



**Sixth Form  
Curriculum  
Information**

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## The Spirit of St Mary's

At St Mary's we cherish girls and we nurture their spirit. Whatever your talents and aptitudes, we want to find them and we want them to grow. We have a team of specialist Sixth Form Tutors who will mentor you through every aspect of School life; from adapting to AS and A level study and managing your extra curricular activities to tracking your academic progress and helping you to set realistic and aspirational targets. We have extraordinarily dedicated A level teachers who can demonstrate track records in helping girls to realise their academic potential and to excel. You will experience total commitment and dedication to every aspect of your education. Our founder Mary Ward said, 'It is the quality of our relationships which define us as people'; be a sixth former at St Mary's and flourish in learning and relationships. You will know who you are and be ready to embrace new challenges.

### Our Mission Statement

"St Mary's is a Roman Catholic Girls' School, Boarding and Day, founded on the principles of Mary Ward. Her vision and our mission is to educate each individual to the highest standards through fostering traditional values in the spirit of the Gospel. We are concerned with all that a girl is and could become."

## What can you study?

We offer 24 subjects at AS and A2 and any girl who is offered a place will be able to indicate her preferred combination of four subjects from this list. We will do everything we can to enable girls to study their chosen options.

### Subjects

Art (Fine Art)	Biology	Business Studies	Chemistry
Classical Civilisation	Critical Thinking	Economics	English Literature
French	German	Geography	History
History of Art	Latin	Maths	Further Maths
Music	PE	Photography	Physics
Psychology	Religious Studies	Spanish	Theatre Studies

## The Broader Curriculum

What might your week of learning be like?

There are 46 lessons of 35 minutes in each week and they will be organized like this:

	Lessons	Time
Option 1	8	4 hours 40 minutes
Option 2	8	4 hours 40 minutes
Option 3	8	4 hours 40 minutes
Option 4	8	4 hours 40 minutes
General Studies/Enrichment	2	1 hour 10 minutes
General Religious Education	2	1 hour 10 minutes
Physical Education	2	1 hour 10 minutes
Tutorial Period	1	35 minutes
Careers	1	35 minutes
Study Lessons	8	4 hours 40 minutes
Total	48	28 hours

School Assemblies 2 x 20 minutes

## Extra Curricular Activities

Life is enriched by a great range of events, activities, trips and visits. Here is just a sample

Duke of Edinburgh Award	Young Enterprise Company	Peer Mentoring
Rock Band	Orchestra	Wind Band
Choir Plus	Chapel Choir	The Insider
Plays	Scuba Diving	Life Guarding
Rock Climbing	Tennis	Water Polo
Swim Squad	Hockey	Sailing
Netball	Athletics	Cookery
Photography	Astronomy	Debating Society
Le Cercle Littéraire	Economic & Politics Society	First Aid
Wigmore Reading Group		

## Freedom to discover

The Sixth Form at St Mary's aims to provide a positive experience that each girl will treasure throughout her adult life. At its heart is developing self-knowledge, self discipline and integrity to fulfil personal potential. We want girls to be free to both discover and be themselves so that the transition to adulthood is carried always as a joyful memory.

## Art (Fine Art)

"Art as a unit is both a form of 'communication' and a means of expression of ideas and feelings"

Art (Fine Art) aims to:

- Develop intellectual, imaginative, creative and intuitive powers;
- Develop investigative, analytical, experimental, technical and expressive skills, aesthetic understanding and critical judgement;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the role and achievements of artists, craftspeople and designers in the past and in contemporary society;
- Develop an understanding of the relationship between, and the connections across the disciplines of art, craft and design.

The emphasis is on individual development, enabling each student to enhance skills, develop awareness and to produce work which shows a personal response to a range of media and ideas. Students are expected to work from direct observation, and record findings using drawing, photographs and relevant secondary source material. It is important for students to explore a range of materials and processes and apply this knowledge to the development of a planned final conclusion. Working in a variety of media will be encouraged including drawing, painting, ceramics and sculpture, photography, collage as well as fabric printing, batik, block, mono printing and screen printing.

Both traditional and experimental responses are encouraged in order to develop an open-minded, flexible approach to creative work. Considerable self-motivation is also required. Practical work is complemented by visits to exhibitions and galleries and by reference to relevant Art historical contexts.

### Coursework content

The OCR examination offers four units, two for AS LEVEL and two further units for A2 LEVEL.

### AS consists of two Units of work:

**Coursework Portfolio** 60% (AS) 30% (A Level coursework)

Students must submit coursework assignments, derived from initial starting points, topics and themes that can be determined by us. Work will be in a variety of media with supporting planning sheets and sketchbooks.

**Controlled Assignment** 40% (AS) 20% (A Level)

Students are required to produce work in a controlled environment. It will enable them to independently develop ideas in a sustained and focused way. They have 3-6 weeks preparatory time with 5 hours controlled time to complete the work.

**A2 consists of the following:**

***Personal Investigation***

30 % (A Level Coursework)

Personal choice and flexibility are offered as the investigation derives from initial starting points determined by the students. Related personal study element ensures that candidate's work is put in context with the work of others.

***Unit 2: Controlled Assignment***

20% (A Level)

This will enable students to independently develop ideas in a sustained and focused way and it will provide them with the opportunity to produce personal and informed work that demonstrates the experience gained from the whole GCE course. (3 -6 weeks preparatory time with 15 hours controlled time).

## Biology

Biology is a modern science: it continually evolves as new discoveries are made. It is also often controversial, and today there are many ethical considerations that need to be discussed, making the study of this science crucial to understanding the modern world. Everybody benefits from members of society well-educated in biological science; we need people who can analyse data and information rationally and intelligently in order to judge whether newspaper headlines are just ‘hype’ or based on real evidence.

Our Biology AS and A2 courses are carefully chosen for content that will be useful and stimulating, much of it directly relevant to humans as organisms. Practical work is often used where active observation or investigation greatly enhance the understanding of important biological principles. We also use interactive information systems, such as SMART boards, digital probes, DVD and CDROMS, as well the traditional methods of microscopy and dissection (always optional!).

The OCR specification builds on concepts and skills developed in the GCSE Science specifications, emphasizing the way in which scientists work and the contribution of science to modern society. The scheme of assessment allows for “stretch and challenge” for the most able, but still allows for all abilities to show what they know and what they can do.

Both the AS course (studied and examined in Lower 6) and the A2 course comprise three units:-

### For AS: -

- Unit F211, entitled Cells, Exchange and Transport is examined by a 1 hour written paper, comprising 30% of AS marks;
- Unit F212, entitled Molecules, Biodiversity, Food and Health is examined by a 1hr 45minute written paper comprising 50% of AS marks.
- Practical skills are tested in Unit F213, by 3 centre-marked tasks set by OCR. This contributes 20% of the AS marks.

### For A2:-

- Unit F214, entitled Communication, Homeostasis and Energy is examined by a 1 hour written paper, comprising 15% of the total A Level marks;
- Unit F215, entitled Control, Genes and the Environment is examined by a 1hr 45 minute written paper comprising 25% of the total A Level marks. This paper includes some synoptic assessment and Stretch and Challenge questions.
- Unit F216 assesses practical skills, by means of three tasks set by OCR but marked internally using mark schemes provided by the Board. This unit contributes 10% of the total A Level marks.

We welcome students from a wide range of academic interests and future career-paths (including those who need a little more time to decide!) - the study of Biology is directly relevant to everybody, as well as those requiring it for further study in the medical and general biological fields.

# **Business Studies**

Business Studies is one of the most popular subjects studied at ‘A’ level in Britain and University places are becoming increasingly competitive. No prior learning in the subject is necessary – all that is required is an interest in business and an enthusiasm to learn more.

The AQA 2130 syllabus comprises four modules, two of which are studied during AS and two in A2. Assessment is through four module examinations only, the fourth requiring some in-depth research into a specific area of business prior to the examination. Four key skill areas are developed: acquisition of knowledge; application of that knowledge; analysis of data and evaluation of the analysis.

## ***AS Module 1 Planning and Financing a Business***

This module focuses on the question: how do I set up my own business? It explores how to plan and finance a new business, market the product and manage budgets and cash flows.

## ***AS Module 2 Managing a Business***

In this module you assume the role of a middle manager and how you would deal with competitors and the 4 Ps of marketing; sustaining the quality of the product; working with suppliers and buyers; recruiting, motivating and managing the workforce; improving the financial performance of the company.

## ***A2 Module 3 Strategies for Success***

As one of the senior managers you consider the strategies you may employ to ensure the continued success of the business. The four major functional areas which are considered are financial, marketing, operations and human resource management.

## ***Module 4 The Business Environment and Managing Change***

As the managing director of the company you look at the impact of the external environment on your business and the changes you may have to make in response to changes in the economic, technological, political and social environment. The question: ‘How to instigate change’ is also considered.

Resources embedded in the scheme of work include AQA endorsed text books; DVDs; internet resources and visits to businesses.

If you enjoy watching The Apprentice or Dragon’s Den, this is the course for you!

## Chemistry

This OCR Chemistry A course has been developed in consultation with the Royal Society of Chemistry and GlaxoSmithKline with the aim of providing a stimulating and relevant course, suitable for those wishing to study pure chemistry to degree level or as an entry requirement for other science disciplines, including medicine and biochemistry. The course has been updated in response to modern developments in chemistry and also the impact of chemistry on modern society and resources. There is comprehensive coverage of all major topics, with an emphasis on relevance to everyday life, green issues and economic awareness.

The study of chemistry is intellectually challenging and offers the student an opportunity to learn how to assess the validity of data and draw conclusions from experimental results. There is an increased emphasis on understanding and application rather than recall and in addition all parts of the course are supported by relevant, interesting practical work which will enable students to become adept at handling chemicals and apparatus with care and accuracy.

Both AS and A2 sections of the course are examined in three units, the first two relating to chemical theory and its application, and the third involving the assessment of practical skills. This third unit will be internally assessed, and externally moderated. The first units at AS and A2 levels have been shortened in order for them to be completed in time for examination in the January examination session, if required. A 'stretch and challenge' component has been introduced into the A2 section of the specification for use when awarding the new A\* grade. For example, questions could ask the candidate to 'analyse', 'evaluate' or 'discuss' and there is a wider range of question types – such as case studies and open-ended and synoptic

AS Chemistry consists of 2 written and 1 practical exam. Unit F321 Atoms, Bonds and Structures is a 1 hour exam (30% of the AS assessment) and includes atoms and reactions; electrons, bonding and structure and the periodic table. Unit F322 Chains, Energy and Resources is examined by a 105 minute paper (50% of the AS total) and includes; basic concepts and hydrocarbons; alcohols, halogenoalkanes and analysis; energy; resources. Unit F323 is an internal assessment of practical skills and comprises 20% of the AS assessment.

A2 Chemistry is a similar structure. F324 Rings, Polymers and Analysis makes up 15% of the A level (a 1 hour 15 minute paper) and includes; rings, acids and amines; polymers and synthesis; analysis. F325 Equilibria, Energetic and Elements is a 2 hour exam (25% of the A level) and include; rates, equilibrium and PH; energy; transition elements. F326 is a further internally assessed practical exam (10% of the A level total).

## Classical Civilisation

“Class Civ” takes students on a breathless and varied trip through the Ancient Roman and Greek cultures with their colourful extremes.

For all four modules, there are texts to read over the course of the year in English and the exam consists of both essay questions on each topic as a whole and shorter questions asking for comments on extracts from the texts.

### AS Module 1:

**Women in Athens and Rome.** Think 21<sup>st</sup> century women have a raw deal? Think again as you read about what an Athenian husband expected of his wife. You would have spent your days inside the house, full stop. All spare time was taken up with weaving on the loom, and if you ever set foot outside the house without your husband, scandalous conclusions would have been drawn about you. But one Athenian man understood their plight- the playwright Aristophanes, whose comedy *The poet and the women* depicts the women taking their revenge in ways which his male audience must have found outrageous and frightening. Was it as bad for Roman women? All will be revealed!

### AS Module 2:

He swims for days on end, cleverly blinds and gets the better of an enormous one-eyed cyclops, escapes when all around him are killed by Zeus’ thunderbolt or rock-throwing giants, dangles from a branch to avoid being sucked into an massive whirlpool and takes on 70-odd suitors in battle, disguised as a tramp. Then there’s the smooth side to our action-hero, who beds not one goddess but two on the course of his travels... Yes it’s Odysseus, the James Bond of the ancient world! Hold on tight as we read Homer’s Epic, the *Odyssey*.

### A2 Module 1:

As you enter Upper VI and your mind turns to the thorny area of relationships, pause for thought with cautionary tales from **Greek Tragedy**, where we study four plays named after their unfortunate main characters. Consider Jocasta and *Oedipus*, who belatedly realise that they are actually mother and son! Oedipus gorily blinds himself out of shame. True, most of us are likely to avoid that particular pitfall, but what about *Hippolytus*, whose refusal to frolic with his step-mother leads to her suicide and to his father eventually causing his death? Or *Medea*? She “loses it” so badly when her partner Jason finds a new love that she kills their children to spite him! Food for thought for Saint Mary’s girls on the cusp of what we hope will be a virtuous adulthood; but it’s not all love-affairs gone wrong. In the fourth play, *Antigone* is stuck. The king demands that she go against one of the most sacred rules of her religion... God or Government, which should she side with? It’s a dilemma familiar in modern and recent times, but when it occurs in a Greek Tragedy, you can be sure of one thing: there will be suicides!

### A2 Module 2:

**Roman Epic**, reading Virgil’s *Aeneid*, gives a new and more complex twist on heroes in the mould of Odysseus. The hero of this Epic Poem, Aeneas, is often said to symbolise the first Roman Emperor (Augustus) with the restraint and sense of duty that he usually shows... So what are we to make of his “moments of madness”- his reckless and destructive affair with Dido, the Trojan queen, his vengeful killing-sprees on the field of battle, or his chilling ruthlessness as he slaughters the noble opponent Turnus at the end of it all, despite his desperate pleas for mercy. Students will be perplexed; is Virgil *really* trying to say something dark about Augustus and Rome more generally?

## **Critical Thinking**

Rene Descartes said, “I think therefore I am.” But was he thinking critically?

Perhaps he was making assumptions or had insufficient reasons for his conclusion. Was he aware of the credibility criteria and had he analysed any of the letters sent to the Blackmore Vale Magazine to assess the quality of the arguments?

All this and more in Critical Thinking, offered as an additional subject to the Upper Sixth which can lead (if you wish) to an AS level, and to certain University success (=vested interest).

Become a Critical Thinker and never let a counter assertion worry you again!

## Drama and Theatre Studies

This highly creative course helps girls to get a real understanding of the skills required to take a written play or a theme and produce it in an appropriate theatrical style.

At AS, we study one set play for part of the written examination (currently Ibsen's *A Doll's House*), concentrating on the interpretation of the play from a performance perspective, as directors, designers and actors. The second part of the exam is based on live productions seen during the course.

At A2, two set plays are studied for the written exam, one pre-Twentieth Century (*The Recruiting Officer*, by George Farquar), and one Twentieth Century or Contemporary Drama (*Our Country's Good*, by Timberlake Wertenbaker), which work really well together, as 'Our Country's Good' features rehearsals for a performance of 'The Recruiting Officer'!

At both AS and A2, one of the two units is assessed by a practical exam. Here the girls work in small groups and have complete responsibility for the shows that they present and are assessed on acting, design or directing skills, as they wish.

At AS, the presentation is from an existing published play; this helps build the skills and experience needed to create their own devised drama at A2. In both cases, the girls also submit production notes that outline the skills they have been perfecting and how they have been influenced in developing their theatrical style.

The girls are taken to a range of productions (at some extra cost) so that they can experience the rich diversity of theatrical styles in which they might wish to work.

In both years, as well as being the obvious choice for anyone interested in the Performing Arts or the Media, the benefits of taking this course extend way beyond the world of Drama and Theatre. Girls grow in confidence, not only in presentation and communication skills but also in problem solving and in working with others – excellent transferable skills of great value at university and beyond, as independent and confident individuals.

## **ECDL**

The European Computer Driving Licence (or ECDL) is an internationally recognised qualification for computer users everywhere. It is not an A level but it provides vital skills for work and study.

Through it you will gain the confidence, basic skills and knowledge to use computers and a wide range of common IT software packages. What's more you don't need any prior IT knowledge or experience to do it.

The following courses provide you with the knowledge you will need to match the ECDL modules:

**Introducing Computers - Level 2** = ECDL Module 1 Basic Concepts of Information Technology and ECDL Module 2 Using the Computer & Managing Files

**Word Processing - Level 2** = ECDL Module 3 Word Processing

**Spreadsheets - Level 2** = ECDL Module 4 Spreadsheets

**Databases - Level 2** = ECDL Module 5 Databases

**Presentations - Level 2** = ECDL Module 6 Presentations

**Electronic Communication - Level 2** = ECDL Module 7 Information & Communication

Or

**The Complete ECDL** = Covers all 7 ECDL modules, Prepare for the ECDL and ECDL Module Tests in one course

This course is an optional extra for girls in the Sixth Form and provides an excellent skill for both study and work.

## **Economics**

‘If you ask 100 Economists for a solution, you will get 200 different answers’.

Economics is both an art and a science that affects us all in everything we do; whether that be decisions made in World Trade Organisation negotiations, or a girl’s individual choice of A Level subjects, the course covers all levels of individual and international relevance. We live today in a perfect case study!

The course is structured into two AS and two A2 Modules with no coursework. Each Module has its own exam (90 minutes in AS Level and 2 hours at A2).

Girls are not required to have any previous knowledge of the subject; instead they must have a desire to participate in lessons, enjoy logical thought and an ability to assess strengths and weaknesses of theories and arguments. There is never a right or wrong answer to any economic problem and the best solutions come from those who have the willingness to display the above skills.

Increasingly, universities are looking to distinguish the excellent from the good and a good Economics grade is seen as a credible signal to that distinction, whether it be as a first choice of subject at university or a supplementary qualification for other subjects. Employers make the same distinctions.

## English Literature

This syllabus by the OCR examining Board offers an exciting opportunity for those who might wish to follow the full A2 course and also for those who wish to follow a Literature course only as far as AS level.

The AS exam seeks to develop critical literary skills and greater understanding of the contexts in which texts are produced together with the variety of possible interpretations.

### *AS Level*

Unit F661 Poetry and Prose 1800 – 1945 is assessed by a 2 hour exam worth 60% of the AS mark. Three texts written post-1900 must be chosen and one of them must have been published or performed after 1990 – so this is a very modern course! The coursework element at this level, entitled Literature Post-1900 (F662), is worth 40% and offers girls the opportunity to compare texts as they follow areas of individual interest and enjoyment.

### *A2 Level*

At A2 the examination paper F663 is Drama and Poetry Pre -1800. The study of Shakespeare is a key focus as is the study of a heritage literary text, involving critical analysis of structure, form and meaning, and consideration of others' interpretations. There is one two hour exam which is 30% of the A level. At A2 the coursework module F664 is entitled Texts in Time and gives candidates an appreciation of the cultural and contextual influences upon readers and writers and the way in which texts relate to literary traditions, movements and genres. This makes up the final 20% of the A level assessment.

Stretch & Challenge!

This initiative aims to help universities differentiate between applicants; it does not mean extra exam questions but a slight change of emphasis from those encountered at GCSE in the style of question asked.

The questions will –

- ✓ be more wide-ranging;
- ✓ put more focus on an analytical, evaluative and discursive response.

In summary, this is a course that covers both the classics of literature and contemporary work but above all seeks to emphasize the importance of the individual's response and uses a range of activities and teaching styles.

## Geography

The world we live in is changing. Geography allows you to see why and how it is changing. It is a good choice for students who wish to broaden their AS or Advanced GCE studies to cover both ‘sciences’ and ‘humanities’; it makes a good choice to study with many other AS’s

It can also enhance communication skills, ICT, literacy, spatial awareness, working in a team, problem-solving and environmental awareness.

It should appeal to students who:

- have an interest in and concern for the environment
- are interested in current affairs
- enjoy studying a subject that is relevant to their own lives and experiences
- want the opportunity to carry out practical work outdoors as well as class work
- enjoy finding out their own answers – not just being taught
- enjoy travel and finding out about new people, places, landscapes and events
- want to keep their options open – Geography AS or Advanced GCE is an appropriate qualification for a very wide range of higher education or career choices. It does not force you to make an early commitment.

The department has chosen to follow the popular AQA Specification which balances traditional geography with contemporary and engaging geographical subject content. Key themes are management of change and sustainability. It encourages students to reflect on why they think the way they do about an issue, as well as how others think, skills that are vital for citizens in the 21st century.

Fieldwork is an important element of the AS course with visits to a Dorset river, the Dorset coast and other local fieldwork in order to supplement the key themes.

There are 2 units in AS for the first year of study. Physical Geography includes the core theme of ‘Rivers, Floods and their Management’. The other Physical Geography Module studied is ‘Arid Regions and their Margins’. The Human Geography element at AS has the core theme of ‘Population Change’ and the second module is ‘Health Issues’. Geographical Skills are also tested.

At A2 the concepts, themes and skills from AS are extended and developed in different settings, taking in contemporary issues, challenges and conflicts. These include Plate Tectonics and Associated Hazards, Change and Challenges to Global Ecosystems, and Contemporary Conflicts and Challenges (e.g. Global Poverty). The second examination paper at A2 covers geographical skills and includes questions on piece of local fieldwork.

With updated and topical content we believe our Geography specification will provide a fresh modern course that will interest, challenge and stretch our students.

## History

“How do you know who you are unless you know where you’ve come from? How can you tell what’s going to happen, unless you know what’s happened before? History isn’t just about the past. It’s about why we are who we are – and what’s next.” (Tony Robinson, Actor and Television Presenter)

In choosing to study History you will be taking up a challenge. It is a very highly-regarded A-Level, based on a core of hard fact that you must learn to master; at the same time you have to be deductive, perceptive and imaginative in the use of that fact. Studying History teaches you to think analytically and to approach a very wide range of issues with an informed, enquiring and open mind.

We study the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries because it is an exciting period; because it was a time of great change and because it was when many of today’s political, religious and social institutions – and problems – can be said to have originated.

AS History is divided into two modules. One involves studying the end of the savage Wars of the Roses and the reigns of Richard III (made famous by Shakespeare’s play), Henry VII and Henry VIII (up to 1529). The second module also begins in a period of civil war – the savage French Wars of Religion, and covers the reign of France’s most-loved and most colourful king, Henry IV. A2 History is also two modules. The first will deal with the dramatic reign of Elizabeth I and her immediate fore-runners; the second will be a personal investigation based on the global Spanish and Portuguese empires of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, though the particular aspect to be considered will be up to individual choice. There may also be the opportunity for students to choose their own investigation outside the main syllabus – though that will require careful consideration and discussion with your teachers.

This was a period when individuals achieved so much – we look at behaviour, relationships and motives and try to understand them from the viewpoint of their own time. Our judgments are limited by the evidence available to us, and the essential skills of source analysis and evaluation will be relevant. History is dynamic and there is often more than one valid view of a past event. We spend some time considering historians’ interpretations and this forces us to look again at the values and assumptions of our own time.

The student of History learns to amass a comprehensive body of information, to select what is relevant to their particular enquiry, to prioritise arguments and evidence, and to construct responses, written and verbal, that are logical, coherent and well-informed. Flexibility of thought is essential. These skills are valued by all universities and employers, and are essential for careers in law, the civil service, public relations, journalism, advertising and the media generally. Students of other subjects, especially the Humanities and Modern Foreign Languages, find the skills they develop in History invaluable.

## History of Art

*“An artist who makes pictures that look good but express nothing is like a writer whose words sound good but have no meaning” (Gerald Brommer)*

History of Art has a wide appeal as a subject as it makes the student aware of the socio-political factors that inspired, drove and achieved aesthetically pleasing, some controversial, some baffling, and some of the most monumental works of art that have ever been produced.

This subject draws the attention of the student to the driving forces behind the artists whether it was through powerful patrons such as popes, guilds, changing religious and social attitudes, the art market, or from the artist reflecting his or her own emotions or society through painting, sculpture and architecture that have survived as important primary sources to this day. The study of architecture makes the student far more aware of how buildings can reflect the different ages, and the intentions and status of the patrons who commissioned them.

The student becomes familiar with the techniques and skills applied to both painting and sculpture, and with architecture to learn how to look at a building with an analytical and critical eye. Developments of style are a key issue when studying all three of the applied arts, and students also become aware of how such developments and choice of subjects are linked to historical events and changes in religious and social attitudes.

History of Art is a popular subject to take on at degree level, and there are many who go on to some of the leading universities to extend their studies. This can lead on to a post-graduate (Master's) degree or a PhD, and or careers in History of Art in fields such as Fine Art auctioneering, museum curators, commercial art galleries, teaching and lecturing of the A-level or lecturing at universities and other institutes of Higher Education, journalism and in the educational departments of State Museums and Galleries.

Study trips to Florence and London will be offered during the course of the two year programme. Attendance is made possible at appropriate lectures when offered for History of Art A-level students.

## **Latin**

Latin at AS and A2 follows on naturally from GCSE by continuing to combine language work with the study of literature. A certain amount of new grammar is encountered for the language course, but one of the “softer” new skills required is the challenge of translating poetry in Unseen exams for A2, which requires pupils to develop a more sensitive approach when handling the colourful imagery and flexible language of Latin verse. The set texts available for the literature modules allow pupils to taste a good variety of Latin writing across various different genres; grand Epic poetry or shorter and more personal ‘lyric’ poems, historical prose writing or the flamboyant prose of public orators such as Cicero. The literature exams require pupils to comment on passages from the texts and show knowledge of the overall plot, much as at GCSE. Writing brief essays on Latin literature is a new facet to the course, but the texts are usually full of interesting issues to explore and pupils are never short of ideas!

## **Mathematics and Further Maths**

Why should I study Mathematics or Further Maths in the 6<sup>th</sup> form?  
If you enjoy a challenge, like problem solving and are prepared to persevere,  
this is the subject for you.

The A level course consists of two Pure Mathematics modules for AS and A2 and an applied one. Further Maths follows a similar format. The Applied modules are Mechanics, Statistics or Decision and all of them link with other subjects within the curriculum. At present Mechanics is the module studied in the Lower VI and this primarily covers content which is very similar to topics in the Physics A level syllabus.

A recent article in the Saturday Telegraph indicated the need for Mathematics A level when applying to University for a wide range of courses varying from Biological Sciences to Economics. Even if you decide not to follow a Science related course it is still considered a very useful subject to have included on an UCAS application. Once you move on to the work place, a survey has shown that employees with Mathematics A level tend to be earning up to 10% more than other employees doing similar jobs but with different A levels!

Finally, there are two great benefits of studying Mathematics, there is no coursework and it is a real break from writing essays.

# Modern Languages

*The AS and A Level course will encourage you to:*

- Develop understanding of the spoken and written forms of the foreign language from a variety of registers.
- Communicate confidently, clearly and imaginatively in the foreign language through both the spoken and written word, using increasingly accurate, complex and varied language.
- Increase your sensitivity to language and language learning.
- Develop critical insights into, and contact with, the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of countries or communities where the foreign language is spoken.
- Develop positive attitudes to foreign language learning.

*What will you study?*

In the first year you will study four topics. These are Media, Popular Culture, Healthy Living/Lifestyle, and Family Relationships. These build on what you have studied at GCSE and cover a wide range of interesting and engaging issues.

In the second year you will have a further four topics – Environment, the Multicultural Society, Contemporary Social Issues. You will also choose one of four cultural topics for in-depth study, the first topic being a study of the literature of the chosen country.

*Which languages?*

**French:** French is the language of our closest neighbour. It is a Romance language, the key to a rich, diverse and vibrant culture carried far and wide, from Canada to Polynesia.

**German:** German is the language of a major European power, whose close links with the East will open up new opportunities. Study of the language can offer students great advantages in business and financial spheres, as well as a better understanding of a great cultural and scientific tradition.

**Spanish:** Spanish is spoken by some 300 million people in 21 different countries. There is an increasing awareness of its importance both in Europe and America, and opportunities for Spanish speakers are rapidly expanding.

*Examination*

We use the AQA specification, and this is taught using a variety of on-line resources specifically designed for the course. In the first year your assessment is in two parts. There is a two hour exam which includes listening, reading and writing. This accounts for 70% of your marks for the year. Then there is a 15 minute speaking test. This accounts for 30% of your marks for the year. The second year is very similar. The listening, reading and writing exam lasts for 2.5 hours and accounts for 70% of your marks for the year. Then, as in year one, the speaking test lasts 15 minutes and accounts for 30% of your marks.

## Music

This is the subject for those of you who want to make the most of your performing skills. There are many possibilities and you will be able to fit into more than one of these areas.

- Solo performing
- Performing on a second instrument/voice
- Performing in a duet or ensemble, or as an accompanist
- Performing own composition

You learn how to write in the style of the classical composers.

You learn how to compose your own piece in any style of your choice using 4 instruments up to a maximum of 10. It could be a piece in contemporary style.

You study three beautiful works in the Historical Study section which will lead to a broader understanding of the orchestra and to a deeper insight into particular instruments depending on the choice of repertoire.

You will be able to develop your musical interests at your own tempo as much of the syllabus is coursework.

You do not need GCSE music in order to do AS, but it helps!

You must love music. Music needs to be part of your life.

If you have these two prerequisites you will have the two most important ingredients for success and fulfilment.

## Photography

Photography is a form of communication and expression: a visual language which deals with the construction and interpretation of both personal and cultural meanings.

Emphasis in the AS course is in the learning and practice of investigative skills- the process. In the A2 course, whilst the process is important, the quality of the product has a greater emphasis.

New AS/A2 Photography specification for first teaching in September 2008

AS Coursework Portfolio 60%

- Choice and flexibility are offered as the portfolio derives from initial starting points, topics or themes that can be determined by the school.
- Tailored to fit the candidate's needs with a choice of a single project or several smaller projects.

Controlled Assignment 40%

- Produce work in a 5 hour controlled environment.
- Enables students to independently develop ideas in sustained and focused way.

A2 Personal Investigation 30%

- The investigation derives from initial starting points determined by the candidate.
- A related Personal Study of 1000-3000 words ensures that the candidates' work is put into context with the work of others.
- Exhibition visits are an essential element of this study.

Controlled Assignment 20%

- Produce work in a 15 hour controlled environment
- Offers the opportunity for candidates to produce personal and informed work that demonstrates the experience gained from the whole GCE course.

### *Career Possibilities*

'We're looking for creativity rather than experience'

Photography degree courses are in high demand so universities can be selective. Most universities will expect to see a portfolio and evidence of creativity rather than a great deal of experience in photography, because they can teach that. They like to see evidence that applicants show interest in current photographic practice and evidence of some knowledge about photographers and exhibitions they have visited.

A full advanced level in photography provides a sound basis for students who wish to proceed to Higher Education as well as being a useful background to any career within the photographic and journalistic field.

## Physical Education

If you have a passion for sport and want to learn how to improve your own or others' performance, then this is the course for you.

The focus of these specifications is on participation and performance in physical activity as part of a balanced, active and healthy lifestyle.

All the theory that is learnt can be linked to a greater understanding of what it is that makes you want to take part, how you achieve and win in any sport or physical activity you pursue. From looking deep into the body's muscular and cardiovascular systems, understanding the methods of processing the information you receive during a match and ensuring you are in the zone of peak performance.

### **Prior learning:**

Candidates would normally be expected to have successfully completed a GCSE in Physical Education but this would not exclude candidates who had not done so.

### **AS course content:**

The AS written unit, which is 60% of the first year's assessment, involves a study of applied exercise physiology, skill acquisition and looks at the opportunities for participation in physical activity.

The Practical Assessment, which makes up the remaining 40% of the first year is about acquiring, developing and evaluating practical skills in Physical Education. Candidates will be assessed on two different activity profiles (which can be performing, coaching/officiating).

### **A2 course content:**

The A2 written course looks at optimising performance through exercise physiology, applying sport psychology and the contemporary issues influencing a performer. This makes up 30% of the A2 mark.

The remaining 20% of A2 marks are based on assessment of one practical activity (which can be performance/coaching or officiating) plus a written analysis of a performer with suggestions for causes and corrective measures to improve their performance.

### **Careers:**

A Level physical education has been established for many years and is a well-respected qualification recognized by all universities. Sport is often combined with other subjects, including business, event management and marketing.

An A level in physical education can lead onto a wide range of career opportunities, whether it is following a sports scientific route to become the next Olympic Biomechanics Coach or researching blood doping in the world of swimming, to the participation side of sport involved in sports development within the community, sports psychology, physiotherapy, sports commentary or even the next top sweeper for the GB Hockey squad!

## Physics

Physics tries to explain everything from the smallest sub atomic particle to the largest galaxies in the universe, why things behave as they do, and to use mathematical ideas and models to solve scientific, practical and social problems.

For those who have a logical way of thinking, Physics is an enjoyable, stimulating and interesting subject to study at A Level. The courses continue and expand upon many of the themes already encountered in the GCSE Double Award Science as well as introducing many new concepts and attempt to tread a delicate path between theory and practical application.

Whilst the course may not, in itself, answer the following questions, it may encourage you to think about these and other more obtuse, yet strangely practical questions:-

What is nothing?

Why is there something instead of nothing?

What time is it? Are you sure?

Why are golf balls dimpled?

Is this universe 3, 4 or 10 dimensional?

Is time travel possible?

Is space infinite?

How can we use rock music to explain how the universe was created?

It is normally expected that girls who wish to study AS physics will have gained at least a B grade in Double Award Science and a grade B in Mathematics.

The logical problem solving and analytical skills developed whilst studying physics are seen as extremely desirable by universities and employers. You can go from using Chaos Theory to help predict the Stock Markets to helping to design the latest MRI Scanner in medicine.

# Psychology

## Why study psychology?

In some of the more forward looking European countries, psychology is an important part of the national curriculum. It should be here too, quite obviously, and if I had my way it would be compulsory! Psychology is an interdisciplinary academic subject that requires a keen intellect, a profound interest in what it is that makes us all so different, and a passionate curiosity and willingness to explore and research this diversity. It develops in students these characteristics and also makes us question everything we see, hear and read, encourages our compassion and tolerance, encouraging us to reach out to celebrate the diversity we find in the world.

At AS level there are two examined modules which encompass a broad introduction to this discipline. The first module covers the background to cognitive and developmental psychology and research methods, the second is on physiological psychology and individual differences (psychopathology) and social psychology. Amazing stuff! Exciting!

The requirements at A2 level really stretch the students and their ability to evaluate and analyse research, look at the bigger picture and to undertake mini projects of their own. The third and fourth module will cover different physiological and psychological theories (based on good scientific evidence and research) for our unique differences and we learn about biorhythms, sleep and dreaming, theories and research on the development of personality, gender and adolescent development, eating disorders, and evolutionary explanations of gender differences in sexual behaviour, mental disorders and intelligence, the pernicious influence of the media, and addictive behaviours. We study in great detail, depth and breadth, the psychopathologies of schizophrenia, depression and OCD and the different ways in which these are diagnosed, understood and treated. We then look at the big debates that cross all areas of psychology, looking at the different contribution of understanding ourselves from the view of nature or nurture, whether free will or determinism shape our being, and looking at the issue of reductionism. Lastly we look at the ways in which the different approaches of behaviourism, psychodynamic explanations, biological, cognitive, humanistic and social constructionist views, dominate areas of research and understanding of human nature and how applications of psychology in the real world can be seen as relevant in the media, celebrity, addictive behaviour for example. Students are expected to develop and use their understanding of research, scientific method, process, analysis of data and reporting on investigations.

Yes, it's a huge subject, very exciting, masses of very hard work stimulating, extremely challenging.....but fantastic!

St Mary's students have gone on to study psychology at a huge variety of universities from Durham, Plymouth, Kent, Bangor, Liverpool, Newcastle, Exeter, Cardiff to Leeds, and ultimately to specialise in a wide variety of fields such as Child Psychology, or train in Forensic or Clinical Psychology.

# Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics

Religious Studies is made up with a combination of Philosophy of Religion and Religious Ethics; it is challenging and is, as one student commented, “*the most mind expanding course*”.

## Philosophy

The course asks you to consider: Why you exist? Why does anything exist? Why is there something rather than nothing? Is nothing something? Have you ever wondered why some people say that ‘reason’ is called God? Indeed are you in the cave; the matrix? Can you get out and seek the source of light? Are you going to ask questions?

Other aspects to the course involve questioning philosophical issues in religion. What is God? What are the classic arguments for the existence of God? Does Richard Dawkins have any kind of intelligent point? If there is such a thing as God – why is there evil in the world? Can we talk about God? If so what kind of language do we use? Is there life after death?

Why would you not want to explore these questions?

## Ethics

Ethics is life. It is contemporary and involves analysing whether there is an objective basis for our moral decisions or whether morality is relative, subjective and consequently meaningless. It is concerned with Justice.

In the course you are asked to consider the nature of reality and whether we are free or determined - if determined whether we can ever be deemed culpable if we harm another.

What do you think are the implications for the judicial system if we conclude this?

You will be further asked to critically analyse the many ethical perspectives and theories that are used in our society: in religion, business, law, the judicial system, politics and medicine.

It is a rigorous subject but one that receives great acclamation from all who take it. Its value to society cannot be underestimated.

This course is accepted by Russell Group and all other universities as a first tier academic subject. It enables rigorous academic training in logical and critical thinking and, when studied at University, can lead people to a wide range of careers. It complements the sciences and is very useful for careers in the following areas: law, business, medicine, politics, nursing, teaching, sociology and languages. It is also an excellent adjunct to History and History of Art, English and Psychology.

The course is examined by two papers at AS and two at A2 each comprising four essay style questions. Each Paper is 90 minutes.

**Unit G571 Philosophy of Religion** includes a study of Ancient Greek influences on philosophy of religion; Judaeo-Christian influences on philosophy of religion; Traditional arguments for the existence of God; Challenges to religious belief.

**Unit G572 Ethical theories;** Applied ethics topics

**A2 Units** Each is worth 25% of an A level

**Unit G581 Philosophy of Religion** includes a study of Religious language; Experience and religion; Nature of God; Life and death; Miracle.

**Unit G582 Religious Ethics** includes Meta-ethics; Free will and determinism; Conscience; Virtue ethics; Applied ethics topics.

## **Freedom to Flourish**

### **Some thoughts on why St Mary's?**

'Great teaching, great friends, safe and positive relationships, sport, D of E, debating, plays, concerts, socials, theatre visits, shopping trips, Wine Society, St Cecilia's, St Nick's, Chapel Choir, House Christmas Parties, Bonfire Night Games, Trick or Treat on Halloween, Cooking with Margot, Sixth Form Entertainment, The Staff Pantomime, Food Glorious Food, Retreats, Night Prayers, TV and hot homemade apple cake in Mary Ward.....**Why Not?**

'In the all girls' environment, I felt my voice was heard and my contribution valued. I never felt pressured to impress people.'

'Mary Ward House is the most fantastic thing about St Mary's Sixth Form; coming together with girls of your own age to prepare for A2 exams and for university life was the most memorable time of my school life. There was almost too much fun! The friendships I made are one of the most precious things in my life.'

'Strangely, it was not difficult to work and focus on my studies; everyone in the Sixth Form wanted to do well and studied in a very businesslike way. I got my great results and felt incredibly proud of what I had done.'

'I was treated as a young adult when I was ready to take responsibility for organizing my time and directing my own learning. When I needed help, it was always there. When I needed space, it was there. When it came to leave, I felt ready for anything but wanted the camaraderie to last forever.'

'I have great memories of summer evenings, coming back from a dance class and enjoying a leisurely swim.'

## **Trips and Visits**

Departments arrange educational visits where necessary. Some are very regular:

Paris: Regular joint French/Photography visit  
Florence: History of Art  
Pompeii/ Naples: Offered by the Classics Department  
Exclusive Sixth Form only bi-annual ski trip.

Upcoming visits include:

Venice: October 2011 St Mary's Choir  
Curricular Trips and Visits in the Sixth Form

