

GCSE Curriculum Information

Head : Richard Palmer

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Switchboard | 01462 650850 |
| School Office | 01462 650902 |
| Fax | 01462 481578 |
| E-mail (general) | school.admin@stchris.co.uk |
| Curriculum and Academic Matters | dennis.rix@stchris.co.uk |
| Pastoral System | andy.selkirk@stchris.co.uk |
| Extra Curricular Activities | edwin.gruber@stchris.co.uk |

www.stchris.co.uk

GCSE

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

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%

Writing 10%

Shakespeare

Prose study

Original writing

Media

Subject

Examining Group

Syllabus Title

Examinations

Coursework

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

Pupils are placed in sets according to aptitude and interest in the subject. This enables teachers to adapt the content and pace of lessons to individual needs.

Most pupils are entered for the Higher Tier examination.

Subject **Mathematics**

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Examining Group | EDEXCEL |
| Syllabus title | GCSE Mathematics (2381) or IGCSE Mathematics (4400) |
| Assessment | Two levels of entry: Foundation (C-G) Higher (A*-D) |
| IGCSE | Terminal examinations (100%) |
| GCSE | Stage 1 March 2009 30% Stage 2 June 2009 20% Terminal examinations 50% |

Set A

Pupils will be following 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. The IGCSE introduces three topic areas that are not covered by the GCSE: Calculus, Sets and Functions. These are all extremely useful to students who will ultimately go on to study Mathematics at A level.

Other sets

Pupils will be following the GCSE modular course. The course is assessed by examination only; 50% of the course is examined in Year 10 (4 group) and 50% in Year 11 (5 group). 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 pattern | 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

Art and Design
Design and Technology
Drama
French
Spanish
Geography
History
Media Studies
Music
Physical Education

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 with and with the agreement of 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 by and organised in 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 **Drama**

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Examining Group | AQA |
| Syllabus title | Drama (3241) |

The course aims to develop

1. Theatre Skills
2. Imagination and Creativity
3. Social Skills

Course Content

Practical (60%)

Year 10: Each student will act in two mini-productions. One will be a scripted performance 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

French

Examining Group

OCR

Syllabus title

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 of GCSE on communication and an exchange programme with a French school gives added relevance to this course.

Subject

Spanish

Examining Group

OCR

Syllabus title

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 Languages (including Italian, Japanese and Hindi) can be followed at an extra charge.

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

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

Media Studies

Examining Group

AQA

Syllabus Title

GCSE Media Studies

What is it?

In an increasingly media-driven society GCSE Media Studies encourages students to analyse and interpret the variety of ideas and images with which they are presented using a similar skill set to that expected in GCSE English. The course then allows students to put theory into practice, designing and producing their own media products such as news broadcasts, web pages and magazine articles, and then critically evaluating their success.

How is it assessed?

The AQA syllabus is followed. Students are assessed by means of coursework and a final case study style examination.

Coursework is 50% of the overall mark in Media Studies. It is made up of three assignments and a practical production. Each assignment is composed of a mix of written and practical tasks and covers topics such as:

- the changing face of teenage magazines
- the BBC as an institution
- the representation of race on film
- the rise of Internet social networking

For their final project students will work as part of a team to construct a media product of their own, focusing on the music industry. They will keep a record of their progress throughout, presenting their initial research, design portfolio and final product along with a detailed critical evaluation of their work for assessment.

The examination is also worth 50% and takes the form of a case study. There is a three-hour controlled test on a topic set by the board. Last year the controlled test was on television situation comedy. In the exam students are expected to answer two essay questions and produce design work for a media product. This is an open examination and therefore students can conduct their research and produce preliminary design work before the exam itself.

Who should take it?

Pupils should consider Media Studies as an option if they already enjoy:

- Applying skills of analysis to a range of different texts
- Coming up with creative ideas
- Investigating the world around them
- Working as part of a team
- Using ICT to design publications
- Creating organised, professional looking work
- Working with moving images

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 your 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 are 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 3 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.

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: includes bones, joints, muscles, the respiratory and circulatory systems.
- Factors affecting physical activity: includes health, fitness, performance, training methods, diet and hygiene. **In this section you will need to produce your own six week exercise plan as a piece of moderated coursework.**
- Safety aspects of physical activity: includes sports injury prevention and treatment.

Practical Skills

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

Games

Gymnastic Activities

Outdoor and Adventurous Activities

Athletic Activities

Dance

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.