

# St Gerard's School Trust



**Year 12 Booklet**

**and**

**Options for the Sixth Form**

**April 2011**

# **CONTENTS**

Part 1: General information about A level studies  
and sixth form

Part 2: The courses on offer

## **ST GERARD'S SCHOOL TRUST SIXTH FORM**

The Sixth Form is already an established and successful part of the school, with students consistently gaining A Level grades which are well above both regional and national averages. It is very important to us.

Without appearing too immodest, I feel I can say with confidence that our team has a very successful “formula” and that our commitment to securing students’ higher education has enabled them all to achieve places on the courses of their choice at the institution of first choice *and to go on to complete these successfully.*

The Sixth Form is a good place to be, and if you choose to stay at St. Gerard's after the end of compulsory education, you have a right to expect the very best which we can offer in the way of opportunities to grow in confidence, to develop personal qualities and wider interests, to take more responsibility within the school but essentially to develop academically.

In this context, we are committed to maintaining the Christian environment in which students are respected as individuals and to which they can contribute significantly as well as careful, experienced teaching in effective teaching groups by committed staff, supported by appropriately updated resources.

Encouragement to private study is key and individual timetables emphasise this.

Guidance is given for post-A level studies, especially in the application process, whether through UCAS [the body which oversees university applications] or for other institutions.

The school’s last inspection singled out sixth form teaching for particular praise of its quality within an aspect of the school [quality of teaching] assessed as a major strength throughout.

Although success breeds success, sixth form students will only achieve their best by a combination of ability, appropriate choice of courses, a positive response to guidance and, above all, consistent hard work.

As reflected in the Study Agreement at the end of this booklet, we expect students to work hard and to make the most of their talents as individuals. We recognise and accept our own responsibilities in this process and expect the valuable home-school link to support and strengthen a student’s progress.

Individual A Level courses are described in this booklet. Please ask if there are any particular points you wish to discuss. We shall be pleased to help. You will see that, except for PE, we aim to operate the same range of subjects at AS/A level as at GCSE. Drama is an option at AS.

Some students may feel the attraction of a subject offering a totally new departure such as business studies, psychology, law, none of which are on offer here. Whilst we understand this attraction, our advice to Yr11 students with regard to these is to be cautious. Such subjects do not present as attractive an academic profile to a prospective university as one might suppose, certainly not if the student could have pursued equally well an A level in, say, English, maths, geography, history, a language or a science. This is true even where the subject (i.e. business studies, psychology, law) is identical in name to that which is being contemplated by the student for study eventually at university. Our lengthy experience bears out what we say. The more “traditional” subjects do seem to be particularly valued.

St Gerard’s has an excellent record of achieving university entrance (100% annually) for its students, who have not experienced any disadvantage in their applications through having been educated in the independent sector.

### **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR SIXTH FORM - YEAR 12**

The firm basis for A level study is success at GCSE : a consistently good performance [grade C+] over the range of subjects attempted, with the achievement of high grades - usually grade B and above - in those subjects a student wishes to pursue at A level.

A student who has not achieved a high grade at GCSE and wishes to undertake A levels will need to be particularly committed.

### **A LEVEL STUDIES: general information regarding structure**

*AS modules: 3 per sciences/maths/music, 2 for all others at St Gerard's A2 follows the same pattern with a synoptic element within this series which relates to aspects of the whole 2 –year course. It is, of course, significantly more demanding than the AS phase.*

*In either or both phases, a coursework or practical element is usual.*

The assessment will usually take place in the summer term for all modules, except art, which usually takes place at the end of the second term.

*Units can be assessed either modularly or terminally [at the end of the course] but they are usually taken in 3 examination sessions over the 2 years.*

*A unit can be attempted more than once. Generally, AS units are examinable from the January of the first year and the A2, not before the second year. Although resits are possible, it is in a student’s best interests not to accumulate them since this might threaten performance at later sessions, and offer a less positive profile of the student than some universities would like.*

Experience shows that a significant improvement in a resit i.e. one likely to alter the AS grade and positively affect the final A2 outcome is rare.

***The school undertakes to pay only for first attempts at module tests.***

At St Gerard's, students should have the opportunity to take up to 4 x AS courses in the first year, 3 of which to be continued to A2 and the full A level. As currently, the allocation of time per subject should be 5 periods weekly in each of the two years.

The school pledges to do all that is reasonably possible within its structure and budget to allow a student to undertake 4 courses. The option of a 5<sup>th</sup> cannot be guaranteed and is not generally encouraged. A request to undertake 5 courses will be considered on an individual basis and be subject to the strictures imposed generally by timetabling, staffing and the academic quality of the candidate.

**It should be borne in mind that three solid A Level achievements are still the best route to a degree course at university, so choices made must safeguard this. Thus, it is not obligatory, not necessarily advisable even, for all students to take 4 courses and each one should be advised on an individual basis.**

Fees at St Gerard's for the VIth form are very competitive when compared with other independent schools. Margins are therefore always narrow. The sixth form curriculum is the most expensive to deliver and, in doing so, a consideration has to be borne in mind, which is that where a student will be the only candidate for a course, the school reserves the right either not to run the course or to levy a supplementary charge.

### **Other opportunities**

**The acquisition of the best qualifications of which a student is capable has to be the central thrust of his/her sixth form life.** However, the sixth form is what one makes of it in other areas of one's development and there is scope for each individual or year group to make their own mark in enhancing their own experience and that of others in the school. Ideas which are put forward find encouragement and support.

Members of the sixth form currently organise a school magazine, help run sporting and drama activities and of course, they are responsible for the Christmas revue.

Students have also volunteered to work alongside junior school staff, assisting with such useful activities as reading practice and organised play. There is plenty of scope for VIth formers to offer support to younger students and willingness to do so would be welcome.

### **Key skills**

Key skills include literacy, numeracy, ICT, problem-solving and teamwork. We do not focus upon these discretely but holistically, ensuring first of all a sound grounding at GCSE in such skills for ongoing study.

A post-GCSE certificate in key skills has been promoted by the government in recent times. At St Gerard's, we do not offer this. We are confident that all students entering the VIth form have GCSE qualifications in English

language, maths and science at C+ grades and have acquired good practical skills in IT through the ECDL. We are also confident that their education up to GCSE has equipped them with practice in problem-solving and working with others and that they have acquired study habits which will enable them to improve their own learning.

## **DAY-TO-DAY LIFE AND WORK IN THE SIXTH FORM**

### *Making the transition and building independent study habits*

All students who take A levels should find an immediate rise in the level of commitment and performance required, reflected by the greater allocation of teaching time to each course. The "gap" between GCSE and A level is more evident at an early stage in some courses than others. Staff at St Gerard's are aware of this and are anxious to provide the support necessary to bridge it.

An indication of the difference between GCSE and A-level studies is the student's timetable which, in the Sixth Form, allows for private study in non-contact time ("free" periods). The supervised study provides a good working environment and students will be encouraged to spend "free" time in the study, developing good study habits.

The aim is to devote an equal amount of time to private study, at school and at home combined, as to timetabled lessons - 5 hours per subject per week is a good guide.

It cannot be stressed enough that sixth form students should take stock as early as possible in the first term of the need to keep pace with tasks set and build up a solid store of background knowledge to the studies they are pursuing. They should endeavour to "inhabit" their courses by individual reading and research.

*We take care to track progress* - in the early stages particularly - to ensure that difficulties are detected and solutions provided. A short report is provided to parents at the end of the first half term. This aims to reassure students and parents or to advise of any concerns that have arisen at this early stage. There are also the usual formal reports and parental consultations.

### *Dress and conduct – needs checking and finalising*

It has been customary for sixth formers to be allowed to dress in their "own clothes" without the restriction of uniform. This will continue to be the case. Guidance in this has been difficult to stipulate. However, any sixth former must be prepared for a challenge from his or her sixth form tutor or the Head/Deputy Head if what is being worn is deemed unsuitable wear for the workplace/academic activity. High fashion, expensive clothing is not desirable, "distressed" items, low tops and leggings (girls) are also unacceptable. Students should be neat and tidy in appearance.

Members of the sixth form are also allowed out of school, on foot only, during the day for short periods (to buy lunch or eat out). These privileges distinguish sixth formers from others and reflect our recognition that they deserve a degree of independence.

We feel that treating sixth formers as young adults is an important feature of our approach to them and we hope to encourage from them a responsible, professional approach to studies with due regard for punctuality, attendance and completion of tasks to deadlines. Such an approach cannot be over-

emphasised. It is the key element which distinguishes a successful student and is extremely persuasive with prospective universities and employers.

*To members of Yr 11 contemplating the sixth form*

As sixth formers, therefore, you will occupy a special position within the school in that you will be treated in a more adult manner and be able to contribute significantly to its life through your support both for younger students and for staff in day-to-day issues of organisation and conduct as well as in initiatives you may undertake to enhance the life of the school as a community.

*Outcomes*

At the end of your time in the Sixth, academic achievement will be the most important factor in securing for yourself a place in higher education or the job you would want in the world of employment, but reports from the school on your growth and development as a young person in society also carry weight with selection panels and prospective employers. You will be aware of the competition which faces you in pursuing either of these goals. We hope that your time in the Sixth will enable you to develop all the skills, talents and sense of responsibility you will need when you leave school, that you will enjoy life in the sixth form and find it a real opportunity to further your academic career, develop your particular interests and play a full and active part in the life of the school.

Information on A level courses now follows and, at the end, a copy of an agreement between students and the school which all students and a parent or guardian are asked to sign.

The WJEC is the examining board for:

- art and design
- English literature
- geography
- maths
- modern languages
- music
- all sciences
- RS

OCR is the examining board for:

- history

Edexcel is the examining board for:

- drama

*Grading at AS/A level*

AS  
A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
U

*A2 (full A level)*

A\*  
A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
U

\* awarded at the very end and dependent upon a) 80%+ overall at AS  
b) 90%+ overall at A2

## ART and DESIGN

Art & Design at Advanced Subsidiary GCE and Advanced GCE can be studied by a diverse range of candidates, and particularly those who enjoy painting, drawing, print-making, constructing, modelling, fabricating, making, investigating, handling media/materials/techniques and tools, inventing, improvising, planning and designing and using historical and contemporary influences and references.

Art & Design has close links as a subject with technology, history, and the expressive and performing arts including music and drama. This specification builds on the skills, knowledge and understanding developed in programmes of study throughout primary and secondary education.

Frequently the qualification of Advanced GCE and Art & Design leads to, and may be a necessary entry requirement for, further and higher education courses in Art & Design, and Art & Design Education.

Progression opportunities for candidates include further study, or directly into employment. The qualification of Advanced Subsidiary GCE and Advanced GCE in Art & Design, will contribute significantly to life-long learning.

The specification is designed to encompass four principal areas for critical, practical and theoretical coverage of art, craft and design. These emphasise the qualities of analytical understanding, practical experimentation, researching and individual expression.

At AS these are incorporated as assessment objective headings as follows:

- contextual understanding;
- creative making
- reflective recording
- personal presentation

At A level the headings are the same but the content should reflect increased challenge through:

- greater specialisation in a particular medium or process;
- extended development of particular themes, ideas or issues;
- further theoretical research;
- increased requirement to demonstrate understanding through integrated practical and written forms and other means of communication;
- more rigorous exploration of an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach.

## SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

(percentages expressed are of the full A Level GCE)

<b>AS</b>	
<b>Art 1</b>	Unit 1 Art & Design <b>Coursework portfolio</b> 30% 120 marks 120 UMS
	<p>One unit of coursework based on themes and subject matter developed from personal starting points. All work will be selected, evaluated and presented for assessment by the candidates. Critical contextual understanding may be demonstrated through written, visual, oral or other appropriate forms.</p> <p>To be internally set, internal assessments to be sent to WJEC by mid May and externally moderated in June.</p>
<b>ART 2</b>	Unit 2 Art & Design <b>Controlled Assignment</b> 20% 80 marks 80 UMS
	<p>One unit that comprises an externally set assignment presented to the candidates at the start of the preparation period for the controlled test that will be a continuous period of focused study of <b>eight</b> hours.</p> <p>All work will be selected, evaluated and presented for assessment by the candidates.</p> <p>Critical contextual understanding may be demonstrated through written, visual, oral or other appropriate forms.</p> <p>To be externally set on 1<sup>st</sup> February, internal assessments to be sent to WJEC by mid May and externally moderated in June.</p>
<b>A LEVEL (the above plus the following A Level units)</b>	
<b>ART 3</b>	Unit 3 Art & Design <b>Personal Investigation</b> 30% 120 marks 120 UMS
	<p>One unit of coursework based on themes and subject matter developed from personal starting points that requires the candidate to communicate their understanding through integrated images and texts that includes a written element of no less 1000 words.</p> <p>All work will be selected, evaluated and presented for assessment by the candidates.</p> <p>Critical contextual understanding may be demonstrated through written, visual, oral or other appropriate forms.</p> <p>To be internally set, internal assessments to be sent to WJEC by mid May and externally moderated in June.</p>
<b>ART 4</b>	Unit 4 Art & Design <b>Controlled Assignment</b> 20% 80 marks UMS
	<p>One unit that comprises an externally set assignment presented to the candidates at the start of the preparation period for the controlled test that will be a continuous period of focused study of <b>twelve</b> hours.</p> <p>All work will be selected, evaluated and presented for assessment by the candidates.</p> <p>Critical contextual understanding may be demonstrated through written, visual, oral or other appropriate forms.</p> <p>To be externally set on 1<sup>st</sup> February, internal assessments to be sent to WJEC by mid May and externally moderated in June.</p>

## **DRAMA and THEATRE STUDIES**

The course demands practical, creative and communication skills in almost equal measure.

You will extend your ability to create drama and theatre.

The course will involve taking part in productions, studying plays and theatre visits.

### **Unit 1 – 40%**

- ❖ Practical workshops investigating two plays and one drama practitioner
- ❖ Written 'exploration notes' evaluating the workshops
- ❖ Written review of a live theatre performance

### **Unit 2 – 60%**

- ❖ Practical examination of acting (or design) skills in a group performance
- ❖ Performance of a monologue/duologue
- ❖ Performance concept of the interpretation of the chosen role(s) written under supervised conditions

Further details of the specification and mark scheme can be found at the Edexcel website: [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com)

## ENGLISH LITERATURE

The course encourages wide reading of a range of genres. You will develop your skills in analysis, understanding of others' interpretations, relating texts with similar themes and ideas, as well as exploring the cultural and contextual links between texts.

In this specification, grades awarded for AS will range from A to E, and at A level to A\* to E. To be awarded an A\*, candidates will need to achieve a grade of A on their full A level qualifications and an A\* on the aggregate of their A2 units.

### Assessment

The specification is divided into a total of four units: two at AS and two at A level.

### **AS, the first year of study, consists of:**

LT1: Poetry and Drama 1

2½ hour external examination (open text)

**Section A:** Poetry post-1900. In this part of the unit you will study the poetry of Seamus Heaney as core text with reference to the partner text of *Skirrid Hill* by Owen Sheers.

**Section B:** Drama post-1900. The drama text chosen for study is *Dancing at Lughnasa* by Brian Friel.

and

LT2: Prose Study and Creative Reading  
Internal Assessment

**Section A:** Prose Study. Written coursework study of two novels, one taken from the prescribed author list from the period 1800-1945. The partner text can be from the same period if desired. Chosen texts are *A Room with a View* by E.M. Forster as core, with the partner being *Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro. The coursework assignment is one piece of written work of approximately 1,500 words.

**Section B:** Creative Reading. Here, two pieces of work are required, of approximately 750 words each:

- a personal creative writing response, written in a specific literary genre, to wider reading of prose
- a commentary on the creative writing response

Detailed guidance will be given regarding the novel chosen for response.

## **A2, the second year of study, consists of:**

LT3: Period and Genre Study (Synoptic)  
Internal Assessment

A coursework essay of approximately 3,000 words in response to an exploration of three texts, one poetry, one prose. The third may be poetry, prose or drama. The three texts must be drawn from different periods but will be linked thematically. The emphasis here is placed on independent reading and research. The choice of texts will be made after discussion during the AS course.

and

LT4: Poetry and Drama 2 (Synoptic)  
2½ hour external examination (closed text)

**Section A:** Critical Reading of Poetry. Detailed study of a pre-1800 poetry text – at present, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale* by Geoffrey Chaucer. You will be required to answer one question from a choice of five and link *The Wife of Bath* with one of five unseen poems or poetry extracts on the paper. Emphasis for this section is on analysis and evaluation of connections between the two poems.

**Section B:** Shakespeare and Related Drama. One Shakespearean play will be studied in depth, and will be linked to a play by another dramatist. The plays will be *The Tempest* and Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, although this is subject to change.

The synoptic element requires extensive knowledge and understanding of both the contexts in which the texts were written and are received, as well as taking into account the views and interpretations of other readers.

### **Practicalities of Assessment**

Units LT1 and LT4 are assessed by end of unit examinations, while LT2 and LT3 are marked internally. It is expected that the LT1 assessment will be taken at the end of the AS year.

The teaching plan for the units and their assessment is presented below:

Year 12	LT1 Poetry and Drama 1 (post 1900)	
	• Section A: Poetry post-1900	20%
	• Section B: Drama post-1900	10%
	LT2 Internal Assessment: Prose Study and Creative Reading	10%
		10%
	• Section A: Prose Study	
	• Section B: Creative Reading	

Year 13	LT3 Internal Assessment: Period and Genre Study	20%
	LT4 Poetry and Drama 2	
	• Section A: Critical Reading of Poetry	15%
	• Section B: Shakespeare and Related Drama	15%

This will allow for the re-sitting of LT1 if the required grade is not achieved in the initial assessment period.

*“Literature and butterflies are two of the sweetest passions known to mankind.”*

Vladimir Nabokov

*“Butterflies are ephemeral, however, literature will remain to that last syllable of recorded time.”*

William Shakespeare with the English Department

## Geography

The study of geography has a vital role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It encourages students to understand their own lives in a global world and to understand the vital, complex and inter-related issues they will face in their lives such as climate change, poverty and deprivation, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use.

The earth is a dynamic place where physical, environmental and human processes and changes, interact to produce a constantly changing world. This course studies important concepts and processes in the context of real places that exist at a local, regional, national and global scale.

There is no prior learning required in geography, however, the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired through GCSE Geography would help in the introductory stage of this course.

### Is Geography a good choice?

As a subject, Geography crosses the boundaries between the traditional Arts and Science subjects and sits quite happily between the two, complementing both areas of academic life. Students often find that their geographical studies help with the understanding of other subjects and enhance their skill base.

Most students enjoy the scope of the material they cover in geography, the insights it can provide into understanding the world around us and the sheer contemporary nature of the issues it tackles. Key elements in the study of any subject are understanding and skills.

The skills you use in your geographical studies make you of potential interest to a wide range of employers. The close link between the subject and the world around us makes for a long and varied list of related careers. For example, working with development or aid agencies, environmental work, using Geographical Information Systems, working for the census office and in tourism and recreation. However most of these areas involve only one part of the broad subject of geography.

Statistics show that compared with other subjects, geographers are among the most employable. Areas of employment where geographical skills are useful include administration and management; marketing or financial work. There are also possibilities in planning and of course, teaching! This is presumably because geographers possess the abilities and skills that employers look for.

## **AS level**

The course consists of:

### **Unit G1** – Changing Physical Environments

Investigating climate change

Investigating tectonic and hydrological change

### **Unit G2** – Changing Human Environments

Investigating Population Change

Investigating Settlement change

The content of the G1 and G2 gives opportunities for both research and fieldwork. There is an emphasis on the dynamic systems of climate and landscape and how people react to and manage those changes. The dynamic nature of changing settlements and population change are also studied.

Both Units are examined by written papers of 1 hour 30 minutes length in January and June. Each Unit is equally weighted. The papers consist of structured questions with stimulus material.

The AS examination will account for 50% of the A Level qualification.

## **A Level**

The course consists of the above units plus a further 2 Units

### **Unit G3** – Contemporary Themes and Research in Geography

Section A –

- Climatic Hazards  
and
- Emerging Asia – China

Section B – Individual research enquiry based on one theme from the following topics :-Geography of Crime, Deprivation, Geography of disease, Environmental psychology, Leisure and recreation, Microclimates, Atmospheric and water pollution, Geography of retailing, Rivers or Small scale ecosystems

This Unit will be examined by a written paper of 2 hours 15 minutes duration. Part of the paper will be based on the research enquiry conducted during the course. This paper will represent 30% of the A level assessment.

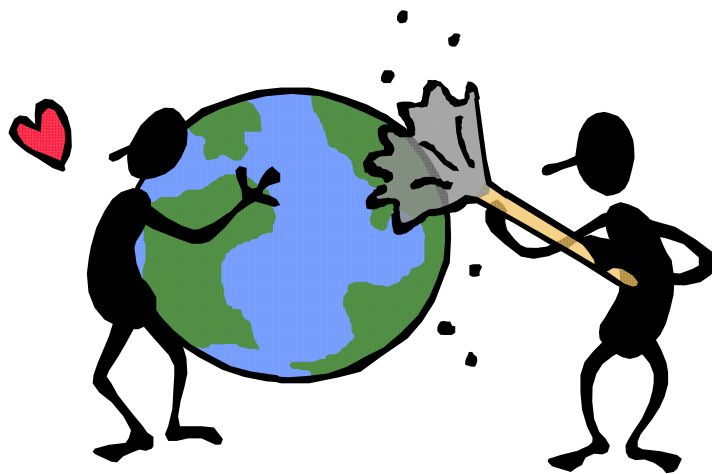
### **Unit G4** – Sustainability

- Food supply
- Water supply
- Energy
- Cities

This is the Synoptic Unit. It will be examined by one paper of 1 hour 45 minutes length based on pre-release material available to the students six weeks prior to the examination. This paper will account for 20% of the A level.

Both units will be available for assessment in January and June from 2010 onwards.

Within the course there will be opportunities for fieldwork which will be related to the Units/themes studied.



## History

The History course offered at St. Gerard's from September 2008 is OCR History syllabus A. Students will study a total of four modules over the course of two years. The course content has a bias towards 20<sup>th</sup> Century history and offers students an opportunity to develop and enhance both their skills and knowledge gained at GCSE and to gain a firm understanding of the world in which we live.

### **Course Content**

#### **AS level**

##### **Period Study (F962) – The Rise of China, 1911-1990.**

This module examines the development of China from a failing feudal monarchy to the present day embryonic economic superpower. The course begins with the revolution of 1911, which brought to an end monarchical power and centuries of dynastic control, and traces the development of Nationalist China through the leadership of Chiang Kai Shek before studying the growth of the Communist Party under Mao Zedong. The Sino-Japanese War, the Cultural Revolution and the events leading up to and including Tiananmen Square are all explored.

This module is examined through a 90 minute written paper. Students are expected to answer two essay questions from a choice of three. This provides 25% of the final mark.

##### **Enquiry (F963) – Winston Churchill, 1920-1945.**

This module examines the career of Winston Churchill both in and out of office. The course begins with a study of Churchill's role as Chancellor of the Exchequer and follows his career during the General Strike and the turbulent period of the 1930s. His attitude towards Hitler and appeasement, as well as his views on India, are all examined. A major part of the module is taken up with a close study of Churchill as a wartime leader.

This module is examined through a source based 90 minute written paper. Students are expected to answer two questions with the aid of 5 sources and their own knowledge. This provides 25% of the final mark.

#### **A2 level**

##### **Historical Interpretations and Investigations (F965) – The Vietnam War 1955 – 1975**

This module examines the controversial war in Vietnam, covering the reasons for the USA's growing involvement, the reasons for the American failure despite its super-power status, the effects of the war on American society and politics, and the effects of the war on the countries of South East Asia.

This module is examined through coursework. Students are required to submit two pieces of coursework, each 2000 words in length. One piece of

work must be an investigation and can be on a topic of the student's own choosing, whilst the other piece of work must be an interpretation, the topic of which will be provided by the board. This module provides 20% of the final mark.

### **Themes (F966) – Russia and its Rulers, 1855-1964**

This module examines the nature of Russian government from the Tsarist rule of Alexander II to the fall of the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev. Students will focus on Russian rulers, the nature of government, the impact of dictatorial rule on the economy and society of the Russian Empire, the impact of wars and revolutions.

This module is examined through a 120 minute written paper. Students answer two synoptic essay questions from a choice of three. This module provides 30% of the final mark.

Our aim is to stretch and challenge our students, to encourage them to:

- develop a coherent knowledge of the past
- develop and apply understanding of historical concepts
- develop the techniques of critical thinking in an historical context, to analyse and solve historical problems
- develop critical awareness of a range of historical dimensions
- develop the ability to communicate historical arguments and conclusions clearly and succinctly
- develop a lifelong love of the subject



## **International Computer Driving License**

*The ECDL is the internationally recognised qualification that enables people to demonstrate their competence in computer skills. This information is included in this brochure as a reminder of the level of skills Yr11s are attaining. The course is no longer on offer in general to Yr12.*

### **The European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)**

The ECDL is the European-wide qualification which enables people to demonstrate their competence in computer skills.

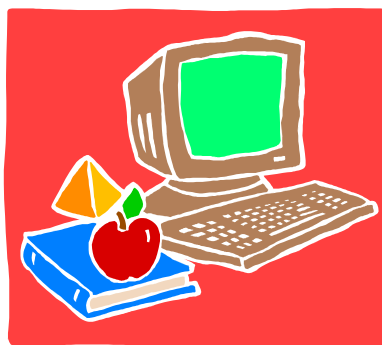
The ECDL is designed for those who wish to gain a qualification in computing, to enhance their career prospects or for personal development.

The seven modules that make up the ECDL are:

- IT security for users
- Using the computer and managing files / IT fundamentals
- Word processing
- Spreadsheets
- Database
- Presentation
- Web browsing and communication

ECDL is not like any other qualification – although it utilises the positive aspects of the best. It is fast becoming the most widely recognised qualification in the field of work-related computer use, because it is targeted at the full spectrum of the population, and because of the support and monitoring of the organisations behind it.

The British Computer Society (BCS) manages and promotes the ECDL in the UK on behalf of the foundation.



## **MATHEMATICS**

Mathematics is a supremely logical subject; there is great satisfaction to be gained from solving a problem successfully. As a discipline, mathematics underpins the quantitative dimension of all sciences, including social sciences, and is a requirement for professional qualifications in subjects as diverse as accountancy, agriculture and psychology.

Maths at A-level can be used as a support subject for physics. It complements biology and chemistry for medical and pure sciences, and is useful in subjects where a knowledge of statistics is highly desirable e.g. geography, economics and sociology. It can also stand on its own with any arts subject.

In order to study maths successfully at A-level, it is essential to have obtained a grade A or A\* at GCSE. We are very unlikely to accept anyone with a grade B as these students find A level mathematics very challenging.

A-level pure mathematics continues the topics studied at GCSE (algebra, trigonometry, co-ordinate geometry) as well as introducing calculus. There is far more theory involved in study at this level than at GCSE, but the importance of practising techniques continues.

At both AS and A2 levels, various combinations of pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics may be studied. Every student has to study some pure maths options. Mechanics options are suitable for those studying physics at A level. Statistics options are suitable for those studying geography or biology at A level and for those considering medicine and social sciences especially economics, at university. However, a combination of both mechanics and statistics options is sometimes preferable, as this gives a broad mathematical education.

The choice of combination of papers will be made after discussion with the head of the maths department. Every student taking mathematics A level will sit the same combination of papers.

Three modules will comprise an AS qualification and six modules will comprise an A level qualification. Each module is examined by a 1½ hour paper in which candidates are expected to attempt every question.

Further Mathematics A level is also available. This includes further pure maths, mechanics and statistics.

The AS module exams will be taken in the June of Yr 12. Re-sits will be possible in the January examination period of Yr 13.

Some A2 module exams may be sat in the January of Yr 13, but the most advanced modules will be examined in the June of Yr 13 and are counted as the synoptic element of the examinations.

### Calculators

In paper C1 (pure mathematics), calculators are not allowed. In all other papers, candidates may use calculators including graphical calculators.

However, the use of calculators which can carry out symbolic algebra or do differentiation or integration is strictly forbidden in all A level maths exams.

### **Mathematics A level Modules**

#### **AS modules (Year 12)**

Pure maths	C1 and C2
Applied maths	M1 or S1

#### **A2 modules (Year 13)**

Pure maths	C3 and C4
Applied maths	M2 or S2

### **Further maths A level Modules**

#### **AS modules (Year 12)**

Pure maths	FP1
Applied maths	M1 and M2
or	S1 and S2

#### **A2 modules (Year 13)**

Pure maths	FP2 and FP3
Applied maths	M3 or S3

## **MODERN LANGUAGES**

The study of a modern language at A-level is very rewarding. It combines happily with other arts subjects and complements scientific studies. Medical and veterinary faculties look favourably on a linguistic qualification in the profile of applicants for their courses.

It is varied and topical, through its use of oral class discussions, which equip the candidate with an ability to handle abstract and analytical thought processes.

Its usefulness, in view of the European Union and the unification of the two Germanys, is self-evident.

The suitable candidate for this course will already possess a sound command of French and/or German, together with a good understanding of the language's grammar. This will normally have been shown by the acquisition of a grade A\* or A at GCSE. In view of the more relaxed attitudes of the examiners at GCSE concerning accuracy and difficulty of language used, it is unrealistic to expect to gain the better A-level grades (A,B,C) unless one has obtained at least a grade A at GCSE, having taken Higher Tier papers in all skills.

In all cases prospective candidates need to seek advice from relevant staff as to their suitability for an AS or A2 course.

Candidates interested in studying both French and German at AS are advised to make their intention known as early as possible to ensure appropriate time-tabling.

Candidates can choose to study for AS only or to continue their studies and take the A2 examination, thus completing a full A level course.

The AS provides an opportunity for Advanced Level Candidates to broaden their studies by postponing a decision to specialise. It constitutes 50% of the total marks for A2.

It has been devised to be an appropriate assessment of the knowledge, understanding and skills expected from students who have completed the 1st part of the full A-Level.

The specification enhances the European Awareness of candidates and provides an opportunity to explore the spiritual, moral, ethical dimensions of the topic studied.

### **Nature of the course**

The skills of speaking, reading, writing, listening are tested at both AS and A2. They include a 40% oral component, conducted by the class teacher at AS level, candidate control of listening to a CD on an individual CD player, but no use of dictionaries during examinations.

The course does not require the memorising of a large body of facts as emphasis throughout is to demonstrate the ability to understand and to use the foreign language.

Courses in higher education for pupils who have followed an A-level course in Modern Languages are varied. As well as the traditional specialist study of French, or German (or indeed a different language altogether) courses in Modern Languages with Law, International Management, Business Studies or Computing at university have all proved popular with past students, and are only a few examples of the great number of courses available.

Although the lower grades (D/E) or an AS only will not normally be enough to enable the study of Modern Languages at university, they are nonetheless an asset in the world of business, science, the Services and many other spheres.

### **Prescribed topics: French**

The following topics will be studied with reference to France and other French speaking countries as well as in a wider, global context as appropriate. Detailed knowledge of contemporary French society is no longer an Assessment Objective.

### **AS:**

#### **(a) Leisure and lifestyles:**

including travel and tourism, sport, hobbies, entertainment, customs, traditions, healthy living – health and nutrition, diet and exercise; unhealthy living – drugs, aids, smoking, alcohol etc

#### **(b) The individual and Society:**

including relationships and responsibilities, gender issues, youth culture (values, peer groups, fashions and trends etc)

Education, vocational training and future careers.

### **Advanced:**

#### **(c) Environmental issues:**

including technology, pollution, global warming, transport, energy, nuclear energy, renewable energies, conservation, recycling, sustainability.

#### **(d) Social and political issues:**

including the role of the media, racism, immigration, social exclusion and integration, terrorism, world of work (employment, commerce, globalization, etc)

#### **(e) Guided studies option:**

including the study of 2 elements from the following: 2 films or a region of France.

The examination consists of the following units:

### **AS:**

Unit 1: Oral (15 minutes) conducted and recorded by the French teacher in school.

Unit 2: Listening, reading and writing ( 2 ½ hours )

**Advanced:**

Unit 3: Oral (20 minutes) conducted by an external examiner.

Unit 4: Listening , reading and writing ( 3 hours)

There is no coursework.

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**Prescribed topics: German**

The following topics will be studied with reference to Germany and other German speaking countries as well as in a wider, global context as appropriate. Detailed knowledge of contemporary German society is no longer an Assessment Objective.

**AS:**

(a) **Leisure and lifestyles:**

including travel and tourism, sport, hobbies, entertainment, customs, traditions, healthy living – health and nutrition, diet and exercise; unhealthy living – drugs, aids, smoking, alcohol etc

(b) **The individual and Society:**

including relationships and responsibilities, gender issues, youth culture (values, peer groups, fashions and trends etc)  
education, vocational training and future careers.

**Advanced:**

(c) **Environmental issues:**

including technology, pollution, global warming, transport, energy, nuclear energy, renewable energies, conservation, recycling, sustainability.

(d) **Social and political issues:**

including the role of the media, racism, immigration, social exclusion and integration, terrorism, world of work (employment, commerce, globalization, etc)

(e) **Guided studies option:**

including the study of 2 elements from the following: books, films, or a region of Germany

The examination consists of the following units:

**AS :**

Unit 1: Oral (15 minutes) conducted and recorded by the German teacher in school.

Unit 2: Listening, reading and writing ( 2 ½ hours )

**Advanced:**

Unit 3: Oral (20 minutes) conducted by an external examiner.

Unit 4: Listening, reading and writing (3 hours)

There is no coursework.

## **MUSIC**

The AS is the first part of the A level course. It will contribute 50% of the total A level marks. Candidates must complete three units in order to gain an AS qualification.

### **MU1 Performing 15%**

Candidates are required to present a performance of between a minimum 8 minutes and a maximum 10 minutes in length demonstrating contrasting styles as a member of an ensemble or as a soloist or a combination of the two.

### **MU2 Composing 15%**

This unit will allow candidates to develop and demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of musical elements such as the fundamentals of harmonic progressions and relationships as well as showing an awareness of certain musical styles.

- (i) One composition must reflect the musical techniques and conventions associated with the Western Classical Tradition;
- (ii) Free composition.

### **MU3 Appraising 20%**

Candidates will be required to gain a depth of understanding of **two** contrasting areas of study, at least one of which must be selected from List A – Western Classical Tradition.

#### List A

- Orchestral Music
- Vocal Music
- Chamber Music

#### List B

- Musical Theatre
- Jazz, Rock and Pop
- Welsh Songs

## **A Level Music**

The Advanced Level specification consists of two parts: Part 1 (units studied at A.S level) and Part 2, a further three units in performing, composing and appraising.

### **MU4 Performing 15%**

Candidates are required to present a performance of between a minimum 10 minutes and a maximum 12 minutes in length demonstrating contrasting

styles as a member of an ensemble or as a soloist or a combination of the two.

### **MU5 Composing 20%**

This unit will allow candidates to develop and demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of musical elements such as the fundamentals of harmonic progressions and relationships as well as showing an awareness of certain musical styles.

Candidates are required to submit 3 compositions.

- (i) a 'style' composition which illustrates understanding of the musical language of the Western Classical Tradition.
- (ii) a composition which illustrates and reflects understanding of the musical language of the 20<sup>th</sup> / 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- (iii) a 'free' composition.

### **MU6 Appraising 15%**

#### **Part 1**

This unit will require a broad understanding of the diversity of musical styles in Western Art Music of the 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. This unit will include:

- Nationalism
- Impressionism
- Neo-Classicism
- Expressionism
- Minimalism

In addition, candidates will be required to apply the knowledge gained through their study of the above to other styles of 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> century music, such as:

- Electronic music
- Aleatoric music
- Musical theatre
- Jazz, rock & pop

#### **Part 2**

Candidates will study one set work from the following:-

Ravel concerto in G major for piano and a study of orchestral music.

Shostakovich String Quartet no.8 and a study of chamber music.

William Mathias: This Worlde's Joie (Parts One, Three & Four) and a study of vocal music.

## **RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

*This GCE AS/A2 course builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired at GCSE Religious Studies. It provides a suitable foundation for Religious Studies courses in Higher Education, and also provides a challenging and worthwhile course of study for those who do not progress to further studies in this area after AS/A2.*

### **At AS level, candidates will be required to**

- (i) acquire knowledge and understanding of :
  - the key concepts within the chosen areas of study ;
  - the contribution of significant people and traditions to the areas studied ;
  - religious language ;
  - major issues and questions arising from the chosen areas of study ;
  - the relationship between the chosen areas of study and other aspects of human experience.
- (ii) develop the following skills :
  - recall, select and use specified knowledge ;
  - identify, investigate and analyse relevant questions and issues ;
  - use appropriate language and terminology ;
  - interpret and evaluate religious concepts, issues and ideas ;
  - communicate, using reasoned arguments backed up by evidence ;
  - make connections between the chosen study areas and other aspects of human experience.

### *Topic areas*

#### **An introduction to the New Testament, including:**

- Incarnation ( birth stories)
- Parables.
- Miracles
- Crucifixion and resurrection.

#### **An introduction to Christianity, including: key Christian beliefs.**

- The Protestant Reformation - Martin Luther, John Calvin, the Anabaptists.
- Different types of worship.
- The Baptism and the Eucharist in different Christian traditions.
- Christmas and Easter.

**All units address subject matter which is concerned with**

- the quest for meaning in life, for truth and for ultimate values ;
- awareness of aspects of human life other than the physical and material ;
- human experiences of wonder and mystery ;
- the exploration of religious beliefs ;

**and they provide students with opportunities to**

- explore their own beliefs, values and worth ;
- recognise and value the world and others ;
- study relationships between religion and everyday life ;
- consider moral values and attitudes of individuals, faith communities and today's society ;
- develop skill in reasoning on matters concerning values, attitudes and actions
- develop the ability to make responsible judgements on important moral teaching and contemporary issues.

Modules

**AS level**

- 1 An introduction to Christianity
- 2 An introduction to Biblical Studies

**A2 level**

- 1 Studies in Biblical Studies
- 2 Synoptic paper: life, death, after-life in Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism

## BIOLOGY

### Why study Biology?

- Biology is **the** science that is always in the news.
- There are many aspects to discover and to learn about.
- Biology will be an essential science for our own and the planets future.
- There are a huge number of potential job opportunities.
- Biology is the fastest developing science and is cutting edge.
- Dealing with new diseases, endangered species, shortage of food supply, medical needs and advances, all require an understanding of biology.

If you read the newspapers you will know that within a couple of pages you are likely to find an article that is related to biology. It is a happening science and things are changing at such a pace that the future looks very exciting.

Studying Biology says a lot about you. There are many concepts to learn and understand. **The demands of the course are high and you must be prepared to work hard throughout.** Universities and employers know this.

An A level in Biology will allow you to pursue a wide range of career opportunities either in relation to biology or in other areas such as business.

In studying biology you are allowing yourself to have knowledge, understanding and insights into of many of the major advances that will surely come about in the next 50 years or so.

### Career opportunities with Biology

Studying Biology at A Level allows you to develop a wide range of highly desirable skills essential to a successful career, these include developing practical skills, teamwork, writing reports, analysing data and problem solving for example.

Career opportunities are wide ranging and include the obvious like medicine, veterinary science, dentistry, forestry, environmental science, microbiology, agriculture, genetic engineering, forensic science and academic research.

Less obvious areas perhaps include alternative therapies such as acupuncture and osteopathy, journalism, law and even teaching!

## Biology at St Gerard's

We study the WJEC Syllabus.

**Pupils who attain A\* and A grades in their biology exam (IGCSE Separate science/ Dual award) and who intend to take another science, will be well prepared for taking on the challenges ahead.**

You will be taught for a total of 5 lessons a week; normally 4 lessons of theory and 1 of practical work, though this can vary. In addition you will be expected to complete a considerable amount of independent study, such as reading around the topics covered in class and project work.

We have good links with University Wales Bangor and arrange for visiting speakers to deliver lectures in school. There are also opportunities to enter competitions such as the British Biology Olympiad, indeed as a result of our successes in 2007 we were voted "Best school in Wales".

## The Course

### AS Biology:

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**Module BY1:** Basic Biochemistry and Organisation.

**Module BY2:** Biodiversity and Physiology of Body Systems.

**Module BY3:** AS Practical Assessment.

### A2 Biology:

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**Module BY4:** Metabolism, Microbiology and Homeostasis

**Module BY5:** Environment, Genetics and Evolution

**Module BY6:** A2 Practical Assessment.

Pupils sit exams in Modules BY1, BY2 and BY3 in the summer of Year 12

Pupils sit Module BY4 in January of Year 13, followed by Modules BY5 and BY6 in the June of year 13.

Pupils may re-sit exams in January and June in Year 13 if required.

If you have any questions about the course do not hesitate to speak to

Mr Hanlon.

## CHEMISTRY

### **Why study Chemistry?**

- Chemistry is the future
- Discovering replacements for petrol
- Reducing the emissions of polluting gases
- Finding useful new plastics that biodegrade
- Making a new wonder drug to fight obesity or cure cancer
- Making new fertilizers to increase food yields
- Develop new dyes

Almost every problem facing the world today, such as global warming, alternative energy sources, and an outbreak of a flu pandemic will require chemistry and chemists to find the answers. The amount of money being awarded to chemistry will only increase and the opportunities for chemists will grow with this.

Studying Chemistry will open up a multitude of career opportunities. Universities and employers alike take notice of a good grade in A level chemistry, more so than certain other subjects. By studying Chemistry you will advantage yourself in the highly competitive university selection process. There are few unemployed chemists.

### **Career opportunities with Chemistry**

Studying Chemistry at A Level allows you to obtain a whole range of highly desirable skills essential to a successful career. Developing practical skills, working with others in a team, writing reports, summarising articles, analysing trends and data, problem solving and improved organisational skills to name but a few.

All major companies welcome employees with chemistry A Level because of the skills you will have learnt. Chemistry has many transferable skills which can be used in a wide variety of jobs. If you are undecided on a career studying chemistry keeps your options open. This is in addition to being a requirement for those seeking a career in medicine and veterinary sciences.

### **Chemistry at St Gerard's**

We study the WJEC Syllabus. This is a very accessible syllabus, written so that the chemical concepts are studied in a context relevant to today's world. It is also a so-called "spiral curriculum" so that you revisit concepts several times in the course, building up your understanding. It is also

better at linking together the different areas of chemistry. By approaching chemistry in this way we find that students have a better understanding of the subject matter.

Pupils who attain A\* and A grades in their chemistry exam (IGCSE Separate science/ Dual award) and who intend to take another science, will be well prepared.

You will be taught for a total of 5 hours a week; normally 3 hours of theory and 2 of practical work. In addition you will be expected to study for at least 3 hours a week in your own time (read the section on independent study). We have good links with University Wales Bangor and arrange regular visits, linking these into the course.

## The Course

### AS Chemistry:

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**Module CH1:** Controlling and Using Chemical Changes

**Module CH2:** Properties, Structure and Bonding

**Module CH3:** Chemistry Practical unit

### A2 Chemistry:

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**Module CH4:** Spectroscopy and Organic Chemistry

**Module CH5:** Physical and Inorganic Chemistry

**Module CH6:** Chemistry Practical unit

Pupils sit exams in Modules CH1 and CH2 in the summer of Year 12

Pupils sit Module CH4 in January of Year 13, followed by Module CH5 in the June of year 13.

The practical unit is covered throughout the course as 4 separate practical assessments.

Pupils may re-sit exams in January and June in Year 13 if required.

Should you have any questions about the course do not hesitate to see Mrs Manfredi.

## PHYSICS

### Why study physics?

Physics is crucial to understanding the world around us. Physics is the most basic and fundamental science and encompasses the study of the universe from the largest galaxies to the smallest subatomic particles. Physics challenges our imaginations with concepts like relativity and quantum theory, and it leads to great discoveries, like computers and lasers, that change our lives. Physics is concerned with the most basic building blocks of all things - from ants to antennas, from quarks to quasars. The study of physics means trying to find out what the universe is made of, and how objects move and interact with each other. Physicists love simplicity and are constantly striving to find the most fundamental ideas that can be used to describe even the most complex of phenomena. Physics teaches you to think and ask questions about the world around you and in so doing open up new horizons and new opportunities - A-level physics offers pupils an ideal opportunity to learn the techniques and skills required to benefit from these opportunities.

### Career opportunities with Physics

A good AS/A-level qualification in physics will equip pupils with analytical, quantitative and problem solving skills. These are valuable skills that can be applied in a variety of careers. Mathematics and physics are fundamental to many aspects of modern life including computer technology, lasers, the compact disc, nanotechnology, space travel, mobile phones, medical imaging..... the list is endless! Government, industry and commerce also welcome the detailed analytical and modelling capability of physicists. Physics-based technological developments have revolutionized our world!

### Physics at St Gerard's

At St. Gerards we follow the WJEC GCE syllabus. GCSE A\* or A grades in physics and mathematics will provide good preparation for A-level physics. Pupils will be timetabled five lessons a week; normally 4 lessons of theory and 1 of practical. In addition, pupils will be expected to complete a considerable amount of independent study. Pupils will be expected to engage with the subject matter and develop their learning skills.

### The Course

#### AS Physics:

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**Module PH1:** Motion, Energy, & Charge.

**Module PH2:** Waves & Particles.

**Module PH3:** Practical Physics.

#### A2 Physics:

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**Module PH4:** Oscillations & Fields

**Module PH5:** Electromagnetism, Nuclei & Options

**Module PH6:** Experimental Physics.

Pupils sit exams in Modules PH1, PH2 and PH3 in the summer of Year 12.

Pupils sit Module PH4 in January of Year 13, followed by Modules PH5 and PH6 in the June of year 13.

Pupils may re-sit exams in January of Year 12 and January/June in Year 13 if required.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Physical Education continues as a compulsory component in the Sixth Form, where all students are offered one period each week. Many students find the opportunity to continue with some form of exercise a refreshing change from, and a positive benefit, to, their academic studies.

The essential difference between the Sixth Form physical education programme and that operated for the rest of the school is that sixth formers select their own activities, based on the size of the group and the facilities available both on and off-site. Sports such as squash, climbing, badminton, tennis and fitness/weight training are offered on the programme. However, if a group of students wish to pursue traditional team activities then this option can also be developed. Health and Safety continues to be of primary importance and students are required to participate in any activity with correct kit suitable for that activity.

For those students with a deep interest in sport and/or particular expertise in an activity, opportunity can be negotiated whereby they can develop coaching experience by working closely with members of the PE Staff.

The underlying philosophy of this programme continues to be one of enjoyment and participation, with the opportunity to sample new activities or rediscover old ones that will be continued after leaving school.

**STUDY AGREEMENT**

A-LEVEL SUBJECTS:

OTHER COURSES:

I agree to the following:

- To complete and hand in assignments on time unless a valid reason is presented.
- To arrive on time for classes.
- To discharge duties required as a member of the V1th Form and in any other capacities accepted by me.
- To explain in writing any absence from school
- To arrive in time for school and to attend assembly every morning.
- While the above commitments are being met I understand that I am not required to be in school during my designated free period.

Signed:.....(student)

The staff agree to the following:

- To set, mark and return assignments within a reasonable time (usually not longer than one week).
- To arrive for class on time.
- To give some notice to students when consultations are needed in their free time.
- To monitor closely the progress of the student and to give feed-back on progress at regular intervals; to consult with parents if a student's progress gives cause for concern.

Signed:.....(Headteacher)

The parent or guardian agrees to the following:

- To support and encourage the student to meet the commitments made.
- To consult with the school about any concerns which might affect the student's ability to meet these commitments.
- To give permission for the student, so long as the agreed commitments are being met, not to be in school during their designated free period.

Signed:.....(Parent/Guardian)