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From the Head

The first year in the Senior School heralds the beginning of an exciting phase in the lives of our pupils. St Edmund's takes pride in its unique House system, its family atmosphere, its breadth of achievement, its sensible emphasis on academic work, its particular excellence in the performing and visual arts, and the sense of pride which permeates the school.

This is an important booklet which aims to present you with a more thorough look at the work of the academic departments than can be offered in the prospectus or on the website. It also offers an insight into the longer-term objectives of GCSE and A-level success. Principally, however, it specifies what a pupil will be studying in each of the various Lower Fifth Form courses, both in the subjects which will be at the very core of public examination preparation, and in those which will become optional at the end of the first year at St Edmund's.

Introduction

This booklet complements the routine administrative details which are contained in the Parents' Handbook. It presents a guide to the work of the academic departments during the Lower Fifth Form (Year 9).

As an independent school, St Edmund's is not governed by the Statutory Orders of the Education Reform Act. This enables us to provide an academic programme that, in its breadth and balance, far exceeds the requirements of the National Curriculum. Nevertheless, we do, of course, fulfil the main aims of the Act, which requires that the curriculum be "balanced and broadly based, to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life". Our curriculum broadly follows the programmes of study for the final year of Key Stage 3. We believe that our independence gives us the flexibility to offer the curriculum best suited to the particular range of abilities and interests of our pupils. The academic departments have created schemes of work that stimulate the pupils' interest and enthusiasm, and develop sound study skills whilst laying solid foundations for GCSE success.

Lower Fifth Form Curriculum

	Number of Lessons per Week
Art	2
English	5
French/EAL	5
Geography	3
History	3
Information and Communications Technology	1
Mathematics	5
Music	2
Physical Education	2
PSHE	1
Religious Studies	1
Science:	
Biology	3
Chemistry	3
Physics	3

Optional Subject(s):

Drama	3
Latin	3
Spanish	3
Technology	2

Option 1: Spanish or Drama

Option 2: Latin instead of Technology and 1 RS lesson

Art and Design

At St Edmund's, each individual pupil is encouraged to develop powers of expression and design and problem-solving capabilities, in a variety of media.

Investigating and Making

- *Observation and Recording, Drawing and Visualisation*: Pupils are taught to look. Drawing skills are not exclusive to the naturally talented. Drawing and visualising can be taught and go hand-in-hand with learning how to look. The fact that some pupils will have a greater aptitude than others is true of all areas of the curriculum. If pupils are given encouragement and their experiences are those of having achieved, then their ability will improve.
- *Learning Skills and Use of Materials*: Within the department we encourage pupils to experiment with a variety of materials and processes: ceramics, printmaking, painting and drawing, sculpture, photography, textiles, graphics and the use of the department's multimedia computers.
- *Personal Expression/Confidence*: We treat pupils as individuals and have the time to inspire them and to promote a learning environment where, on the basis of their achievement and progress, the pupils are rewarded by frequent exhibitions of their work.
- *Critical Studies and Appraisal*: Pupils are encouraged to look at the different kinds of art and to respond to the work of artists and designers through their own work.

In the first four weeks of the L5 year, all pupils participate in an intensive drawing course. They then choose to study two out of three options for the remainder of the year. The choices are 2D Art, Ceramics and New Media. The courses offered in each of these options are based on mini GCSE-style projects to give students an insight into the options they have in M5 and U5. Sketchbooks are used to record ideas, research artists' work and to develop ideas.

2D Art

This includes drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed media and an introduction to digital photography.

Ceramics

Pupils develop ideas in their sketchbooks and translate them in clay using slab and coiling techniques.

New Media

This option gives pupils the opportunity to work in two and three dimensions with wire, willow, modmesh, modrock, papier mache, plastics and textile techniques. They explore various forms of fine art and design including sculpture, fashion and textiles. Ideas are recorded and developed in the sketchbook.

There is a weekly art club for L5 to extend their learning. This allows them to work alongside GCSE and A Level students.

A trip to one of the major London Galleries is arranged in the Lent term.

Drama

Essentially this year-long course allows pupils to develop a set of fundamental dramatic skills that will enable them to progress to further study at GCSE level. Various schemes of work introduce pupils to key skills and techniques that range from storytelling, use of improvisation and working with scripts to basic stagecraft and design concepts.

The work done in the Lower Fifth year also provides a range of opportunities for pupils to express themselves as well as aiding the development of imagination and artistic awareness. It increases and improves social interaction through group work and the use of role-play and helps pupils develop their mental agility, fluency of speech, self-knowledge, self-respect, self-discipline and self-confidence.

Through the study of dramatic technique and the use of different texts that originate from a variety of social, cultural and historical contexts, the course also helps our young people to learn about the wider world and to mature emotionally, preparing them for adult life. The benefits do not only accrue through pupils participating actively in drama; they can also learn from observing others, particularly if they are encouraged to evaluate peers' work constructively.

English

The English Department provides an exciting and challenging course at Lower Fifth Form level. The aims are: to encourage the best in creative and factual writing; to improve accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar; to promote enjoyment and judgment in reading, including an introduction to Shakespeare, and to develop good speaking and listening habits in all pupils.

The department offers more than the basic minimum required by the National Curriculum and provides for both Junior School Form 8 and external entrants. Each pupil is expected to read regularly. Books to supplement the regular class readers can be acquired through book boxes or purchased from the school bookshop *Paperback Paradise*. The department is happy to recommend titles. In addition, the Library offers a selection of fiction.

The department tests spelling at regular intervals throughout the year; attention to basic writing skills is a high priority, not only for progress towards GCSE, but also to provide a secure foundation for all writing. Work is set regularly and marked carefully. There is a chance to write imaginatively and argumentatively, informally and formally, and to develop style and technique. Opportunities for writing poetry are also seen as an essential part of a varied literature study programme.

Speaking and listening, worth 20% at GCSE, are practised through reading, debating, group discussion and presentation. Extra-curricular opportunities are provided for public speaking and drama, and participation is encouraged in prize-essay and poetry competitions.

On entry, in line with school policy, all pupils have specialist spelling and reading tests. This ensures that any difficulties are detected early and, if necessary, followed up by our qualified Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Mrs Sandra Williams, in one-to-one tutorials, at a subsidised cost to parents.

Overseas pupils are helped in small groups by Mrs Helen Theakston, our specialist in English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Geography

According to Michael Palin; “Without Geography, you are nowhere!”
We agree with him!

Geography is all around us everyday and everywhere. To be a good global citizen pupils will develop an understanding of world we live in; we hope to build on the foundations set in Junior School Geography to develop a life-long interest in the subject. One of our key objectives is teaching pupils how to learn, and enquiry, problem solving and thinking skills activities will form the basis of classroom learning. In Geography we will be investigating how the planet influences people and how we are, in turn, having a dramatic influence on the planet. Throughout the course pupils will develop and improve a wide range of transferable skills including drawing and interpreting maps, drawing sketches, diagrams and graphs, interpreting photographs and satellite images, as well as refining powers of analysis and ability to express thoughts and ideas in clear and detailed writing. These will, we hope, prove valuable for other subjects particularly science, history and maths.

The areas covered try to develop and understanding of the wider world and important global issues such as the impacts of Natural Hazards, Development and Poverty and the Destruction of Ecosystems whilst keeping in touch with the concept of ‘Think Global, Act Local’. We hope to prepare pupils to be global citizens aware of the demands of sustainability for the benefit of all those on the planet.

History

History is an interesting and diverse subject, which encourages pupils to delve enthusiastically into the past. In the Lower Fifth Form pupils study a range from the following topics: British History 1900-1914, the causes of the Great War, the First World War, and the Second World War. These courses allow pupils to be exposed to the range of skills required by historians and the range of sources they can use, including the Internet, documentaries, novels and films.

During the course of the year opportunities are given to do research work using a range of sources including primary sources. Additionally, there is an introduction to important GCSE skills to provide a clear awareness of the demands of study at that level.

As part of the course all pupils go on a study day to the Ypres battlefield on the Western Front.

Information and Communications Technology

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is fundamental to most walks in life; it is an exciting and ever-changing subject. In the Lower Fifth Form pupils have a dedicated ICT lesson each week. They learn how to use a wide range of computer applications including word processors, spreadsheets, presentation, databases, web authoring, the internet and email, and basic control processing. Importantly, they will be taught how to use applications in an effective, efficient and business-like manner.

Lower Fifth Form teaching provides foundation knowledge to progress pupils' study further and give them the skill and confidence to use IT in other subject areas.

Latin

Latin is offered primarily to those who have already spent two or three years studying the language, though complete beginners with linguistic ability can also achieve resounding success. The course is designed to develop and improve pupils' awareness of the ancient world and its impact on life today, and to help them progress linguistically through translation from and into Latin and through comprehension exercises. It will also demonstrate that Latin is still in use a great deal in everyday language.

The emphasis in the Lower Fifth Form is very much to enjoy studying both the language and the civilisation aspects – life in Roman Britain and Roman Egypt – while equipping pupils with the foundations that they will need for the two year GCSE course which begins in the Middle Fifth Form (Year 10). Students follow the Cambridge Latin Course making full use of its extensive online resources.

Apart from its own intrinsic value, the study of Latin can help in many other disciplines, especially English and modern foreign languages.

Mathematics

The emphasis during the Lower Fifth Form is on the building of confidence in essential mathematical skills and techniques. New concepts in algebra, data handling, and shape and space are introduced, and familiar ideas in these topic areas are developed further. Computational facility is emphasized, including mental arithmetic and pen-and-paper calculation as well as the efficient and confident use of calculators. Pupils are also encouraged to develop their capacity for logical thought and problem-solving.

Pupils are taught in sets grouped by ability, the key difference between them being the speed with which the material is covered. The setting is flexible and reviewed regularly to ensure each pupil is being taught at a pace appropriate for him or her.

The syllabus is grouped into five main headings:

- *Using and Applying Mathematics*: choosing appropriate mathematical techniques to use in solving problems.
- *Number*: developing knowledge of decimals, fractions, percentages, ratios, negative numbers, standard form, accuracy and rounding.
- *Algebra*: using algebraic ideas in the investigation of number patterns, graphs, functions, as well as the solution of equations and inequalities.
- *Shape, Space and Measure*: looking at important shapes and solids such as triangles, quadrilaterals, cones and spheres. We consider their symmetries and angle properties, and the units appropriate for measurement. This section also introduces pupils to Pythagoras' theorem, and ideas of co-ordinate geometry and trigonometry.
- *Data-handling*: the collection, analysis and interpretation of numerical information, together with introductory work on probability.

Modern Foreign Languages

(French, Spanish)

Languages are part of the cultural richness of the world in which we live; the ability to understand and communicate in another language is a lifelong skill for education, employment and leisure.

The Modern Foreign Languages Department enables pupils to continue their previous study of French while offering also the opportunity to take a beginners' course in Spanish. The aim in both is to enable pupils to acquire good linguistic skills while making language learning an enjoyable experience. Both languages may subsequently be taken to GCSE and GCE A level.

French

In principle all pupils are expected to take French in the Lower Fifth Form and to continue with at least one modern foreign language to GCSE. Exceptions may be made in the case of pupils from overseas and others who have no previous knowledge of French, particularly if they have an alternative foreign language.

Pupils are assigned to one of four sets to enable them to work at the level and pace most appropriate to their ability and previous knowledge. However, the progress of all pupils is under constant review and a change of set can be made at any time if staff consider it would be beneficial. All four sets study the same topics to facilitate transfer between teaching groups but the depth of study and range of vocabulary and grammar varies from set to set.

The syllabus prepares pupils for the GCSE specification of the AQA examining board though it is equally relevant to other GCSE specifications. Teaching methods give opportunities for communication in pairs and for group work, and seek to involve pupils in a variety of activities, including games, rôle-play, surveys, songs, television and the use of ICT. The foreign language is used routinely for practical tasks and pupils are also encouraged to be creative in their spoken and written French.

Spanish

Spanish is a major world language spoken by millions around the world and as such offers those who speak it enhanced travel, work and study opportunities.

Spanish is an optional subject for pupils in Lower Fifth Form. The course gives an excellent chance to sample this subject and then to decide whether to continue study for a further two years leading to a GCSE qualification. This is a vibrant and exciting course which provides a sound grammatical base whilst placing lots of emphasis on the spoken word.

The course is aimed primarily at those pupils who have enjoyed learning a foreign language and have demonstrated the skills and enthusiasm to take on a second. No previous experience of studying Spanish is necessary. Pupil numbers are limited for this option, and a selection process will be implemented if demand exceeds supply.

Music

The Lower Fifth Form course looks at music from a broad range of cultures and traditions, and focuses on the three main elements of music, namely performing, listening and appraising, and composing. Thus the Lower Fifth Form course logically follows on from the first two years of Key Stage 3 and provides an ideal platform for those wishing to take the subject to GCSE and beyond, as well as providing a practical, enjoyable course of study for everyone.

The content of the course covers all styles and genres of music with composition and improvisation being at the centre of class work. Topics include a revision of musical elements, forms and structures, music for television and film, 20th century art music, including minimalism, calypso, reggae and rap.

All Lower Fifth Form lessons are taught in the Music School with state-of-the-art facilities. Pupils use the Yamaha keyboards and specialist notation software, including Sibelius 5 and Cubase SE3 as well as all manner of percussion including ethnic and non-western instruments.

Physical Education and Games

Pupils have two lessons of PE and one games afternoon per week. Facilities include many games pitches, a sports hall, a gym, tennis courts, squash courts, a heated outdoor swimming pool and a pitch-and-putt golf course.

The Lower Fifth Form programme not only builds on the pupils' previous sporting achievements but introduces them to new sports and provides a foundation for those wishing to follow the GCSE course in Physical Education in Middle and Upper Fifth Forms (Years 10 and 11).

There are opportunities to represent House and School in nearly all the sports offered. Many pupils over the years have represented both District and County at this age level and every encouragement is given to talented pupils to gain representative honours. Expert guidance is given by the staff of the Physical Education department, and by members of staff who are qualified coaches.

There are opportunities to participate in the following sports:

Athletics	Cross-country	Karate	Squash
Badminton	Dance	Netball	Swimming
Basketball	Fitness	Racketball	Tennis
Climbing	Golf	Rounders	Volleyball
Cricket	Hockey	Soccer	

Religious Studies

Lower Fifth Form classes meet once a week with a member of the Religious Studies Department. During the course of the year we study two units, the first being rites of passage and the second being contemporary moral issues. In the first unit, we consider the significant events in the life of an individual and how those events are marked by different religious communities. For each significant event (birth, coming of age, death) we look at the Christian celebrations and the celebrations or commemorations of two other religions. Similarly in the second unit, we look at contemporary issues, such as crime and punishment, issues of life and death (abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering), from the perspective of Christianity and two other religions. We attempt to understand how religious belief can affect our moral behaviour.

PSHE

(Personal, Social and Health Education)

The PSHE programme looks in depth at how we organise our lives and our society, and how we approach the social and moral issues which affect us all. It is an arena in which teenagers can explore, debate, talk freely, and learn from the experience of others, as well as from informed adults. Issues covered include drugs, alcohol use and abuse, smoking, sex and relationships, sexuality, rules, boundaries, morality, decision-making, respect for others, conflict management, parenthood, homelessness, animal welfare, food and diet, abortion, euthanasia, and bullying. A vital part of the PSHE syllabus is to equip our pupils with the knowledge that they need to deal with the increasingly complex world in which we live, and to ensure that they are able to make informed choices. Many of the issues that we discuss are topics on which young people have strongly-held opinions. The opportunity to express their own opinions and hear the ideas of others in a supportive and safe environment is a vital part of our pupils' emotional and moral development.

Science

All pupils have three periods each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics per week in well-equipped laboratories.

Our objectives during the year are to:

- give pupils a broad experience of practical, investigative Science;
- lay the foundation for the GCSE Science qualifications;
- ensure that new pupils entering St Edmund's at Lower Fifth Form level have, by the end of the year, the same scientific knowledge as pupils who have progressed through our own Junior School;
- ensure that all pupils, whatever their ability, have the scientific knowledge to make informed decisions about scientific issues that will affect them in later life.

Biology

The course aims to provide a solid foundation on which pupils can build for success in the Middle and Upper Fifth Forms. The work encourages pupils to develop an enthusiasm and respect for the living world and 'things biological' whilst developing a scientific approach to practical work, problem solving and new situations. The foundations are also laid for the Investigative Skills Assignments (coursework) which form part of the GCSE award. Topics covered during the year include: enzymes, microbes, biotechnology, diet and health, skeleton and muscles, nerves and senses, and ecology all of which have a large practical emphasis.

Chemistry

This is a largely experimental subject although some time is also spent on more theoretical ideas such as atomic structure and kinetic theory. Pupils are introduced to the periodic table and electrolysis, they study the reactivity series, the extraction of metal, acids, bases and neutralisation, and they investigate a wide variety of chemical reactions. We make the work relevant to the modern world, and subjects like industrial processes, the finite nature of resources and pollution (both causes and remedies) are included in the course.

Physics

The course is based largely upon practical work; it introduces topics that will be covered in more detail in the GCSE course. Pupils start by investigating the properties of waves through examples of sound waves, light and other electromagnetic waves. They then study forces and their effects and energy and power. Finally, they are introduced to static and current electricity, laying a good foundation for the start of the GCSE course.

Technology

Pupils follow a foundation course in Technology during the Lower Fifth Form. The course covers the three GCSE Technology disciplines: Food Technology, Graphic Products and Resistant Materials.

Food Technology

The Food Technology course covers ingredients, food products, food packaging and labelling, nutritional analysis and food science. Pupils will gain a good understanding of hygiene and safety and will acquire the ability to assess quality through product testing. Pupils will develop skills in food preparation and make comparisons between home-made and bought products.

Graphic Products

This course builds upon the foundation work done in Years 7 and 8 and introduces new and more complex techniques. Much of the emphasis will be on three-dimensional drawing systems. For some, the work covered will be of direct use if they choose to continue to GCSE level in this subject but, for the rest, it will be of general educational interest.

Resistant Materials

During the year, Lower Fifth Form pupils undertake a design-and-make project which adds to the skills acquired in Years 7 and 8. Pupils initially carry out a studio-based task using sketches and CAD to prepare a mini design folder. The exercise continues in the workshop and is fully realised as a light-emitting diode nightlight. This project has been selected as a good introduction to the requirements of GCSE Resistant Materials Technology.

Notes