

GCSE 2007-09

In Years 7, 8 and 9 all pupils study a wide range of subjects. In Years 10 and 11 most pupils follow a curriculum which leads to nine GCSE awards.

The **core curriculum** is compulsory for all.

- English and English Literature (2 GCSEs)
- Mathematics
- Double Award Science (2 GCSEs)

The remaining four subjects are chosen from a broad range of options.

Pupils are strongly advised to opt into those subjects that they enjoy and are good at. Higher Education and career aspirations should also be considered.

Wherever possible it is sensible to aim for a balanced programme of study. However, the School does **not** require that pupils choose courses to include all the main curriculum areas (languages, humanities, creative subjects and technology). It is possible, therefore, to select a combination of subjects tailored to individual needs.

The process of choosing subjects may take some time. The School provides advice and consultation for pupils and parents during Year 9 to help them make appropriate choices.

This booklet provides basic information about the GCSE courses provided at St Christopher and will be a good starting point for discussion.

Subject

Examining Group

Syllabus Title

Examinations

Coursework

Subject

Examining Group

Syllabus Title

Examinations

Coursework

English

AQA

English A (3702)

Paper 1 (1¾ hours) 30%

Reading: Response to unprepared non-fiction/media materials.

Writing: Tasks which argue, persuade or advise.

Paper 2 (1½ hours) 30%

Reading: Response to poetry.

Writing: Tasks which inform, explain or describe.

Speaking and Listening 20%

Reading 10% Shakespeare

Writing 10% Prose study
Original writing
Media

English Literature

AQA

English Literature A (3712)

One Paper (1¾ hours) 70%

One question on 20th Century Prose
One question on poetry

Three assignments 30%

Shakespeare play

Pre-1914 Prose

Post-1914 drama text

Subject **Mathematics**

Examining Group	EDEXCEL
Syllabus title	GCSE Mathematics (2544) or IGCSE Mathematics (4400)
Assessment	Two levels of entry: Foundation (C-G) Higher (A*-D)
IGCSE	Terminal examinations (100%)
GCSE	Stage 1 March 2008 35% Stage 2 June 2008 15% Terminal examinations 50%

Set A

Pupils will follow the IGCSE course run by EDEXCEL. This examination follows a very similar structure to the usual GCSE. It concentrates more on the study of Mathematics and less on Statistics. It is a qualification that is now used by a number of independent schools in preference to the GCSE and is accepted by Universities. As neither the GCSE nor the IGCSE provides enough challenge for very good Mathematics students, pupils will also study topics from the Free Standing Mathematics Qualification, Additional Mathematics, administered by OCR. It is intended that pupils in this set will take both the Higher Level IGCSE and the Additional Mathematics qualification in June 2009.

Other sets

Pupils follow the GCSE modular course. Pupils in the lowest set will follow the Foundation level of study. The other two groups will follow the Higher level of study. The GCSE course comprises topics from four main areas: Number, Algebra, Shape and Space and Data Handling.

Subject Science

Please see the Mathematics section for comments on the status and acceptability of the IGCSE qualification.

Set 1 (p)

IGCSE Double Award Co-ordinated Science

Examining Group	Cambridge IGCSE, part of OCR
Syllabus title	Co-ordinated Sciences (0654)
Assessment	Terminal examinations: Multiple choice paper (30%) Extended theory paper (50%) Alternative to practical paper (20%)

All students in this group will be entered for the Higher Tier papers.

Other sets

Science and Additional Science

Examining Group	AQA
Syllabus title	Science A (4461) Additional Science (4463)
Assessment	

Science

Taken in Year 10
Six Module Tests (75%)
These are half an hour each, mainly multiple choice. There are two in each of Chemistry, Biology and Physics. Three will be taken in March, the other three in June.

Coursework (25%)
Coursework consists of 45 minute *ISA* tests, based on practical exercises set by the Board, taken in lessons when appropriate during the course and marked internally. The best set of marks is submitted.
There is no coursework to do at home.

Additional Science Taken in Year 11

Terminal papers: one in Chemistry, one in Biology, one in Physics (75%)
Coursework (25%) following the same pattern as in Year 10

GCSE Options

French
German
Spanish
History
Geography
Information Technology
Art and Design
Design and Technology
Physical Education
Drama
Music

Subject

Examining Group
Syllabus title

French

OCR
French (1925)

Examinations

Papers in Listening, Reading and Writing at Foundation or Higher level (25% each).

There is also a Coursework option.

Speaking test

Conducted and taped by the teacher (25%), externally marked.

It is expected that most pupils will continue with the study of French in Year 10. The emphasis at GCSE on communication and an exchange programme with a French school gives added relevance to this course.

Subject

Examining Group
Syllabus title

German

OCR
German (1926)

Examinations

The skills of Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking are of equal importance (25% for each skill). There is the option of Coursework for the Writing Component.

Speaking test

Conducted and taped by the teacher (25%), externally marked.

The German course has always had the extension of pupils' overall fluency in all aspects of communication as its main aim. The OCR exam has the same overall objective and thus makes this approach fully viable throughout the course. Our language trip in September will be to the Austrian region of Salzburg, where pupils will be involved in a language acquisition and activities programme.

Subject

Examining Group
Syllabus title

Spanish

OCR
Spanish (1928)

Examinations

The skills of Listening, Reading, and Speaking are of equal importance. A coursework option is available instead of the Writing paper (25% for each skill).

Speaking test

Conducted and taped by the teacher (25%), externally marked.

During the GCSE course pupils will continue to develop all of the skills which they will have already practised in their first 2 years of Spanish. At the beginning of Year 10 they will have the opportunity to visit Spain and stay with a Spanish family, which will greatly enhance their knowledge of the language and of Spanish culture.

Other Options: Other Language courses (including Italian, Japanese and Hindi) can be followed at an extra charge.

Subject

History

Examining Group

EDEXCEL

Syllabus title

Syllabus A
Modern European and World History (1334)

The GCSE syllabus provides candidates with the opportunity to study aspects of Twentieth Century World History in outline and in depth. Assessment is by two examinations and two pieces of coursework.

Examinations

PAPER I - (2 Outline Studies) - 40% of total mark

- 1) The Emergence of Modern China 1911-1970
- 2) A Divided Union? The USA 1941-1981

PAPER 2 - (2 Depth Studies) - 35% of total mark

- 1) The Russian Revolution c.1910-1924
- 2) The War to End Wars 1914-1919

Coursework (25%)

2 pieces (12½% each)

- 1) The Irish Question 1916 - 1972
- 2) Britain in the Age of Total War

Subject

Geography

Examining Group

EDEXCEL

Syllabus Title

Geography Syllabus B (1313)

Paper 3H (1 hour 15 minutes) Weighting: 25%

This paper takes the form of a decision-making exercise. It includes a booklet with resources such as maps, photographs and newspaper articles, all based on an issue arising from one of the core units (A1, A2, or A3 – see paper 4H). Candidates are asked structured questions using the resources to consider the issue being examined. The resource booklet is released to candidates three weeks before they sit the paper.

Paper 4H (2 hours) Weighting: 50%

A question is set on each of the topics listed below (apart from the one that is examined in paper 3H). Each question is resource-based and structured and will involve using the case study material covered throughout the course.

Unit A1 – Providing for Population Change

- Population Dynamics
- Population and Resources

Unit A2 – Planning for Change

- Where should we build new homes in the UK?
- How is rapid growth affecting cities in LEDCs?
- Can cities be made more sustainable?
- How is the global workplace changing?

Unit A3 – Coping with Environmental Change

- How do physical and human concerns impact on coasts?
- How can tectonic movements create hazards?
- What are the risks associated with flooding?

Unit B4 – Weather and Climate

Unit C7 – Recreation and Tourism

Coursework: a fieldwork investigation worth 25%

Candidates are required to complete ONE fieldwork investigation at a local scale to investigate an argument, problem or assertion. They will collect the data during a visit to Cambridge in the Summer Term of Year 10 and complete the write-up during the Autumn Term of Year 11.

Subject

Examining Group:

Syllabus Title:

Information Technology

OCR

GCSE in Information and Communication
Technology A (1994)

Pupils study

- how ICT is used for work and leisure
- the positive and negative effects of ICT on society
- how to design and use ICT systems
- hardware, software and communication networks.

Pupils learn

- how to use software such as word processors, databases, spreadsheets, etc.
- about practical design of ICT systems
- key skills in numeracy, communication and ICT
- how to apply ICT to real life situations and solve problems
- how to use ICT to research, acquire, manipulate and present information.

Assessment

This course consists of four modules. The first two modules make up a short course in ICT. By extending these to take the other two modules, pupils can achieve a full course GCSE. Modules 2 and 4 are based on coursework while modules 1 and 3 are written examinations. There are two levels of entry for the examination papers: Foundation and Higher.

Module 1

This is assessed by a short written examination. The questions are based on a basic knowledge and understanding of computer systems, communications technology and information.

Module 2 – Coursework

Pupils will produce two minor coursework projects. The first project is about presenting information and the second is chosen from handling data, modelling, measuring or control.

Module 3

The third module is assessed by a short written examination. The questions are based on ICT applications, systems, networks and computer technology.

Module 4 – Coursework

The final module is a major coursework project where you should produce your own documented ICT system to tackle a real problem of your choice.

Assessment Unit	Entry code	Title	Duration	Full Course Weighting
1	2357F	ICT: Paper 1 (Foundation)	1 hr	20%
	2357H	ICT: Paper 1 (Higher)	1 hr 15 m	
2	2358	ICT: Coursework Projects 1a/1b	-	30%
3	2359F	ICT: Paper 3 (Foundation)	1 hr	20%
	2359H	ICT: Paper 3 (Higher)	1 hr 15 m	
4	2360	ICT: Coursework Project 2	-	30%

Subject **Art and Design**

Examining Group	AQA
Syllabus title	Art and Design (3201 – 3205)
Assessment	Coursework component – 60% Controlled Test – 40%

Students will be introduced to a variety of experiences employing a range of media, processes and techniques. This may be within a specialised programme of study from any one of the following endorsed syllabuses: drawing and painting, graphics, textiles, three-dimensional studies; or more usually, a combination of them all.

Knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design will be developed through the practical activities of making and investigating. This will also be developed through students' evaluation of their own work and the work of expert practitioners, while using an appropriate specialist vocabulary.

The course specification should encourage candidates to develop

- creative and imaginative powers and the practical skills for communicating and expressing ideas, feelings and meanings in art, craft and design
- investigative, analytical, experimental and interpretative capabilities, aesthetic understanding and critical skills
- understanding of codes and conventions of art, craft and design and awareness of contexts in which they operate
- knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design in contemporary societies and in other times and cultures.

Students will be required to prepare 2, 3 or 4 units of work for the Coursework component and a separate piece for the Controlled Test. In all cases, this will include preliminary/supporting studies, i.e. studies carried out before and during the creation of a finished piece.

Subject **Design and Technology**

Examining Group

WJEC

Syllabus title

D+T Resistant Materials Technology GCSE

Assessment

60% - Major Project

The early stages of Year 10 involve a range of designing and making activities: these are all for practice and do not count specifically as GCSE marks. The Major Project counts for all coursework marks. This project allows the candidate to design and make something of their choosing (in negotiation and agreement with the teacher!).

40% - Theory examination

There are two papers which make up a single-sitting 2 hour examination at the end of Year 11. The questions are a mixture of CDT 'Theory,' such as types of material, and 'Designing' questions which give the candidate the chance to sketch design solutions set within the paper (rather like the design work in their projects and Year 9 theory tests). Theory is addressed during the course and especially in the first half of the Summer Term of Year 11.

Pupils should consider CDT as an option if they already enjoy

- coming up with creative ideas
- finding out about how things are made and used
- freehand sketching and accurate measured drawings
- designing 3D shapes on the computer (ProDesktop)
- making projects in the workshop
- using all sorts of materials, tools and machines
- learning about DT theory (doing well in the Year 9 CDT tests)
- being motivated and organised with project work

The differences between Year 9 work and GCSE are chiefly

- the opportunity to design and make a project of your own choice
- smaller classes so more individual help - especially in the workshop
- the chance to use a wide variety of tools and machines
- greater emphasis on planning ahead through the design folder

Extra-curricular opportunities increase in the Spring Term of Year 11, and pupils usually enjoy the busy atmosphere at this time. Very ambitious projects are often completed by using a good deal of this 'shed' time.

The course is well suited to both artistic and more technically-minded students.

Subject **Physical Education**

Examining Group EDEXCEL

Syllabus Physical Education (1827)

Theory

This section of the course accounts for 40% of the final assessment and falls under three broad headings:

- Anatomy and Physiology. This includes bones, joints, muscles, the respiratory and circulatory systems.
- Factors affecting physical activity. These include health, fitness, performance, training methods, diet and hygiene.
- Safety aspects of physical activity. These include sports injury prevention and treatment.

Practical Skills

Each student must choose four activities from at least two of the following areas:

Games	Athletic Activities
Gymnastic Activities	Dance
Outdoor and Adventurous Activities	Swimming

It is anticipated that each student will study more than just four activities to enable them to choose the four most appropriate for examination. It may also be possible to negotiate the inclusion of certain activities pursued outside school (such as martial arts). This section not only includes physical performance itself, but also the ability to plan and evaluate performance, and also to analyse performance with a view to improving it. 35% of the marks are awarded during the course and 25% for a final practical assessment.

Subject **Drama**

Examining Group	AQA
Syllabus title	Drama (3241)

The course aims to develop

- theatre skills
- imagination and creativity
- social skills

Course Content

Practical (60%)

Year 10: Each student will act in three mini-productions (one per term). Two will be scripted performances and one devised. These will be internally assessed and externally moderated.

Year 11: Students can continue in acting with a further two mini-productions, one scripted and one devised. However, there will also be opportunities to be assessed in technical areas such as lighting, set design and sound. Again, both assignments are internally assessed and externally moderated.

Scripts range from old (Shakespeare) to new (Godber).

Devised work is based on narrative.

Written (40%)

There is one written paper in the final term of Year 11. Students have to answer questions on two live productions they have seen during the GCSE course.

Theatre Trips:

Students can expect to see at least one production a year with the school.

Subject

Music

Examining Group

OCR Syllabus title Music (1919)

Music GCSE covers a wide range of topics and activities. The focus is on four areas of study:

Area of Study 1	Performing on and understanding the instrument.
Area of Study 2	Techniques of Melodic Composition. For this pupils learn about different ways of writing melodies or tunes.
Area of Study 3	DANCE MUSIC In this Area of Study pupils learn about three different styles of dance music – Elizabethan dances called pavan and galliard, waltzes and disco.
Area of Study 4	TRADITIONS AND INNOVATIONS This is about the way composers combine old and new ideas. Pupils look at three different types of music that do this – bhangra, salsa and minimalism.

Coursework

Pupils complete a module of coursework. It is split into two areas:

Part A - Integrated Coursework (30%)

Pupils study three pieces of music for instrument or voice and do work based on all three.

1. Pupils PERFORM one of the pieces and write an appraisal to say how well they think they played and what they could have done better.
2. Pupils COMPOSE a new piece using ideas from all three pieces and write an appraisal saying how well they did.

Part B - Further Coursework (30%)

1. Pupils PERFORM another two pieces – these can be anything the pupils wish.
2. Pupils compose one more piece, in one of the styles covered in Area of Study 3 and 4.

Examinations (25%)

At the end of Year 11 there are two exams.

1. TERMINAL task – pupils have to compose a piece of music on a simple idea within 30 minutes.
2. LISTENING and APPRAISING – pupils listen to music from Area of Study 2, 3 and 4 and answer questions on it.