



**ST EDMUND'S  
SCHOOL**  
CANTERBURY

# THE RIGHT START

**CURRICULUM FOR LOWER FIFTH  
(YEAR 9)**

**2022 - 2023**









# Contents

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Introduction	2
Lower Fifth Form Curriculum	3
Art and Design: 2D Art, Ceramics, New Media	4
Computer Science	5
Design and Technology: Product Design, Food Preparation and Nutrition	6,7
Drama	8
English	9
Geography	10
History	11
Latin	12
Mathematics	13
Modern Languages	14
Music	15
Physical Education and Games	16
PSHEE	17
Religious Studies and Philosophy	18
Science: Biology, Chemistry, Physics	19

# Introduction

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This booklet provides an overview of the various courses available to our Lower Fifth pupils. It is, of course, a vital transition year in which the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed at GCSE are put into place. The curriculum in Lower Fifth is designed to be broad and diverse yet prepare the ground for GCSE study by exploring concepts in detail. Much of the curriculum is compulsory but pupils have a choice from three option blocks when it comes to language options, and some subjects appear within a carousel arrangement to extend the opportunity of studying a variety of subjects before specialising. We arrange the curriculum in this way to prepare for GCSE and to provide learners with a truly enriching experience.

We try to keep class sizes at St Edmund's small, even in comparison with many other independent schools: the average class size of a Lower Fifth lesson is around 15 pupils. We recognise that pupils flourish best when their individual learning needs are understood and addressed in a close and supportive learning environment. Our curriculum is tailored to suit the needs of individual learners but is underpinned by a growth mindset and belief that all pupils can learn and develop. In English, Maths and Science, where setting by ability is used, this setting is reviewed regularly with planned opportunities for pupils to move between groups. Pupil progress is carefully monitored during the year and parents are kept informed through our Academic Review Card (ARC) system, written reports and parents' evenings. However, regular ongoing communication between school and home is also conducted on a less formal basis via conversations with Housemasters and teachers.

The school also seeks to foster understanding and respect for physical, social, health and fundamental values (such as democracy, freedom, tolerance and mutual respect) throughout the whole school community in a variety of ways. These include whole school assemblies and Chapel services, Curiosity Shop lectures, citizenship as part of PSHEE, the tutorial programme, trips to Parliament and other important UK institutions (when not constrained by COVID restrictions), questionnaires to test pupil understanding of key concepts like "democracy" and "representation" and other opportunities within the academic curriculum. This is particularly (though not exclusively) through subjects like History, Geography, English and Religious Studies.

If you have any questions about the Lower Fifth Curriculum, or any other aspect of the school's academic life, please feel free to contact me at [cfs@stedmunds.org.uk](mailto:cfs@stedmunds.org.uk).

Kind regards,



Dr Cathy Sotillo  
Director of Studies

# Lower Fifth Form Curriculum

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## Compulsory Subjects

Subject	Lessons per fortnight (55/60 mins)
Art and Design	2
Computer Science	2
Design and Technology	2
Drama (in carousel with Music)	3
English	8
Games	4
Geography	4
History	4
Mathematics	7
Physical Education	2
PSHEE	2
Religious Studies/Philosophy	3
Science:	
Biology	3
Chemistry	3
Physics	3
Friday afternoon Skills & Services (week B)	2

## Optional Subjects

Your daughter or son will choose three subjects from the optional subjects below:

Option Subject	Lessons per fortnight (55/60 mins)
Latin	2
French	2
German	2
Spanish	2
English as an Additional Language	2-6 (depending on need)

# Art and Design

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The Lower Fifth Art course is designed to stimulate visual awareness. It enables pupils of varying artistic abilities to experience, and enjoy using, a variety of media, to observe, analyse and develop ideas and to express themselves in visual terms. Pupils are offered the opportunity to experiment with a wide range of materials and processes, including ceramics, printmaking, drawing and painting, sculpture, photography, textiles and through the department's multimedia computers. Pupils are encouraged to look at different examples of Art and Design, responding to the work of artists and designers through their own work.

Pupils work in three different areas over the course of the year. The experiences offered in each of these areas are based on mini GCSE-style projects to give pupils an insight into the options they have in Middle and Upper Fifth. Sketchbooks are used to record and develop ideas and research artists' work.

## 2D Art

Using the theme Colour and Pattern pupils explore drawing, painting and mixed media approaches to a variety of natural and manmade starting points. This may include some digital photography to record and develop ideas. Pupils research, explore and develop ideas in their sketchbook, leading to a final piece in their choice of media.

## Ceramics

The theme Natural Form is used as a starting point for individual projects. Pupils use sketchbooks to research, record and develop ideas which are translated into three dimensions using clay. There is an emphasis on form, colour and pattern in natural objects.

## New Media

Pupils are introduced to the work of a range of artists and designers. They respond in two and three dimensions using traditional as well as unconventional media and processes to develop creative and independent ideas and outcomes, whilst learning new techniques. Preps take the form of sketchbook work as well as some inventive three dimensional pieces.

Lower Fifth pupils are encouraged to attend art clinics after school to extend their class work.

# Computer Science

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Computer technologies are everywhere; from the way we communicate, to the cars we drive; the movies we watch; and the ways businesses and governments deal with us. The demand to make hardware smaller, work faster, and provide access to new and exciting software has never been greater. Understanding the different dimensions of computing is part of the necessary skill set for life in the 21st century.

Computing in Lower Fifth provides students with the opportunity to develop and extend capability, creativity and knowledge in the Information Technology, Digital Media and Computer Science disciplines at sufficient depth to progress to GCSE level.

Students develop and apply a wide range of transferable skills deemed essential for any career path option. These include ICT competence, computational thinking and problem-solving; collaborative working and leadership; numeracy; and research and design techniques.

In addition, this course cultivates and maintains a crucial understanding of how changes in technology affect safety, including new ways to protect their online privacy and identity, and how to identify and report a range of concerns.

# Design and Technology

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Designing and Making is the most powerful way that we solve problems, express ideas and shape our world. What and how we make defines who we are, and communicates who we want to be. For many people, making is critical for survival. For others, it is a chosen vocation: a way of thinking, inventing and innovating. For some it is simply a delight to be able to shape a material or combine ingredients and say "I made that."

The Lower Fifth course builds on pupils' previous knowledge and enables a deeper understanding of the design process. All of the subject areas share the common themes of designing and making, and foster skills in all the practical aspects of the subject. Pupils undertake a variety of projects and work to produce products that are fit for purpose, taking into account the needs and wants of different user groups of people.

## Product Design

In Product Design schemes of work are designed to encourage pupils to be able to design and make products with creativity and originality using a range of materials and techniques. Packaging, labelling and instructions are encouraged as part of the complete design proposal and advertising, points of sale, etc. can be used to supplement the making experience and help create products which can be evaluated for their commercial viability.

Pupils will develop an understanding of the iterative design process and an appreciation for the history of design. Pupils will develop their knowledge regarding the working characteristics of a range of materials such as wood, metal, plastics and textiles. Practical skills are developed through various manufacturing activities such as sublimation printing, the use of smart materials, 3D printing and traditional workshop skills. Focus is also given to advertising, product branding and marketing techniques.



# Food Preparation and Nutrition

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With the increase in popularity for all things culinary, St Edmund's are pleased to give our students the opportunity to take their cookery lessons to another level, ignite creativity and inspire in 'all things food', using a variety of presentation skills to deliver a mixture of modern and traditional cuisine. This course enables pupils to cook for a range of different occasions and a number of people.

Pupils learn how to cook from scratch, how to work safely in a kitchen environment and how to produce stunning and creative dishes such as Indian spiced dhal with rice, lamb koftas with pomegranate, salmon with a mustard and dill crust and a menu of sumptuous desserts. Awards for 'Chef of the Week' are hotly contested during this challenging course.

# Drama

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This course inspires pupils to develop a set of fundamental dramatic skills that will enable them to progress to study the subject at GCSE level. Lessons introduce pupils to key skills and techniques that range from storytelling, use of improvisation and working with scripts to basic stagecraft. Furthermore, pupils learn about a wide range of general topics which are studied from a dramatic perspective.

The work done in the Lower Fifth year 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, knowledge, self-discipline and self-confidence.

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

# English

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The English department provides an exciting and challenging course at Lower Fifth level. Pupils are introduced to the origins and development of English and English literature through the close study of grammar, work on etymology and the reading of non-fiction excerpts and passages extracted from Homer, Virgil, Beowulf, Milton, Spenser and Chaucer, as well as Shelley, Poe, Dickens and, of course, Shakespeare. The department aims to facilitate high quality creative and factual writing; to improve accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar; to promote enjoyment and judgment in reading and to develop good speaking and listening habits in all pupils.

English offers more than the basic minimum required by the National Curriculum, providing for both Junior School Form 8 and external entrants. Each pupil is encouraged to read widely and the Librarian regularly updates pupils on new fiction. Books to supplement the regular class readers can be acquired through departmental resources, via the Library or through the Accelerated Reader programme, to which the school subscribes.

The department considers the teaching of basic writing skills as essential, not only for progress towards GCSE, but also to provide a secure foundation for writing across all subjects. Written work, including spelling, punctuation and grammar, is assessed frequently and pupils' understanding and skills evaluated through half-termly formal assessments. Throughout the year there are chances to write imaginatively and argumentatively, analytically and persuasively. In addition to improving accuracy, pupils are encouraged to consider how they express themselves so that style and technique are developed and honed.

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

Any pupil with difficulties in English is identified early by our Head of Learning Enhancement. Overseas pupils are helped in small groups by the EAL Department.



# Geography

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Geography is all around us, every day and everywhere. We aim to develop an understanding of the world we live in and to prepare our pupils to be good global citizens, aware of the demands of sustainability for the benefit of all those on the planet. Geography at this level has a primary aim to foster a life-long interest in the subject. One of our key objectives is teaching pupils how to learn - inquiry, problem solving and thinking skills activities often form the basis of classroom learning.

During the Lower Fifth we investigate how the planet influences people and how we are, in turn, having a dramatic influence on the planet. Throughout the course, pupils develop and improve a wide range of transferable skills, including drawing and interpreting maps, drawing sketches, diagrams and graphs, interpreting photographs and satellite images, developing GIS skills as well as refining powers of analysis and the ability to express thoughts and ideas in clear and detailed writing. These will, we hope, prove valuable for other subjects, particularly Science, History and Mathematics.

The course currently covers a range of human and physical units including The Future of Food, Ecosystems, The Truth About Development and Natural Hazards. In the summer term we begin an introduction to GCSE, starting with a unit on Coasts. Fieldwork includes a woodland ecosystem investigation, as well as a day at the coast to explore elements of the GCSE specification. We keep our studies relevant and we incorporate current issues into our teaching wherever possible.

# History

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The History Department provides pupils with the opportunity to study a range of different types of History as well as introducing them to the skills necessary for GCSE success. We build on the knowledge and skills the pupils arrive with and create a learning environment which encourages development of a natural inquisitiveness for History.

We begin the Lower Fifth year with a wide-ranging investigation into the concept of Empire. Following an overarching view of empires throughout history, we focus on the British Empire, studying what allowed it to expand so rapidly in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and what its legacy is today. The second half of the year focuses on the First and Second World Wars. The pupils look at the causes of both conflicts as well as the nature of the fighting.

Many opportunities are given for pupils to develop independent skills of research; they are exposed to a range of sources which feeds directly into developing the pupils' analytical skills as well as essay writing. This introduction to important GCSE skills provides a clear awareness of the demands of study at this level.

# Latin

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Latin is offered primarily to those who have already spent at least one year 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 Latin. It also explores the links between Latin and modern languages and thus aims to enhance and extend the pupils' prowess with both vocabulary and grammar in general.

The emphasis in the Lower Fifth is very much to enjoy studying both the language and the civilisation aspects – life in Roman Britain and Roman Egypt – whilst equipping pupils with the foundations that they will need for the two-year GCSE course which begins in the Middle Fifth (Year 10). Pupils 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 Languages.



# Mathematics

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Some people love learning and exploring Mathematics whilst others find it intimidating and daunting. Whatever your aptitude may be we will help to guide you through this compulsory subject and build upon your level, enhancing upon your understanding and improving your confidence. Even if a career in mathematics or a related field is not your intention, confidence with numbers is a real bonus in everyday life as well as at work. And for those with a keen interest in the subject, we will thoroughly prepare you for advanced study.

Pupils are taught in sets to ensure that work is covered at a speed with which they will feel comfortable. Higher sets move along quickly and create time for extension work to stimulate interest in the subject and to provide students with the strongest possible foundation for further study. Lower sets move more cautiously, allowing ideas and concepts to become fully grasped before moving forwards. The placement of individuals into ability sets is continually reviewed so that every pupil has the greatest opportunity to realise his or her full potential.

The Lower Fifth course covers topics under five broad headings:

- **Using and Applying Mathematics:** choosing appropriate mathematical techniques to solve everyday 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
- **Shape, Space and Measure:** looking at fundamental shapes and solids such as triangles, quadrilaterals, cones and spheres; symmetries and angle properties
- **Data Handling:** collecting, analysing and interpreting numerical information, together with work on probability.

# Modern Languages

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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 Languages Department enables pupils to continue their previous study of French and Spanish and has recently added German as an option. The aim is to enable pupils to acquire good linguistic skills whilst also making language learning an enjoyable experience. All three languages may subsequently be taken to GCSE and A-Level.

All Modern Foreign Languages are now in option blocks in the Lower Fifth. Pupils are able to explore up to three languages in Lower Fifth, be it French, German, Spanish – or Latin! These blocks also provide an opportunity for non-native speakers to study English as an Additional Language and, for those pupils for whom it is appropriate, time in the Learning Enhancement department. No previous experience of studying Spanish or German is necessary; it is usual, but not necessary, for pupils to have some prior knowledge of French. In order to study a language for the two year GCSE course pupils must select it as a Lower Fifth option, in order to start building the foundations needed for success at GCSE level.

The Lower Fifth courses are dynamic, vibrant and exciting, providing a sound grammatical base whilst placing lots of emphasis on building vocabulary and gaining the confidence to speak the language. All courses include up-to-date content, reflecting contemporary issues and developing cultural awareness through media and current affairs. Dedicated online resources provide a variety of interactive comprehension tasks as well as grammar exercises with instant feedback. Teaching methods strive to stimulate pupils' curiosity, interest and enjoyment of language learning, whilst keeping communication at the heart of the learning experience. The courses prepare pupils for the GCSE specifications of the AQA examining board.

# Music

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The Lower Fifth course looks at music from a broad range of cultures and traditions, and focuses on the three main skills of performing, listening and appraising, and composing. The 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 and enjoyable course of study for everyone.

The content of the course covers all styles and genres of music with performance, improvisation, composition and Music Technology being at the centre of class work. Topics include a revision of musical elements, forms and structures and an overview of music from 1600 to the present day.

All Lower Fifth lessons are taught in the Music School with state of the art facilities. Pupils use Yamaha keyboards and specialist music software, including Sibelius 7, Logic and Garageband, as well as percussion, ethnic and non-western instruments.



# Physical Education and Games

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Pupils have one lesson of P.E. and one Games afternoon per week. Facilities include many games pitches, a sports hall, a gym, tennis courts, Astro turf pitch, squash courts, and a heated outdoor swimming pool.

The Lower Fifth programme not only builds on the pupils' previous sporting achievements but introduces them to new sports, providing a foundation for those wishing to follow the OCR Cambridge National course in Sports Science in Middle and Upper Fifth (Years 10 and 11).

There are opportunities to represent House and School in many sports. 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	Dance	Indoor Rowing	Tennis
Badminton	Fitness	Netball	Trampolining
Basketball	Football	Rounders	Touch Rugby
Cricket	Handball	Squash	
Cross-country	Hockey	Swimming	

# PSHEE

## (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education)

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The PSHEE 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 healthy relationships, sexuality, parenthood, boundaries, morality, decision-making, respect for others, conflict management, bullying and cyber-bullying, food and diet, sleep, stress management, revision techniques, careers and the future.

A vital part of the PSHEE 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 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. PSHEE is timetabled for two periods a fortnight in the Lower Fifth.

# Religious Studies and Philosophy

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In the Lower Fifth we start by introducing the six major world religions through narratives, with stories from Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These stories allow pupils to explore, compare and contrast characteristic themes and belief systems from both Eastern and Western traditions. In the Lent Term pupils study morality: how we learn it and what it means to be 'good'. During the final term pupils have the opportunity to enter the national Spirited Arts Competition before focusing on an independent research project which explores the life and work of a particular individual who, influenced by their beliefs, has changed the world.

In all that we study we attempt to understand how religious belief can affect and shape our behaviour through participation in a 'Community of Enquiry'. Within this 'Community' pupils are encouraged to develop not only critical and analytical skills but also the ability to formulate ideas at a philosophical and abstract level.

Building on this aim, we run a Philosophy course as part of the Religious Studies curriculum. All pupils in Lower Fifth have one hour a fortnight when they learn about the development of ideas through a chronological study of notable philosophers. Starting with the Greeks and Romans, followed by Mediaeval and Enlightenment thinkers, we finish with 21st century philosophers. The course provides an overview and a taste of philosophy. One of the main aims is to encourage pupils to creatively build on each other's ideas in order to achieve a higher level of understanding and to practise problem-solving at an abstract level.

# Science

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

Our objectives during the Lower Fifth are to:

- Complete the teaching of the programme of study for Key Stage 3 of the National Curriculum, using the AQA Key Stage 3 Scheme of work
- 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 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 provides a solid foundation on which pupils can build for success in the Middle and Upper Fifth. 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. Topics covered during the year include: breathing, gas exchange, smoking, alcohol and drugs, diet and digestion, respiration and photosynthesis, evolution and genetics.

## 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 metals, 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 studying forces and their effects and energy and power; then they investigate magnetism and the properties of waves through examples of sound waves, light and other electromagnetic waves, laying a firm basis in preparation for the GCSE course.









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St Edmund's School Canterbury, St Thomas Hill, Canterbury, Kent CT2 8HU

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