



SAINT AIDAN'S

Church of England High School

YEAR 9 OPTIONS

2026

Aspire – Believe - Succeed

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NB The Information in this booklet concerning courses is correct at the time of going to print (December 2025)

Introduction

During Key Stage 3 at Saint Aidan's (Years 7 - 9) students follow a broadly based curriculum covering all subjects that are required as part of the National Curriculum. Students have no choice at all with regard to the subjects they take. At Key Stage 4 (Years 10 - 11) students have some limited choice about the subjects they take, and it is important that they choose wisely.

It is the aim of this booklet to inform you about all those subjects that are compulsory and about those that you have some choice about.

Selecting the subjects about which you have some choice should not be undertaken lightly. You do need to think carefully about your interests and abilities. You also need to give some consideration to possible further study at Sixth Form College, Further Education College or School Sixth Form. A subject not taken to GCSE level may be very difficult, if not impossible, to take at a higher level.

You should not be influenced in your choice by what your friends do. They will make a decision, which is appropriate to them; the subjects that they choose may be totally inappropriate for you.

Over the next few weeks you will have the opportunity to talk to your teachers about the different subjects you can study. You will also have a personal interview with either your form tutor or another teacher. During this discussion your teacher will explain all of the options that are available to you, and they will also go through how to complete the options form.

Remember that the most important task at Key Stage 4 is to work hard. The majority of your time at Saint Aidan's will be spent doing the core curriculum and only a small part of the time allocation is spent doing optional subjects. You should keep this in mind when making what limited choice you have.

GCSE Grading System

All subject areas will be following either GCSE specifications or a vocational course leading to Level 1 or Level 2 qualifications.

Vocational course Levels	Equivalent GCSE Grades
Level 2 Distinction*	8/9
Level 2 Distinction	7
Level 2 Merit	6
Level 2 Pass	4/5
Level 1 Distinction	3
Level 1 Merit	2
Level 1 Pass	1

Vocational courses are more practically based subjects and have a smaller examination element. There are clear progression routes in terms of the Level 2 and 3 courses available at post 16. GCSE courses are seen as better preparation for those students progressing on to pure A-levels.

Careers Education and Guidance in Years 10-11

Various elements of careers education have been covered in Personal Development and tutorial periods in Years 7 - 9 at Saint Aidan's. In Year 9 students work on choices for GCSE and investigate the breadth and balance needed for future careers. Particular emphasis has been placed on self-appraisal and the development of self-confidence and determination to make the most of one's own talent and opportunities.

In Years 10 - 11 careers education and guidance will still be offered. Subject areas will also make a significant contribution to the development of skills and knowledge necessary for adult life.

A greater emphasis on vocational guidance develops during Years 10 and 11. During this time all students will have the opportunity to have an individual careers interview.

Colleges, sixth forms, armed forces and industry provide assemblies and 'drop-in' sessions throughout the year. A Careers Convention takes place each year.

Making the right choices

The most recent school report is a good starting point for making considered and appropriate option choices. All students have a 'Standard working at' for each subject which gives an indication of their ability and suitability for further study in this area at Key Stage 4.

Once decisions have been made regarding subject choices each student is required to complete an options form, a sample of which appears on the next page. Form Tutors will issue the forms to students in Year 9 as part of the mentoring process during the week beginning Monday, 5th January 2026.

At the end of the form all students are expected to include a reserve choice option subject.

The deadline for the return of all options forms is Monday, 19th January 2026.

Students mostly working at the Extending standard

Students should study across the full range of GCSE subjects. They are encouraged to opt for one Language (German or Spanish) and one Humanity (History or Geography). Under some circumstances a student may opt to choose either a Language or Humanity rather than both if they have a particular career path in mind. This should be done in consultation with Mr Calvert.

Students mostly working at the Strengthening standard

Again, students should study across the full range of GCSE subjects. They are encouraged to opt for at least one Language (German or Spanish) or Humanity (History or Geography). This can be taken alongside a second and third option from the full range of qualifications.

Students mostly working at the Consolidating or Developing standard

Students are encouraged to consider a Language (German or Spanish) or a Humanity (History or Geography) – advice on suitability is available from subject teachers. Students working at Consolidating or Developing have often found that Geography is a good option choice. It is also anticipated that students will opt for at least one vocational subject.

In addition, there will be a very small number of students who will benefit from a more bespoke curriculum. This will be an appropriate blend and number of GCSE and vocational courses, perhaps with some time out of normal lessons preparing for working life. Parents will be contacted on an individual basis prior to Options Evening (11th December 2025) to discuss the best programme for their child.

Sample Options Form - do not hand in

Year 9 Options Form

Name

Form

Please fill in the correct column

	Subjects	Extending	Strengthening	Consolidating or Developing
		Choose 3 To include at least one (and probably two) from: History Geography Spanish German	Choose 3 To include at least one from: History Geography Spanish German	Choose 3 Encouraged to include a humanity (e.g. History) or a language (German or Spanish) Recommended to include a vocational course
GCSE	Art			
	Business Studies			
	Computer Science			
	Design and Technology			
	Drama			
	Food and Nutrition			
	Geography			
	German			
	Graphic Communication			
	History			
	PE			
Spanish				
Vocational	Engineering Design			
	Health and Social Care			
	Performing Arts (Music)			
	Sport Science			
	Reserve Choice			

SUMMARIES OF COURSES TO BE OFFERED

A CORE COMPULSORY EXAMINATION COURSES

English Language GCSE (AQA)

Overview of course content

The AQA specification offers a skills-based approach to the study of English Language. All students attempt the same examinations with questions designed to take students through lower tariff tasks to more extended responses.

Assessment

Paper 1 Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing (1 hour 45 minutes)

Reading 25% - a range of short and long questions based on one text

Writing 25% - one extended writing question, either narrative or descriptive

Paper 2 Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives (1 hour 45 minutes)

Reading 25% - a range of short and long questions based on two linked texts

Writing 25% - one extended writing task, presenting a viewpoint

Progression Routes

AS and A level English Language

All students will study English Language, almost all will also study English Literature and will achieve two separate GCSEs

**For more information please contact Mrs C Fewson-Reeve
at staffcf@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

English Literature GCSE (AQA)

Overview of course content

The AQA specification takes a skills-based approach to the study of English Literature that is consistent across the genres.

Assessment

Paper 1 Shakespeare and the 19th century novel (1 hour 45 minutes)

Shakespeare play – students must answer one question based on an extract from the play. The second question is based on the whole text

19th century novel - students must answer one question based on an extract from the play. The second question is based on the whole text

Paper 2 Modern texts and poetry (2 hours 15 minutes)

Modern texts – prose or poetry – student will answer one question from a choice of two

Poetry – students will answer one comparative question on one named poem and one other poem from the anthology cluster

Unseen poetry – students will answer one question on an unseen poem comparing it with another unseen poem

Progression Routes

AS and A level English Literature

Almost all students will study English Literature alongside English Language and will achieve two separate GCSEs.

**For more information please contact Mrs C Fewson-Reeve
at staffcf@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Mathematics GCSE (AQA)

At Key Stage 4, all Saint Aidan's students will be entered for the AQA 8300 GCSE Mathematics qualification. This is a linear course which will be taught during four lessons a week and which assesses students in two distinct tiers.

Students will be guided towards the tier that best supports their learning and gives them the opportunity to succeed. This decision is made with care, based on each student's progress and mathematical development during their first three years at Saint Aidan's. The aim is always to ensure that every student is both challenged and encouraged in a way that builds confidence and helps them achieve their potential.

Assessment Tiers: There are **two tiers of entry:**

- **Foundation Tier** - Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5
- **Higher Tier** - Grades 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9

Students will be rigorously assessed throughout Year 10 and Year 11 to make sure that they are aware of their progress towards the examination in the summer of Year 11. Formal internal mathematics examinations will take place in:

- December of Year 10
- March of Year 10
- June of Year 11
- December of Year 11
- March of Year 11

The examination in May & June 2026 will consist of three 1½ hour exam papers for all students:

Paper 1 (Non-calculator) worth 33⅓% of the overall mark

Paper 2 (Calculator) worth 33⅓% of the overall mark

Paper 3 (Calculator) worth 33⅓% of the overall mark

All students will require their own calculator throughout the two-year course and this must be a scientific calculator (preferably a Casio fx83 or fx85).

Mathematics is without doubt an invaluable skill for life. With this in mind, all students should aim to develop and maintain a positive approach towards GCSE Mathematics in order to achieve their true potential in the subject.

For more information please contact
Mrs A Jenkinson at staffajj@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk

Religious Studies GCSE (AQA)

Year 10 students will embark upon the AQA Full Course in Religious Studies. All will follow Specification A and will be examined at the end of Year 11.

This course is entirely assessed by two examinations and will not contain any coursework. Each examination will last for 1 hour 45 minutes.

Grades of 1-9 will be awarded.

Students will take assessments in the following two components in the same series:

- **Component 1: The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices**
- **Component 2: Thematic studies**

Component 1: The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices.	Component 2: Thematic studies
<p>What's assessed Beliefs, teachings and practices of the following religions: Christianity Islam</p>	<p>What's assessed Four religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes from the perspectives of the following religions: Christianity Islam Themes to be studied: Theme A: Relationships and families Theme B: Religion and life Theme D: Religion, peace and conflict Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment</p>
<p>How it is assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes • 96 marks (plus 6 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)) • 50% of GCSE 	<p>How it is assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes • 96 marks (plus 3 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)) • 50% of GCSE

For more information please contact
Miss K Patterson at staffkp@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk

Science GCSE (AQA)

All students must study all three sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics).

The majority of students will be entered for the Double Award Science (GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy).

Students who are in top sets for Science (9F1 or 9W1) will be entered for the Triple Award Science (GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry & GCSE Physics).

Both double and triple science provide good routes onto studying A-levels in science.

Course content

All students are taught by specialist Biology, Chemistry and Physics teachers; each for two hours per week. We follow the AQA GCSE specifications.

Assessment

Students are internally assessed through homework, classwork, interim assessments and mock exams.

There are mock exams in March of Year 10, and November in Year 11.

Students will be entered at either foundation or higher tier, depending upon their ability. Tiers of entry for the external GCSE exams are not finalised until Year 11.

All GCSE exams are at the end of the course. The GCSE exams consist of two papers each for Biology, Chemistry and Physics; totalling six exam papers for each student.

Higher Tier GCSE	grades covered	9, 8, 7, 6, 5,
Foundation Tier GCSE	grades covered	5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Revision resources

All students have access to their knowledge organiser(s) and online study resources at <https://my.educake.co.uk/student-login> for use at school and at home.

Students should use the relevant AQA specification as a checklist for their revision. For double award, these are available from <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science>. Triple science students can navigate from here to find the specifications they need.

We advise students to watch YouTube clips to revise their practical work regularly.

Ongoing revision is essential for success; with good attendance being the key to success.

**For more information please contact
Mrs L Tilbury at stafflim@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Personal Development

Personal Development will be studied as a one-year course in Year 11. Students will also benefit from six Personal Development days across KS4.

Course content

Personal development is divided into three strands:

❖ Relationship and Sex Education

All schools are required to teach compulsory RSE. This will include:

- Healthy relationships
- Consent
- Contraception
- STIs
- Personal values and assertive communication
- Managing conflict (challenging homophobia, transphobia, sexism)
- Tackling relationship myths and expectations

❖ Living in the wider world

- Employability skills
- Preparation for work experience
- College application process
- Personal finance
- Post 16 options and careers

❖ Health and wellbeing

- Self-esteem
- Coping with stress
- Healthy choices

Personal Development days have the following focus:

Healthy relationships: the law, peer pressure and sexual health.

University and further education: exploring university life and courses.

Work preparation day: CV writing, letters of application and mock interviews.

Equality day: sexism and harassment.

Humanutopia: The final push towards GCSEs and revision

Physical Education

The Key Stage 4 programme is designed to reinforce and then add to the work done in previous Key Stages. All students will study all the five Key Processes from the National curriculum for one hour per week. These are the essential skills and processes in PE that students need to learn to make progress.

Developing skills in physical activity

Students should be able to:

- Develop their technique and improve their performance in other competitive sports or other physical activities.

Making and applying decisions

Students should be able to:

- Use and develop a variety of tactics and strategies to overcome opponents in team and individual games.

Developing physical and mental capacity

Students should be able to:

- Take part in further outdoor and adventurous activities in a range of environments which present intellectual and physical challenges and which encourage pupils to work in a team, building on trust and developing skills to solve problems, either individually or as a group.

Evaluating and improving

Students should be able to:

- Evaluate their performances compared to previous ones and demonstrate improvement across a range of physical activities to achieve their personal best.

Making informed choices about healthy, active lifestyles

Students should be able to:

- Continue to take part regularly in competitive sports and activities outside school through community links or sports clubs.

The study of PE will include activities that cover at least two of the following:

- a) Outwitting opponents, as in games activities
- b) Accurate replication of actions, phrases and sequences, as in gymnastic activities.
- c) Exploring and communicating ideas, concepts and emotions, as in dance and outdoor adventurous activities
- d) Performing at maximum levels in relation to speed, height, distance, strength or accuracy, as in athletic activities
- e) Exercising safely and effectively to improve health and wellbeing, as in fitness and health activities.

Activities - Key Stage 4

Girls	Boys
Aerobics	Athletics
Athletics	Badminton
Badminton	Basketball
Basketball	Cricket
Life Fitness	Football
Netball	Handball
Rounders	Life Fitness
Tag Rugby	Rugby

**For further information please contact
Mr B Macleod at staffbm@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

C OPTION SUBJECTS

Art GCSE (AQA)

The specification in this subject is offered by AQA. The course content follows the specification called Art and Design.

COURSE AIMS:

- The course encourages candidates to develop creativity using a variety of visual research and media. Candidates will develop practical skills to communicate and express ideas, feelings and meanings in art, craft and design.
- Candidates will learn to investigate, analyse, experiment and interpret aesthetic meanings in Art.
- Candidates will understand how to use a range of materials, techniques and equipment.
- Candidates will get the opportunity to study other artists, craftspeople, cultures and contemporary issues in society. Written opinions and analysis are an important part of this.

	ART AND DESIGN	
COMPONENT 1 (Coursework)	No time limit The coursework is completed over 2 years. Students will complete 3 projects from the following themes: - 1. Identity 2. Natural Form 3. To be negotiated with the teacher Coursework is centre-assessed and moderated by AQA.	60% of total marks
COMPONENT 2 (Exam)	10 hours Schools are sent 7 possible project themes – in discussion with the teacher, each pupil will select one of these. Candidates will receive their exam paper in the first week of January. From there they will have approximately 12 weeks to plan and prepare artwork for the 10-hour supervised exam. This exam will happen over 2 full days. Set by AQA, centre-assessed and moderated by AQA.	40% of total marks

The candidates' artwork will be presented in the form of an exhibition in May of Year 11. It will be the responsibility of each candidate to complete all artwork, meet deadlines and safely store all finished outcomes for this exhibition.

Note: Art is a specialism within the AQA Art specification and cannot be taken alongside GCSE Graphic Communication.

For more information please contact
Miss R Ellis staffrel@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk

Business Studies GCSE (Edexcel)

GCSE Business Studies (Edexcel) is an exciting and creative subject on offer to students in KS4.

The course involves learning about the world of business through real and relevant local and international brands. It gives students the opportunity to communicate and explain ideas, think creatively, and make decisions, and work with numbers to solve business problems.

Exam based assessment:

Students will complete two lots of 90mins written exams based on multiple choice, calculation, short-answer, and extended-writing questions contributing to 100% of their final mark. These will be based on the two separate themes outlined below, both of which include exploring case studies and the current business environment.

Theme 1: Investigating small business - 90mins

- How and why do business ideas come about?
- What makes a successful business?
- How to develop an idea, spot an opportunity and turn it into a successful business.
- How to make a business effective, manage money and see how the world around us affects small businesses and all the people involved.

Theme 2: Building a business - 90mins

- How does a business develop beyond the start-up phase?
- Key business concepts and issues and decisions you need to make when growing a business and working in a global business.
- Meeting customer needs.
- Making marketing, operational, financial, and human resourcing decisions.
- How the wider world impacts the business as it grows.

Students opting for GCSE Business Studies should:

- Have a keen interest in current business and economic affairs.
- Have a good level of literacy.
- Have a willingness to learn independently.
- Have a good level of mathematical ability.

Potential Progression Routes

- A Level Business Studies and beyond
- BTEC Level 3+
- Marketing
- Leisure and Tourism
- Accountancy
- Law
- Finance

**For more information please contact
Mr N Ireland at staffnai@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk or
Mrs E Macphee at staffema@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Computer Science GCSE (AQA)

GCSE Computer Science (AQA) is an exciting and creative subject on offer to students in KS4.

Exam based assessment:

Students will complete one 2 hour written exam and one 1 hour 45 mins exam contributing 100% of their final mark.

Exam Paper 1: Computational thinking and programming skills - 2 hours

This will include:

- Computational thinking and problem solving
- Assessing the design of algorithms, including key sorting and searching algorithms.
- Code tracing using trace tables.
- Designing, writing, testing and refining of code. This takes place in the exam with our chosen language: Python

Exam Paper 2: Computing Concepts – 1 hour 45 mins

This exam is focused on computer systems covering the physical elements of computer science and the associated theory.

- Data Representation – including binary, Hex, images, sound and compression.
- Computer hardware and software – the CPU, clock speeds, RAM and storage and how these have been developed over the years.
- Networks – communication through the use of packets, IP addressing, protocols and network software.
- Relational Databases and Structured Query Language (SQL) – Creating and maintaining relational database management systems and using SQL.
- System security – including common threats and preventative measures.
- Legal, Moral, Social and Environmental Impact – exploring the impact of computer systems on society.

Programming Project

There is no requirement for students to complete an assessed programming project. However, they will be expected to complete one extended programming activity involving designing, implementing and testing a solution to a problem.

Students opting for GCSE Computer Science should:

- Be able to meet demanding coursework deadlines
- Have a willingness to learn independently
- Have a good level of mathematical ability

Potential Progression Routes

- A Level Computer Science
- Professional qualifications in Networking or other similar certifications.
- Game Design and Programming

**For more information please contact
Mr N Ireland at staffnai@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk or
Mrs E Macphee at staffema@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Design and Technology GCSE (AQA)

GCSE Design and Technology will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise.

Students will study core technical and designing and making principles, including a broad range of design process, materials techniques and equipment. They will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth from either a Resistant Materials or Textiles perspective.

Unit 1 – Exam - 50% of the overall qualification

Externally assessed written exam lasting 2 hours, where students will be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of the following: -

- Core technical principles
- Specialist technical principles
- Designing and making principles

The exam is split up into 3 sections:

Section A – Core technical principles (20 marks)

A mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions assessing a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding.

Section B – Specialist technical principles (30 marks)

Several short answer questions (2–5 marks) and one extended response to assess a more in-depth knowledge of technical principles.

Section C – Designing and making principles (50 marks)

A mixture of short answer and extended response questions.

Unit 2: Non-Exam Assessment (NEA) 50% of overall qualification, internally assessed

Students will undertake an extended making project that showcases the knowledge they have developed in Unit 1. Students will produce a prototype and a design portfolio to evidence the following assessment criteria:

- Identifying and investigating design possibilities
- Producing a design brief and specification
- Generating design ideas
- Developing design ideas
- Realising design ideas
- Analysing and evaluating

The contextual challenges to be released annually by AQA on 1 June in the year prior to the submission of the non-examined assessment. All work will be marked by teachers and moderated by AQA.

For more information please contact
Mrs L Salmon at stafflp@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk

Drama GCSE (Eduqas)

GCSE Drama is an exciting, inspiring and practical course. The specification encourages active involvement in and enjoyment of drama, while also providing opportunities to attend live theatre performances and develop skills as informed and thoughtful audience members.

The Eduqas GCSE in Drama offers a broad course of study which enables learners to:

- apply knowledge and understanding when making, performing and responding to drama
- explore performance texts, understanding their social, cultural and historical context
- develop a range of theatrical skills and apply them to create performances
- work collaboratively to generate, develop and communicate ideas
- develop as creative, effective, independent and reflective learners able to make informed choices in process and performance
- reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of others

Please note: Drama is a highly collaborative subject, and group work is a central part of the course. Good attendance is essential to ensure all students can contribute fully to rehearsals and performances and to support the progress of the whole group.

Component 1: Devising Theatre
Non-exam assessment: internally assessed, externally moderated 40% of qualification
Learners participate in the creation, development and performance of a piece of devised theatre in response to a stimulus set by the exam board. Learners must produce: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a performance of their piece of devised theatre• a portfolio of supporting evidence• an evaluation of the final performance
Component 2: Performing from a Text
Non-exam assessment: externally assessed by a visiting examiner 20% of qualification
Learners study two extracts from the same performance text. Learners participate in one performance using sections of text from both extracts.
Component 3: Interpreting Theatre
Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes 40% of qualification
Section A: Set Text A series of questions on a set text studied throughout the course.
Section B: Live Theatre Review One question, from a choice of two, requiring analysis and evaluation of a live theatre production seen during the course.

Throughout the completion of this course, learners will develop a range of essential life skills which will help them succeed in any career they choose. This course prepares students for any Drama or Performing Arts qualification delivered post KS4.

**For more information please contact
Mrs L Marsden at stafflb@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Food Preparation and Nutrition GCSE (Eduqas)

The GCSE in Food Preparation and Nutrition equips learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to cook and apply the principles of food science, nutrition and healthy eating. It encourages learners to cook, enables them to make informed decisions about food and nutrition and allows them to acquire knowledge in order to be able to feed themselves and others affordably and nutritiously, now and later in life.

The course has been developed to maintain a balance between practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding. By studying food preparation and nutrition learners will be able to: -

- (a) demonstrate effective and safe cooking skills by planning, preparing and cooking a variety of food commodities whilst using different cooking techniques and equipment.
- (b) develop knowledge and understanding of the functional properties and chemical characteristics of food as well as a sound knowledge of the nutritional content of food and drinks.
- (c) understand the relationship between diet, nutrition and health, including the physiological and psychological effects of poor diet and health
- (d) understand the economic, environmental, ethical and socio-cultural influences on food availability, production processes, diet and health choices
- (e) demonstrate knowledge and understanding of functional and nutritional properties, sensory qualities and microbiological food safety considerations when preparing, processing, storing, cooking and serving food.
- (f) understand and explore a range of ingredients and processes from different culinary traditions (traditional British and international) to inspire new ideas or modify existing recipes.

Assessment

Assessment will be via a written examination and a non-examined practical assessment, each area being worth 50% each of overall marks. Examples of possible assessment:

Assessment 1

Task A

Shortcrust pastry should be crisp to the bite and crumbly in the mouth. It can be prepared using a range of different ingredients. Investigate the working characteristics and the functional and chemical properties where appropriate of the different ingredients needed to achieve a perfect shortcrust pastry. This assessment must be supported by investigational work.

Task B

There are a number of ways to thicken a sauce. Investigate the working characteristics and the functional and chemical properties where appropriate of the different methods used to thicken a sauce. This assessment must be supported by investigational work.

Assessment 2

Task A

A local restaurant is holding an international week. Research, prepare and cook three dishes that could be served on a themed menu to promote the cuisine of a specific country or region. This assessment must be supported by investigational work.

Task B

Celebrity chefs have been promoting the importance of a healthy diet for children. Research, prepare and cook three dishes that could be served on an open day menu to encourage new pupils to eat in the school canteen. This assessment must be supported by investigational work.

**For more information please contact
Mrs J Rossall at staffjor@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Geography GCSE (AQA)

Why Choose GCSE Geography?

Are you interested in studying Geography at GCSE? You should be because:

- ✓ We teach an exciting, up to date, relevant and interesting curriculum
- ✓ Geography helps you to develop a wide range of transferable skills – essential in the world of higher education and employment.
- ✓ Geography is regularly found to be one of the most employable subjects

Put simply: Geography is a subject that teaches you about the world we live in and the issues affecting us now and into the future.

Which Syllabus do we follow?

The AQA specification recognises the vital role geography has in the 21st century curriculum enabling our students to appreciate the complexity of our world and the diversity of its environments, economies and cultures.

The course comprises **three** papers; one physical, one human and one that is skills and fieldwork based. All three papers and the units we are most likely to be teaching within them are outlined in the table below.

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment	Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment
<p>Section A: The challenge of natural hazards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural hazards • Tectonic hazards • Tropical storms • Extreme weather in the UK • Climate change <p>Section B: The Living World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosystems • Tropical Rainforests • Hot Deserts <p>Section C: UK Physical Landscapes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Coastal Environments • UK Glacial Environments 	<p>Section A: Urban issues and challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global population • Population in a NEE: Lagos • Population in the UK <p>Section B: The changing economic world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global development • The economy of a NEE: Nigeria • The UK's economy <p>Section C: The challenge of resource management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources management • Global Water Resources
Paper 3: Geographical applications and skills	
<p>Section A: Issue evaluation This section assesses students' geographical skills and applied knowledge by looking at a particular issue(s) taken from part of the course (using a pre-released resource). It will challenge students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.</p> <p>Section B: Fieldwork Students need to undertake two geographical inquiries. Students will be examined using a range of questions that assesses their understanding of fieldwork design, data collection and analysis.</p>	

Assessment and support

Throughout the GCSE course we support students with effective revision and exam technique for assessments and exams. We provide bespoke resources, workshops and knowledge organiser booklets to aid this, as well as sharing information with parents so you can effectively support your child through the course.

Fieldwork opportunities

We also run a bi-annual fieldtrip to Iceland which is only for students taking GCSE Geography. The next trip will run in February 2028. Information will be available in the next year for students opting for GCSE Geography who are interested.

For more information please contact
Mr A Corbridge at staffac@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk

German and Spanish GCSE (AQA)

Students will have studied either Spanish or German at KS3. This is the same language that they will study in KS4 if they continue with their MFL studies. A GCSE in Spanish and German is an academic qualification, but the most important criteria for someone continuing with their language studies is that they enjoy the subject and are willing to work hard.

The Course (German and Spanish)

In the new languages GCSE (introduced in 2024), students are expected to know 1200 words at foundation tier, increasing to 1700 at higher tier. These are the most common words in the language, meaning that pupils should leave in year 11 with a competent level of understanding and communication in the language. As we already adapted our KS3 curriculum, students will already have covered a significant proportion of this vocabulary, as well as lots of the grammar needed for success at GCSE.

The course aims to extend the students' skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing and will provide a sound and substantial basis for further study, be it academic or vocational. A GCSE in MFL will give students the confidence to stay in the foreign country and communicate successfully as well as confidently communicate in the business world.

The following topics are covered in the GCSE course:

Theme 1: People and lifestyle

- Identity and Relationships with Others
- Healthy Living and Lifestyle
- Education and Work

Theme 2: Popular Culture

- Free Time Activities
- Customs, Festivals and Celebrations
- Celebrity Culture

Theme 3: Communication and the World Around Us

- Travel and Tourism, Including Places of Interest
- Media and Technology
- The Environment and Where People Live

Assessment

We follow the AQA specification and there is a Foundation tier (Grades 1 – 5) and a Higher tier (Grades 4 – 9)

Students must take all four question papers at the same tier.

- 25% Listening - 25% Reading
- 25% Speaking - 25% Writing

Paper 1 Listening exam

1 exam – Foundation tier 35 minutes and Higher tier 45 minutes.

Paper 2 Speaking exam

1 exam consisting of a role play, a reading aloud task with short, unprepared conversation and a photo card discussion. Foundation tier will last 7-9 minutes and Higher tier will last 10-12 minutes.

Paper 3 Reading exam

1 exam – Foundation tier 45 minutes and Higher tier 1 hour.

Paper 4 Writing exam

1 exam – Foundation tier 1 hour 10 minutes and Higher tier 1 hour 15 minutes.

Languages are without doubt an invaluable skill for life. All students will be equipped with the communication skills and linguistic competence needed to succeed in the ever-increasing global world of work.

Students will of course also have the opportunity to take part on a trip to Spain or Germany during their GCSE studies.

**For more information please contact
Mr N Curran at staffncu@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Graphic Communication GCSE (AQA)

The Graphic Communication GCSE course is designed for students to firstly learn about graphic conventions, how advertising works, understanding the needs of the client and the design process – then to creatively design and develop a range of design solutions for different projects. These are key skills which can be applied to a huge range of jobs within the creative industry, including: -

Illustration, animation, graphic design, product design, marketing and advertising, computer games design, project management and many more.

Assessment

Component 1 Controlled Assessment (Coursework) 60% of the total marks

Students will complete three extended projects. As the course progresses, pupils are given more creative freedom to tailor projects to their own strengths and interests.

1. Restaurant Branding - design a themed restaurant (logo, building, uniform, menu, packaging, etc.
2. Editorial Design – design an illustrated magazine spread on a subject of your choice.
3. Free choice to be negotiated with the teacher.

Component 2 Exam 40% of the total marks

Students will choose one of seven starting points provided by AQA. They will investigate appropriate ideas, designers and methods before developing and improving a range of ideas culminating in a final design solution. Students will have around 12 weeks to prepare their ideas before spending 10 supervised hours in school producing their final designs. The exam project follows the same pattern as the Controlled Assessment project, meaning there is no formal written exam.

Note: Graphic Communication is a specialism within the AQA Art specification and cannot be taken alongside GCSE Art.

For more information please contact
Mr D Elwell at staffde@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk

History GCSE (Edexcel)

At Saint Aidan's students study the following course:

Why should I choose GCSE History?

We teach **exciting, interesting** and **challenging** topics. History equips you with a **range of skills all vital in our modern World**

- ✓ **Independent critical thinking, problem solving, researching and selecting information, resilience and time management.**
- ✓ **The ability to communicate clear, coherent and evidence-based arguments.** The ability to **empathise with others** through understanding how and why people acted as they did in the past and how this helps us to understand the modern world
- ✓ **History GCSE is an excellent foundation** for the study of History at A level, as well as subjects such as English Language and Literature, Law, Religious Studies and Classical Civilisations.

<p>Exam Paper 1: Thematic study and the historic environment</p> <p>Unit 1: Medicine in Britain, c1250– present day AND Unit 2: The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches</p>	<p>Written examination: 1 hour and 15 minutes and worth 30% of the final grade. Exam is taken in the summer term of Year 11</p> <p>Assessment overview Section A: historic environment Students answer a question that assesses knowledge plus a two-part question based on two provided sources. Section B: thematic study Students answer three questions that assess their knowledge and understanding. The first two questions are compulsory. For the third question, students answer one from a choice of two questions</p>
<p>Exam Paper 2: Period study and British depth study</p> <p>Unit 3: The American West, c1835– c1895 AND Unit 4: Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060–88</p>	<p>Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes and worth 40% of the final grade. Exam is taken in the Summer term of Year 11</p> <p>Assessment overview Section A: Period study Students answer three questions that assess their knowledge and understanding. The first two questions are compulsory. For the third question, students select two out of three parts. Section B: British depth study Students answer a single three-part question that assesses their knowledge and understanding. The first two parts are compulsory. For the third part, students select one from a choice of two.</p>
<p>Exam Paper 3: Modern depth study</p> <p>Unit 5: Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39</p>	<p>Written examination: 1 hour and 20 minutes and worth 30% of the final grade. Exam is taken in the summer term of Year 11</p> <p>Assessment overview Section A Students answer a question based on a provided source and a question that assesses their knowledge and understanding. Section B Students answer a single four-part question, based on two provided sources and two provided interpretations (a type of source)</p>

Students opting for this subject should be able to meet the demands of GCSE History which includes:

- An ability and willingness to learn a very large amount of work.
- A willingness to work independently, manage the workload and meet deadlines.
- Excellent literacy skills—there is a considerable amount of reading and essay writing in GCSE History (literacy is assessed in all History examination papers)

**For more information please contact
Miss J Nicholls at staffjmn@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Physical Education GCSE (AQA)

This is an AQA academic course and as much time is spent on the theoretical aspects of sport (60%) as on practical performances of sport (40%). It is aimed at students who are strong sporting performers i.e. at least school team performers. It is also aimed at those students who have an interest in:

The physiological effects of exercise on the body, how the body biomechanically produces movements and the impact sport has on society as a whole both nationally and internationally.

GCSE PE can lead into many Post 16 courses such as 'A' level P.E., Vocational Sports Studies at Level 3 and 4, and Sports Coaching and Leadership Awards.

At the end of the course students will be awarded a grade 1 - 9 based upon their practical performances and two written examination papers.

Assessment

Practical assessment

- Practical Areas of work worth **40%**
- These are internal assessments completed under the scrutiny of the teacher assessor. Each student will enter **3 assessments**.
- Each area is assessed out of 25 marks, 10 for developing skills and 15 marks for full context. (25 x 3 = 75 marks).
- Added onto the practical marks are analysis (15 marks) and evaluation (10 marks) which focus on bringing about an improvement in one activity.
- Final practical grade will be out of **100 marks**.
- Students are required to be assessed in three different activities in the role of player/performer only.
- **One of these assessments must be in a team activity; one assessment must be in an individual activity, with the third assessment being in either a team or individual activity** e.g. Your selection would come from (1) Team activity, one from; Netball/ Association Football/ Rugby Union or League/ Basketball/ Cricket/ Doubles Badminton or Tennis: (2) Individual activity, one from; Athletics/ Rock Climbing (Tower Wood)/ Singles Badminton or Tennis/ Equestrian/ Dance/ Golf/ Artistic Gymnastics : (3) Any activity not selected in (1) or (2).
- Practical assessment is continual so attendance at every lesson is very important. Some assessments will be completed during school fixtures or at extra-curricular clubs and some in Core Games Lessons. Students do not opt to do certain activities, they study all areas and those they achieve most marks in are put forward.

Theory Assessment, Knowledge and Understanding

External Assessment in the form of **two written exams, worth 60%**.

Paper 1: The human body and movement in physical activity and sport.

What's assessed: Applied anatomy and physiology • Movement analysis • Physical training • Use of data.

How it's assessed: Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes • 78 marks • 30% of GCSE.

Paper 2: Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport.

What's assessed: Sports psychology • Socio-cultural influences • Health, fitness and well-being • Use of data

How it's assessed: Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes • 78 marks • 30% of GCSE.

Questions A mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.

There is **no coursework**.

Who is best suited to this course?

Highly motivated students inside and outside the classroom.

- This course would suit students who are highly capable performers in a variety of practical activities.
- It is essential that students are at a good level as a practical performer and have represented the school teams on a regular basis or participate in sports/teams regularly outside school.
- All candidates will be expected to attend all our extra-curricular programme in school.
- Candidates who are only competent in a couple of areas will struggle on the course.

**For more information please contact
Mr B Macleod at staffbm@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Engineering Design (Cambridge Nationals)

Level 1 / Level 2

Course Overview

In Engineering Design you will identify opportunities and solve problems which contribute to the development of new products. Through research and practical activities you will understand how to answer professional client briefs and use practical skills such as drawing, computer modelling and model making to show design ideas. This course will provide you with knowledge in engineering, technology and develop your critical thinking, creativity and dextrous skills.

Progression Routes

Various courses post-16 including: -

- A Levels and T Levels
- BTEC National Diplomas
- Apprenticeships

Studying something in Engineering Design could lead to a career in: -

- Engineering
- CAD Technician
- Product Designer

How will you be assessed?

Unit	What will you do?
Unit R038: Principles of engineering design	This unit is all about the design process. You will investigate all the stages and processes that engineers use in order to produce new, innovative and exciting products. You will come to appreciate that designing is a complex process with many factors to consider and compromises to be made. This unit is externally assessed through a 75-minute exam, which will be sat during year 11. It is worth 40% of the final grade.
Unit R039: Communicating designs	Beginning with sketching and moving on to using computer 2D and 3D design packages, this unit is all about learning how to communicate your ideas through engineering drawings. You will learn the correct ways to present your ideas as well as learning how to use Computer Aided Design (CAD) software. This unit is internally assessed through ongoing submission of assessment work (coursework). It is worth 30% of the final grade.
Unit R040: Design, evaluation and modelling.	In this unit you will initially learn by analysis and disassembly of a given product. You will then be required to make a prototype model of your own. This could be using workshop tools and equipment, newer technologies such as laser cutting or a mix of both. This unit is internally assessed through ongoing submission of assessment work (coursework). It is worth 30% of the final grade.

**For more information please contact
Mr J Wright staffjw@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Health and Social Care (Cambridge Nationals)

Level 1 / Level 2

Assessment Overview

Cambridge Nationals in Health and Social Care at Level 1/Level 2 covers foundational principles and practices essential for supporting individuals in various health and social contexts

The qualification consists of three units that give learners the opportunity to develop broad knowledge and understanding of health and social care at Levels 1 and 2. Units R032 and R033 are mandatory with R034 and R035 being optional units.

R032: Principles of Care in Health and Social Care

This unit introduces the fundamental principles that underpin effective care in health and social settings. Topics include the importance of person-centered care, communication skills, safeguarding, and the roles of various professionals. Students learn how to respect individuals' rights and promote their well-being.

R033: Supporting Individuals Through Life Events

This unit focuses on the impact of significant life events on individuals and their families. It covers how to support people during transitions, such as birth, education, employment, and bereavement. Students explore strategies for providing emotional and practical support, recognizing the importance of empathy and understanding in care.

R034: Creative and Therapeutic Activities

In this unit, students examine how creative and therapeutic activities can enhance well-being and aid recovery. They learn about different activities, such as art, music, and drama therapy, and their role in promoting mental and emotional health. The unit emphasizes planning and delivering activities that cater to individual needs.

Unit	Component title	Level	How assessed	% of Qualification
R032	Principles of care in health and social care (Exam)	1/2	Synoptic External (mandatory)	40%
R033	Supporting individuals through life events	1/2	Internal (mandatory)	30%
R034	Creative and Therapeutic activities	1/2	Internal (optional)	30%
R035	Health promotion campaigns	1/2	Internal (optional)	30%

What can the qualification lead to?

- They provide an excellent foundation for progression to Cambridge Technical, A Levels, T Levels, BTEC National Diploma's and Apprenticeships.
- This will help preparation into employment or to move on to higher education by studying a degree (level 4) in aspects of health and social care.

Learners who generally achieve a Level 1 across their Key Stage 4 learning might consider progression to:

- Study at Level 2 post-16 in a range of technical routes designed to lead to work, to progression to employment, apprenticeships or to further study at Level 3.
- Study of health and social care post-16 through a technical certificate. Learners who perform strongly in this qualification compared to their overall performance should strongly consider this progression route as it can lead to employment in health or social care.

**For more information, please contact
Mrs M Morgan at staffmcm@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Music - Technical Award Level 1/2 (Eduqas)

Qualification Overview

The Technical Award in Music has been designed to support learners who, in addition to improving their performance and composition skills, want to learn about the Performing Arts sector and the potential it can offer them for their careers or further study. Further study would provide learners with the opportunity to develop a range of specialist and general skills in music that would support their progression to employment.

Learners specialise in music performance and composition, yet also explore wider performing arts industry practices.

The qualification aims to develop learners' knowledge and understanding of music and the performing arts sector and provide them with opportunities to develop associated practical skills. Skills covered include performing existing works, creating original works and planning commissioned work.

The course consists entirely of coursework. There is no exam. **Please note that the course does involve a significant amount of research and documentation to be produced across the range of tasks.** The three units that make up the qualification focus on applying knowledge, skills and understanding through purposeful tasks which, in unit 3, have many of the characteristics of real industry work.

Overview of Units

Unit 1 – Performing	30% of Qualification	60 Marks
In this unit learners will gain knowledge and understanding of the skills and techniques needed to reproduce and perform an existing piece of professional/published music.		
This can be completed through any of the following disciplines:		
Music (voice or instruments) - Music Technology (computer based music)		
Assessment: learners are required to plan and perform an existing piece of music. They are required to conduct research into their chosen piece and present findings, produce a rehearsal schedule, maintain a reflective journal documenting the process and conduct an evaluation of the performance. This is internally assessed.		

Unit 2 - Creating	30% of Qualification	60 Marks
In this unit learners will gain, develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the skills and techniques needed to create and refine original music composition.		
Assessment: learners are required to create an original music composition to an audience. They will be provided with an assignment brief and required to produce an outline of the components they have considered when creating their piece. They will keep a written log which tracks the development of their ideas. They will then evaluate the success of their creative process and final product. This is internally assessed.		

Music - Technical Award L1/2 (Eduqas) contd.

Unit 3 – Performing Arts in Practice	40% of Qualification	80 Marks
<p>This unit introduces learners to areas of the performing arts that need to be considered when responding to an industry commission. This project requires students to explore different job roles in the industry and plan and pitch a fictional event. They will need to draw on their knowledge of the skills and technique from both Unit 1 and Unit 2.</p> <p>Learners will be required to submit a creative proposal for a commissioned performance. This unit provides learners with a 'real-life' experience of working on events in the performing arts industry.</p>		
<p>Assessment: learners will undertake a series of set tasks that are to be applied to a prescribed context set by the exam board. They will be given a commission to produce a themed performance for a festival. They will create a plan which will include a detailed description of the resources and personnel required, a production schedule and a cost budget. They will consider how their event might be marketed. They will produce a practical example from their proposal. They will pitch their proposal to an audience. Finally, they will evaluate the success of their creative proposal. This is externally assessed.</p>		

Entry Requirements

It is desirable if you are currently receiving, or plan to begin, private lessons on your instrument or voice. The school offers discounted tuition for those taking the Performing Arts Award.

There is no requirement that you are able to read music.

What can this qualification lead to?

Learners who achieve this qualification may wish to consider progression to:

- Study of a vocational qualification at Level 3, which prepares learners to enter employment or apprenticeships, or to move on to higher education by studying a degree in the performing arts or production arts areas.

**For more information, please contact
Mr. P Dalton at staffpd@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

Sport Science (Cambridge Nationals)

The aim of the second option within PE at Saint Aidan's is to offer a suitable alternative to Physical Education GCSE. It offers students an understanding of the science behind sport. Topics studied include:

- Preparing for sports, reducing the risk of injuries
- Fitness testing – planning and delivering your own fitness tests, and learning how that data can be used effectively
- How our bodies provide us with energy and the ability to move, and how exercise can help our bodies become stronger
- How nutrition and a healthy diet impacts performance in sport, creating nutrition plans.

What can the course lead to?

By developing applied knowledge and practical skills, this course will help give you the opportunity to progress on to A Levels, a Cambridge Technical in Sport and Physical Activity, an apprenticeship or university. Sport science has a wealth of opportunities. You could become anything from a personal trainer to a sport therapist or nutritionist.

Assessment

Coursework Assignment Units – 60% towards your overall grade

There are two assignment units, these are:

Unit R181: Applying the principles of training: fitness and how it affects skill performance:

- Components of fitness applied in sport
- Principles of training in sport
- Organising and planning a fitness training programme
- Evaluate own performance in planning and delivery of a fitness training programme

Unit R183: Nutrition and sports performance:

- Nutrients needed for a healthy, balanced nutrition plan
- Applying differing dietary requirements to varying types of sporting activity
- Developing a balanced nutrition plan for a selected sporting activity
- How nutritional behaviours can be managed to improve sports performance

Exam Unit – 40% towards your overall grade (written exam – 1 hour 15 minutes)

Unit R180: Reducing the risk of sports injuries and dealing with common medical conditions:

- Different factors which influence the risk and severity of injury
- Warm up and cool down routines
- Different types and causes of sports injuries
- Reducing risk, treatment and rehabilitation of sports injuries and medical conditions
- Causes, symptoms and treatment of medical conditions

Who is this course for?

This course is for pupils who:

- Have a passion for sport, health and fitness.
- Are willing to commit to extra-curricular sports clubs.
- Want to understand the science behind sport.
- Are highly motivated students inside and outside the classroom

**For more information please contact
Mr J Agar at staffja@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk**

