



**ST EDMUND'S
SCHOOL**
CANTERBURY

ENTERING YEAR 10 IN SEPTEMBER 2025



GCSE CHOICES 2025

Choosing your options is an exciting time – but it can also be a daunting one. This booklet is designed to help you and your parents make informed choices about the subjects you will study in Middle and Upper Fifth (years 10 and 11). It provides detailed descriptions of the subjects offered for GCSE, both the core subjects (English, Mathematics and Science) and those which are optional. Making an informed choice, based on experience and aptitude, is crucial.

The information within 'Entering Year 10' will complement the ideas your son or daughter may already have as well as clarify issues which might seem difficult. There is a detailed description of each subject, with an indication of the specification's assessment requirements and the skills needed to succeed in the subject.

Please read this booklet carefully to decide what set of subjects you would like to study for GCSE. It forms the basis of informed discussion between pupil, parent, teacher and tutor so that, together, we can help pupils find the right combination of subjects to study.

We are proud of our success at GCSE and are aware of our responsibility to ensure that all our pupils embark on the right courses for them. With your help, we will plan the most suitable way forward for your son or daughter.

TIMELINE – KEY DATES

Monday 24th February

Assembly for all L5 Students
'Entering Year 10' curriculum booklet emailed to all pupils, parents and guardians

Thursday 27th February

L5 Parents' Curriculum Evening
Webinar

Monday 10th March

Deadline to return choices form

Friday 23rd May

Confirmation of your options

REMEMBER – we are here to help and support you with making option choices!



Anya Bensburg
Deputy Head, Education
aeb@stedmunds.org.uk

THE CURRICULUM

The standard GCSE curriculum is 8/9 GCSEs. Whether your child studies for 8 or 9 GCSEs will depend on whether they study triple or combined Sciences. The 'plus' part of the curriculum is our Future Skills programme which provides a pathway to future in-demand skills for success in higher education and the workplace.

FUTURE SKILLS

From 2025-26, Future Skills will be a key feature of our Fifth Form curriculum. Our Future Skills programme has been designed specifically for St Edmund's in conjunction with the Skills Development Trust. The programme will foster lifelong cognitive, leadership, interpersonal and digital skills, equipping pupils to grow into authentic, confident and well rounded young adults. This compulsory course is evidence based and comprises a weekly lesson and off timetable events designed to help pupils to explore and understand themselves and their place in an ever-changing world.

TECHNOLOGY

At St Edmund's, we want to make the best use of technology to enhance learning wherever possible. From next year, we propose that all pupils bring a laptop to every lesson. There will be an option to rent a laptop via a scheme. We are keen to develop a balanced view of technology; looking to continue to discuss and support pupils to use digital resources appropriately.

CONTENTS

Year 10 Curriculum	3
Core Subjects	
English	7
<i>English as an Additional Language</i>	9
Mathematics	10
<i>Extra Mathematics and English</i>	11
Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)	12
PSHEE	13
Optional Subjects	
Art and Design	14
Ceramics (Three-Dimensional Design)	17
Computer Science	19
Drama	20
Economics	22
Food Preparation and Nutrition	23
Geography	24
History	26
Film Studies	28
Modern Languages	29
French	30
Spanish	30
Latin	31
Music	32
Physical Education	34
Product Design	35
Religious Studies	37
 Options Table	 38





The Year 10 Curriculum

All courses run for the whole academic year



YEAR 10 CURRICULUM

CORE SUBJECTS

NO. OF FORTNIGHT 1HR LESSONS

English (Language & Literature)	8
Mathematics	7
Science	15
PSHEE, PE, Games, Outdoor Ed	10
Optional Subjects	6 per option
Pupils usually choose 3 options	2
Future Skills	

20 hrs max

Pupils in Middle Fifth (year 10) study the GCSE core subjects and select one subject from each of three option blocks. The arrangement of optional subjects is designed to allow pupils to study those subjects best suited to their individual aptitudes and abilities.

The selection of optional subjects is guided by full discussion and consultation between pupils and their parents, teachers, tutors and Housemasters. The parents' curriculum evening held during the Lent term is an important stage in this process.

The separate Science disciplines (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) are taught by specialist staff. Pupils may be entered for GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy) worth two GCSEs or for GCSEs in each of the three separate sciences.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) is available as an alternative to a Modern Foreign Language for pupils for whom English is not their native tongue. EAL lessons are scheduled individually, at additional cost. GCSEs were reformed in 2015, when they were re-designed to be more academically demanding with a greater importance placed on the final examinations. Parents will be aware that GCSEs are now graded on a 9 to 1 scale.

YEAR 10 CURRICULUM

The old and new GCSE grading scales do not directly compare but there are three points where they align, as the diagram shows:

- The bottom of grade 7 is aligned with the bottom of grade A;
- The bottom of grade 4 is aligned with the bottom of grade C; and
- The bottom of grade 1 is aligned with the bottom of grade G.

OLD GCSE GRADES	NEW GCSE GRADES
A*	9
A	8 7
B	6
C	5 (Strong pass) 4 (Standard Pass)
D	3
E	2
F	1
G	
U	U

Beyond academic lessons, pupils build wider skills through:

- Physical Education lessons (one hour per week)
- Games (one afternoon weekly)
- Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education (PSHEE) lessons (one hour per week).
- Skills and Services afternoon (one afternoon per fortnight). This includes:
 - the CCF (Combined Cadet Force)
 - the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme
 - Voluntary Action
- Participation in a range of other options, both group and individual, such as music, theatre, debating, talks, House activities, competitions and overseas trips

YEAR 10 CURRICULUM

TUTORING

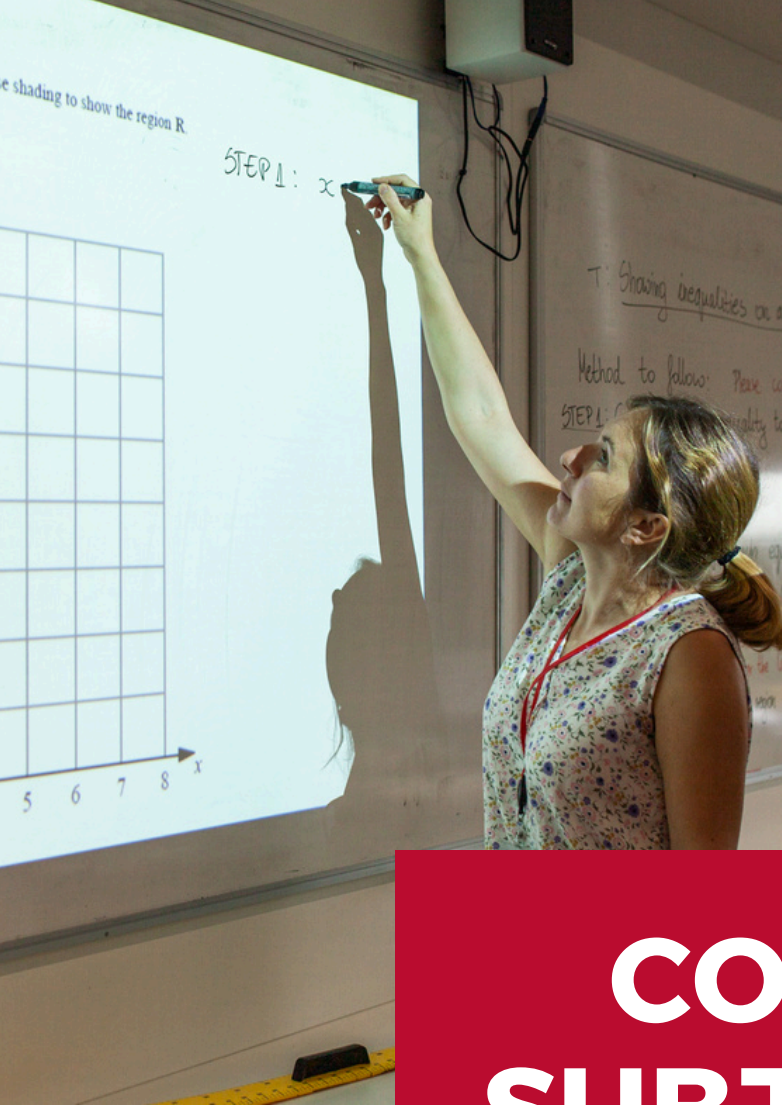
Every pupil has a personal tutor who looks after a group of up to 10 pupils within their House. Tutors and Housemasters are collectively responsible for monitoring wellbeing and progress and helping pupils to gain the knowledge and skills needed to participate fully in life at Senior School and beyond.

STUDY

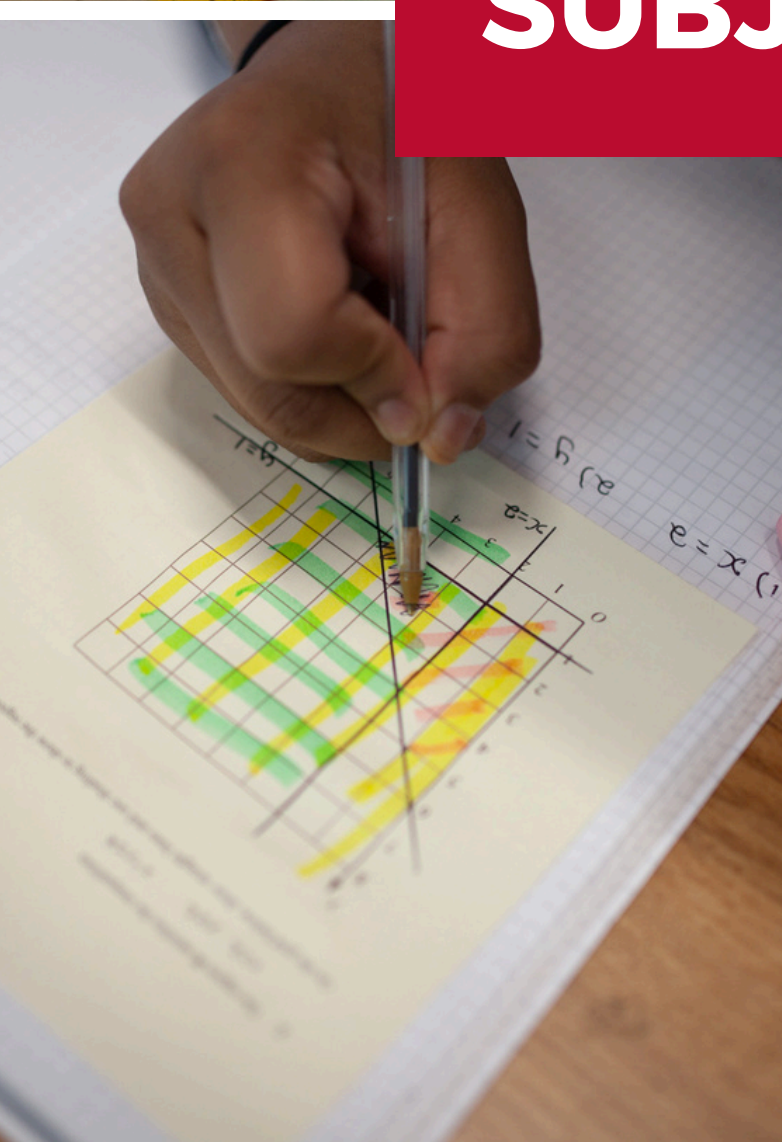
For core subjects (English, Maths, Science), pupils are divided into teaching groups called 'sets' where the pace of teaching and learning is most appropriate to their needs. In all other subjects pupils are taught in mixed ability groups. The School's learning portal, My School Portal, helps pupils manage their timetable and prep (around one and a half hours per day). Pupils work towards GCSE target grades which are monitored regularly through our reporting system. Pupils' GCSE targets are produced using MidYis (Middle Years Information System) data combined with teacher input. There is a parents' evening in the first term of Middle Fifth, providing an opportunity for parents to meet their child's teachers and discuss initial progress on their GCSE courses. We update parents on their child's effort and achievement throughout the year via our reporting system.

CAREERS PROGRAMME

In Middle Fifth, pupils continue to learn about the world of work and research career options during their PSHEE lessons. In the summer term, the Middle Fifth participate in Careers Week which includes a day off timetable and completion of a careers investigation survey, which includes online profiling and employability modules. During the Upper Fifth year, all pupils meet with an external careers adviser to discuss their future career options.



CORE SUBJECTS



ENGLISH

The GCSE years are exciting and stimulating times for English. The department aims to help pupils to express themselves with clarity and feeling. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are important in the assessment of both GCSEs, but there is also emphasis on creativity and pupils are encouraged to read beyond the curriculum. Good handwriting and presentation are encouraged alongside ICT skills. The department follows the AQA specifications for both areas of the subject, details of which are given below:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE (AQA 8700)

English Language is assessed by two 1 hour and 45 minute papers:

- the first (01) examines Creative Reading and Writing;
- the second (02), examines Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives.

Each paper is worth 50% of the GCSE.

Paper 01: There are two sections, A and B. In A, candidates read and respond to unseen non-fiction texts, one of which is 19th century. In B, they produce a piece of non-fiction writing.

Paper 02: There are two sections, A and B. In A, candidates read and respond to unseen prose texts, from the 20th and/or 21st century. In B, they produce a piece of original creative writing.

In addition, there is a spoken language component. This is a compulsory, non-examined element which requires pupils to deliver a presentation.



ENGLISH

ENGLISH LITERATURE (AQA 8702)

English Literature is assessed by two 1 hour and 45 minute papers:

- **the first (01) examines Shakespeare and a 19th century novel;**
- **the second (02) examines poetry and modern prose.**

The aim is to develop comprehension, critical learning skills and the ability to compare; to analyse the effects of language, form and structure, and to write sustained analytical responses.

Each paper is worth 50% of the GCSE.

Paper 01:

There are two sections, A and B. In A, candidates write about a play of their choice and they write in detail about an extract from the play and then write about the play as a whole. In B, candidates respond to one 19th century novel, writing in detail about an extract from the novel and then to write in detail about the novel as a whole.

Paper 02:

There are three sections, A, B and C. In Section A, students answer an essay question from a choice of two on their studied prose or drama text. In Section B students answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster.

In Section C, students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.

Able, Gifted and Talented pupils are offered Masterclasses that take place after school to further enhance their progress towards study in the Sixth Form and beyond.

ENGLISH

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EDEXCEL 4ES1)

The International GCSE in English as a second language (EAL) is aimed at pupils whose first language is not English. It provides a recognised qualification reflecting the practical language abilities of the candidate who will go on to further study either here in the U.K. or in another country where Higher Education is through the medium of English. The examination consists of two separate papers: Reading and Writing, and a Listening paper.

Candidates are examined through a variety of realistic tasks, including comprehension of written and recorded texts, and writing tasks that reflect the type of work that further study demands. There is no coursework component and the results are issued as a grade. Preparation for the examination is by means of specific practice exercises as well as general English grammar and vocabulary taught in interactive, communicative small group classes.



MATHEMATICS

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 International GCSE subject and help you build your skills, enhance your understanding and improve 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. For those with a keen interest in the subject, we will thoroughly prepare you for advanced study in the subject.

Pupils are taught in sets to ensure that work is covered at a speed with which they 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.

Assessment is entirely through written examination, with two papers being taken at the end of the Upper Fifth year.

The 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, both with and without the use of calculators

MATHEMATICS

- Algebra: using algebraic ideas in the investigation of number patterns, graphs of many kinds, functions, as well as the solution of linear, quadratic and simultaneous equations and inequalities
- Shape, Space and Measure: looking at fundamental shapes and solids such as triangles, quadrilaterals, cones and spheres; their symmetries and angle properties are considered in addition to the units appropriate for measurement; this section also includes Pythagoras' theorem, together with co-ordinate geometry and trigonometry
- Data Handling: collecting, analysing and interpreting numerical information, together with work on probability.

Able, Gifted and Talented pupils are offered an enrichment programme that takes place at lunchtimes. The programme foci are Further Mathematics and Algebra.

EXTRA MATHS AND ENGLISH

Extra English and Extra Mathematics lessons are designed for pupils working at below a predicted grade 4 (strong pass) at GCSE. Due to the importance of a pass in GCSE English Language and Mathematics for Further and Higher Education, small group structured teaching for five hours per fortnight is offered.

Extra English and Mathematics lessons are highly structured to meet individual needs. Lessons run alongside the pupils' usual core subject lessons, providing extra opportunities to develop and practise the skills required for success at GCSE.

SCIENCE

Separate AQA 8461H, 8462H, 8463H
Combined AQA 8464 F/H

The AQA specification is followed at GCSE level. This encourages learning through practical activities and gives pupils the opportunity to discuss current science issues, including science-based articles presented by the media. The science studied is often relevant to our everyday lives and the emphasis in the teaching is on “how we know” rather than “what we know”.

Biology, Chemistry and Physics will be studied by all pupils and the curriculum will be delivered by experienced subject specialists. Pupils will study interesting and diverse topics such as Genetics, Ecology, Atomic Structure, Rates of Reaction, the Big Bang and Radioactivity.

GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy) is studied by the majority of pupils in the Middle Fifth and Upper Fifth, leading to the award of two GCSEs. Assessment is through external examinations, comprising structured questions, which will be taken in May and June of the Upper Fifth year. These exams will assess both the theory and practical elements of the course. There is no coursework element. Pupils can be entered for Higher or Foundation papers for GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy). Higher tier pupils can be awarded a Grade 9-9 to Grade 4-4. Foundation tier pupils can be awarded a Grade 5-5 to a Grade 1-1.

Set One pupils will study a more extensive curriculum which will lead to the award of a separate GCSE in each of the three science subjects. Assessment will take the form of written papers in May and June of the Upper Fifth year. There is no coursework element. We anticipate that all pupils studying GCSE separate Science will be entered for Higher tier.



PSHEE

(Personal, social, health & economic education)

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) is a subject through which pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to manage their lives, now and in the future.

These skills and attributes help pupils to stay healthy and safe and prepare them for life and work in modern Britain. When taught well, PSHEE helps pupils to achieve their full potential, make informed decisions and leave school equipped with skills they will need throughout later life.

At St Edmund's, pupils are taught in mixed ability and in mixed gender groups. At the beginning of each year, staff outline the behavioural expectations of the class and what is and is not acceptable. These agreed expectations form the fundamentals of the lesson structure, allowing both staff and pupils to discuss potentially sensitive material in a mature and supportive manner. We follow the recommendations from the PSHE Association.

The PSHEE curriculum is divided into the following areas:

- Self-care: includes topics such as self-esteem (including self-image and eating disorders), stress management, preparing for exams, and the importance of sleep, diet and exercise
- Relationships: includes interpersonal relationships, the nature of sexuality and sexual relationships, pornography, STIs, pregnancy
- Drugs and alcohol: includes topics such as units of alcohol, responsible drinking, dangers of alcohol, legal classification of drugs, effects and dangers of cannabis and other drugs, how to say 'no'
- Smoking and vaping: includes consideration of the dangers of smoking, consideration of effects of vaping
- Managing money: includes topics such as credit vs debt, taxation, managing student finance, the world of work, preparing for work experience
- e-safety: cyber bullying, dangers of 'sexting', where to go to get help, what is safe to put online

All PSHEE lessons contain potentially sensitive material but are delivered in an open and age-appropriate way.



OPTIONAL SUBJECTS



ART & DESIGN: FINE ART (AQA 8202)

Art and Design is both a form of communication and a means of expressing ideas and feelings. It is a language which complements the literary, mathematical, scientific and fact-based subjects. Art and Design is especially concerned with the development of those complex mental processes involved in visual perception and aesthetic experience.

The GCSE 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. Attention is given to developing individual skills, and projects are underpinned by critical studies. Pupils explore ideas using a wide range of media, techniques and approaches, including new technologies to develop personal responses to various starting points. The course offers the opportunity to produce work from many disciplines including drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, mixed media, textiles, digital photography and film. Pupils work on a variety of scales, using a sketchbook as a visual resource in which they develop ideas and record responses to relevant images, artefacts and resources. Gallery trips are offered to provide inspiration and first-hand experience of the work of professionals.

A genuine interest and enjoyment of the subject is vital due to the time commitment associated with the coursework component.

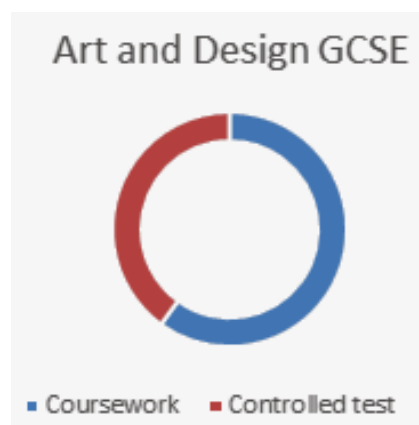
The course is assessed in two units as follows:

Component 1: Coursework Portfolio

60% of the final mark

Component 2: Externally set assignment

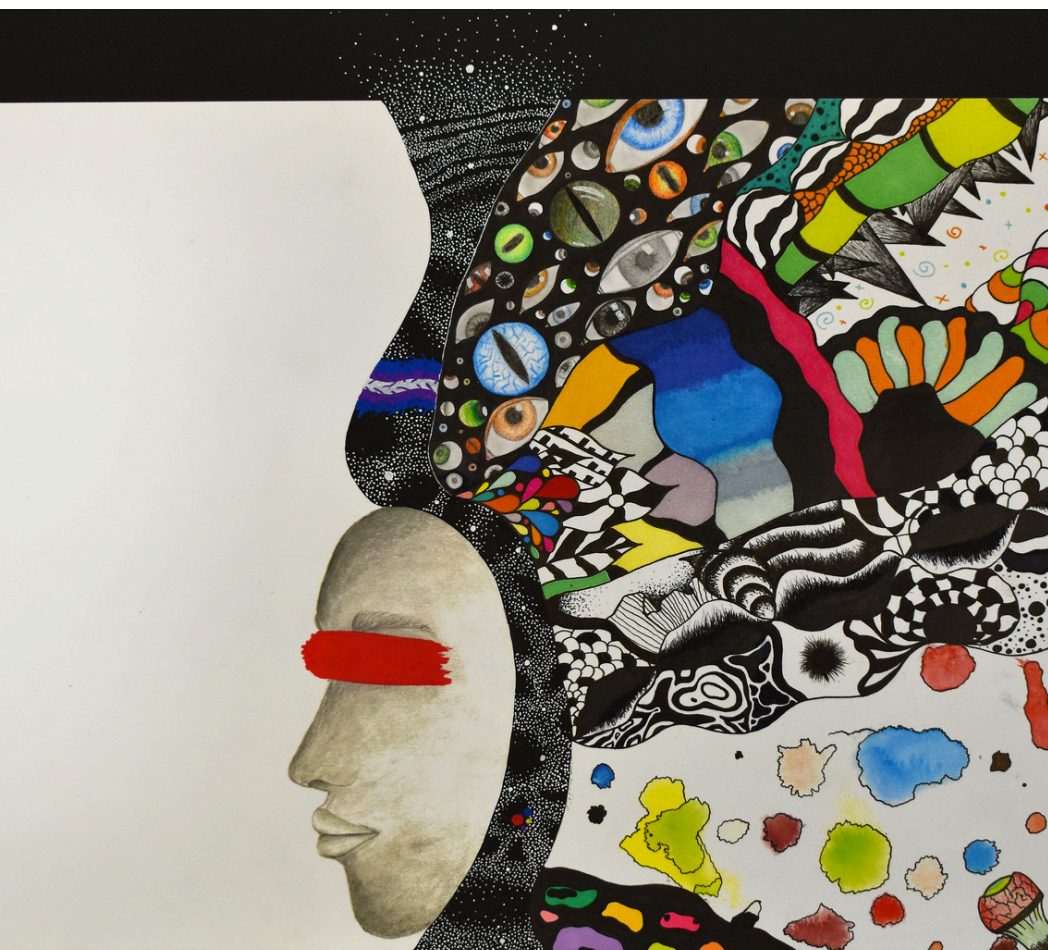
Ten hour controlled test and additional preparation studies. 40% of the final mark

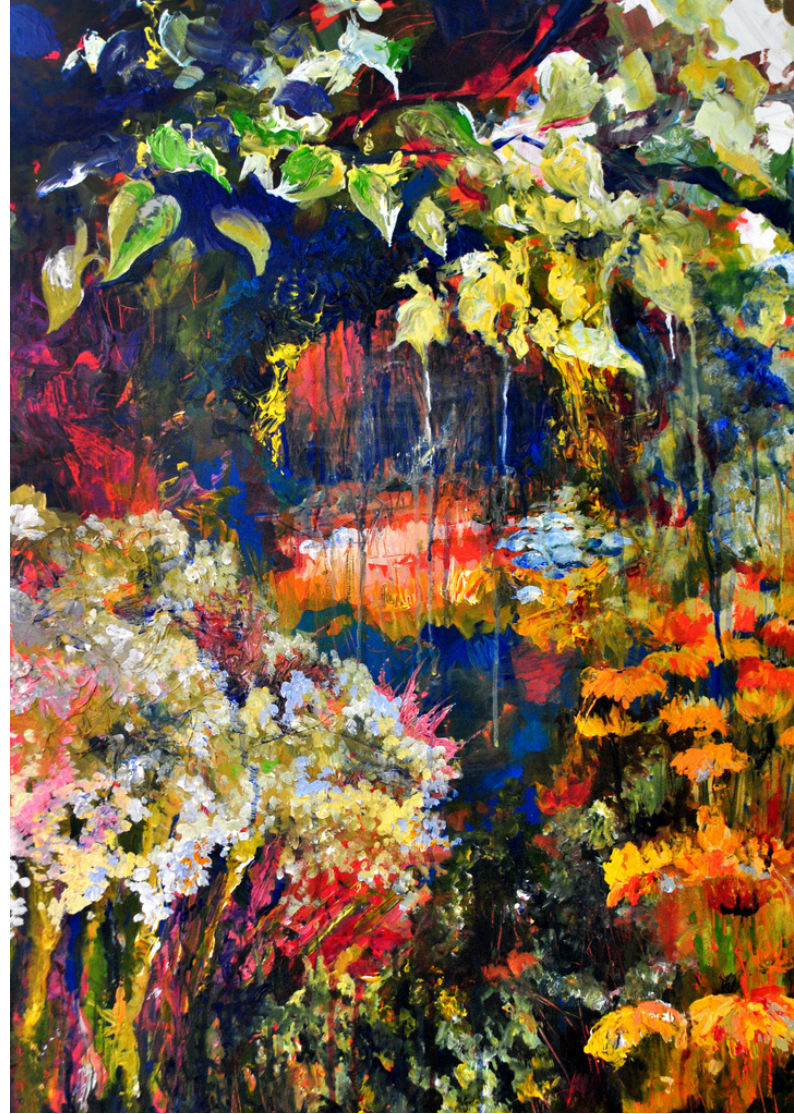


ART & DESIGN: FINE ART (AQA 8202)

GCSE Art offers excellent opportunities to broaden pupils' perceptions and visual literacy as well as developing transferable skills, which are valued in industry and Higher Education; particularly research, creative thinking, problem solving and independent learning. It is an excellent foundation for the study of Art and Design A-level options. Possible career paths include Fine Art, Photography, Textiles, Fashion, Graphic Design, Interior, Furniture and Jewellery Design, as well as Architecture.

This course is one of two options offered by the Art Department. Pupils may study one or both options. Due to the expensive nature of Art and Design, pupils will be charged £10.00 per term to make a small contribution to the cost of consumable materials. They will also be offered the opportunity to purchase other materials for their own personal use. These are charged at cost price.





CERAMICS - THREE DIMENSIONAL DESIGN (AQA 8205)

The GCSE Ceramics course is designed to stimulate visual awareness. It enables pupils of varying artistic abilities to experience, and enjoy using ceramics media, to observe, analyse and develop ideas and to express themselves in visual terms.

Ceramics is a particularly relevant subject for pupils who possess strong practical and creative skills and a good sense of spatial awareness. Pupils work from a chosen topic, using relevant research material to develop a progression of individual design ideas which are then transferred into three dimensional clay work. The beginning of the GCSE course is designed to build up the knowledge of a variety of different hand building techniques, so previous experience of working with clay is not necessary.

Pupils explore a wide range of decorative effects which can be applied both during construction and after the firing process. A variety of other materials can also be used in combination with the clay. Three-dimensional outcomes can take the form of sculptural items, decorative ware, textural wall hangings or tiles etc. depending on the choice of each individual pupil.

The course is assessed in two units as follows:

Component 1: Coursework Portfolio

60% of the final mark

Component 2: Externally set assignment

Ten hour controlled test and additional preparation studies. 40% of the final mark

Ceramics GCSE



This course is not only directed at pupils who wish to pursue further study in Ceramics or Three-Dimensional design. It will also develop pupils' visual perception and other skills including research, creative thinking, problem solving and independent learning.

GCSE Three-Dimensional Design (Ceramics) is a good basis for the study of A-level Art and Design options. Specialist areas of possible Higher Education study include Ceramics, Sculpture, Glass, Interior, Furniture, Product, Jewellery and Fashion Design.

This course is one of two options offered by the Art Department. Pupils may study one or both options. Due to the expensive nature of Art and Design, pupils will be charged £10.00 per term to make a small contribution to the cost of consumable materials. They will also be offered the opportunity to purchase other materials for their own personal use. These are charged at cost price.



COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computer Science is one of the most active fields of study, where new technologies and new theories continually emerge. As such, pupils not only enjoy investigating current developments, but also what may be possible for future innovations.

This course follows the AQA GCSE Computer Science syllabus, an inspiring course for pupils interested in programming and understanding how a computer works. It is a particularly useful course for pupils who are interested in Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics.

The course is examined via two papers:

1. Computational thinking and problem solving – Written Paper (1h 30 minutes, 50%). Pupils will learn how to logically program, formulate algorithms using flow charts and write pseudo code. They will learn to trace code samples, find errors in code and predict outcomes. This paper will also examine the mathematical element of computer science and pupils are expected to learn binary and hexadecimal representation of data plus electronic logic gates.
2. Computing Theory – Written Paper (1h 30 minutes, 50%). For this paper, pupils will learn about computer networks, cyber security, software development, various protocols (for example, TCP and SMTP) and how pieces of hardware work together to create a computer system.

Lessons will balance between programming and theory and pupils will create most of their notes electronically in the computer room. The programming language they will predominantly use is Python, a scripting language, and they will be required to install Python on their own computer for essential independent study.

Pupils are not necessarily required to have previous programming skills, but they must have a willingness to learn abstract things like electronic gates and have a high level of Mathematics.



DRAMA

This exciting and creative International GCSE course is taught through a comprehensive set of units that cover practical skills such as effective use of the voice and body, improvisation and devising and stagecraft. It also approaches the subject from an academic perspective, inviting pupils to analyse text and critically reflect on performances.

As part of the course pupils see a variety of professional performances and are encouraged to take part in the many co-curricular drama-related opportunities that are offered at St Edmund's, such as performing in a production or being part of the well-established stage crew. Performances of practical pieces of coursework often attract large audiences and results are excellent with pupils, almost always, gaining marks at the top of Band One.

Component 1: Written examination - 2 hours 30 minutes

The questions on this paper relate to pre-release material which is sent to St Edmund's in December of the Upper Fifth. This material consists of three stimuli and an extended extract from a play (or an abridged version of an entire play).

The question paper is structured as follows:

Section A Candidates answer 6–8 short-answer questions on the extract from the play (20 marks) and 2–4 questions on the drama devised from their chosen stimulus (10 marks).

Section B Candidates answer one longer-answer question from a choice of three on the extract from the play.

Section C Candidates answer one longer-answer question from a choice of three on the drama devised from their chosen stimulus. This Component is worth 40% of the overall exam.

Component 2: Coursework

Candidates submit three pieces of practical work.

- One individual piece (3–5 minutes)
- One performance of an extract from a play
- One original devised piece

This Component is worth 60% of the overall exam.

Drama IGCSE



■ Exam ■ Coursework



ECONOMICS (OCR J205)

Economics allows pupils to pursue their interest in matters such as the workings of the economy, the role of markets and the arguments for and against government policy.

This is a demanding GCSE subject; it is an ideal choice for a student with strong awareness of current affairs who is something of an all-rounder, able to offer accomplished essay writing skills alongside the ability to calculate quickly and solidly and use number evidence in analysis.

Economics is an ideal complement to subjects such as History and Geography. The difference between Economics and other Social Science subjects is that Economics, from the early days of GCSE study, will make demands on pupils' numeracy skills.

The OCR GCSE course is linear, does not have a coursework element and is assessed at the end of the course via two written papers, one on each of the components below.

Component 1: Introduction to economics (1h 30 minutes, 50%)

Students are introduced to fundamental economic terms and concepts and apply them to explain how markets work in contemporary and historical economic contexts. They study the roles of the main economic agents, how they interact, and the importance of financial markets. There are two topics:

- Introduction to economics
- The role of markets and money

Component 2: National and international economics (1h 30 minutes, 50%)

Students develop their understanding of how governments aim to achieve economic objectives and the effects of economic policies on markets, as well as the importance and impact of international trade. There are two topics:

- Economic objectives and the role of government
- International trade and the global economy

In both components, students are encouraged to evaluate the moral, ethical and sustainability issues that arise from economic activity.



FOOD PREPARATION & NUTRITION (AQA 8585)

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition is an exciting and creative course which focuses on practical cooking skills to ensure students develop a thorough understanding of nutrition, food provenance and the working characteristics of food materials.

At its heart, this qualification focuses on nurturing students' practical cookery skills to give them a strong understanding of nutrition. Food preparation skills are integrated into five core topics: Food nutrition and health, Food science, Food safety, Food choice, and Food provenance.

Progression Routes for Food Include:

Leiths Introductory Certificate of Food and Wine, Degrees and Diplomas at University, Hospitality, Food Retail, Food and Nutrition, Food Product Design, Food and Manufacture, Food Technologist, Chef, Food Scientist and Nutritionist.

Assessment Methods

Non-Examination Assessment: 50%

Written examination: 50%

The opportunity to undertake a Leiths Introductory Certificate in Food and Wine is on offer at St Edmund's. This enables the student to further develop their knowledge and skills at a higher level and, in turn, can lead to university courses and careers.

Food and Nutrition GCSE



■ Exam ■ Practical Assessment



GEOGRAPHY (AQA 8035)

The study of Geography is now recognised as a fundamental part of moving the planet forward to a sustainable future. Geography covers many matters of vital concern to everyone in the world today, including the proper use of resources and the environment, rapid social, economic and technological change, urban growth and the increasing, devastating impact of natural hazards.

The AQA GCSE course encourages the development of a wide range of transferable skills through work in the field, the classroom and individual enquiry. The topics below are covered during the course and assessed in three exam papers at the end of the two years.

Unit 1: Living with the Physical Environment (Including hazard management and climate change, the living world, physical landscapes in the UK, impact of glaciation and coastal geomorphology)

Unit 2: Challenges in the Human Environment (to include urban issues and challenges, the changing economic world and resource management)

Unit 3: Geographical applications; this consists of two sections: Issue evaluation and decision making and fieldwork.



GEOGRAPHY (AQA 8035)

This exciting and contemporary syllabus covers the topics that really matter and develops pupils as well rounded, high order thinkers who can meet the challenges of modern global issues. Throughout, pupils are encouraged to examine theoretical processes using real and contemporary examples of issues and locations and to consider how these affect people all over our rapidly changing world.

The GCSE course is taught using a wide variety of methods including data interpretation, map and photograph interpretation, the analysis of satellite imagery as well as practical work involving field experimentation and investigation.

The main fieldwork component is covered on a residential trip, usually to the field study centre at Blencathra in the Lake District. The fieldwork component stimulates real interest and passion for the subject. It is also an essential component of the GCSE because knowledge and understanding gained here is tested formally in paper three of the exam series. There is a separate charge for the trip.



HISTORY (Edexcel 4HI1)

Pupils study the Edexcel International GCSE History Syllabus. This course enables the pupils to study a variety of important events and developments throughout the mid-19th century into the 20th century. The IGCSE is assessed by two exam papers both lasting 1hr 30 minutes.

Paper 1 consists of two main areas of study. The first topic is Super Power Relations 1943-1972. This allows the pupils to investigate the key developments in the Cold War such as the Berlin Blockade 1948-1949, the Korean War 1950-1953 and the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962.

The second topic is Civil Rights in the USA 1945-1974 which examines the progress made by African Americans in their pursuit of equality.

Paper 1 is worth 50% of the overall mark and is assessed in terminal exams at the end of the Upper Fifth.

Paper 2 is also made up of two courses. The first topic is The USA 1918-1941, with a focus on the causes of America's prosperity in the 1920s and then the economic crash of 1929 which led to the depression of the 1930s.

The second topic is Medicine 1848-1948. This unit comprises five key sub-topics, each centred on crucial developments in the history of this period. The following themes run through the key topics:

- changes in medical treatment and in understanding the cause of illness
- improvements in public health provision
- changes in surgery
- the changing role of women in medicine
- the impact of war and science and technology on medicine

Paper 2 is also worth 50% of the overall mark and assessed in terminal exams at the end of the Upper Fifth.





FILM STUDIES (Eduqas C670QS)

Film is an important part of many people's lives. Those who choose to study it characteristically bring with them an enthusiasm and excitement that constantly motivates them in their studies. They experience a powerful medium that inspires a range of responses from the emotional to the reflective as they are drawn into characters, their narratives, and the issues films raise. The root of that power is the immersive audio-visual experience film offers – one which can exploit striking cinematography, composition and locations as well as powerful music and sound.

Exam Paper 1: Key Developments in US Film

This component assesses knowledge and understanding of three US films, chosen from a range of options. Assessment consists of four questions on one pair of US mainstream films and one US independent film.

Paper 1 is worth 35% of the overall mark and is assessed in terminal exams at the end of the Upper Fifth.

Exam Paper 2: Global Film: Narrative, Representation and Film Style

This component assesses knowledge and understanding of three global films produced outside the US.

Paper 2 is worth 35% overall mark and is also assessed in terminal exams at the end of the Upper Fifth.

Both examination papers (Papers 1 and 2) are 1 hour and 30 minutes each.

Coursework

Pupils produce one genre-based film extract (either through film production or from screenwriting) and one evaluative analysis of the production, where learners analyse and evaluate their production in relation to comparable, professionally-produced films or screenplays. Coursework begins in the Middle Fifth year and is worth 30% of the overall mark.



MODERN LANGUAGES - FRENCH, SPANISH

St Edmund's School is a thriving cosmopolitan community. We believe that the foundation of Modern Languages is the opening up of minds to new worlds through personal engagement with linguistic and cultural difference. Knowledge of foreign languages can transform personal relations and experiences and enhance professional opportunities.

The Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) Department offers GCSE courses in French and Spanish. The courses are designed to prepare pupils for the AQA examination. In all three languages vocabulary and grammar are practised and learnt in three main themes that are divided as follows:

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

The four skills tested at GCSE level are Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing and are all examined at the end of the course in a formal and terminal examination. Each of the four skills contribute 25% to the overall mark.

Two levels of entry are available: Foundation (grade 1-5) and Higher (grade 4-9). Decisions about tiers of entry are based on each individual's strengths and weaknesses.

The principal aims of all three courses are the same, namely to develop:

- understanding of the spoken and written forms of the language;
- the ability to communicate effectively in speech and writing;
- knowledge and understanding of the rules of grammar and the ability to apply them;
- knowledge of countries and communities where the target language is spoken;
- positive attitude towards learning modern foreign languages;
- a sound foundation for the practical use of the language and for further study.

French and Spanish are available as a GCSE option to those pupils who have previously studied the language in Lower Fifth or elsewhere. Regular assessments help teachers match students to Higher or Foundation Tier. Class sizes allow for work to be carried out in small groups and for individual progress to be made at the appropriate tier.

FRENCH

French is an important language globally as it is the only language, other than English, spoken on the five continents. French has been called the language of diplomacy: it has a long history as a colonial language and played a key role in the founding of the United Nations, the Olympic Movement and the European Union. With France just over an hour's drive away via the tunnel it is, perhaps, the most obvious language to learn for anyone living in Kent.

SPANISH

Spanish is a language of increasing worldwide importance. As well as being the native tongue of most South American nations in addition to the people of Spain, it is also widely spoken in the USA with a higher number of speakers than in Spain. In total, there are more than 400 million native Spanish speakers in the world, giving Spanish a global standing like never before. It has been cited as a 'growth language' giving it more popularity in schools.

Whatever language you choose, the course will be relevant, up-to-date and rewarding. The language is introduced through a range of engaging topics relevant to young people. Throughout the course we aim to expose pupils to native speakers (where possible) and to encourage them to experience first-hand all things culturally French, German and/or Hispanic, including music, film and food. A variety of trips and events are organised to support and develop both cultural and linguistic knowledge, including the organisation of individual exchanges, film screenings and activities to celebrate the European Day of Languages. There are also opportunities for the pupils to pass on their knowledge to younger students in the Junior School and Pre-Prep.

LATIN (OCR J282)

Latin GCSE provides the opportunity to study the language and literature of Ancient Rome, reading the works of famous authors such as Virgil, Ovid, Cicero and Tacitus. The course, which continues to follow the Cambridge Latin textbooks, covers elements of the language, culture and social and political life of the Roman civilisation which has influenced many later generations. As well as being interesting and inspiring, this course helps to develop analytical skills which will be useful in a wide range of jobs or in further study.

Course Aims

- To develop a sensitive and analytical approach to language generally, including an awareness of the relationship between Latin and the languages of today
- To read and appreciate Latin literature in its cultural context and in its original language
- To learn how to communicate clearly and effectively

EXAMINATIONS

Paper 1: Language, 90 mins

Comprehension and translation questions based on unseen Latin passages. Questions are similar to those practised in class and for prep throughout the GCSE course.

Paper 2: Prose Literature, 60 mins

Comprehension and literary appreciation questions based on the prose texts studied in class. We study the Druids and Boudica's rebellion.

Paper 3: Verse Literature: 60 mins

Comprehension and literary appreciation questions based on the verse texts studied in class, usually from Virgil's epic 'The Aeneid' which tells of the adventures of the Trojans after their city has been destroyed by the Greeks. This year's focus is Aeneas's love affair with Dido.



MUSIC (Edexcel 1MU0)

GCSE Music is open to all pupils who have a keen and active interest in Music. Pupils build up a broad range of skills, including in communication and presentation; historical contexts and analysis, and in self-expression and creativity. Music is demanding both academically and practically, yet equally personally fulfilling and rewarding.

Pupils must be prepared to study an instrument, sing, and learn to develop their reading of different forms of musical notation. Normally, it is expected that candidates should already play an instrument to Grade 4 (or equivalent) standard at the start of the course. Should formal examinations not have been taken, a candidate's level of performance will be assessed by departmental staff before being accepted onto the course. All musicians are expected to be fully involved, not only in classroom music, but also in the wide variety of co-curricular music organised by the department. It is essential that pupils have a proven level of musical proficiency in written musicianship and theory at the start of the course. Those who have little experience in reading notation should be prepared to follow a short course designed to get them up to speed with the musical understanding needed in order to get the top grades at GCSE. The recommended workbook is 'Step Up to GCSE Music' by Paul Terry, which may be started at any point and will be supported by music staff.



MUSIC (Edexcel 1MU0)

The Edexcel Specification is followed, which breaks down into three components:

Performing (30%): Pupils record two performances in the Upper Fifth year, one of which must be part of an ensemble. The combined length of these recordings will be at least four minutes.

Composition (30%): This coursework element comprises two compositions, one of which is written in response to a set brief and the other is free. Pupils are set regular composition assignments covering a range of styles throughout the course, and build up a portfolio of ideas from which two are chosen to be developed for final submission. Scores must be produced and pupils will gain experience in using Music software, including Sibelius, Garageband and Logic, in order to fulfil this requirement.

Appraising (40%): Assessed as a 1 hour 45 minute written paper, this component examines knowledge of set works, musical elements, historical contexts and responding to unfamiliar pieces. There are four Areas of Study, each with two set works:

- Instrumental Music 1700-1820
- Vocal Music
- Music for Stage and Screen
- Fusions



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

AQA GCSE Physical Education provides students with the knowledge and understanding of how to live a healthy and active lifestyle, enabling them to make informed choices about their own physical development. Students can choose from a variety of physical activities in which to participate and be assessed. It is suitable for pupils with a passion for sport who may aspire to work in a sporting environment.

Assessment methods:

Two examination papers are taken at the end of the two-year course. Practical assessment is ongoing throughout the course.

Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport: 1 hour 15 minutes 30% of GCSE.

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport: 1 hour 15 minutes 30% of GCSE

Multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.

Non-examination assessment:

Practical performance in physical activity and sport - internally assessed and externally moderated: 40% of GCSE.

1. Practical performance in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer. One in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or an individual activity (each assessed out of 25 marks).
2. Analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement in one activity - written or verbal (25 marks).

PRODUCT DESIGN (AQA 8552)

Think of almost any issue that bedevils the modern world – climate change, superbugs, affordable housing - and the chances are that people with STEM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) will be at the core of devising a solution. Great product design combines art, technology, mathematics and science in various degrees to make inventive three-dimensional goods using a wide range of materials.

This GCSE course includes a Non-Examination Assessment project featuring the design, manufacture, marketing and branding of prototype products. Design contexts are chosen by the individual and can include: furniture, lighting, fashion, jewellery, smart products, sports and leisure products, transportation, toys and games. Pupils develop a range of techniques across studio-based design processes, traditional workshop methods, computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing techniques. They will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth.

This course enables pupils to understand design in its wider context and to recognise its place in the cultural landscape. They will gain awareness and learn from wider influences including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making, and to apply technical and practical expertise.

PRODUCT DESIGN (AQA 8552)

Assessment Methods

Non-Examination Assessment: 50%

Written examination: 50%



■ Exam ■ Coursework

Careers directly related to GCSE Design Technology include product design, manufacturing, carpentry, metal work, furniture production, plumbing, model-making, product development, industrial design, materials development, architecture, graphic design, graphic artist, Illustrator, set designer, costume designer, fashion and jewellery designer and interior designer.

The opportunity to study A-level Product Design is also on offer at St Edmund's, enabling pupils to further develop their knowledge and skills at a higher level. This, in turn, leads to university courses and careers in the creative industries.



RELIGIOUS STUDIES (AQA 8062BA)

The GCSE course we follow considers the basis for Christian and Buddhist beliefs and teachings and how these religions are practised in the modern world. Learning is reinforced by trips to local churches, including a privileged insight into the life of Canterbury Cathedral, and a Buddhist temple. Outside speakers help pupils understand how religious communities contribute to the wider community. The second year focuses on modern moral dilemmas such as war, abortion, euthanasia, crime and punishment, environmental issues and social justice.

The course builds on material covered in the Lower Fifth, where Christianity has been studied, and an introduction to ethics has been followed. However, prior knowledge is not essential and the course is open to people of all beliefs and those with none. The course is examined via two written papers; there is no coursework.

The Religious Studies course requires pupils to explore all sides of an argument and to develop their own opinions. During the two years, pupils learn a great deal about religion and the world in which they live but, most importantly, they learn a lot about themselves, their beliefs and their values.

The course helps pupils to develop the ability to marshal and to express an argument persuasively without necessarily believing in that point of view. It is ideally suited to those who enjoy discussion and debate and is a useful stepping stone to A-level humanities courses, including Philosophy and Ethics.



OPTION BLOCKS 2025 - 2026

GCSE CHOICES

Select three optional GCSE subjects to be studied in the (M5) Form, one subject from each of the blocks.

BLOCK A	BLOCK B	BLOCK C
ART	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	CERAMICS
DESIGN TECHNOLOGY	DESIGN TECHNOLOGY	COMPUTER SCIENCE
ECONOMICS	FOOD TECHNOLOGY	FOOD TECHNOLOGY
DRAMA	FILM	DRAMA
MUSIC	LATIN	GEOGRAPHY
FRENCH	HISTORY	HISTORY
GEOGRAPHY	MUSIC	SPANISH
RELIGIOUS STUDIES		
EAL		



**Pupils who require additional support may choose “Extra Maths and English”. This subject is only for pupils predicted GCSE grade 4 or below. Classes seek to reinforce skills developed during regular English and Maths lessons.

*English as an Additional Language (EAL) is available for pupils for whom English is not their native tongue. EAL lessons will be scheduled individually, at additional cost.

Don't worry! Your choices are NOT final and binding at this stage. Please contact Mrs Bensberg if you have any questions or concerns: aeb@stedmunds.org.uk.

