



YEAR 9 OPTIONS 2026-2028





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A note from the Co-Heads of Secondary

Dear Parents/Carers and Students,

We are delighted to share this Options Booklet with you as you prepare for an exciting and pivotal moment in your child's educational journey. Over the coming weeks, you will support your child to make important decisions that will shape their path towards achieving their full potential. At St Mary Magdalene we are here to support you and your child every step of the way, and we encourage you to use this booklet as a guide, attend our Options Event, and engage with your child's class teachers about the curriculum we offer.

The next two years of preparation for GCSE examinations are not just about achieving excellent results; they are about laying the foundation for your child's future. Whether their aspirations include university, an apprenticeship, or a meaningful career, these decisions will open doors to exciting opportunities. At St Mary Magdalene, we take pride in nurturing every student's unique talents and ambitions within the framework of our Christian ethos, where values such as family, faith and fellowship guide all that we do.

We are also proud to offer a thriving Sixth Form, which many of our students choose as the next step in their journey. By staying with us for their post-16 studies, they benefit from continuity in their education, outstanding teaching, and a supportive environment that prepares them for higher education and the wider world. Our Sixth Form is a place where students can further develop their passions and skills, laying the groundwork for success in the years ahead.

Our vision is to see each of our pupils flourish academically, personally, and spiritually. As we journey with them, we aim to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and character needed to succeed in their chosen paths and to make a positive difference in the world.

It is our hope that this Options Booklet will inspire thoughtful discussions and help you feel confident in the decisions ahead.

Co-Heads of Secondary

Mr Riley and Mr Benn



Introduction for students

Dear student,

This booklet is designed for you and your parents/carers to use throughout your GCSE options process. Please read through the booklet and consider its contents carefully. This booklet contains information about GCSEs, advice on how to make your choices, and details about each subject.

This represents only the beginning of your GCSE journey. Over the coming months, you will have individual discussions with your teachers, family group tutor and members of the senior management team – as well as a range of events – to help you in making your choices. Good GCSE grades are crucial to your future success and we will support each of you to achieve your potential. Your attitude to learning now – not just from next year – will determine your level of success. It is your responsibility to work hard in lessons, demonstrate urgency for learning, complete your homework and prepare thoroughly for tests and exams.

The options process will follow the timeframe below:

January – Launch of Options with y9 – students are given booklets and options process explained in assembly

4th February – Options event – 4-5.30pm – parents encouraged to attend with students

5th February – 18th March – All students will be interviewed by members of SLT and governors

25th February – Year 9 Parents' Evening

20th March – Options Form Deadline

The Options Process is spaced out to ensure that students are supported in making appropriate choices. From January you should be discussing your career ideas with your Family Group tutor as well as discussing with your class teachers. You will receive key subject information at the Options Event in February and you will each have a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss your initial ideas. Parents' Evening on 25th February 2026 will then give you a good opportunity to discuss your final choices with your teachers and family group tutor. We ask you to make three choices in order of preference plus two reserves. We will aim to meet your first three preferences where possible.

Throughout Years 10 and 11 – just like now – we will push you to achieve your very best, support you along the way and let you know how you're doing. We will also give you guidance on A Level options, universities, apprenticeships and careers so that you can successfully progress to the next stage of your education.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to speak to me, Mr Mukasa, or any member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Emerson, Assistant Principal



Key information about GCSEs

Grading of GCSEs

Since September 2015, grades have been given as numbers from 9-1, with 9 representing the highest standard. Grade 4 is sometimes referred to as a 'standard pass' and a grade 5 as a 'strong pass'. GCSE content has also changed: these changes have been different for every subject, but all subjects have become significantly more challenging. Each subject's content is explained in this booklet.

All GCSEs are now 'linear', meaning that students sit all of their examinations at the end of Year 11, although a small number of subjects involve non-examination assessment (NEA) as part of the course. This could mean, for instance, creating a portfolio or written report under specific conditions.

Compulsory subjects

All students at St Mary Magdalene will be examined on the following subjects: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science (Combined Science or Triple Sciences), and Religious Studies. All students will also have PSHE and PE lessons, on which there will not be an examination. There is information about what you will study in these subjects on pages 7-14, where they are labelled 'Core'.

EBacc

Students who achieve a grade 4 in English, Maths, Science, History or Geography and a Modern Foreign Language are recognised as having achieved the English Baccalaureate, or 'EBacc'. This is not an additional qualification but is a description of a specific combination of subjects which the government feels are important. The EBacc is valued by colleges, universities and employers. You should be mindful of this when making option choices.

Optional subjects

All students will have a further three options. The GCSE subjects you can choose from are: Art, Craft and Design; Business Studies; Computer Science; Design and Technology; Drama; Food Preparation and Nutrition; French; Geography; History; Music; Spanish; and you may select one subject from the Social Sciences: Citizenship; Sociology; or Psychology. You may also choose to study Triple Sciences – this will take one of your three option places and leave you with two other options.

You can also choose from a couple of BTECs and vocational alternatives: Digital Functional Skills and BTEC Sport. These are studied as an alternative to GCSEs. For each course, you complete a series of units – some are written assignments, such as essays, whilst others are projects. These qualifications are not assessed using grades 9-1 but as Distinction, Merit, or Pass.

Community Languages

The Community Languages GCSE is an exam that allows students to earn an additional GCSE by demonstrating their proficiency in a language other than English. The exam includes tasks that assess a student's reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills so students need to be supported in this at home,



Some languages that are offered for the Community Languages GCSE include: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Polish, and Portuguese.

Students can take the Community Languages GCSE exam in addition to their other options but there will not be lessons available in school to support.

Alternative pathways

For students who may struggle to achieve a full nine academic GCSEs, we offer opportunities for support and some vocational courses may also be appropriate. These students and their parents will be spoken to by Ms Pinto.

How to select your options

When making your choices, you have some key questions to consider:

- In which subjects have I done the best work over the past three years?
- Which subjects am I most interested in?
- Do I think that the 'English Baccalaureate' is important to me and my future? If yes, this means taking French or Spanish and History and/or Geography.
- Finally, and least importantly, which subjects do I need for my preferred future career? (Keep in mind that it is your A-Levels and university course that will be most important for this.)

Never be tempted to choose a subject because you like your teacher; they might not be timetabled to teach you for your GCSEs. Also never pick a subject because a friend is doing it: what works well for them might be wrong for you – and you might be placed in different classes anyway.

Careers and work experience

It is most important that your subjects are chosen for the right reasons. The best reasons are that you enjoy a subject and are good at it. However, the subjects you study in Years 10 and 11 could affect your career choices in the future, so if you have a specific career or university course in mind, then it would be sensible to check which subjects are required for entry. However, to choose a subject that you have struggled with only because it is needed for a particular career is not a good idea: if you get a low grade then you will not be able to enter that career, and if the subject plays a large part in the job, then it might not be the right choice for you.

You might not be sure what careers you're interested in right now and that is perfectly normal. You will receive careers advice and information in Years 9, 10 and 11 through PSHE sessions and special workshops and assemblies. You will also have the opportunity to carry out work experience during Year 10, gaining valuable experience of the workplace.

Extracurricular activities

It is important to maintain a balanced approach to work and other activities. This will help you to enjoy yourself and learn better. It is also very useful when applying for university or future employment that you can show a range of skills and interests. For that reason, we will encourage you to continue to attend enrichment activities in school and pursue your interests outside school.



Exam board: AQA

Course Code: 8700

Why we study English Language at St Mary Magdalene

Studying English Language ensures that students become competent readers and writers and prepares them to be able to confidently express their views and opinions.

Outline of course:

The study of English Language helps to develop all students into strong, confident communicators, able to express themselves clearly and able to analyse, synthesise, compare and evaluate information.

Through studying English Language at GCSE, students will explore a range of extracts from 20th or 21st century prose fiction texts, with a focus on openings, endings, narrative perspectives and points of view, narrative or descriptive passages, character, atmospheric descriptions and other appropriate narrative and descriptive approaches. Students will apply these techniques to their own writing, crafting passages of creative writing to demonstrate their narrative and descriptive skills in response to a written prompt, scenario or visual image.

Students will also study non-fiction texts drawn from the 19th century, and either the 20th or 21st century. The combination will provide students with an opportunity to consider viewpoints and perspectives over time. Choice of genre will include high quality journalism, articles, reports, essays, travel writing, accounts, sketches, letters, diaries, autobiography and biographical passages or other appropriate non-fiction and literary non-fiction forms. Students will then apply non-fiction writing skills in their own original writing, considering audience, purpose and form, using a range of opinions, statements and writing scenarios to provoke a response.

Assessment:

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing (written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes, 80 marks, 50% of GCSE)

Section A: Reading- one literature fiction text.

Section B: Writing- descriptive or narrative writing.

Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives (written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes, 80 marks, 50% of GCSE)

Section A: Reading- one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text.

Section B: Writing- writing to present a viewpoint.

There is no foundation or higher tier for either English exam so all students will sit the same papers.

Who to contact for more information: Mrs Otoo



Exam board: AQA

Course Code: 8702

Why we study English Literature at St Mary Magdalene

English Literature offers an opportunity for students to explore how ideologies have been shaped by the time period in which they were written. Literature allows students to become critical thinkers that question history, culture and society.

Outline of course:

Through studying literature, our students will explore the world around them, scrutinising history, culture and society, and holding up a mirror to the world around them in order to make meaningful connections with wider life.

In Paper 1, students will study Shakespeare's play Macbeth, and Charles Dickens' novel, A Christmas Carol. Students will explore character, setting and themes, as well as learn to closely analyse how the writer presents these elements through language, form and structure.

In Paper 2, students will study JB Priestley's stage play, An Inspector Calls, and the AQA poetry anthology Power and Conflict. Students will analyse the presentation of themes in the play through character, setting and language, and understand the wider context in which it was written. As well as learning how to analyse and compare poems in the anthology, students will learn how to explore unfamiliar poems and extract meaning from their form and structure as well as the language, for the unseen question in Paper 2.

Assessment:

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel (written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes, 64 marks, 40% of GCSE).

Section A - Shakespeare: students will answer one question on their play of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the play and then to write about the play as a whole.

Section B - The 19th-century novel: students will answer one question on their novel of choice. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the novel and then to write about the novel as a whole.

Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry (written exam: 2 hour 15 minutes, 96 marks, 60% of GCSE)

Section A - Modern texts: students will answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied modern prose or drama text.

Section B - Poetry: students will answer one comparative question on one named poem printed on the paper and one other poem from their chosen anthology cluster.

Section C - Unseen poetry: Students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this poem with a second unseen poem.

There is no foundation or higher tier for either English exam so all students will sit the same papers.

Who to contact for more information: Mrs Otoo



Exam board: Edexcel	Course Code: 1MA1
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Why we study Mathematics at St Mary Magdalene
Mathematical thinking is important for all members of a modern society, for its use in the workplace and for personal decision making. Maths not only equips us with ways to describe, analyse and influence the world; it can also stimulate moments of pleasure and wonder when problems are solved for the first time, or when we notice hidden connections. Maths is fundamental to national prosperity in providing tools for understanding science, engineering, technology and economics.

In the mathematics department at St. Mary Magdalene we aim to produce numerate, logical, problem-solving students who can apply their mathematical knowledge both in further study within mathematics and other disciplines, and in real-life situations.

Outline of course:
This is a two-year course in which students study a variety of different units:

- Number
- Ratio, proportion and rates of change
- Algebra
- Statistics and probability
- Geometry and measure

Students at St Mary Magdalene are taught to use mathematics in a variety of situations to solve a range of problems, and to become financially capable using mathematics. They also experience maths as a creative discipline. We want to develop their ability to think logically and creatively. We encourage students to persevere and to become resourceful problem solvers. Maths naturally transcends cultural boundaries and its importance is universally recognised.

At St Mary Magdalene, we aim to make Maths enjoyable, exciting and a worthwhile experience for all students. Every course is delivered by well-structured schemes of work which are constantly updated to reflect curriculum changes.

Assessment:
The Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9 to 1) in Mathematics is a tiered qualification. There are two tiers:

- Foundation tier for which grades 1 – 5 can be awarded
- Higher tier grades for which grades 4 - 9 can be awarded

Students will sit three externally-examined papers from their tier of entry. All three papers in the same assessment series.

Students will sit three papers, one non-calculator paper and two calculator papers. Each assessment is:

- A written examination with a range of question types
- 1 hour and 30 minutes long (both Foundation and Higher tier papers)

Set with a maximum of 80 marks available (240 marks across all three papers)

**Links to careers:**

- Numeracy / calculations – Retail, accountancy, finance, business
- Fractions and percentages – Retail, accountancy, finance, business
- Standard form – Medical research, space industry
- Ratio – Risk management, food service industry, purchasing
- Algebra – Engineering, Finance, retail
- Mensuration – Engineering, architecture, interior design, logistics
- Angles – Aviation, transport
- Trigonometry – Engineering, architecture
- Transformations and constructions – Engineering, architecture, graphic design, sports science
- Probability – Risk management, data analyst, pensions, gambling
- Averages – Risk management, data analyst
- Representing data – Risk management, data analyst

Who to contact for more information: Mr. Pigott (Head of Mathematics) or Mr. Todd (Deputy Head of Mathematics)



Science (Combined Science: Trilogy)

Core

Exam board: AQA

Course Code: 8464

Why we study Science at St Mary Magdalene

Studying science is an interesting and challenging learning experience with a broad range of study from the smallest building blocks of matter to cells, Earth and its ecosystems to the forces that govern the natural world around us.

Science allows us to develop transferable skills that are useful outside of science and directly applicable to the world of work such as investigative skills, problem solving and analytic skills.

By studying GCSE Science, you will gain access to a wide range of potential courses at Post-16 and apprenticeships. This can then lead you into a career in a range of fields including healthcare, engineering, sports and fitness and many more!

Outline of course:

The Combined Science course will allow all students to learn essential aspects of the knowledge, methods, processes and uses of science. This course will allow them to see how the natural world can be described through scientific detail.

Students who wish to select separate Sciences ('Triple Science') should see p.13.

During the course, students will be able to develop an understanding of a number of key ideas which include:

- the use of conceptual models and theories to make sense of the observed diversity of natural phenomena
- the assumption that every effect has one or more cause
- that change is driven by differences between different objects and systems when they interact
- that many such interactions occur over a distance and over time without direct contact
- that science progresses through a cycle of hypothesis, practical experimentation, observation, theory development and review
- that data analysis is a central element of many theories and of scientific methods of inquiry.

Paper 1: Biology 1: Cell Biology; Organisation; Infection and response; Bioenergetics.

Paper 2: Biology 2: Homeostasis and response; Inheritance; Variation and evolution; Ecology.

Paper 3: Chemistry 1: Atomic structure and the periodic table; Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter; Quantitative chemistry; Chemical changes; Energy changes.



Paper 4: Chemistry 2: The rate and extent of chemical change; Organic chemistry; Chemical analysis; Chemistry of the atmosphere; Using resources.

Paper 5: Physics 1: Energy; Electricity; Particle model of matter; Atomic structure.

Paper 6: Physics 2: Forces; Waves; Magnetism and electromagnetism.

Assessment:

All papers are assessed through a written exam, lasting 1 hour and 15 minutes. Each exam is worth 70 marks.

Links to careers:

The skills and knowledge developed through the study of science offer many possible career paths. Potential careers include:

Health, social care and medicine (jobs such as Nursing, physiotherapy, psychiatry, social care worker, doctor etc.)

Engineering (Structural engineers who ensure buildings remain standing, electrical engineers who design complex electrical systems and mechanical engineers who design moving objects such as engines and large industrial equipment, to name but a few)

Research – research can be done in a broad range of areas such as particle physics, medicine and chemical engineering. You may be responsible for the next major scientific discovery.

Analytical chemistry and forensic science – responsible for developing new drugs and medicine, quality assuring chemicals and products, or analysing crime scenes.

There are multiple careers outside of science where scientific skills are highly valued and useful, such as finance and computing.

This is just a small taste of the multitude of careers that scientific study may open up for you.

Who to contact for more information: Mr Weerakone



Science (Triple Science: Biology, Chemistry and Physics) Optional

Exam board: AQA	Course Code: Biology: 8461 Chemistry: 8462 Physics: 8463
Why we study Triple Science at St Mary Magdalene Triple Science is great for anyone who enjoys science and for those who want to unpick, in detail, how the world around them works. All students selected for this course will be given a comprehensive overview of physics, chemistry and biology. The course will support students to continue their studies in any chosen scientific discipline beyond GCSE level. This is a course that carries a lot of weight with further education providers, and will be respected as a sign of ability and intent for any future educational plans. Triple Science GCSE can open the door to many career opportunities; however, it should not be undertaken lightly as students will have fourteen hours of Science lessons a fortnight, therefore a passion for Science is important.	
Outline of course: This course allows students to achieve three distinct GCSEs in each of the sciences and develops the range of their scientific knowledge and understanding beyond that of those doing combined science. This course is an ideal starting point for those wishing to enter the fields of medicine and science. GCSE Biology: 1. Cell biology. 2. Organisation. 3. Infection and response. 4. Bioenergetics. 5. Homeostasis and response. 6. Inheritance, variation and evolution. 7. Ecology. 8. Key ideas GCSE Chemistry: 1. Atomic structure and the periodic table. 2. Bonding, structure, and the properties of matter. 3. Quantitative chemistry. 4. Chemical changes. 5. Energy changes. 6. The rate and extent of chemical change. 7. Organic chemistry. 8. Chemical analysis. 9. Chemistry of the atmosphere. 10. Using resources GCSE Physics: 1. Energy. 2. Electricity. 3. Particle model of matter. 4. Atomic structure. 5. Forces. 6. Waves. 7. Magnetism and electromagnetism. 8. Space physics (physics only) Triple science is a qualification that is a guided options choice and is an EBacc qualifying subject. However, we recommend that you are predicted a grade 6 or above in science if you wish to consider this course.	
Assessment: Students will sit two written examinations for each subject. Each exam is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 hour and 45 minutes• 100 marks• 50% of the GCSE qualification for each separate Science	
Biology Paper 1: Topics 1, 2, 3, and 4	



Biology Paper 2: Topics 5, 6 and 7

Chemistry Paper 1: Topics 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Chemistry Paper 2: Topics 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

Physics Paper 1: Topics 1, 2, 3 and 4

Physics Paper 2: Topics 5, 6, 7 and 8

Links to careers:

Physicists are valued for their mathematical and problem-solving abilities, making them ideal candidates for multiple career paths.

Some potential career paths include: Astronomy, Climate science, Engineering, Energy (renewable and non-renewable) Medical Physics, Finance, Robotics and A.I., VFX and gaming.

Chemistry being a versatile subject, you will not only learn about how the world works at the atomic level but also develop problem-solving skills, analytical skills along with practical laboratory skills. These will prepare you for a variety of jobs even outside the Scientific world.

Chemistry related careers: Academic researcher, Analytical Chemist, Forensic scientist, Research scientist. Toxicologist.

Biologists study the living world, opening up a whole host of careers surrounding the study and understand of how humans and other organism's function.

Some key careers include: Medicine, Biotechnology, Marine Biology, Zoology, Veterinarian science, Physiotherapy, Psychology and Psychiatry, Health and social care

Who to contact for more information: Mr Weerakone or Mr Humair.



Exam board: AQA	Course Code: 8062MA
<p>Why we study RS at St Mary Magdalene We study Religious Studies at St Mary Magdalene School as part of the national compulsory framework and entitlement of education.</p> <p>The GCSE in Religious Studies is an engaging and challenging course which allows our students to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a deep knowledge of the world around them• Understand the diversity in society• Support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development• Nurture useful transferable skills to critically analyse structured and balanced arguments, in turn enhancing their religious literacy.• foster a mutual understanding within different religious traditions, including non-religious. <p>All of this, and more, enables our pupils to move forward as skilled and compassionate members of society who, as a result, are better prepared for the academic and real-world challenges they may face.</p>	
<p>Outline of course: GCSE RS is a diverse course allowing students the opportunity to study beliefs, teachings and practices within both Christianity and Islam.</p> <p>In the Christianity unit, students will study key beliefs about the nature of God, such as God being all-powerful and loving. Beliefs and teachings surrounding the incarnation, evil and suffering and sin will also be studied. When studying Christian practices, students will learn about prayer, sacraments, pilgrimage and baptism.</p> <p>In the Islam unit, students will study the nature of God focusing on God as one, core beliefs and rituals, such as the Six Articles of Faith and the Five Pillars of Islam. Students will also have the opportunity to learn about Muslim family life and festivals.</p> <p>All GCSE students will have the opportunity to go on trips to further enhance their knowledge and understanding of both Christianity and Islam.</p> <p>In addition, students will study four ethical themes from different Christian perspectives. These themes are relationships and families, religion and life, peace and conflict and crime and punishment. Many contemporary issues are explored in these four units including: marriage, divorce, abortion, euthanasia, war, pacifism, and capital punishment.</p>	



Therefore, the study of these themes, alongside the Christian and Muslim faiths, will allow our students to develop an understanding of the contemporary issues in our world while reflecting on their own views on their journey to becoming global citizens.

Assessment:

Pupils will complete two exam papers at the end of year 11:

For most pupils this will be the first of their final GCSE papers and success in this is generally reflected in all other subject examinations.

The first focuses on Christianity and Islam. With an in depth look at the beliefs and practices of these two global religions.

The second paper focuses on **four ethical themes.**

Both exams will be 1 hour 45 minutes. Students will get marked for their spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) on each paper.

Links to careers:

Pursuing religious studies leads to a large number of career paths and equips students for even more. The evaluation and argumentation used in Religious Studies ideally prepares pupils for legal, executive and political roles. The ability to consider multiple perspectives and arrive at well-reasoned conclusions is essential in all decision-making roles.

Furthermore, the ability to justify actions and present information concisely is essential to any young professional looking to develop in their respective fields. There are additional focuses that would supplement a pupil's ability to pursue careers in STEM subjects such as research and medicine.

These careers often require young people to be able to consider the ethical ramifications of their actions, for Religious Studies caters and allows the students to develop and hone these skills with a high level of efficiency and enthusiasm.

Who to contact for more information: Miss S Choudry



Physical Education

Core

Exam board: n/a	Course Code: n/a
Why we study PE at St Mary Magdalene The PE 'Core' curriculum intent states: <i>'Pupils will leave Y11 with the confidence, knowledge, enthusiasm and opportunities to continue to lead a healthy and active life through active participation.'</i> PE at KS4 aims to provide positive experiences of physical activity and staying healthy in order for pupils to continue this throughout their lives once they leave the secondary school setting.	
Outline of course: During Years 10 and 11, students will cover a wide range of sports in their core PE lessons. Traditional sports will continue to be taught, building on students' prior learning in Years 7, 8 and 9. Students will also be introduced to, and taught, skills in some unfamiliar sports to broaden their experience of physical education. Students interested in taking a full examined course in Physical Education should see page 44 for information about BTEC Sport. As a PE Department, we aim to get the students as active as we can in lessons, thus improving their physical fitness. We aim to cover a wide variety of topics as we strive to promote a healthy active lifestyle and hope our students learn enough from their PE lessons to continue to sustain and remain involved in physical activity. The majority of the curriculum is based around team sports and invasion games, providing students with lifelong skills. The following topics will be taught: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basketball• Football• Volleyball• Netball• Handball• Trampolining• Badminton• Health Related Fitness• Leadership• Athletics• Striking and Fielding	
This course is not examined and no grade is given at the end of Year 11.	
Assessment: n/a	
Who to contact for more information: Mr Lawrence	



Exam board: n/a	Course Code: n/a
<p>Outline of course: Over the course of Years 10 and 11, students will study elements of the following in a spiral curriculum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Health and wellbeing2. Relationships3. Living in the wider world <p>PSHE will be taught regularly in family groups. It is not assessed, but it forms a key part of students' education.</p> <p>In PSHE, students will acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives now and in the future. PSHE education develops the qualities and attributes pupils need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society.</p> <p>PSHE education equips pupils to live healthy, safe, productive, capable, responsible and balanced lives. It encourages them to be enterprising and supports them in making effective transitions, positive learning and career choices and in achieving economic wellbeing. Students will reflect on and clarify their own values and attitudes.</p> <p>PSHE education contributes to personal development by helping students to build their confidence, resilience and self-esteem, and to identify and manage risk, make informed choices and understand what influences their decisions. It enables them to recognise, accept and shape their identities, to understand and accommodate difference and change, to manage emotions and to communicate constructively in a variety of settings. By developing an understanding of themselves, empathy and the ability to work with others, students will be well-prepared to form and maintain good relationships later in life, develop the essential skills for future employability and better enjoy and manage their lives.</p>	
Assessment: n/a	
Who to contact for more information: Mr Gayle	



Art: Art, Craft and Design

Optional

Exam board: Edexcel	Course Code: 1AD0
<p>Outline of course:</p> <p>The GCSE in Art, Craft and Design is a broad and flexible course that requires students to develop an appreciation of the creative process through a practical response, using a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional media, materials, techniques and processes. Students should explore critically how artists, craftspeople and designers from diverse cultures, times and societies have arrived at solutions and communicated meaning using the formal elements. Students should use this knowledge when developing new ideas, recording observations and creating outcomes which fully realise their personal intentions.</p> <p>All students will be required to keep a sketchbook in which to record their experiences, ideas, experiments and knowledge of art and artists.</p> <p>To do well in this subject you will need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have good observational drawing skills. • Have an open and creative mind. • Produce a sketchbook which shows the development and investigation of your ideas. • Explore and write about the work of Artists, Craftspeople and Designers. • Research various art forms and ideas connected with your work in your own time. 	
<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Students will complete two components of work over two academic years.</p> <p>Component 1 is a portfolio that in total shows explicit coverage of the four assessment objectives. It must include a sustained project evidencing the journey from initial engagement to the realisation of intentions and a selection of further work undertaken during the student's course of study. There is no time limit, this component contributes 60% of the overall GCSE grade, is a 72 mark unit and is a non-exam assessment (NEA).</p> <p>Component 2 requires for students to respond to their chosen starting point from an externally set assignment paper relating to their subject title, evidencing coverage of all four assessment objectives. Students will have a preparatory period as well as 10 hours supervised time under exam conditions. This component contributes 40% of the GCSE grade and is a 72-mark unit.</p>	
<p>Choose this subject if you want to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO1: Develop ideas through investigational skills • AO2: Refine and experiment with media, materials, techniques and processes. • AO3: Develop recording and observational drawing skills • AO4: Present own personal and meaningful responses 	
<p>Links to careers:</p> <p>Art offers a wide range of career pathways including: Architecture, Graphic Design, Teaching, Jewellery Design, Fashion Design, Television work, Shoe Design, Textile Design, Film making, Printing, Pottery, Animation, Illustration, Costume Design, Theatre Design and Garden Design.</p>	
<p>Who to contact for more information: Ms Anderson</p>	



Business Studies

Optional

Exam board: OCR	Course Code: J204
Why we study Business Studies at St Mary Magdalene:	
<p>Studying Business Studies will provide students with the opportunity to develop a range of skills and knowledge to be able to work in a business, to become leaders of a business, or to start and develop a business of their own.</p> <p>The course is designed to provide a broad understanding of all areas of a business; from Human Resources to Finance, and Marketing to Production. This course is designed to allow students to gain a strong understanding of business theory, but also to develop a range of skills including innovation, enterprise, financial capability and team work</p>	
Outline of course:	
<p>The OCR GCSE (9-1) Business is split into two components:</p> <p>Business 1: business activity, marketing and people (01) - This component introduces learners to business concepts and issues concerning the activities of a business. It explores the purpose and role of a business from first spotting an enterprising opportunity through to the growth of an established business. It takes a closer look at the role of marketing and human resources.</p> <p>This component introduces learners to business concepts and issues concerning the activities of a business. It explores the purpose and role of a business from first spotting an enterprising opportunity through to the growth of an established business. It takes a closer look at the role of marketing and human resources.</p> <p>Business 2: operations, finance and influences on business (02) - This component takes a closer look at the role of operations and finance and introduces learners to external influences on business. It explores the importance of these influences and how businesses change in response to them. Finally, learners will use content from both component 01 and component 02 to make connections between different elements of the subject. There are four sections covering content – section 4: operations, section 5: finance, section 6: influences on business and section 7: the interdependent nature of business</p>	
Assessment:	
<p>100% examination. Two exams at the end of the course, each 90 minutes long.</p> <p>Paper 1: Business 1: business activity, marketing, and people (01). 50% of total GCSE</p> <p>This component is worth 80 marks, split into two sections and assesses content from business activity, marketing and human resources.</p> <p>Section A contains multiple choice questions. This section of the component is worth 15 marks.</p>	



Section B includes short, medium, and extended response style questions which use stimulus material that draws on real business contexts. This section of the component is worth 65 marks.

Paper 2: Business 2: operations, finance, and influences on business (02). 50% of total GCSE

This component is worth 80 marks, split into two sections and assesses content from operations, finance and influences on business. This component assumes knowledge of business activity, marketing, and human resources.

Section A contains multiple choice questions. This section of the component is worth 15 marks.

Section B includes short, medium, and extended response-style questions which use stimulus material that draws on real business contexts. This section of the component is worth 65 marks. Synoptic questions are included in section B.

Choose this subject if...

If you are interested in finding out the answers to the questions below, then Business Studies might be the subject for you:

- What is enterprise and could I be an entrepreneur of the future?
- How do businesses develop products that people want to buy, set prices that should be charged, and advertise and promote them so that people know they exist?
- What is international trade and how do businesses sell to people around the world?
- How does a business calculate cash and profit, and how do they know if they are being successful?
- How does a business recruit its workers and motivate them to work as hard as they can?

Links to careers:

This GCSE course opens exciting opportunities to study business-related subjects at A-level or as L3 BTEC.

We live in a corporate world and the markets operate around us constantly. Because of this, business is a universal subject. There are few, if any, careers for which an understanding of business would not be of some benefit. Business studies is also a key to attaining highly paid and challenging roles in all levels of management.

Who to contact for more information: Mr A Ogunmefun



Citizenship

Optional

Exam board: Edexcel	Course Code: 1CS0
<p>Why we study Citizenship at St Mary Magdalene: Our vision in the Social Sciences is to understand the world and then make it better. Citizenship teaches us how to research society and then build theories about how and why specific social facts occur. For example, why and how do rich people stay rich from one generation to another. Once we have this information, we can improve our world by protecting and defending vulnerable groups, challenging inequalities and fighting for social justice.</p>	
<p>Outline of course: GCSE Citizenship helps students to gain knowledge and understanding of key political structures, processes and issues within the UK and a global context.</p> <p>Students will develop their knowledge of the rights of citizens and the responsibilities attached to these.</p> <p>By studying citizenship, students will develop transferable skills including how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate facts and make deductions develop opinions and new ideas on political issues analyse and better understand the political world 	
<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Paper 1: 50% of GCSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes <p>What's assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living together in the UK Democracy at work in the UK Law and Justice <p>Paper 2: 50% of GCSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes <p>What's assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking citizenship action Power and influence <p>Students will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics.</p>	
<p>Choose this subject if... You are interested in understanding more about the political workings of the UK as an individual but also within a global context. You want to develop your own political views and engage in local citizenship action.</p>	
<p>Links to careers: Citizenship teaches a range of transferable skills that are useful in many career choices. These are most specifically useful if you are thinking of going into politics, journalism, policy, law, charity work.</p>	
<p>Who to contact for more information: Miss Leach or Miss Okorie</p>	



Computer Science

Optional

Exam board: OCR	Course Code: J277
Why we study Computer Science at St Mary Magdalene?	
The curriculum has been designed to enable learners to develop their problem-solving skills using computational thinking techniques and a range of programming languages, consisting of both visual and textual languages. We aim for our students to not only become confident users but creators of technology.	
Outline of course:	
This is an exam-based course, and consists of 2 components.	
Component 1 – Computer Systems introduces students to the central processing unit (CPU), computer memory and storage, data representation, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, system security and system software. It also looks at ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with computer science.	
Component 2 – Computational thinking, algorithms and programming allows students to explore their logical thinking skills, and apply those skills to interpret and create programs of their own. They develop skills and understanding in computational thinking: algorithms, programming techniques, producing robust programs, computational logic and translators.	
Assessment:	
Component 1: Computer Systems	
Written Exam	
Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes	
Weighting: 50% of total GCSE.	
Structure: The exam paper is out of 80 marks and mainly consists of short and longer answer questions, with some multiple-choice questions.	
Component 2: Computational thinking, algorithms and programming	
Written Exam	
Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes	
Weighting: 50% of total GCSE.	
Structure: The exam paper is out of 80 marks and mainly consists of short and longer answer questions, with some multiple-choice questions, along with writing, interpreting and correcting algorithms.	
Choose this subject if...	
If you are interested in learning about the way computers and programs are made and not just how to use them.	
You will be gaining valuable programming, problem-solving and computational thinking skills which will not only support you with your GCSE but also in further education and careers.	
Links to careers:	
Data analyst, IT consultant, web developer, forensic crime specialist, network consultant, programmer, program tester, finance, banking and many more.	
Who to contact for more information: Miss Farrukh	



Design and Technology

Optional

Exam board: AQA	Course Code: 8552																
<p>Why we study Design Technology at St Mary Magdalene Design and Technology enables students to identify, consider and solve problems through creative thinking, planning and design and by working with different media, materials and tools.</p>																	
<p>Outline of course: In this two-year course, students will develop their designing and making capabilities in a range of different materials, such as wood metal and plastic as well as incorporating electronics and textiles. A broad range of design techniques using specialist technical equipment will be learnt.</p> <p>Students will study the subject through exciting short focused design challenges that will build their subject knowledge and skills, and lead to outcomes that students will make and keep.</p>																	
<p>Assessment: Students will be assessed in core technical principles (materials, mechanics, energy), specialist technical principles (wood, metal, plastic, electronics, textiles), and designing and making principles (research, designing, tools & equipment, prototyping).</p> <p>Written exam: 2 hours - 100 marks - 50% of GCSE. Non-examined assessment (NEA): a substantial design and make task through a contextual challenge set by AQA Students will produce a prototype and portfolio of evidence. 100 marks - 50% of GCSE.</p>																	
<p>Choose this subject if...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You want to design and make products • You like using tools and equipment • You have an interest in Science and Engineering • You like to work with your hands in a practical environment 																	
<p>Links to careers: A career in Technology and Design often involves developing creative, solutions to existing problems. This may mean anything from designing video games to creating indoor living spaces. As technology advances, the range of careers in design and technology will also expand. Here are just a few jobs that make use of skills found in design and technology</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>• Interior Designer</td> <td>• Design Engineer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Product Designer</td> <td>• CAD engineer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Video Game Design</td> <td>• Electrical Engineer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Civil Engineer</td> <td>• Civil Engineer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Mechanical Engineer</td> <td>• Architect</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Robotics Engineer</td> <td>• Steel Fabricator</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Aeronautical engineer</td> <td>• Electrician</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Joiner</td> <td>• Surveyor</td> </tr> </table>		• Interior Designer	• Design Engineer	• Product Designer	• CAD engineer	• Video Game Design	• Electrical Engineer	• Civil Engineer	• Civil Engineer	• Mechanical Engineer	• Architect	• Robotics Engineer	• Steel Fabricator	• Aeronautical engineer	• Electrician	• Joiner	• Surveyor
• Interior Designer	• Design Engineer																
• Product Designer	• CAD engineer																
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• Mechanical Engineer	• Architect																
• Robotics Engineer	• Steel Fabricator																
• Aeronautical engineer	• Electrician																
• Joiner	• Surveyor																
<p>Who to contact for more information: Mr. McPeake or any member of the DT Department</p>																	



Drama

Optional

Exam board: AQA	Course Code: 8261
Why we study Drama at St Mary Magdalene? We study Drama as a way to engage learners in worldwide issues in a safe creative and inspiring way, providing students with a platform to discuss, perform and share their findings. Drama builds on skills such as teamwork, communication, dialogue, negotiation and develops imagination and creativity. It can support learners to have a better understanding of human behaviour and empathy with situations. Through the development of critical thinking, Drama also supports students in making better and more conscious decisions.	
Outline of course: There are three components: Understanding Drama, Devising Drama and Texts in Practice. Understanding Drama encompasses the following: getting to grips with theatrical terms; studying a set play; see and evaluate live theatre. Devising Drama encompasses the following: independent work and capacity to learn focusing on one role as a theatre practitioner; preparation and live performance, actively contributing to a live performance. Texts in Practice encompasses the following: contributing to a live performance in the role that the student developed during Devising Drama.	
Assessment: Understanding Drama: Assessed through a written exam. The sections cover: theatre roles and terminology, knowledge and analysis/evaluation of the set text, analysis/evaluation of live theatre experienced. Devising Drama: Students must present a working log book of their devising process making use of self-analysis/evaluation as well as being assessed in their live performance as a performer, lighting designer, sound designer, set designer, costume designer or puppet designer. Texts in Practice: students must perform or create realised designs for two extracts from one play which contrasts to the set play studied in Understanding Drama. They can be assessed as a performer, lighting designer, sound designer, set designer, costume designer or puppet designer.	
Choose this subject if... You love exploring characters, human nature and important themes. You enjoy a practically weighted subject.	



You're interested in developing skills in acting, directing, technology, art and design, public speaking, critical thinking, self-confidence, self-development, literature analysis, physical performance and writing.

You are interested in a career in: entertainment, events, TV/film, theatre, publishing, public speaking, management, public relations, human resources, marketing, advertising, writing, design, technology, infrastructure, the civil service, or public sector work.

Links to careers: Students look at the various roles and responsibilities within the performing arts disciplines and the also the importance of other roles including backstage, costume and lighting. Students will have the opportunity to meet artists and stake holders within the industry and deepen their knowledge and links to future career opportunities.

Who to contact for more information: Miss Reading or Mr McInnis



Food Preparation and Nutrition

Optional

Exam board: Eduqas	Course Code: 3560
Why we study Food Preparation and Nutrition at St Mary Magdalene? The Eduqas GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition teaches students about nutrition, food science, and practical cooking skills. It covers topics like a balanced diet, the role of nutrients and food safety. Students gain hands-on experience in preparing healthy meals and learn the science behind cooking techniques, preparing them for making informed food choices and pursuing careers in the food industry.	
Outline of course: The Eduqas GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition covers several key areas. Food Science and Nutrition: Students learn about a range of food commodities, their uses and provenance. They go on to learn about the importance of a balanced diet, the functions of nutrients, and how they impact health. They also study food allergies, intolerances, and the impact of diet on long-term health. Food Preparation and Cooking Skills: This area focuses on developing practical cooking skills, including how to prepare and cook a variety of dishes. Students learn techniques related to food safety, hygiene, and how to adapt recipes to meet specific dietary needs. The Food Industry and Sustainability: Students explore the food production process, including sourcing ingredients, food labeling, and the environmental impact of food choices. They also learn about food trends and the ethical considerations in the food industry. The course includes both theoretical learning and practical assessments, with students required to complete a food science investigation (15%) and a food preparation task (35%) as part of their final assessment alongside a written theory exam (50%).	
Assessment: NEA 50% – 2 Assessments Exam 50%	
Choose this subject if... You would like to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have a deep understanding of food science and the theoretical knowledge needed for a variety of careers.• understand the role of nutrients in the body, food chemistry, and how cooking methods affect food quality and nutrition.• Have a knowledge of food safety, food production processes, and the impact of diet on health.• Gain insight into how different ingredients interact, the principles behind food preservation, and how to plan nutritious, balanced meals. This theoretical foundation equips you to make informed food choices and is essential for pursuing careers in food science, nutrition, and related industries.	
Links to careers: The Food Preparation and Nutrition GCSE combines the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating.	



It helps you develop cooking techniques, as well as knowledge of food traditions and kitchen safety.

The course gives you a range of skills, like planning and organising, working independently, understanding and applying science and even creative skills.

It can lead to a wide range of careers. For example you could be designing new ice cream flavours, or working in a hotel, restaurant or tourist attraction.

You could also be working in distribution or retail for a supermarket or advising people about healthy eating as a nutritionist.

Who to contact for more information: Ms K Hinds or Mrs Awaleh-Chaces



French

Optional

Exam board: AQA

Course Code: 8652

Why we study French at St Mary Magdalene:

The aim of our GCSE French key Stage 4 course is to ensure that students develop their ability and ambitions to communicate with native speakers in speech and writing. The study of French should also broaden the students' horizons and encourage them to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries and develop new ways of seeing the world.

GCSE French helps students develop their language skills in a variety of contexts and serves to enhance their understanding of the culture of Francophone countries and communities where French is spoken. It encourages enjoyment of language learning and the recognition that language skills enable students to take their place in a multi-lingual global society.

Outline of course:

GCSE French is divided into 3 themes:

- 1: People and lifestyle
- 2: Popular culture
- 3: Communication and the world around us

Each theme is divided into three topics, among which students will find motivating sections such as media and technology, travel and tourism, the environment and where people live, celebrity culture, customs, festivals and celebrations, free-time activities, education and work, healthy and lifestyle, identity and relationships with others, etc.

GCSE students will also be expected to develop and use their knowledge of grammar throughout their course.

Students will learn to understand and provide information and opinions in the target language about these themes and relating to their own experiences and those of other people, including countries/communities where French is spoken. We will also be providing students with cultural enrichment during lesson time at various points throughout the course. This is not examined, but in MFL at St Mary Magdalene, we think it is crucial that students gain a cultural insight into the countries where the language is spoken. This may take the form of an English discussion, where the objective is to inspire students.

Studying French will also develop students' critical thinking and analytical skills, key skills for Sixth Form, the professional world and beyond.

**Assessment:**

The assessment will consist of four exam papers, one on each of the linguistic skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading & Responding, and Writing. All four exams are equally weighted at 25% of the total GCSE.

GCSE French has a Foundation Tier (grades 1–5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4–9). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier. All question papers must be taken in the same series.

Choose this subject if...

"The boundaries of my language signify the boundaries of my world." - Ludwig Wittgenstein

At St Mary Magdalene, we are passionate about the benefits that learning a language can bring. We strongly believe in languages as a skill for life and something students should enjoy and find rewarding.

Our French course offers an assessment which expands students' cultural knowledge whilst developing their language skills in preparation for a successful future, wherever it might be.

We are confident our course will deliver the right results for your children. We want to provide for students of all abilities, and to deliver the assessments and results our students deserve.

Links to careers:

Aside from the chance to travel and to communicate with people of different nationalities and cultures, having a second language is a much sought-after skill in the professional world. After GCSE, students have the chance to continue to Post 16 and university level language, when they will have the chance to study or work abroad.

After university, professional fields requiring capable linguistics range from journalism and engineering to teaching and translation.

Jobs that would be directly related to languages include; researcher, interpreter, translator or a teacher. Other jobs that would find a language incredibly useful would be; journalist, logistics manager, detective, marketing executive, advertising.

Studying a language is immeasurably valuable in the world of today and therefore the employability of a language student is greatly increased.

Who to contact for more information: Mrs Hamdi



Geography

Optional

Exam board: AQA	Course Code: 8035
Why we study Geography at St Mary Magdalene:	
<p><i>Geography is the study of place — the lens that helps us understand our world, our connections, and our future.</i></p> <p>In Geography, our intent is to get students thinking like geographers. The curriculum enables learners to be confident, understand, and ask questions about the world around them, generating a knowledge of space and place across a range of scales. We seek to teach students on a locational basis throughout Key Stage three and shifting focus from human to physical and environmental geography on a half-term basis to excite and ignite curiosity in students as they progress to Key Stage 4. Key geographical skills and fieldwork are incorporated into the curriculum in order to develop pupil's interest and understanding of the subject throughout all years of education. Students also consider their own personal geographies and sense of place and how this is interconnected with the wider world and issues in contemporary media.</p>	
Outline of course:	
<p>The world we live in is changing at an alarming rate. Geography encompasses a perfect blend of Physical and Human Geography. There are three units that you will study over the two years, and you have already had an insight into some of these and the skills required to answer GCSE questions:</p> <p>Unit 1- Living with the physical environment: In this unit we will study the dynamic nature of physical processes and systems, and human interaction with them in a variety of places. This includes studying; volcanoes, earthquakes, tropical rainforests, deserts and the amazing coasts and river landscapes of the UK.</p> <p>Unit 2- Challenges in the human environment: The aims of this unit are to develop an understanding of the factors that produce a diverse variety of human environments; the dynamic development of Nigeria, Rio de Janeiro and the UK; the need for sustainable management; and the areas of current and future challenge and opportunity for these environments.</p> <p>Unit 3- Geographical applications: This section can be broken down into two components; issue evaluation and fieldwork. For issue evaluation, a resource booklet is released 12 weeks prior to the exam; this contains information on a current issue around the world. Students then evaluate this issue and come to a judgement about this in the exam. For the fieldwork component we will visit a river and urban landscape around London and conduct fieldwork which will be assessed in the final exam.</p>	
Assessment:	
<p>You will complete three written papers at the end of Year 11: Paper 1- Physical environments: The challenge of natural hazards, The living world (tropical rainforests and hot deserts), Physical landscapes in the UK (rivers and coasts) and Geographical skills. (35% of GCSE).</p>	



Paper 2- Human environments: Urban issues and challenges (London and Rio de Janeiro), Changing economic world (UK and Nigeria), Resource management and Geographical skills (35% of GCSE).

Paper 3- Geographical investigations: Issue evaluation, fieldwork enquiries and skills. (30% of GCSE).

Choose this subject if...

You would like to understand the world around you! Geography is at the forefront of all major world issues. The course will give you a chance to get to grips with some of the big questions which affect our world, such as climate change, world development, natural hazards, and natural processes which shape our world. There has never been a more important time to study Geography! The Guardian newspaper found geographers to be the most employable graduates because of the range of skills and knowledge you develop. It is very practical, with opportunities to learn new skills such as map skills, interpreting photographs, fieldwork skills, presenting, role play, and debating.

Links to careers:

• Environmental consultant	• Mapping, Technology & Data
• Conservation officer	• GIS analyst
• Sustainability adviser	• Remote sensing specialist
• Climate change analyst	• Cartographer
• Environmental data specialist	• Geospatial technician
• Town planner	• International development worker
• Transport planner	• Policy adviser
• Housing officer	• Demographer
• Landscape architect	• Migration specialist
• Hydrologist	• Travel, Tourism & Global Business
• Meteorologist	• Tourism manager
• Seismologist	• Travel researcher
• Flood risk analyst	• Airline route planner
• Volcanologist	• Logistics coordinator
• Outdoor education leader	• Education & Communication
• Museum or heritage educator	• Geography teacher

Who to contact for more information: The Geography team



History

Optional

Exam board: Edexcel	Course Code: 1H10 PM
Why we study History at St Mary Magdalene: <i>The purpose of history at SMM is to provide students with knowledge and understanding of how societies and cultures have evolved and interacted over time, so that they may recognise how the past has shaped the world they live in today, be that at the international, national, or more local level within Southeast London. We believe our students should be exposed to a broad and diverse array of histories and interpretations, proudly reflecting the SMM community, whilst equipping them with the cultural capital necessary for all to thrive in the future.</i> <i>The study of history at SMM should help foster our students' ability to think critically about the past, able to grapple with great moral dilemmas, so that they can leave us as active and aware citizens, who can critically evaluate, form logical arguments, and draw conclusions when presented with evidence from a variety of different sources.</i>	
Outline of course: GCSE History is a diverse course that allows and encourages students to become curious, to develop their own opinions based on a respect for evidence, and to build a deeper understanding of the present by engaging with and questioning the past at a local, national and global level. The course is based on content which helps learners to address fundamental issues in human history, it brings together people, events and issues that students will find engaging and that will stimulate a desire to explore the similarities and differences between people's lives in the past and their own lives now. The course is broken down into three components: <u>Paper 1: Thematic study (migrants in Britain) and a historic environment (Notting hill)</u> The thematic study requires students to understand change and continuity across a long sweep of history, including the most significant characteristics of different ages from the medieval to modern periods. They include people, events and developments and reveal wider changes in aspects of society over the centuries and allow comparisons to be made between different periods of history. At SMM we have chosen to study how migration to Britain has changed over time. should understand how key features in the migration to and within Britain were linked with the key features of society in Britain in the periods studied which drew migrants to Britain. Students also study a specific historic environment, in this case Notting Hill between the Windrush and 1970. <u>Paper 2: the Period study (Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941-1991) and British Depth study (Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88)</u> The British depth study focuses on a substantial and coherent short time span and require students to understand the complexity of a society or historical situation and the interplay of different aspects within it. The Period study focuses on a substantial and coherent medium time span of at least 50 years and	



require students to understand the unfolding narrative of substantial developments and issues associated with the period.

Paper 3: Modern Depth Study (Weimar and Nazi Germany, c1918-c1939)

Like the British Depth study, the modern depth study focuses on a substantial and coherent time span, however in this paper they grapple with modern history, in this case the trials and tribulations of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazis in Germany. Students are required to understand the complexity of the historical situation and the interplay of different aspects within it.

Assessment:

The assessment will consist of three externally assessed exam papers. Paper 1 - 1 hour 20 minutes, paper 2 – 1 hour 50 minutes and paper 3 – 1 hour 30 minutes. Students will be marked on their spelling punctuation and grammar on some papers.

Choose this subject if...

Choosing History is great foundation for your future! You will learn skills that can be applied in a huge range of careers and life situations. If you are interested in a career in law, business, journalism or economics then History is a great choice that will give you the skills needed to succeed in these areas. History teaches you to sharpen your critical thinking abilities, such as analysis, research, communication, debating and problem solving. It is an excellent subject for keeping your options open when choosing a degree.

Links to careers:

The Study of History and the skills used within it are useful for many different future careers, such as;

- Law
- Education
- Politics
- Journalism and media

Who to contact for more information: Ms. Pepper



Media Studies

Optional

Exam board: Eduqas (WJEC)

Course Code: C680QS

Why we study Media Studies at St Mary Magdalene:

Media Studies helps students understand and succeed in a media-rich world. Students learn how films, TV, music, advertising, news, games, and social media are created and how they shape opinions, identity, and culture. The subject builds creativity, confidence, and critical thinking, while developing practical skills like video editing, design, research, and analysis. Media Studies prepares students for further study and a wide range of future careers by helping them become informed, thoughtful, and responsible media users and creators

Outline of course:

GCSE Media Studies explores how media communicates meaning across print, audio-visual and online forms. Students study media language, representation, audiences and industries through set texts including magazines, advertising, newspapers, TV, radio, film marketing, video games and music videos. The course develops analytical skills and provides a creative opportunity to produce original media work.

Assessment:

Component 1 – Exploring the Media (1hr 30 / 40%)

Section A Set Texts:

- Pride magazine (2015)
- GQ magazine (2019)
- The Man with the Golden Gun (1974) – film marketing
- No Time to Die (2021) – film marketing
- The Guardian (18/01/22) – newspaper front page
- The Sun (01/01/21) – newspaper front page
- Quality Street (1950s) – print advert
- This Girl Can (2016) – print advert

Section B Set Texts:

- The Sun (full paper & website)
- The Archers (full radio episode)
- 007.com (film website)
- Fortnite (video game)

Component 2 – Understanding Media Forms & Products (1hr 30 / 30%)

Section A – Television:

- Modern Family
- Friends

Section B – Music Videos & Online Media:

- Katy Perry – Roar (2013) + website
- Justin Bieber – Intentions (2020) + website
- TLC – Waterfalls (1995)

Component 3 – Creating Media Products (Coursework / 30%)

- Students produce a film poster and DVD cover responding to a set brief.



Choose this subject if...

You enjoy analysing media such as TV, film, magazines, adverts, and online content. You like both creative and written work. You are interested in how media shapes society and how audiences respond. You enjoy designing, creating and thinking critically about media products.

Links to careers:

Film & TV production, journalism, advertising, marketing, PR, social media, digital content creation, graphic design, photography, video editing, game design, and other creative industries.

**Who to contact for more information: Head of Media: Miss Asuquo
Teacher of Media: Mr Tarjot**



Music

Optional

Exam board: Eduqas	Course Code: C660QS
Why we study Music at St Mary Magdalene: <i>Through performing, composing and appraising music, the music curriculum intends to inspire creativity and self-expression. Through our diverse curriculum we intend for students to develop a lifelong love and respect of music by exposing them to a broad and diverse range of composers, artists, genres and musical experiences.</i>	
Outline of course: The WJEC Eduqas specification encourages an integrated approach to the three distinct disciplines of performing, composing and appraising through four interrelated areas of study. Component 1 Performing 30% A minimum of two pieces, lasting a total of 4-6 minutes, recorded in the year of assessment: One piece must be an ensemble (group piece) lasting at least one minute One piece linked to an Area of Study (see below) Grade 3 music is the standard level and can score full marks if played perfectly You can use any instrument or voice, or choose a technology option. Component 2 Composing 30% Two pieces: One in response to a brief set by WJEC – there are 4 to choose from each year. One free composition – ANY style you want to write in. Component 3 Appraising 40% Externally assessed examination Listening examination: 8 questions, 2 on each area of study: AoS 1 Musical Forms and Devices AoS 2 Music for Ensemble AoS 3 Film Music AoS 4 Popular Music	
Assessment: One written exam (1 hour 15 minutes) Two performances (1 solo and 1 ensemble) Two compositions	
Choose this subject if... If you already play an instrument or sing, you can develop your skills and get a GCSE out of it. If you don't already play an instrument or sing, you can take the opportunity to learn new skills which could stay with you for life. If you are a creative person who wants to learn to make music, this course will give you that chance. This course will also deepen your understanding of the theoretical elements of music, as well as examining music from a cultural and contextual perspective.	
Links to careers: Students complete a unit where they study the various job roles and responsibilities in the industry. Students will have the opportunity to meet artists and stake holders within the industry and deepen their knowledge and links to careers.	
Who to contact for more information: Mr McInnis	



Psychology

Optional

Exam board: AQA

Course Code: 8182

Why we Study Psychology at St Mary Magdalene:

Our vision in the Social Sciences is to understand the world and then make it better. Psychology teaches us about human behaviour and then allows us to build theories and analyse studies about why people show certain behaviours for example mental disorders and how they are developed. Once we gain this knowledge, we are able to achieve personal growth as we have developed an understanding of human behaviour and the possible reasons for certain behaviour. Thus, we can understand more vulnerable/marginalised people, make an effort to remove the stigma behind mental health, understand ethical issues and social injustices within the wider society and develop an understanding that people are complex and there are many reasons for their behaviour.

'The purpose of psychology is to give us a completely different idea of the things we know best' - Paul Valery

Outline of course:

GCSE Psychology introduces students to the fundamentals of psychology, developing critical analysis, independent thinking and research skills.

Students will develop their use of specialist vocabulary, psychological concepts, terminology, and convention to engage in the process of psychological evaluation and analysis. The students will also develop an understanding of the relationship between psychology and personal, moral, social and cultural issues.

By studying sociology, students will develop transferable skills including how to:

- Acquire knowledge and understanding and how this can help to explain everyday social events.
- Present information, develop arguments, draw conclusions and reflect on these conclusions.
- Develop an understanding of how Psychology contributes to society.

Assessment:

Paper 1: 50% of GCSE

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

What's assessed:

- Memory
- Perception
- Development
- Research Methods

Paper 2: 50% of GCSE

- Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes

What's assessed:

- Social Influence



- Language, thought and communication
- Brain and neuropsychology
- Psychological problems

Students will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics.

Choose this subject if...

You are interested in understanding more about the human mind and human behaviour. GCSE Psychology is an excellent way to give yourself a foundational knowledge of how the human mind works, understand social behaviour and human development. GCSE psychology will also give you the basis upon which to build deeper knowledge of people and lead to a clear humanities pathway at post 16.

Using studies such as Zimbardo's prison experiment and Milgram's shock study. We will evaluate human behaviour and the wider implications they can have on society. We will focus on specific areas of human behaviour this includes Social Influence, Psychological problems (mental health), Memory and many more.

In addition, you will gain skills of research with the aspiration of undertaking your own psychological project or case study.

Links to careers:

Psychology offers many career options not just linked to Psychology such as Forensic psychology, Therapists, Sports and exercise psychologist etc. It also provides you with a number of transferable skills that can be useful in many other careers.

The scientific aspects of your psychology course, including the application of a reasoned approach, problem solving and manipulation of data, provides useful tools for careers in healthcare, law enforcement, finance, IT and research.

Your knowledge of human behaviour and motivation, ability to critically analyse a problem, formulate a considered response, create an argument and generate new ideas lend themselves well to careers in the creative industries, the legal sector, government administration and education.

Who to contact for more information: Ms Da Costa or Ms Campbell-Richards



Sociology

Optional

Exam board: AQA	Course Code: 8192
Why we Study Sociology at St Mary Magdalene: Our vision in the Social Sciences is to understand the world and then make it better. Sociology teaches us how to research society and then build theories about how and why specific social facts occur. For example, why and how do rich people stay rich from one generation to another. Once we have this information, we can improve our world by protecting and defending vulnerable groups, challenging inequalities and fighting for social justice. A very famous sociologists once said that 'Sociology is like a martial art – it should never be used in anger, but it can be used to defend those who need defending.'	
Outline of course: GCSE Sociology helps students to gain knowledge and understanding of key social structures, processes and issues through the study of families, education, crime and deviance and social stratification. Students will develop their analytical, assimilation and communication skills by comparing and contrasting perspectives on a variety of social issues, constructing reasoned arguments, making substantiated judgements and drawing reasoned conclusions. By studying sociology, students will develop transferable skills including how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• investigate facts and make deductions• develop opinions and new ideas on social issues• analyse and better understand the social world.	
Assessment: Paper 1: 50% of GCSE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes What's assessed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The sociology of families• The sociology of education• Relevant areas of social theory and methodology Paper 2: 50% of GCSE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes What's assessed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The sociology of crime and deviance• The sociology of social stratification• Relevant areas of social theory and methodology Students will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics.	
Choose this subject if... You are interested in understanding more about the society you live in while building a strong foundation of knowledge that can lead to a clear humanities pathway at post 16.	



Using case studies we will evaluate our society. We will focus our studies on the areas of the family, our education system, social equality and crime in our society.

In addition, you will gain skills of research with the aspiration of undertaking your own action research within our community.

Who to contact for more information: Miss Leach



Exam board: AQA

Course Code: 8692

Why we study Spanish at St Mary Magdalene:

First and foremost, after Mandarin, Spanish is the second most spoken language in the whole world.

The aim of our GCSE Spanish course is to ensure that students develop their ability and ambitions to communicate with native speakers in speech and writing.

We study Spanish at St Mary Magdalene CofE to provide students with a foundation for understanding the wider world, different cultures and societies around us. We want our students to be able to communicate with Spanish speakers in the workplace, at home or abroad, understand cultural practices of other peoples, and appreciate the nature of language itself.

Spanish is a great choice because it's relatively easy for English speakers to learn. Learning a second language is good for your intellectual development, and speaking Spanish could open up many opportunities for you in the future.

Outline of course:

GCSE Spanish is divided into 3 themes:

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

Each theme is divided into four topics, within which students will study content such as social media, music, food and eating out, travel and tourism, healthy and unhealthy living, charity and voluntary work, the environment, etc.

GCSE students will also be expected to develop and use their knowledge of grammar throughout their course.

Students will learn to understand and provide information and opinions in the target language about these themes and relating to their own experiences and those of other people, including countries/communities where Spanish is spoken. We will also be providing students with cultural enrichment during lesson time at various points throughout the course. This is not examined, but in MFL at St Mary Magdalene, we think it is crucial that students gain a cultural insight into the countries where the language is spoken. This may take the form of an English discussion, where the objective is to inspire students.

Studying Spanish will also develop students' critical thinking and analytical skills, key skills for Sixth Form, the professional world and beyond.

**Assessment:**

The assessment will consist of four exam papers, one on each of the linguistic skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading & Responding, and Writing. All four exams are equally weighted at 25% of the total GCSE.

GCSE Spanish has a Foundation Tier (grades 1–5) and a Higher Tier (grades 4–9). Students must take all four question papers at the same tier. All question papers must be taken in the same series.

Choose this subject if...

"...you need to make sure your child can speak Spanish...We should have every child speaking more than one language." Barack Obama

At St Mary Magdalene, we are passionate about the benefits that learning a language can bring. We strongly believe in languages as a skill for life and something students should enjoy and find rewarding.

Our Spanish course offers an assessment which expands students' cultural knowledge whilst developing their language skills in preparation for a successful future, wherever it might be.

We are confident our course will deliver the right results for your children. We want to provide for students of all abilities, and to deliver the assessments and results our students deserve.

Links to careers:

Aside from the chance to travel and to communicate with people of different nationalities and cultures, having a second language is a much sought-after skill in the professional world. After GCSE, students have the chance to continue to Post-16 and university level languages, when they will have the chance to study or work abroad.

After university, professional fields requiring capable linguistics range from journalism and engineering to teaching and translation.

Jobs that would be directly related to languages include; researcher, interpreter, translator or a teacher. Other jobs that would find a language incredibly useful would be; journalist, lawyer, insurance broker, architects, logistics manager, detective, marketing executive, advertising and any other career working abroad in any Spanish speaking country.

Studying a language is immeasurably valuable in the world of today, with over 474 million native Spanish speakers in the world, studying Spanish dramatically increases your/your child's employability.

Who to contact for more information: Ms Tormo



Digital Functional Skills

Optional

Exam board: Pearson	Course Code: 61033595
Why we study Digital Functional Skills at St Mary Magdalene: The Pearson Edexcel Digital Functional Skills Qualification at Level 1 will enable learners to initiate and participate in digital and online activities safely in the workplace and in other real-life contexts. At this level, Digital Functional Skills qualifications should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enable learners to increase their confidence and fluency in their use of digital knowledge and skills and develop a positive attitude towards the use of digital skills• Enable learners to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by applying these to complete tasks and activities.• introduce learners to areas of life and work which may be new or unfamiliar, and tasks and activities that they may encounter in future.• Enable learners to develop an appreciation of the importance of digital skills in the workplace and in life generally.• Provide a basis for further study, work and life.	
Outline of course: The following skills will be assessed in this course. <i>Using devices and handling information, creating and editing, communicating, transacting, being safe and responsible online.</i>	
Assessment: The Pearson Edexcel Digital Functional Skills Qualifications at Level 1 consists of one externally assessed assessment , available onscreen, on-demand. Each assessment comprises two sections – a test section and a task section.	
Choose this subject if... You want to build a foundation for progression into employment in the IT industry, or further education and develop skills for everyday life.	
Links to careers: Office/business support, IT user support, customer service, content creation and data handling.	
Who to contact for more information: Ms. M Farrukh, Mr. A Hussain	



BTEC Tech Award in Sport

Optional

Exam board: Pearson	Course Code:
Why we study Sport at St Mary Magdalene? The PE 'Option' curriculum intent states: <i>'Pupils are ready for the next stage of Physical Education and have the confidence, knowledge and enthusiasm to pursue a career in the sporting industry.'</i> Studying PE and Sport as an option at St Mary Magdalene will give pupils an insight into various pathways within the sporting industry and show that there is a lot more to sport than participation. Studying sport at KS4 is a great way to push yourself into a career in sport and continue to lead a physically healthy, active lifestyle.	
Outline of course: The BTEC Tech Award in Sport is a vocational option assessed in two ways; an externally assessed written examination and two components of internally assessed coursework. The theory lessons will take place in a classroom environment and the practical lessons in either the Sports Hall, Hard Court, 4G Pitch, Athletics Track or Gym. Below is a breakdown of the three components that make up the qualification: Components 1 and 2 are internal assessments that pupils will complete in school during allocated assessment time. These two components will be covered during year 10. Component 3 is an external assessment and will involve a written examination at the end of year 11.	
Assessment: <u>Component 1</u> Content: Sporting Provisions, Equipment and Technology in Sport, Participation in Sport. <u>Component 2</u> Content: Components of Fitness, Roles of Officials, Improving Sporting Techniques. <u>Component 3</u> Components of Fitness, Methods of Training, Principles of Training, Fitness Testing, Goal Setting, and Training Programming.	
Choose this subject if...	



You want to work within the sporting industry with employment opportunities such as Physiotherapy, Sports Coaching, PE Teaching, Psychology of Sport, Sports Analysis, Personal Training/Fitness Coaching.

You want the knowledge and know-how to keep yourself fit, healthy and active for life.

You find the human body fascinating.

This will be an interesting and challenging learning experience taught by very passionate and enthusiastic PE teachers. Students will be introduced to key sporting ideas and show how these interact with practical performance to improve health and fitness.

Links to Careers: Physiotherapy, Sports Coaching, PE Teaching, Psychology of Sport, Sports Analysis, Personal Training/Fitness Coaching, Sport in the Media, Sports Journalism.

Who to contact for more information: Mr Lawrence, Mr Mudge, Miss Woolsey.



Completing your options request

In the week commencing **16th March** you will receive a link to an online form on MS Teams where you can make your options choices.

When doing this, you should consider the advice / guidance given by staff. There are certain subjects which you will require specific skills to be able to access.

You must select your 3 preferred options as well as two reserve options. We will try to meet as many requests as possible but we cannot guarantee that everyone will get their top three choices due to when the classes are scheduled or the capacity of classes.

You may only select one social science subject (Psychology / Sociology / Citizenship)

You can indicate on the form if you would like to be entered for a community language GCSE.

All forms must be submitted by **20th March 2026**.