listen, speak, read and write.

Languages offered are French, German and Spanish.

Modern Languages are assessed at GCSE in the four skill areas:

- Speaking (read aloud, role play, picture task and conversation)
- Listening (listening comprehension questions with answers in English and a short dictation into French/Spanish/German)
- Reading (reading comprehension in English and a short translation into English)
- Writing (Foundation- picture-based task, writing task and short translation into French/Spanish/German and Higher: 2 x writing tasks and a short translation into French/Spanish/German)

All examinations are set and marked by Edexcel. They are taken at the end of Year 11.

Foundation and Higher papers are available so that every pupil can demonstrate her skills to the best of her ability.

The course and assessments are designed to include cultural and authentic content wherever possible, showing how language is used in real life.

As communication skills are very important in language study, visits abroad are encouraged. We hope that all the pupils will take the opportunity to visit the relevant country during the course, either on trips organised by the school or through individual arrangements.

Music

OCR J536

General aims

GCSE Music aims to give a solid foundation to both hobby and career musicians and accommodates a range of abilities. It focuses on the core activities of Understanding Music, Performing and Composing. As most pupils take performing lessons privately, some of the preparation for the performance component is usually undertaken by pupils' instrumental/voice teacher.

Post-16 study can include A level Music, A level Music Technology or Performing Arts courses. Many Music pupils maintain it as a valued hobby throughout adulthood, whereas music for others can be a career. It can be followed, for example, through performing, composing (e.g. for TV and film, stage, concert hall), teaching/lecturing, sound technology (e.g. in a theatre or studio), music journalism, music therapy, education/arts management and consultancy.

Content of the course and assessment

The GCSE Music course comprises three components:

Listening and Appraising (40%):

This is a listening paper which is 1 hour 30 minutes and is taken at the end of the course. Pupils study a wide variety of genres from four areas of study: Concerto Through Time, Rhythms Around the World, Film and Computer Game Music, Conventions of Pop.

Performing Music (30%):

Pupils perform one solo and one ensemble piece on a chosen instrument or voice. Those who have taken instrumental/vocal examinations will find they are familiar with this requirement which makes Music an excellent choice for them. It is important that those taking Music GCSE gain performing experience through participation in school groups such as Choir, Chamber Choir or Orchestra and taking part in school concerts and events.

Composing Music (30%):

Pupils are required to compose two pieces of music; one composed in Year 10 (which is a pupil set brief) and one composition in Year 11 (which is an Examination Board set brief). It is possible to compose in a wide variety of styles and for any combination of instruments/voices. Popular choices include songs of any sort and solos/duets for any instrument with piano accompaniment.

Physical Education

SPORTS AND COACHING PRINCIPLES (TECHNICAL AWARD)

WJEC EDUQAS 5259QA

General aims

The Sports and Coaching Principles course is designed to encourage and enable pupils to develop practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of the factors that underpin coaching in the vocational sector; they will also then be able to apply this knowledge to improve performance. The course will be a mixture of theory and practical throughout Year 10 with more focus on unit 2 and 3. With Year 11 being the completion of unit 3 and the theory work for the external exam of unit 1. Pupils will be expected to take part in physical activities that they may not themselves necessarily opt to use for unit 2 or 3 but that others in the group might – they are expected to support their peers when they are leading to the best of their ability.

Content of the course and assessment

Unit 1 – Theory – Fitness for sport: Introduces learners to the adaptations that take place in the body following exercise, how training can lead to improvements in fitness, and the planning of training programmes. The aim of this unit is to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to plan training programmes to improve the fitness of individuals. This is worth 40% and is a 1 hour 20 minute written exam.

Unit 2 – Improving sporting performance:

Introduces learners to how different areas of sporting performance can be improved. The aim of this unit is to provide learners with the knowledge and understanding needed to be able to analyse sporting performance, identify strengths and weaknesses and plan for improvement. This is a controlled assessment (NEA) that will last approximately 4 hours and is worth 25% of the qualification. The assessment is the completion of an assignment brief provided by the exam board which includes a scenario and several tasks.

Unit 3 – Coaching Principles: Introduces learners to the principles involved in sports coaching. The aim of this unit is to provide learners with the appropriate knowledge and understanding to be able to plan, lead and evaluate a coaching session within a sporting activity. This is a controlled assessment (NEA) that will last approximately 6 hours and is worth 35% of the qualification. The assessment is the completion of an assignment brief provided by the exam board which includes a scenario and several tasks.

Religious Studies

EDEXCEL 1RBOZK

General aims

Religious Studies at GCSE enables pupils to study Christianity and Judaism as a lived religion in the United Kingdom and throughout the world along with its beliefs, teachings, and practices. Pupils will have the opportunity to explore how faith impact the followers' views on the world with particular focus on; family, matters of life and death, crime and punishment, and peace and conflict. When examining ethical issues, other worldviews are considered (such as Atheist and Humanist) and pupils will have the opportunity to reflect on, and think critically about, their own ideas and belief systems.

A good level of written English along with good revision skills are necessary for this course.

Content of the course and assessment

The examination consists of two papers:

The first paper covers Christian beliefs and practices, the Christian family, marriage and relationships, and issues on life and death – including topics such as abortion, euthanasia and the afterlife.

The second paper covers Jewish beliefs and practices, peace and conflict, crime and punishment - including topics such as the treatment of criminals and the death penalty.

Pupils can travel to Kraków and visit Auschwitz.



St Mary's
Colchester