



St Mary's
Colchester

Subject Information

Art

The Art Department at St Mary's teaches a whole and balanced syllabus across Key Stage Three (Years 7-9), starting with drawing skills, proportion and use of colour, then perspective and design, with all projects based on contextual references demonstrating clear connections with the work of other artists, craftspeople and designers from around the world. Each term we introduce the formal elements such as tone, composition, and form; then we focus on the skill based work such as sculpture, print-making photography and painting.

By the time the students take their options in Year 9 they are ready to develop these skills and explore ideas of their own within the coursework elements. We encourage our students to refine their ideas through an informed use of media in a creative but considerate way of working, documenting each step as evidence for their project, folder, and GCSE.

We encourage good practice, responsibility, independent learning, imaginative ideas, and a personal response to the set topics and themes, which help to prepare the students for the final Set Assignment and the Controlled Exam.

The Art Department introduced photography at GCSE. This option has proved very successful and extends our girls knowledge of technology, design and the highly visual world of the photographic image.

The Department has one of the largest uptakes at GCSE. All girls have an equal opportunity and they are encouraged to continue with Art and Design into Key Stage 4.

We run artist workshops, trips to galleries, exhibitions, and art events throughout the year and encourage all of our students to visit galleries with the ability to interpret and critically evaluate work at any level, including contemporary art practice. We are fortunate to have links with the local community, artists and organisations including Firstsite, Tate Modern and The Fitzwilliam Museum.

The Art Department organise and run regular extra-curricular activities, including an Art's council, Mini Art lectures (given by other teaching staff) and an after school club for our GCSE students.



Classics and Latin

At St Mary's all of our students have the opportunity to discover the legacy of the Classical world. Although rigorous at times, the lessons are fun and aim to encourage the students to think critically about how the Classical world has influenced the modern-day world in terms of language, literature, art and architecture.

Classics at Key Stage 3

All girls follow an Entry Level course in Latin in Years 7 and 8.

Year 7

We introduce Latin in a lively way through the use of the highly regarded 'Cambridge Latin Course'.

Year 8

In Year 8 we continue with the Cambridge Latin Course. At the end of Year 8, the girls sit an Entry Level Latin exam (OCR).

Year 9

In Year 9, the girls are taught in sets; currently there are two Latin sets and one Classical Studies set. The girls who continue Latin are given the opportunity to sit exams for the WJEC Level 1 certificate in Latin and Roman Civilisation. This gives them an excellent foundation should they wish to continue either Latin or Classical Civilisation at GCSE level.

Classical Civilisation at Key Stage 4 (OCR J199 GCSE 9-1)

The Classical Civilisation GCSE Course is enjoyable and rewarding, focusing on the civilisations of Greece and Rome. It is a wide-ranging subject involving the study of literature, art, artefacts, archaeological sites, and the ancient historical context. From women in the ancient world, to the study of religious beliefs and ancient ideas about war, Classical Civilisation involves interesting discussions about issues that still affect us today.

The course has two components:

1. Thematic Study—Women in the Ancient World
2. Literature and Culture—Roman City Life

Latin at Key Stage 4 (WJEC Eduqas GCSE 9-1)

Latin GCSE aims to provide a foundation in linguistic and cultural competence, enabling learners to gain knowledge and understanding of the Roman world through reading and responding to its language and literature.

The course has two components:

1. Latin Language
2. Latin Literature and Sources (Themes)
3. Roman Civilisation

Visits

Year 7 girls visit Lullingstone Roman villa in Kent which they thoroughly enjoy. In the past Classics girls visited Sorrento and Pompeii as joint Italian/Classics visits. We have also made visits to Silchester Roman Town and the British Museum. We try to attend theatre productions of Greek drama; the National Theatre production of Sophocles' 'Antigone' in a joint Classics/Drama department visit, proved very successful. We also encourage girls to enter Classics related competitions.

Beyond GCSE

Several girls go on to study Classics at 'A' Level. We have also had girls go on to study Classics or Archaeology at university level.

"Latin is so much fun!"
(Year 7 pupil)

Duke of Edinburgh

Valued highly by colleges, universities and employers, the DofE Award can provide life-changing experiences, as well as being a LOT of fun! At St Mary's, students from Years 9 to 11 have the opportunity to gain their Bronze and Silver Awards.

Physical, Skill and Volunteering Sections

To complete your DofE Award you must spend an hour per week on an activity from each of the physical, skill and volunteering sections.

You select your own programme of activities; some of which you may already be engaged in, and some of which may be entirely new experiences.

We have had girls improving their musical skills, teaching drama to younger children, learning to decorate cakes, bone collecting, learning woodwork, working in charity shops, sailing, dancing, helping families in need, leading at cubs, gardening, fundraising, reviewing books, lifeguarding, assisting in libraries, cooking meals, exercising greyhounds, visiting the elderly, horse riding, presenting hospital radio, and much, much more...

The Expedition Section

This is the final section of the DofE Award. The part that poses the greatest challenges – and will provide you with memories and stories to last a lifetime!

For your Bronze expedition you will learn how to use a map and compass, pitch a tent, cook on a camping stove, create and follow a route plan and how to pack your rucksack with everything you will need for a weekend expedition. You will then head off with your team to complete two weekend expeditions!

For your Silver expedition you will swap your rucksack for dry bags and after various practices you will set off in canoes with your team for a three-day expedition!

Celebrations

At our annual DofE Awards Evening we celebrate all that has been undertaken and achieved by the girls over the course of the year. Last October we were delighted to present a total of 47 Bronze Awards and 20 Silver Awards.





Drama

There are always exciting activities going on in Drama, both inside and outside the classroom. St Mary's offers opportunities to visit a variety of live theatre performances, the chance to work with outside practitioners as well as getting involved with smaller scale performances and large-scale shows!

Every two years there is a major school production. Beauty and the Beast was a great success! We are already looking forward to our next show!

Drama is taught to Year 7 and Year 9, and a club runs for Year 8. GCSE Drama is a very popular option.

Last year our students achieved 100% pass rate at GCSE. We are so proud of our performers.

The girls have the opportunity to visit the theatre on many occasions. Recently we have seen;

The Woman in Black, Blood Brothers, Wicked, Guys and Dolls, The Thirty Nine Steps, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Jesus Christ Superstar with more trips coming up shortly!

The girls have the chance to

participate in performance festivals at The New Wolsey or the Mercury theatre. These are great opportunities to perform on a professional stage.

English

Examination Results

We pride ourselves on hugely successful examination results. We encourage the students to become independent learners and readers and the department helps them to achieve and to obtain the best results.

Literacy Intervention Sessions

Every half-term, selected students are invited to attend Literacy Booster sessions to help enhance levels of vital reading and writing skills and increase confidence. The department reflects on progress made within these short sessions, with follow up courses being offered as and when appropriate throughout the year.

Revision Sessions

We hold regular revision sessions for Year 11 girls as they approach their GCSE examinations. These take place during lunchtimes and after school.

The Library - Passport to Reading

The English Department works very closely with the Librarian. Girls have a recommended reading list at the end of each term and are also encouraged to participate in our departmental reading scheme, which involves

a silent reading lesson for thirty minutes each week and the opportunity to write book reviews and collect certificates.

English Speaking Board (ESB)

The English department is delighted to be able to offer our students training for the English Speaking Board (ESB) exams. The training will be integrated into the curriculum as it supports and enhances the Speaking and Listening skills taught across all subjects. The courses are designed to encourage pupils to feel confident about forming and expressing their own opinions, giving presentations and speaking in public—skills that will be useful in numerous situations in their future lives. The training and exam experience gives them confidence and enhances their verbal skills to do this effectively.

Book Week/Book Day

We always participate in a range of activities during these times. These have included author visits, readathons, book trees and various writing workshops.

Popular author visits

Authors visit the school regularly. In the past, we have welcomed Melvin Burgess, Cathy Cassidy, Karen McCombie and Fiona

Foden. Anne Cassidy loved discussing her ideas for teenage crime and mysteries with the girls.

The visits are hugely successful - the girls find out what inspires authors to write and consequently then develop their own writing skills in workshops.

Public speaking activities

We successfully run our own annual St Mary's Public Speaking Competition, attended by other local senior schools. Our students also participate in national public speaking competitions such as those held by the Rotary club and Colchester Royal Grammar School. As part of our Enrichment programme, students can also join the Public Speaking Team

Trips and Activities

We aim to complement our curriculum whenever possible by taking the girls on local theatre and cinema trips. Past trips have included taking Years 8 and 9 to see the London theatre production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

Girls also visit the Globe Theatre as a cross-curricular trip with

the Art and History departments and we enjoy using Colchester's Mercury Theatre as a local resource.



SAVE THE RAINFOREST!

Handwritten text on a poster, including a diagram of a person climbing a tree and other notes.

Why Should We Protect RAINFORESTS?

Handwritten text on a poster, including a drawing of a rainforest and a small photograph of a landscape.

WHY P
RA

Partial view of a handwritten poster.



Geography

Throughout Key Stage 3 and 4 the girls are encouraged to always question what is happening in the world around them.

Decision-making is an integral part of our teaching and we recognise it as a tool that the girls will require in all areas of their lives.

Girls in every year group take their study of Geography beyond the classroom and engage in regular fieldwork:

Year 7

Spend the day working with Essex Wildlife Trust Investigating the biodiversity of the school grounds.
Coastal fieldwork at Walton-on-the-Naze.

Year 8

Plan and host their own Climate Change Conference.

Year 9

STEM day focusing on renewable clean energy and water.

Year 10

Coastal fieldwork at Walton-on-the-Naze investigating coastal processes and management techniques.

Ecosystems and biodiversity study in deciduous woodland at the Lower School.

Year 11

A long weekend (e.g. Snowdonia, Shropshire) in order to complete one of the core units of the GCSE course. We spent one day studying the upper course of the river Conwy and another in Llandudno looking at contrasting urban environments.

History

The History Department at St Mary's is committed to encouraging a curiosity and love of learning, which will create an enthusiasm for History that will last a lifetime. Every student is encouraged to think critically and creatively, and we aim to create an environment where everyone is stimulated and challenged. Students are encouraged to make sense of the world they live in by examining the past through thought-provoking, engaging and challenging lessons.

We have a specialist History classroom, which is extremely well-resourced with a wide-range of textbooks, academic history books, general interest books, magazines, historical fiction and digital resources. We provide a wide range of support for students at lunchtime and after-school. Holiday revision sessions are also available but more importantly there is always a teacher or fellow student willing to help whenever it is needed.

We provide a stimulating and relevant curriculum throughout the school, with a consistent focus on the skills of a historian, regular links made with other subjects and the modern world. We have

embedded skills, knowledge and understanding throughout both key stages in order to allow each student to fulfil their potential both in examination achievement and in their wider education.

History is a compulsory subject for all students in Years 7, 8 and 9. The key skills the students need for GCSE, and to engage critically with the world they live in, are embedded from the start of Year 7, and they study a wide range of topics from 1066 to the 21st century, and from local history through to a global context.

History is an option for GCSE, with at least two classes opting to continue their historical studies. We currently follow the OCR Schools History Project syllabus, looking at: Migrants to Britain from c.1250 to the present; The Norman Conquest, 1065–1087; The Making of America, 1783–1900; Living under Nazi Rule, 1933–1945; History Around Us (a site study). This course builds on their work in Key Stage 3 and allows them to further their skills and understanding. There is a particular focus on the key skills of the developing arguments, extended writing and analysing sources.

Beyond the classroom the History Department offers a wide range of trips, in-school workshops and activities. There are regular activities for all Key Stages and in recent years these have ranged from Year 7 having an activity day at Hedingham Castle, Year 9 visiting the battlefields of the First World War, to the GCSE students visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau. We have also had re-enactors coming into the school to lead Tudor, Stuart and World War One days, and GCSE masterclasses led by experienced senior examiners.

As a department, we are passionate about history and we sincerely hope to transmit this to all of our students.



ICT

ICT builds the students' ability to think computationally, and prepares students for real-world computer challenges. Using ICT skills in the classroom will help students cope with the future demand for a higher level of technological knowledge and awareness. As a result this should help to produce a population, which feels comfortable with the new technology and one that can adapt to the rapid progress in this field.

At St Mary's we aim:

- to develop, in all students, confidence and proficiency in the use of ICT in the classroom.
- to develop an awareness of ICT in the context of the wider world.
- to enrich learning and to promote both autonomous study and group work. To encourage problem solving and investigation.
- to provide opportunities for the use of hardware and software at the cutting edge of educational technology.

The girls currently have a 1 hour a week ICT lesson through Years 7-9. They cover a wide range of topics including, the

History of Computer Science, Animation, Hardware, Software, Programming in Python and Scratch, Networks, Binary data, E-Safety and a range of Computational Thinking skills.

Curriculum

In Years 10 and 11 girls have the opportunity to study ICT at GCSE. This course covers both theory and practical elements of ICT. This course develops understanding of technology, its impact upon the world as well as developing useful practical skills.

Digital Leaders

Our Digital Leaders programme allows girls the opportunity to develop skills outside of the curriculum, to support the use and to further the development of ICT in school. The team is assembled upon application and interview, and meet regularly. Students are then given training and support to develop specific areas of ICT expertise. These areas of expertise can be self-determined, or may be a particular request for a specific item of hardware or software.

Food & Nutrition

Food and Nutrition is an exciting and rewarding subject. Students learn how to select a nutritious diet and achieve a healthy lifestyle in line with current government guidelines. At the same time, they acquire skills which enable them to make a wide range of delicious dishes. They also gain an understanding of food safety and hygiene and learn how to prepare, cook and present food: valuable lessons which they will use throughout their lives.

In Years 8 and 9 all students study Food and Nutrition. Students learn a wide range of practical and organisational skills enabling them to produce high quality food products which meet national targets and encourage good health. In Year 8, lessons are focussed on developing skills and good practice in the kitchen and in Year 9 students develop this knowledge to help them with development and production of new dishes and show expanded creativity in their own designs.

In Years 10 and 11 students have the option to study the Eduqas (WJEC) Level 1/2 Technical Award in Hospitality and Catering. This award is equivalent to a GCSE and is graded pass, merit and distinction. The qualification

is 60% internal assessment (coursework) and 40% external assessment (written exam).

The course will cover the following areas

Kitchen safety
Nutrition
Meal planning
Cooking methods
Use of equipment
Job roles
Types of Hospitality and Catering Establishments

As well as the theoretical knowledge, students will undertake practical lessons most weeks which will develop their Catering skills in areas such as knife skills, kitchen hygiene, use of equipment and team work. These lessons will also reinforce the theory lessons as students demonstrate their knowledge of meal planning and nutrition, kitchen hygiene and safety as well as developing team work and problem solving.

There will be a 3 hour practical exam towards the end of the course which involves learners planning and making 2 courses for a chosen target group.



Library

Our newly refurbished Senior School library is available to the whole school community, during term times, offering a range of resources that support the curriculum and independent learning.

The Librarian, Mrs Cassell liaises closely with Heads of Departments to ensure that subjects covered in class are resourced in the Library so that the girls can obtain information to assist with homework and private study. The library is also used as a base for in depth research projects which will help develop study skills.

The fiction stock covers a wide range of both contemporary and classic titles to encourage an enjoyment of reading which is furthered by the “Reading Passport” scheme. The Librarian and the English Department work together to promote the scheme which encourages every girl to read a variety of genres and progress vital literacy and analytical skills. The same close working relationship also helps achieve results in an annual in-house reading completion for the whole of years 7 and 8. The Librarian, as judge, hears all the girls read before the finalists are announced.

There are similar collaborations involving poetry and creative writing competitions. We are involved in the Red House Children’s Book Award (a national annual prize for the best work of fiction for children, awarded by the Federation of Children’s Book Groups) and invite girls from all years to give their opinion on a selection of the eligible books.

Author visits are arranged on a regular basis. The last author to visit us was Penny Joelson who is the author of ‘Girl in the Window’ and ‘I Have No Secrets’. Prior to that we welcomed author and film-maker Matt Dickinson who spoke to Years 7, 8 and 9 about the adventures he has embarked on before giving basic guidance on writing structure.

Girls also enjoy literary themed events such as book sales and quizzes to mark World Book Day and other literary anniversaries.

A book group meets once a week for an active discussion into all aspects of literature and aims to shadow books on the shortlist for several national book awards.

The Library stock includes specialist journals, newspapers

and foreign language magazines. There are also regular in-house displays, which may include short stories and poems written by the girls and a showcase of in-depth projects which have been researched in the Library.

The Librarian also liaises with the teaching staff at the lower school and helps plan joint literary initiatives.

Keep up-to-date with what's going on in the Senior School Library and take a look at our Library Blog on the St Mary's School website. This is written by Mrs Cassell www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/Library-Blog and features recommended reading plus news about upcoming events.

Mathematics

Here at St Mary's, the overall aim of the Maths Department is to encourage pupils to enjoy mathematics and to nurture their confidence in the subject. Students learn to think and communicate mathematically - precisely, logically and creatively. Importantly, they also learn to use their mathematical knowledge and understanding to solve problems outside the classroom.

Lesson time

From Year 7, students are taught in sets. All students study the Edexcel GCSE 9-1 syllabus. All students sit the GCSE mathematics examination in the summer of Year 11. There is no coursework. Students in sets 1 and 2 sit the Edexcel GCSE 9-1 Statistics examination in the summer of Year 10. Students in set 1 also sit the AQA GCSE 9-1 Further Mathematics examination in the summer of Year 11.

We use a wide range of teaching methods and resources ranging from investigation and practical work, to computer and calculator assisted study, as well as teacher-led learning.

appropriate stage.

Every year a number of girls are selected to compete in the Olympiad Competitions.

We run a number of clubs catering for all ages and ability, including chess and cipher clubs.

Summer 2020 GCSE results

Maths: 93% (Grades 9-4/A*-C)

Statistics: 100% (Grades 9-6/A*-B)

Further Maths:

Extra-curricular Maths

Girls in set 1 take part in the Junior and Intermediate Mathematical Challenges at the



Modern Foreign Languages

Learning Modern Foreign Languages is a vital and integral part of the broad and balanced curriculum at St Mary's. Whether it is seen as a stimulating intellectual challenge, a way of developing social skills, or a means of deepening understanding of other cultures, language learning enriches the experience of every student. We are proud of the exceptionally broad choice we offer our students: French, German and Spanish are all taught by specialists.

On joining the school in Year 7, our girls learn French, Spanish and German in their form groups, quickly building basic vocabulary and an understanding of grammatical concepts. From Year 8 they decide which language they want to study and it is taught in sets so that each student develops at an appropriate pace. In Year 9, we start the GCSE course giving us three years to cover the syllabus and prepare for the exam.

Our students all take at least one language at KS4 and are entered for GCSE or FCSE. In Years 9, 10 and 11 girls build on the vocabulary and grammar developed in earlier years. They

become more able to express complex ideas both orally and in writing and study themes in greater depth as well as tackling new topics such as fashion, technology and environmental issues. Our students are entered for the Edexcel GCSE, which uses authentic situations to enable students to see language in context and learn about the culture of the country.

At St Mary's, we are passionate about creating a global ethos throughout the School. We have held the International School Award since 2008 and endeavour to enrich the curriculum with activities that celebrate and embrace students' own as well as other cultural identities. Our international activities have included: links with schools in Ghana, Kenya, Spain, Holland and Germany; performing plays in Spanish, German and French; Fair Trade and salsa workshops, and our annual International Week.

We believe in helping our students gain a global and local outlook; by being well informed about the world we live in, we hope that they feel a sense of commitment to justice, equality and sustainable development.

St Mary's has a lively programme of trips abroad to complement our students' studies. Details vary from year to year, but include visits to or exchanges with schools in France, Spain and Germany. Language-related activities in school include Russian for beginners, foreign language films, penfriends, visits from theatre companies, quizzes, competitions and food tasting. Year 8 girls have Dutch taster lessons to enhance their exchange visit to the William of Orange School in the Netherlands and we also support girls who wish to sit GCSEs in community languages.

Visite à Luxembourg

Cet été, au mois de juin, les élèves de troisième ont voyagé à Luxembourg. C'est une jolie ville où on parle français et allemand! Nous avons voyagé en avion et nous sommes restées dans un hôtel près du centre-ville.

Le matin, on a eu des cours de français et d'allemand dans une école de langues et l'après-midi on a fait des excursions et des visites. Par exemple, on est allé à Treve en Allemagne et Metz en France. Nous allons y retourner en octobre!

Visita a Barcelona

La clase de español ha viajado a Barcelona. Por la mañana, estudiaron en una escuela de idiomas. Por la tarde fueron a practicar nuestro español en la ciudad. Visitaron museos y monumentos pero también fueron de compras

Semana internacional a St Mary's

Durante la semana internacional, vamos a celebrar que somos un instituto internacional con muchas actividades divertidas. Hay un concurso para los años 7, 8 y 9 y otro para los años 10 y 11.

Music

Currently a third of current Senior School students have instrumental lessons.

Choir, Orchestra and Chamber Choir have given public performances each term including: Carol Service/Wassail, Spring Concert and Prize Giving.

In the past four year, girls have taken music exams across a range of examining boards, achieving passes across the entire range from Grade 1 to Grade 8 with Distinction.

In the past six years, students have enjoyed trips to see a number of West End musicals including 'Les Misérables', 'Miss Saigon' and 'Hairspray'.

The Music Department collaborate with our Drama department on a number of showcase productions such as 'The Wizard of Oz,' 'Aladdin' and most recently 'The Sound of Music'.

In Music we follow the Edexcel GCSE syllabus, comprising performing, composing and a listening paper. Students are expected to work independently on their creative ideas and the set works are taught from September.





PE

At St Mary's, we offer a broad and balanced PE curriculum. In Years 7 and 8 girls have lessons in fitness, football, netball, basketball, rugby, volleyball, gymnastics, dance, athletics, tennis, rounders and swimming. In Year 9 we introduce multi-gym.

At Key Stage 4 girls have the opportunity to use many of the local leisure facilities where they can learn new skills through activities such as badminton and squash. We also have a multi-gym, which was provided by the PTA.

GCSE PE

Girls can opt to take PE at GCSE (Eduqas) with students achieving some excellent results.

Clubs and Fixtures

Most of our clubs run at lunchtimes, with a different activity every day. We run clubs in cross-country, basketball, netball, football, gymnastics, dance, rounders, tennis, swimming and athletics. They are open to girls of all abilities. There are also opportunities for GCSE students to try rock climbing and other outdoor pursuits after school.

We enter competitions in most sports for which we run a club.

Competitions and matches are played at all levels so that girls get an opportunity to represent St Mary's or their House.

If girls are interested in playing sport against other schools we have numerous fixtures in a variety of sports, ranging from a friendly level of competition, to District and County competitions. At the end of the year we hold a celebration of the girls successes and achievements at our Sports Awards evening.

PSHEE

Personal, Social, Health,
Economic Education

PSHEE is a subject valued by the students and ensures that they are prepared to make informed decisions at appropriate stages of their lives.

Approaches used in lessons offer the opportunity of in-depth discussions where the students voice their opinions, and are encouraged to listen, value and be sympathetic to the views of others.

Communication, social and life skills are developed to ensure the students leave St Mary's as confident, articulate, mature young ladies, with high self-esteem.

Buddy System

We currently operate a 'Buddy' system at St Mary's to ensure that girls joining the school in Year 7 have the support of a Year 8 student to assist them with the transition from primary to secondary education. The Buddies take their roles seriously and with pride to lend a helping hand, or provide a friendly smile and generally help them to settle in. Buddy work starts in the Summer Term with an initial meeting on New Parents' Afternoon and continues with the

organising of parties at Christmas and Summer BBQs.

Listeners System

Girls in Year 10 and 11 have been elected to support Pastoral Care at St Mary's. They volunteer their breaks and lunchtimes to support girls in whatever way is required.

Outside Speakers

Outside Speakers are welcomed to support the PSHEE curriculum. From Sixth Form providers to the Fire and Rescue Service, we are delighted when they impart their knowledge and experience to our students. Mock interviews to assist with Sixth Form applications and future careers are also offered to Years 8 to 11 through our online programme, Start and an Independent Careers Adviser.

Religious Education

Religious Studies at St Mary's aims to develop students' knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs, as well as their ability to produce well-balanced arguments. It provides opportunities to engage with questions of beliefs and values, and prepares students for adult life in a pluralistic and global community.

In Year 7 students learn how religions began, who were the main founders and prophets of religion, and find out about churches and Holy Books. In Year 8 students look at religions in more depth and in Year 9 this develops further to looking at philosophical and ethical questions in religion.

For the past 16 years, GCSE results in Religious Studies have been outstanding, with a 100% pass rate, and most students achieve grade 7-9.

The Religious Studies department arranges visits to places of religious worship. Recently we visited the Hindu temple at Neasden. This autumn term a group of students studying Religious Studies or History at GCSE will visit Krakow and Auschwitz.



Science

In Science at St Mary's we teach the Edexcel specification. As Science is a compulsory subject, we have two potential pathways: Separate Sciences (often referred to as Triple Science) and Combined Science.

In Combined Science, students will study a broad range of topics within the disciplines of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. At the end of KS4 they sit six exams, two for each discipline. When grades are awarded, students in Science will receive two grades to reflect the two GCSE's that this subject represents. These two grades are effectively a summary of their result across the three Sciences.

Those students that study Separate Sciences are usually students that are either very passionate about Science or exceptionally able. The content within these specifications is much broader with more content and is reflected in the fact that students are awarded a GCSE grade for each of the Sciences. The decision as to which pathway to take forms part of the options process at the end of Year 9 which is when GCSE studies begin.

The Science department is well equipped with four laboratories and excellent resources for a subject that uses practical work to consolidate and cement the learning that happens in the classroom. Homework for students is focused on regular quizzing via Educake, in order to learn key knowledge. Students receive instant feedback with the option to work through content independently.

We are proud to host a suite of enriching Science activities that extend well beyond the scope of the National Curriculum. We host an Annual Science Fair where students from Year 8 present the results of a scientific investigation attended by parents and a guest speaker. Science Week involves activities ranging from practicing suturing and a visit from the Medical Mavericks to forensic workshops and a visit from animal zoos. Visits are usually a prominent part of the Science Department's day to day business with residential trips to the Eden Project, Natural History Museum, New Scientist Live and the National Space Centre. Students also regularly take part in national competitions.

Learning Support

St Mary's endeavours to ensure that through excellent classroom teaching, group intervention and one to one support, every student is equipped with the skills and strategies they need to reach their full potential. We will support them in overcoming any barriers to their learning, enabling them to become happy learners and high achievers.

In the Learning Support Department, we work with our girls to develop a wide range of skills and strategies which are clearly linked to their own individual learning needs, these can vary from Speech, Language and Communication Support, to Reading, Literacy and Numeracy support. Through the process of continuous assessment, each student's progress will be tracked and support will be offered according to each individual student's needs.

Mentoring

The Mentoring programme is designed to support and encourage each student to achieve her full potential in every subject she is studying.

Individual students are offered the support of a mentor on the basis of an analysis of academic monitoring and a discussion

between the Mentoring Co-ordinator, the Director of Senior School, parents, the form tutor, subject teachers and the student herself of her likelihood to benefit from the programme.

The Sew Team (Social and Emotional Wellbeing Team)

This team consists of the school SENCO, The Wellbeing Co-ordinator and the Head of PSHEE. The team meets weekly to discuss improving and maintaining a 'healthy school, happy girls' ethos as well as discussing the progress and provision available to support girls with Social, Emotional and Mental Health issues in school. Again offering a tiered approach to support, through workshops, group Intervention and 1:2:1 sessions if needed. The team can and does liaise with agencies, charities and organisations to offer additional support as and when needed.

Study Skills

The study skills curriculum is by its very nature cross-curricular, with transferable skills and tools. It is designed to support the girls' learning, both in a wide range of subject areas, and at a personal development level, being able to confidently access, interpret and analyse the wealth of information around them.

Essential Learning Skills

Workshop

On the first day at St Mary's the new Year 7s take part in an afternoon workshop focusing on how to be a good learner. This is an introduction to the two years' of timetabled Study Skills lesson that follow in Year 7 and 8, and looks at the evidence for the most effective and efficient learning methods.

Year 7 Study Skills is taught for one hour each week. The programme covers:

- Personal Learning: Goals and aspirations, strengths and weaknesses.
- Learning Tools: Organisation, sketch notes, graphic organisers, understanding command words, planning, revising, target-setting, problem-solving, visual interpretation, analysis of graphs, and interpreting questions.

- Literacy Skills: Homophones, and expanding and extending written work.

Year 8 Study Skills is taught for half an hour each week. The programme covers:

- Personal Learning: Study habits, barriers to learning and solutions, changing habits, motivation, and time management.
- Learning Tools: Remembering, note-making, summarising, graphic organisers, planning, revising and target-setting.
- Additional Skills: Facts and opinions, handwriting, and data handling (collecting, interpreting and presenting).

Textiles

Textiles is a subject our students find hugely enjoyable and which teaches them practical garment designing and making skills.

Textiles is taught from the beginning of Year 7 and all girls become competent on the sewing machine during their first year at St Mary's. During Year 8 the girls use a commercial sewing pattern for the first time, designing and making a pair of pyjamas.

Currently in Year 9 the girls are exploring a variety of decorative techniques, from crazy patchwork, tie dye, machine and hand embroidery, to quilting and beadwork. In the summer term they will be designing and making summer-wear outfits to wear at a music festival! They will look at up-cycling jeans and other garments to produce innovative and original creations, as well as making new garments from scratch to create a complete 'festival look'!

Students are taught design principles of line, form and colour and how to develop and use design briefs with particular reference to quality. The use of ICT, CAD (Computer Aided Design) and CAM (Computer Aided Manufacture) are studied. This all comes together at our biennial Fashion Show!

Textiles Technology (Cambridge International) is a popular option and is concerned with the understanding and use of textiles as a material and the designing and production of textile products from a range of fibres and fabrics.