



St Mary's School  
Gerrards Cross

Sixth Form Options  
2023-2025



Find your #SMSSpirit

# Sixth Form at St Mary's

The Sixth Form at St Mary's aims to be the most exciting and rewarding two years of your school life. Our students choose subjects that they wish to study in-depth and are encouraged to explore new ideas and research areas of personal interest. We provide an excellent academic education, strong pastoral care, and a wide range of enrichment and leadership opportunities. You will receive outstanding teaching and achieve exceptional A Level results due to our small classes and teachers who are specialists in their subject areas. These lessons will challenge, stretch, and inspire you.

Choosing your A Levels can be a daunting process. However, a good place to start is by thinking about what subjects you enjoy. A levels require an ability to study independently and if you enjoy the subject you are much more likely to be motivated to do this. It is also important that you consider your subject combinations. It can be hard to know what you want to do in the future, especially when you are focussing on your GCSE examinations. If you are unsure about what career path you want to take, it is good to keep a broad and varied curriculum. On the other hand, you may have ambitions towards a particular university course. University courses have different entry requirements and it is important that you look at these and see what A Levels and grades are expected. A good example is Medicine. To be accepted onto Medicine, it is imperative that you specialise in science A Levels. If you require guidance or advice on which A Level courses are the right choices for you, please speak with your Head of Sixth Form, Subject Teachers and Heads of Department. Your Morrisby results and the UCAS website are also useful resources.

There are a range of pathways to further education offered in the Sixth Form at St Mary's. Most university courses require three good results at A Level and many universities recognise the value of the Extended Project Qualification, which carries the same amount of tariff points as half an A Level. Some of our students will choose to study four A Levels, particularly those who want a broad range of subjects or intend to take Further Mathematics. No matter whether you take three or four A Levels, you will have the chance to participate in a wide range of activities and opportunities outside the classroom. When you join the Sixth Form at St Mary's, you join a vibrant and supportive community that enables you to achieve your best.



Mrs Francisco  
Head of Sixth Form



Mrs Adams  
Headmistress



# Extended Project Qualification

---

The EPQ is a stand-alone qualification that students can undertake alongside A Levels. Worth half an A Level, it is an opportunity for you to produce an extended piece of work on a topic of your own choice, with guidance from expert teaching staff. The EPQ extends students' planning, research and critical thinking skills, as well as their analytical, evaluative and presentation skills: all of which are highly valued by universities. The EPQ therefore gives students excellent preparation for university-level study and will enhance your UCAS application. To demonstrate the qualities and knowledge that universities look for, students can refer to the EPQ in the UCAS personal statement and at interview.

The EPQ is made up of three components. The production log allows students to record their research and detail how their project develops over time. All EPQ candidates have to present their work to an audience sharing what they found in reflecting on their project. The main bulk of the EPQ is the production of a central piece of work: for most students this is a dissertation. However, some may choose to present a field study based on new research; a performance of something they have created supported by critical commentary and others produce something known as an 'artefact': this could include art projects or architectural plans.

## Duke of Edinburgh's Award

---

The DofE Award takes you into a place where you'll push yourself and have amazing new experiences.

The Gold programme, offered at Sixth Form at St Mary's, is a demanding, non-competitive personal challenge, which takes a minimum of 12 months to complete. Young people build their own programmes with activities in five sections – Physical, Skills, Volunteering, a five-day Residential and a four-day Expedition.

You'll build confidence, resilience, skills and friendship groups and have a brilliant time doing it. It gives you the added benefit of gaining a competitive edge as employers regard a DofE Award highly so it will help open the right doors for you. Many of the skills you gain can be applied to your studies as well as your personal and social development.





Find your #SMSSpirit

# Art

## Industry Information

The creative industries generate over £91bn to the UK economy each year and the industry is growing at four times the rate of the UK workforce.

## What type of student should study this course?

The subject is suited to anyone with curiosity, creative flair and an eagerness to explore ideas. You do not need to have studied Art at GCSE, although it is beneficial.

## Course Structure

Year 12 includes an introductory skills course, as a series of mini studies and a Personal Investigation. This runs until Term two of Year 13 when the externally-set assignment begins. We aim to provide a rich environment in which we encourage and value creativity through the experience of a wide range of activities and processes. Throughout the course, students will analyse the work of other artists; experiment with media and materials; record ideas and present personal responses that realise their intentions.

## How is the course assessed?

All work is assessed at the end of Year 13. Component 1 which runs from Year 12 to Year 13 is worth 60% and the externally set assignment, set in the February of Year 13, is worth 40% of final marks. The final exam is 15 hours (over three days), after which an external moderator comes in to verify the marks awarded.

## What are future career opportunities?

Art and Design opens up a wide variety of careers. Just a few examples are Advertising, Film and TV, Architecture, Publishing, Music, Design, Games, Museums and Galleries, Fashion, Crafts, and the creative use of technology. The creative jobs industry is huge!

## Opportunities as part of this course

Those who take this option will have the chance to experience the annual trip to the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and many other ad hoc gallery visits throughout their study.



# Biology

---

## Industry Information

Life sciences are a major component of the current economic base of the UK with the sector generating £64 billion of turnover, and employing more than 233,000 scientists and staff. This includes the application of biology and technology to health improvement, including biopharmaceuticals, medical technology, genomics, diagnostics and digital health.

## What type of student should study this course?

This course would suit you if your curiosity about human physiology and the wider natural world have been piqued but you are frustrated by the superficial explanations offered at GCSE. You must achieve a minimum of a grade 6 in Biology or 6-6 in Combined Science, and a grade 6 in Mathematics, at GCSE, to study Biology at A Level.

## Course Structure

The A Level Biology course has been designed to naturally progress from Biology GCSE. The course covers topics including biological molecules, cells, organisms, genetic information, genetics, gene expression, evolution and ecosystems.

## How is the course assessed?

There is no coursework on this course. However, your performance during practicals will be assessed.

There are three exams at the end of the two years for A Level, all of which are two hours long. At least 15% of the marks for A Level Biology are based on what you learned in your practicals.

## What are future career opportunities?

Studying a Biology related degree at university gives you all sorts of exciting career options, including: Medicine and Dentistry, Clinical molecular geneticist, Nature conservation officer, Pharmacologist, Research scientist, Vet, Teacher, and Marine biologist. Additionally, almost any career you can pursue with a degree in an Arts subject, you can pursue equally well with a Science degree e.g. Law, Accounting or Advertising.

## Opportunities as part of this course

There are also opportunities to go off-syllabus by participating in national competitions such as the Biology Olympiad and by attending lectures in London given by eminent biologists.



# Business

---

## Industry Information

Money makes the world go round, and Business is what creates and generates that money.

## What type of student should study this course?

The subject is suited to those with a curiosity about the business environment or who are eager to understand corporate life. You do not need to have studied Business at GCSE to take it at A Level and we have no specific requirements about your GCSE results. However, the course does include some numerical work and you should feel comfortable with your mathematical ability. The large number of essays will also require you to feel comfortable writing extended pieces of work.

## Course Structure

The course covers the main functional areas of business: marketing, finance, human resources and operations. This includes theory on everything from leadership, balance sheets, advertising and the stock market. The subject is deeply rooted in the world around us and we will explore a large number of examples from the real world.

## How is the course assessed?

Assessment is based around three exam papers all at the end of the two year course. The papers are mostly essay based, although they also contain multiple choice and short answer questions. Many of these will be based around unseen case studies putting you in the role of decision maker.

## What are future career opportunities?

It could be argued that every single job in the world requires some business knowledge and understanding. It may be as simple as needing to budget, it may be learning how to lead and manage people or it could be helping to promote and sell. Business opens the door to a variety of careers. It leads naturally on to studying many courses at university or an apprenticeship scheme. Those who have aspirations of careers in Advertising, Public Relations, Accounting, Consultancy, HR and Logistics, would be at an advantage if they had studied Business. Business and its related subjects are consistently some of the most popular choices at undergraduate level due to their excellent employability skills.

## Opportunities as part of this course

Business students attend a variety of trips and most recently have enjoyed a trip to London to see the Bank of England. We always encourage those studying Business to get involved in the Peter Jones Tycoon Enterprise Competition.





# Chemistry

---

## Industry Information

The chemical and pharmaceutical industry is fundamental to modern society. Innovation for finding new products and services is crucial for the industry to satisfy the demanding and environmentally conscious consumers. With an immense variety of products, from vital medicines and foods, the construction of buildings, to transport and leisure, the industry truly does have an impact on virtually every aspect of our daily lives.

## What type of student should study this course?

A Level Chemistry attempts to answer the big question 'what is the world made of' and it's the search for this answer that makes this subject so fascinating. If you have an interest in Chemistry and a desire to explain the world around you, Chemistry may be a great choice for you. You must achieve a minimum of a grade 6 in Chemistry or 6-6 in Combined Science, and a grade 6 in Mathematics, at GCSE to study Biology at A Level.

## Course Structure

The course will cover the three main areas of Chemistry: Organic, Inorganic and Physical. You will cover a number of the topics you did at GCSE again, but you will study the concepts in more depth and detail. The first year will be spent covering topics such as atomic structure, bonding, periodicity, alkenes, alcohols and organic analysis while the second year will enable you to develop a breadth of knowledge through topics such as thermodynamics, rate equations, equilibrium constants, transition metals, aromatic chemistry, amines and organic synthesis.

## How is the course assessed?

There are three exams at the end of the two years for A Level, all of which are two hours long. At least 15% of the marks for A Level Chemistry are based on what you learned in your practicals.

There is no coursework on this course. However, your performance during practicals will be assessed.

## What are future career opportunities?

Studying a Chemistry related degree at university gives you many career options, including: Analytical chemist, Chemical engineer, Clinical biochemist, Pharmacologist, Doctor, Research scientist, Toxicologist, Chartered certified accountant, Environmental consultant, Patent attorney, Science writer, Teacher. Chemistry graduates are a highly sought-after commodity with no shortage of opportunities available to them across a wide range of sectors.

## Opportunities as part of this course

Students will be able to participate in the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, Royal Society of Chemistry Olympiad and attend 'Chemistry Live!' lectures in London.



# Computer Science

---

## Industry Information

Computer technology permeates almost every aspect of our lives, and there is a wealth of fascinating careers in industry and cutting-edge research for programmers and computer scientists.

## What type of student should study this course?

“Every girl deserves to take part in creating the technology that will change our world and change who runs it.” (Malala Yousafzai)

This course is suitable for those with an interest in computing and those who wish to develop their problem-solving and analytical skills. It is recommended that anyone choosing this course should have a good pass in GCSE Computer Science, but it may be possible for someone with a passion for computing and independent experience in programming to take it up, subject to discussion with the Computer Science department.

## Course Structure

The aim of the A Level Computer Science syllabus is to encourage students to develop an understanding of the fundamental principles of computer science and how computer programs work in a range of contexts.

Students will study topics including information representation, communication and Internet technologies, hardware, software development, and relational database modelling. As they progress, students will develop their computational thinking and use problem solving to develop computer-based solutions using algorithms and programming languages. Studying A Level Computer Science will help students develop a range of skills such as thinking creatively, analytically, logically and critically. They will also be able to appreciate the ethical issues that arise with current and emerging computing technologies.

## How is the course assessed?

The assessment consists of two written papers which cover the theory of Computer Science and a third which assesses a range of problem-solving and programming skills. There is also a practical paper which requires candidates to complete and test code on a computer using a high-level language such as Python, Visual Basic or Java.

## What are future career opportunities?

Studying Computer Science can open the door to a wide range of rewarding careers across many industries.

## Opportunities as part of this course

Students may benefit from visits to places such as the National Museum of Computing and from taking part in coding projects and competitions.



# Dance

---

## Industry Information

The creative industries are the fastest growing economic sector in the UK, responsible for 5.6% of jobs. This course prepares students to enter this ever growing industry whilst building their creative and analytical skills. Most importantly though, it provides a creative platform for students to express themselves

## What type of student should study this course?

All you need is a passion for dance, some experience of dancing either inside or outside of school and a love for performing and creating dance.

## Course Structure

The A Level Dance course is divided into three main areas: performance, choreography and critical engagement. The course involves studying Dance in both practical and academic contexts. Technical training, predominantly in contemporary and Jazz dance, will focus on developing physical and performance skills. Choreography and repertory performance, which are central to the course, are developed in the studio through workshops and rehearsal in preparation for the practical exam. Classroom based analysis of professional works, and contextual study of significant companies and choreographers, will inspire practical development and prepare students for an essay based written exam. Theoretical content includes two areas of study in the first year (Rambert Dance Company & 1940's American Jazz). In the second year, students will go on to study two set professional works which will extend knowledge, understanding and critical skills.

## How is the course assessed?

A Level assessment consists of a practical exam, worth 50%. The practical examination consists of a solo performance, a performance in a quartet and a group choreography. The other 50% is a written paper lasting 2½ hours. The written paper contains some short answer questions as well as three longer essay questions.

## What are future career opportunities?

Studying Dance can open the doors to the arts or Dance in Higher Education, or as support for any course requiring good communication and group work skills. In addition to performing, choreographing and teaching, this course might lead to such diverse careers as Dance Therapy or Journalism.

## Opportunities as part of this course

As well as many trips to the theatre, you will also have the opportunity to choreograph and perform pieces for various events throughout the year and work with visiting practitioners and choreographers.





Find your #SMSSpirit

# Drama and Theatre

## Industry Information

As humans we have an innate need to tell stories to make sense of the world around us, to learn about the possibilities of life and to learn about human nature. Drama and Theatre is part of who we all are. It is an ever changing and developing landscape, which makes it exciting and interesting. Theatre can be life changing. Theatre can make people laugh, cry, feel anger or passion. It can teach people about something they have never experienced. Theatre is powerful.

## What type of student should study this course?

This subject would suit those who have a genuine interest in Theatre and Performance either as a performer, designer or director. It is preferable that you have a minimum of a grade 6 in Drama GCSE. However, depending on your experience in performance, a Drama GCSE qualification may not be necessary. You would be required to have a minimum of grade 4 in English.

## Course Structure

You will explore a range of theatre practitioners and apply these to three different scripts for performance. You will practically study two set texts and explore ways of performing, directing and designing extracts of these texts. You will also devise your own original piece of theatre.

Drama and Theatre A Level provides you with knowledge and understanding about theatre and performance, but it also provides you with a wide range of transferable skills such as collaboration, analysis and researching, which are applicable to any higher education course or profession. You will grow in confidence and maturity as you successfully realise your own ideas, developing your creativity and problem solving. You will learn to evaluate objectively and develop a sound appreciation of the influences that cultural and social contexts can have on decision making. Whatever the future holds, you will emerge with a toolkit of transferable skills.

## How is the course assessed?

The fantastic aspect of Drama is the range of assessment styles. Two components are practical assessments, one devised and one scripted; both are complemented by coursework. The final component is a three hour written exam taken at the end of the two year course.

## What are future career opportunities?

Drama and Theatre A Level opens up a wide variety of careers - everything from all aspects of the live theatre industry, to working in the Sciences or teaching.

## Opportunities as part of this course

As a Drama student, you will attend a range of trips to experience various different styles of theatre. You will also have the opportunity to audition and take part in the school productions and competitions; run your own Drama Club for lower school, and direct your own productions. You can also take part in LAMDA examinations which can add to your UCAS points.



# Economics

---

## Industry Information

Economics provides a fascinating insight into some of the most important forces that are transforming our ever-changing world. As an intellectually demanding subject, it cultivates a wide range of skills and prepares you for a large selection of careers and courses, as well as giving you an important framework for understanding current affairs.

## What type of student should study this course?

This subject is recommended to inquisitive students who want to gain a strong understanding of how the world around them operates. As this is an essay based subject, we do require you to have a minimum of a grade 6 for GCSE English Language and due to the logical nature of the course, at least a grade 5 for GCSE Mathematics.

## Course Structure

The A Level course looks at a range of questions and concepts, and will leave students with a broad understanding of the key issues. In microeconomics, students will start with simple analyses of markets, before advancing to externalities and public goods, and then on to studying the organisation of firms and the structure of markets. Students will also study the key subjects in contemporary macroeconomics, starting with aggregate supply and demand, and moving on from this to explore monetary and fiscal policy in the context of the UK today. In Year 13, students will also study globalisation, international trade, and the difficulties faced by developing economies.

## How is the course assessed?

Assessment is based around three exam papers, which include a microeconomics paper, macroeconomics paper and a synoptic paper: all at the end of the two year course. The papers are mostly essay based, although they also contain multiple choice and short answer questions, including some maths based questions.

## What are future career opportunities?

Careers in Economics are as diverse as they come, with job roles covering everything from Food and Agriculture to Business and Banking. Depending on your area of interest, Economics will help you develop specialised analytical skills, enabling you to successfully enter multiple industries as a professional economist, or as another type of professional with an eye for Economics.

## Opportunities as part of this course

A Level economics can provide a strong foundation and skill set for a number of career paths. Typical careers for A Level economics students include economist, chartered accountant, investment analyst, management consultant or civil servant to name a few.



# English

## Industry Information

The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go. (Dr. Seuss)

## What type of student should study this course?

This course is suited to students who love to articulate arguments; plan successful essays and responses; engage in critical debates; criticise and evaluate authorial methods; learn about social/historical contexts; communicate successfully in speech and writing and work effectively - whether in a group or individually. Not to mention, those with a love of reading!

## Course Structure

Students will, over the course of all the units, study a range of poetry, prose and drama, ensuring a broad coverage and appreciation of the major forms of literature. They will develop the ability to analyse in depth, and be able to interpret in critical and discerning ways, as well as become adept at engaging with multiplicity of meaning.

The course is made up of three exam based components - Drama, Prose and Poetry. There is one non-examination assessment which allows students to have a free choice of two texts to study and create a comparative essay on.

## How is the course assessed?

The course is assessed via three examinations (all Open Book) and one non-examination piece of work. Component 1, (30% of the course) lasts 2 hours 15 minutes, Component 2, (20% of the course) lasts for 1 hour and 15 minutes and Component 3, (30% of the course) lasts 2 hours 15 minutes. The non-examination assessment is worth 20% of the course.

## What are future career opportunities?

English opens doors into many fields and disciplines. It often leads to successful careers in Publishing, Academia, Heritage and Culture. In the world of business, English can facilitate entry into Advertising, Administration, PR, Journalism, Marketing and even the Intelligence Services. English Literature students go on to university to study a wide range of subjects: English Literature, Creative Writing, History, Psychology, Marketing, Education, Modern Languages, Theology and many more. It acts as a facilitating subject in many disciplines and Russell Group universities value the subject as such.

## Opportunities as part of this course

Students get many opportunities to explore Literature beyond the classroom. We often visit the theatre as well as the cinema to enjoy productions of key texts. In addition, we give the students opportunities to attend academic conferences, held by respected English professors and speakers, which are applicable to their respective units.



# Food Science and Nutrition

## Industry Information

Food Science and Nutrition is never dull. Food related issues are prevalent in the media, cooking programmes continue to be extremely popular and the food industry is still one of the biggest employers in the UK. It is a diverse subject that allows you to be creative and demonstrate a high level of technical skills when preparing and cooking food. It provides opportunities to use your nutritional understanding when developing, planning and evaluating dishes for a range of different needs. In addition, it requires you to apply your knowledge of the functions and working characteristic of ingredients.

## What type of student should study this course?

This course would suit someone who has an interest in food, nutrition and how diet links to our overall health. The Level 3 Diploma in Food Science and Nutrition is an Applied General qualification. This means it is designed to primarily support Students progressing to University. The Diploma is worth equivalent UCAS points to an A Level i.e. a Distinction \* is worth the same number of UCAS points as an A\* at A Level. A good grade in GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition is advisable, however if a student did not have the opportunity to study Food and Nutrition at GCSE, and received excellent grades for GCSE Science, this would be an advantage.

## Course Structure

The course is assessed over three Units of work. Unit 1: Meeting Nutritional Needs is studied in Year 12. Along with the study of nutrition, there is a strong emphasis on practical work with one triple lesson a week dedicated to developing, extending and refining practical skills. Two further units are studied in Year 13: Food Safety, and an independent research project, the topic of which is chosen by the students.

## How is the course assessed?

- 1 Written Exam (2 hours) at the end of Year 12.
- 2 Internal Assessments (Coursework), one in Year 12 and one in Year 13.
- 1 Open book exam (8 hours) at the end of Year 13.

## What are future career opportunities?

The food industry has a huge variety of career paths, all of which are hugely under-resourced in terms of people, giving excellent career opportunities and job security. Career paths such as Food Scientist, Food Product Development, Logistics, Operations, Hygiene and Safety, Food Productions, Quality Assurance, Sales & Marketing, Purchasing, Engineering are some examples of the variety of opportunities available.

## Opportunities as part of this course

Students will be given the opportunity to gain an additional qualification in Food Hygiene and Safety alongside their work in Year 13. Chef lead demonstrations, visits to restaurants and a Walking Food Tour in London enrich the learning as part of this course.





# Geography

---

## Industry Information

Geography studies the world and its people, looking at how the physical and human worlds interact over both space and time. Geography is evident in our daily lives. As a geographer, you will study how you fit into the big picture and begin to see how your actions could lead to change and affect the world's future.

## What type of student should study this course?

If you have an interest in the world, its people and current affairs, then Geography is the subject for you.

## Course Structure

Topics are split into two categories. Physical Geography explores water and carbon cycles, hazards, coastal systems and landscapes. Human Geography examines global systems and global governance, changing places, population and the environment.

## How is the course assessed?

The course is assessed via a mix of examination and coursework. The examinations are made up of two 2.5 hour examinations. One in Physical Geography and one in Human Geography. Questions on both papers include multiple choice, short answers and extended prose with up to four levels of response. The coursework is a 3,000-4,000 word individual geographical investigation based on fieldwork.

## What are future career opportunities?

Students who have studied A Level Geography will have a wide range of possible career and higher education opportunities especially as the Russell Group of universities consider Geography as a 'facilitating' subject. Geography is regarded as a subject with a wide range of transferable skills. These include analytical, creative, statistical and ICT skills, which are often demanded by many employers and universities.

Geography provides opportunities to find employment in many fields including Business, Law, Education, Urban Planning, Land and Environmental Management, Engineering and Surveying, Public Services, Travel and Tourism.

## Opportunities as part of this course

We enter students into a range of competitions, such as the Gresham essay competition and those organised by the Geographical Association. If suitable A Level conference/revision lectures, related to our studied topics become available, the students are encouraged to participate.



# History

---

## Industry Information

Understanding History is the root to understanding what it means to be human. The past and the present are necessarily linked. History is therefore essential to understanding what is happening today, who we are and our role within our community. Historians have critical minds, who can adapt their understanding to new situations. They analyse information and data, then they are able to debate and present this material so that it is understandable to others.

## What type of student should study this course?

Studying History will suit those students who are intrinsically curious about society and who are enthusiastic about understanding why things happen in the way they do.

## Course Structure

You will study: change and continuity in history through our study of the British Empire 1837-1967 and the impact of social, economic, and political actions through studying the USA between 1945-1980. In addition you will conduct an independent study on a historical controversy within the context of the Tudor period.

## How is the course assessed?

This course is assessed on three examinations and one piece of coursework. All questions are essay based and may require you to use primary sources and historical interpretations in your answer.

## What are future career opportunities?

Studying History may lead you to a life of academia, but also possibly Journalism, Politics, Human Resources, Analyst, Marketing, Communications or PR. History is a highly valued 'facilitating' subject.

## Opportunities as part of this course

We enter students into a range of competitions, such as the Historical Association 'Great Debate' and the Peterhouse Cambridge, Vellacott History essay competition. We aim to run an enrichment trip every other year. The last trip was a combined History/German trip to Berlin. We also attend A Level conference lectures related to our studied topics.



# History of Art

---

## Industry Information

We live in a world bombarded by visual signs and imagery; this subject gives students the tools to decode them. The course develops students' understanding of the relationship between society and art; art historical terms, concepts and issues; the influence of cultural, social and political factors as well as developments in materials, techniques and processes of both art and architecture over time.

## What type of student should study this course?

There are no pre-requisites for this subject. It is suited to any student with an interest in Art and an enquiring mind.

## Course Structure

Studying History of Art will give students the opportunity to gain an awareness about what is happening in the art world now, whilst gaining an understanding of how these contemporary ideas have come about in the context of art history.

## How is the course assessed?

A level History of Art is assessed via two written examinations, each three hours long. For Paper 1 students will develop skills in visual analysis to answer a single compulsory question that requires them to comment on an unseen photograph of each a painting, sculpture and building. They will then be required to answer thematic questions on 'Nature in art and architecture' and 'Identities in art and architecture'. For Paper 2 the students will study two art historical periods in depth: 'Invention and illusion: The Renaissance in Italy' (1420–1520) and 'Pop life: British and American contemporary art and architecture' (1960–2015).

## What are future career opportunities?

Students who have studied A Level History of Art will have a wide range of possible career and higher education opportunities. Many students go on to study it at degree level or use the subject to support their application to a range of humanities courses. History of Art provides opportunities to find employment in many fields including Architecture, Design, Advertising, Law, Education. Students may also pursue curatorial work in galleries and auction houses.

## Opportunities as part of this course

We will regularly visit The National Gallery, British Museum, Wallace Collection and Tate Britain. As the subject also has a modern and contemporary focus, the Tate Modern and the commercial galleries of central London are prime resources. History of Art students will also have the opportunity to take part in study trips to Paris, Rome, Florence and New York.



# Languages

## Industry Information

As UK employers and business leaders report growing concern with graduates' international cultural awareness, the language deficit is an important barrier to overcome. Deficient language skills and the presumption that international business partners will speak English costs the UK economy about 3.5 per cent of GDP. The 'Born Global' study, which asked the views of more than 600 employers, found that UK nationals without language skills often lose out because they are limited in their ability to communicate.

## What type of student should study this course?

You should study a language if you are interested in: working for MI5, MI6, the Foreign Commonwealth Office, United Nations and UNESCO; Journalism; International Aid and Charities; Gallery and Museum Curating; Digital Marketing; PR; Travel, Tourism and Hospitality; Investment Banking; Law or Teaching. The wide range of transferable skills developed, as well as the topics covered, makes it highly regarded by universities.

## Course Structure

Through studying Spanish, French, or German, you will develop your ability to a high level in the four key language skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading & Writing. This will help you to become a more confident and effective communicator. Alongside the study of a literary work and film in the target language, you will deepen your intercultural awareness of the countries and societies in which the language is spoken. You will also develop a greater understanding of how, in our multicultural and multilingual society, we can build bridges between communities. A wealth of current issues will be explored throughout the course to develop your critical thinking.

## How is the course assessed?

The Spanish, French & German A Level courses are divided as follows:

Paper 1 - Listening, Reading & Translation into English – 40%

Paper 2 - Written Response to literary/film studies & translation into target language – 30%

Paper 3 - Speaking (discussion on a theme and independent research) – 30%

## What are future career opportunities?

Having a language at A level puts you in good stead to pursue careers in global workplaces - whether that's in Business, Charity/NGO, Travel and Tourism and the list goes on. The wide range of transferable skills developed, as well as the topics covered, makes it highly regarded by universities.

## Opportunities as part of this course

Those who take a language will be encouraged to take part in the annual study abroad trips. You will also have the opportunity to complete a work experience placement abroad through Halsbury Travel, where you can put your language skills into practice in an authentic working environment.



# Mathematics

---

## Industry Information

Mathematicians are the world's problem-solvers and studying for an A Level in Mathematics can set you on the road to becoming one of these problem-solvers. It is recognised by all universities and employers as a most worthwhile qualification.

## What type of student should study this course?

The subject is suited to those with a real interest in Mathematics, however, it combines particularly well with Economics, Business, Geography and Science. You must have a minimum of grade 6 at GCSE Mathematics to take it at A Level.

## Course Structure

All students are required to study Pure Mathematics, Statistics and Applied Mathematics. The Pure content includes looking at different uses of algebraic manipulation, calculus and trigonometry. The Statistics content builds on all that has been learnt at GCSE and the applied content considers the mechanics of motion. This lays all the foundations for the further study and use of Mathematics in the real environment.

## How is the course assessed?

Assessment is based around three two hour exam papers all at the end of the two year course. The first two papers test all the Pure content of the course and Paper 3 tests the Statistics and Applied content of the course.

## What are future career opportunities?

Studies show that an A Level in Mathematics is responsible for adding around 9% to your salary at the age of 30! It can lead to a huge number of career paths including Investment Banking, Coding, Engineering, Data Analyst and Academic. Mathematics will never be undesirable and your skills will always be in demand.

## Opportunities as part of this course

Outside the classroom students can participate in the Senior Maths Challenge and meet other mathematicians at 'Team Challenge' events.

---

For those who are looking to advance themselves beyond the Mathematics A Level curriculum we also offer **Further Mathematics** as an additional A Level.

Students who take Further Mathematics find that the additional time spent studying mathematics boosts their marks in single A level Mathematics. It also enables students to distinguish themselves as able mathematicians in their applications for university and future employment.

You must have a minimum of grade 8 or 9 at Mathematics GCSE to take Further Mathematics at A Level. Assessment is based around four one and a half hour exam papers all at the end of the two year course. The first two papers test all the Pure content of the course and the following two papers test the Statistics and Applied content of the course.

# Media Studies

---

## Industry Information

We would probably all agree that you should never underestimate the power of the media, so to have an insight into how the media represents everything from our news to the contents of our shopping basket, is to have an understanding of the ways communication works throughout our society.

As Director of the Communication and Media Research Institute, University of Westminster, Professor David Gauntlett says, "Popular media can take a leading role in social change ... it can help to chip away at people's prejudices." This is core to Media Studies at St Mary's, where students study the representation of different social groups within the media over time, and whether those representations simply reflect or also shape reality.

## What type of student should study this course?

Students with an interest in current affairs, film, television drama and even politics is an advantage. You must be prepared to read newspapers regularly, engage with online news and to become a media producer yourself.

## Course Structure

The A Level in Media Studies introduces students to the role and impact of the media on society, culture, politics and the economy in both domestic and global spheres. Using case studies from nine media areas including news, film, music video and advertising, students develop their understanding through a theoretical framework of media language, representation, media industries and audience. There are no GCSE subject requirements for this course. Students must be ICT-literate and have a willingness to work independently and to learn how to use editing software to create their media products.

## How is the course assessed?

This course is assessed by two two-hour examinations in Year 13, which comprise 70% of the marks, plus a non-examined assessment where students create their own media products, such as a music video alongside a website for the artist. The non-examined assessment is worth 30% of the total marks.

## What are future career opportunities?

There are many careers to pursue with a Media A Level including, but not limited to, Journalism, Television Production, Media Planning, Public Relations, Copywriting, Digital Marketer.

## Opportunities as part of this course

There are plenty of opportunities for Media Studies students to enrich their experience, from annual study days at the British Film Institute, submitting their work to national competitions, filming school events to enjoying work experience opportunities at Pinewood Studios.





Find your #SMSSpirit

# Music

---

## Industry Information

Music combines analytical, academic and practical skills that require determination, single-mindedness and self-motivation, as well as a creative flair. These are all character traits that impress future employers. Music A Level is a well-respected qualification which all universities accept. By choosing an Expressive Arts subject, you are showing that you are a well-rounded student who has shown determination to get to a high level with an instrument or voice and you have the confidence to perform in front of audiences of hundreds.

## What type of student should study this course?

You should choose to study Music if you enjoy playing, composing and listening to music. It is possible to study Music at A Level without having taken GCSE Music if you have a suitably advanced performance and theoretical background. Grade 5 theory and a practical standard equivalent (to a minimum of grade 6) would be expected by the start of Year 12. Girls taking Music will normally be confident performers, having music lessons on their instrument or voice, and be involved in musical activities in school.

## Course Structure

The performing element includes a recital of ten minutes if this is your major, or six minutes if not. You may also perform on a second instrument or choose to be part of an ensemble. For Composing, you will be required to create two compositions of approximately two to three minutes each in length. Finally, there is a Historical paper which covers the set works. The focus is on listening to music and understanding how it works. The set works includes a very wide range of pieces from Haydn and Mozart to Musical Theatre.

## How is the course assessed?

The course is assessed in the three main areas: Performance (35%), Composition (25%), Historical/Set works (40%). However, if you choose to major in composition, the weighting changes to 25% performance and 35% composition.

## What are future career opportunities?

A Music A Level could open doors up to any profession within the Music Industry - from becoming a professional musician, an orchestra member, a sound technician to a music therapist, a teacher, or a private tutor

## Opportunities as part of this course

It is expected that an A Level Music student would be heavily involved in the co-curricular programme of musical activities in the department, with its opportunities for leadership, outreach work, competitions, school concerts, the House Music Festival and the Expressive Arts bi-annual trip abroad. In addition, there are opportunities to attend concerts and experience not only the music included in the set works, but music by other composers and in other musical genres.





# Physical Education

## Industry Information

The sports industry is one of the fastest growing sectors of modern society. You only have to look at the rise of performance analysis in Premier League Football or the growth of the Olympic and Paralympic Games to see that, with the right qualifications and passion for sport, there are a huge number of exciting opportunities.

## What type of student should study this course?

Physical Education suits students who have a passion for sport; students will enjoy a fast paced and diverse course that covers many subject areas, yet this is underpinned by the student's application to sport. GCSE PE and A Level Biology may help, but are not a requirement. Competing at a high level in at least one sport will be very advantageous.

## Course Structure

This course focuses on relating theory to sport and its impact on the performer. Using theoretical content, students will improve their knowledge, application and analysis skills to understand what it takes to become an elite performer working within the sporting industry.

There are seven sections within this diverse course that are complimented by other subjects, particularly, Biology, History and Psychology. This course looks at applied physiology, skill acquisition, the role of sport in society, exercise physiology, biomechanical movement, sport psychology and the role of technology in sport.

## How is the course assessed?

There is a non-examined assessment as well as exams at the end of the course. The non-examined assessment is a combination of course work based on analysis and evaluation of a performer (15%), and a practical performance in one sport (15%).

The final 70% of the course is based around two examinations, each of two hours. Each paper is broken down into three sections. Within each section there is a combination of multiple choice, short answers and extended writing. There are both 8 and 15 mark questions within each section.

## What are future career opportunities?

As the sports industry is continually growing and developing, there are endless career opportunities which can arise from studying this course. These could include: Nutritionist, Journalist, Sports Development Officer, Physiotherapist, Sports Technology designer, PE Teacher, Sports Coach and many more.

## Opportunities as part of this course

There is an annual trip run by the Girls' Schools Association called 'Girls Go Gold'. This conference includes a number of professional athletes who run practical workshops and keynote speeches to support the A Level course. You will be encouraged to play as much sport as possible both inside and outside of school.



# Physics

---

## Industry Information

Industrial physics is the application of physics knowledge and principles to the design and manufacturing of products and services. The success of modern technology is built upon a foundation of innovations in physics. Sometimes that's done directly or indirectly, but industrial physicists are the catalysts for making this happen.

## What type of student should study this course?

Physicists explore the fundamental nature of almost everything we know of. They probe the furthest reaches of the earth to study the smallest pieces of matter. If studying Physics at GCSE has left you wanting to delve deeper into the workings of the universe, A Level Physics is the course for you. It is advised you achieve a minimum of a grade 6 in Physics or 6-6 in Combined Science, and a grade 6 in Mathematics.

## Course Structure

A Level Physics covers the complete range of concepts starting with classical Physics ideas such as forces, mechanics and electricity and continues on to quantum physics and relativity which covers the newest ideas in Physics. You will cover everything from sub-atomic particles to how the universe was formed.

## How is the course assessed?

There are three exams at the end of the two years for A Level, all of which are two hours long. At least 15% of the marks for A Level Physics are based on what you learned in your practicals.

There is no coursework on this course. However, your performance during practicals will be assessed.

## What are future career opportunities?

Studying A Level Physics offers an infinite number of amazing career opportunities including: Geophysicist/field seismologist, Healthcare scientist, medical physics, Radiation protection practitioner, Research scientist, Scientific laboratory technician, Teacher, Meteorologist, Structural engineer, Acoustic engineer, Product/process development scientist, Systems developer, Technical author. You can also move into engineering, astrophysics, chemical physics, nanotechnology, renewable energy and more. The opportunities are endless.

## Opportunities as part of this course

Students can take part in the British Physics Olympiad and have previously had the opportunity to see theory in practice when visiting CERN and Thorpe Park.



# Politics

---

## Industry Information

No matter what choices you make or subjects you take, all our lives are impacted by Politics.

## What type of student should study this course?

Politics links together brilliantly with anyone wishing to study History or Economics at A Level and would give future International Relations, PPE and Law students a real advantage at university.

## Course Structure

The course studies the powers of our Prime Minister, Parliament and Judiciary. You will discover how democratic and representative our system really is. There is a study of voting behaviours, electoral systems and a look at the influence of the media. At the end of year one, there is a chance to study some of the ideologies that have helped to shape the last 300 years of civilization – Liberalism, Socialism, Conservatism and Nationalism. In the second year of the A Level, you will study Global Politics which will give you an insight into how international institutions (such as the UN, NATO and the ICC) function and how decisions are made that impact the entire world. A perfect module for anyone considering international relations at university.

An understanding of Politics will benefit you throughout your life. It is important to know how decisions are made which will impact you and your families. By taking this course you will develop an interest in and understanding of current affairs which will stay with you in the long term. It particularly suits anyone considering going into the Civil Service, Law, Journalism, Charity Work or Diplomacy.

## How is the course assessed?

Assessment involves three examination papers at the end of the two year course. The papers are mostly essay based, with some source questions and a couple of short comparative questions.

## What are future career opportunities?

By taking this course you will develop an interest in and understanding of current affairs which will stay with you in the long term. It particularly suits anyone considering going into the Civil Service, the Legal Profession, Journalism, Charity Work or Diplomacy.

## Opportunities as part of this course

To make sure we successfully embed ourselves in this political world, each year we intend to visit the Houses of Parliament and attend a specialist A Level conference where we can hear from current and past politicians and question their views.



# Psychology

## Industry Information

Psychology is the scientific study of the brain and behaviour; by studying Psychology you will not only understand yourself better, but be able to explain other people's beliefs and actions in many areas of life.

## What type of student should study this course?

Psychology will suit students who are curious about the social world, but who are also comfortable with biological concepts. There is no requirement to have studied Psychology at GCSE, but a strong foundation in Biology, Mathematics and English is desirable, in order to bring the appropriate skills to the course.

## Course Structure

The course is a broad introduction to many sections within Psychology: for example, social influence (why people conform or obey – or don't); the concept of memory; factors affecting eye witness testimony, and explanations and treatments for a number of mental disorders (e.g. phobias, schizophrenia and depression). Biological and psychological theories are considered through each topic, and debates such as whether we are predetermined or have free will, and how nature interacts with nurture, are explored. Underpinning all of this is a knowledge of psychological research methods, data analysis, and the chance to conduct a practical study.

## How is the course assessed?

Psychology is assessed in three two-hour examinations at the end of the course. Papers include a mix of short-answer and essay questions, and are equally divided between the three assessment objectives: knowledge, application and evaluation.

## What are future career opportunities?

Psychology compliments many other A Levels including Biology, PE, Economics and Mathematics. As such it prepares students for a wide range of university degrees and careers. Psychology A Level can be the first step to becoming a Chartered Psychologist (e.g. educational, sports or forensic), a Neuroscientist, Advertising Executive or a Behavioural Economist – or anything that involves working with people – which is pretty much everything.

## Opportunities as part of this course

In previous years, Psychology students have visited London Zoo to take part in a Phobias workshop, and collect observational data on animal behaviour. They have also attended a 'Brain Day' run by a neuroscientist, which included a dissection of a sheep's brain. Students are encouraged to read related fiction and non-fiction books and to explore topics through some of the many blockbuster films that relate to the syllabus.



# Religion, Ethics and Philosophy

## Industry Information

The Greek philosopher, Socrates, once said “the unexamined life is not worth living”. A level Religion, Ethics and Philosophy explores topics that provide students with the tools they need to critically examine their own lives as well as the world in which they live. It is one of the fastest growing academic subjects at A level nationally; it complements many other A level courses as it analyses issues that relate to all subjects, as well as teaching students not what to think, but how to think.

## What type of student should study this course?

This course is suited to a student who enjoys assessing and evaluating and applying different arguments and theories to a principle or concept. We welcome all students who believe they would enjoy the course. Whilst it will have been beneficial to have taken GCSE Religious Studies, it is not a prerequisite.

## Course Structure

This course is an exam based linear course and consists of three elements: The study of Religion, Ethics and Philosophy. Each component of the course is worth 33.3%. Students will sit three exams at the end of Year 13. For the Religion aspect of the course, students will be able to decide as a group which of the six major world religions they would like to study; Philosophy topics include arguments for the existence of God, challenges to religious belief and Religious Language; and Ethics topics include Ethical Language and Thought, a variety of ethical theories and their application to issues such as euthanasia, sex and business.

## How is the course assessed?

The course is assessed in three areas - Religion, Ethics and Philosophy. Each component of the course is worth 33.3%. Students will sit three exams at the end of Year 13 where they will write three essays for each exam.

## What are future career opportunities?

The breadth of professions into which students can gain entry is perhaps demonstrated by the range of people who have studied this subject, which includes such diverse characters as Martin Luther King Jr., Bruce Lee, Aung San Suu Kyi, Harrison Ford, T S Eliot, Angela Davis, Woody Allen and Bill Clinton. Perhaps martial artist, acclaimed film director, or a historic president are rather wide-ranging careers, but they highlight the potential of a RS, Philosophy/Ethics graduate. More commonly, though, you'll find graduates working as journalists, lawyers, teachers, civil servants, diplomats, in the media or for NGOs.

## Opportunities as part of this course

Depending on the religion chosen by students, a suitable overseas trip will be offered. There will be opportunities to attend Candle Conference Workshops, run by Peter and Charlotte Vardy, as well as a range of competitions that will help to stretch students in their thinking.



# Sociology

---

## Industry Information

Sociology is a subject that seeks to tackle and provide explanations for why people do what they do, and how we can see discernible patterns and trends in human behaviour. It is the study of society, the tensions between the social forces and influences individuals are subjected to, and the agency (ability to make decisions and choices) of those individuals. American Sociologist C. Wright-Mills described Sociology as a tool that allows us to see that our private troubles, most often, have a wider cause and consequence.

## What type of student should study this course?

As a social science, Sociology fits well into any portfolio of A Level subjects. It develops skills of extended essay writing and critical analysis as well as the understanding and application of research methods in social sciences.

## Course Structure

A Level Sociology examines social behaviour from a variety of perspectives and how far our life chances can be affected by our social class, gender and race. Sociology also looks at the institutions and forces which shape our behaviour, such as the media, religion and education. The main topics we cover are Education, Families and Households, Beliefs in Society and Crime and Deviance. Across all years, students are taught the key sociological theories and research methods.

## How is the course assessed?

Sociology A Level is assessed in three two-hour examinations at the end of the course. Questions are worth 10, 20 and 30 marks and so students will learn to develop extended and critical arguments in their written work. Each paper is equally divided between the three assessment objectives: knowledge, application and evaluation.

## What are future career opportunities?

The skills gained in sociology such as critical thinking and analysing different perspectives leads students towards careers in marketing and advertising, media and journalism, or policy making and research. Many students choose to pursue further study in Criminology also with the view to enter the criminal justice system.

## Opportunities as part of this course

Students have the opportunity to visit the Old Bailey and listen to cases that are being tried. We also take students to subject specific conferences that are tailored towards exam skills. Students are encouraged to read around the subject and are offered reading lists, documentary and film recommendations to develop the application skill, by recognising that sociology is all around us.



# Textile Design

## Industry Information

The fashion industry employs nearly one million people across a wide spectrum of roles and provides diverse opportunities for young people (British Fashion Council). Craft is a growing industry worth over £800 million and contributes to the UK's reputation as a world leader in creativity.

## What type of student should study this course?

Textile Design is ideal for students who enjoy practical work such as drawing, designing and physically making things. The subject is suited to anyone with curiosity, creative flair and an eagerness to explore ideas. You do not need to have studied Art at GCSE, although it is beneficial.

## Course Structure

Textile Design is offered at A Level as a linear course. Year 12 includes an introductory skills course, as a series of mini studies and a Personal Investigation. This runs until Term 2 of Year 13 when the externally-set assignment begins. Students will be introduced to a variety of experiences that explore a range of textile media, processes and techniques in both traditional and new media. Students will explore drawing and the use of colour for different purposes, as well as artists and designers from the past and present. Students will learn to demonstrate skills in textile design such as line, scale, colour, texture, pattern, working to a brief and understanding a variety of textile methods such as tie-dye, batik, stitching and embroidery.

## How is the course assessed?

All work is assessed at the end of Year 13. Component 1 which runs across the two years is worth 60% and the externally set assignment is announced in the February of Year 13 and is worth 40%. The final exam is 15 hours (over three days), after which an external moderator comes in to verify the marks awarded.

## What are future career opportunities?

Students who take Textile Design go on to a wide variety of careers. Just a few examples are Film and TV, Design, Museums and Galleries, Fashion/Textile Design, Styling, Interior Design, Crafts, and the creative use of technology.

## Opportunities as part of this course

Those who take this option will have the chance to experience the annual trip to the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and many other ad hoc gallery visits throughout their study.



