



**ST EDMUND'S  
SCHOOL**  
CANTERBURY

# **ENTERING YEAR 9 IN SEPTEMBER 2025**





# WELCOME TO YEAR 9

Welcome to Year 9! In Year 9 (Lower Fifth) pupils will have the chance to grow into enthusiastic and creative learners, confident in their abilities, and keen to experiment and work with others. It is a vital transition year in which the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed at GCSE are put into place. The curriculum in Lower Fifth is designed to be a rich diet which engages pupils in the broadest range of subjects possible yet prepares the ground for GCSE study by exploring concepts in detail. Much of the curriculum is compulsory. It is arranged in this way to prepare for GCSE choices and to provide learners with a truly enriching experience. Separate courses in Art and Design, Music and Drama give full expression to pupils' creative skills as well as providing a firm grounding in the techniques needed in later years. Lessons in Computer Science ensure that pupils develop technological prowess. Lessons in Religious Studies, Outdoor Education and Physical Education complete a rich and varied programme of study.

Most pupils will continue with their study of any two of French, Spanish and/or Latin. Trips and special events add an extra dimension to classroom learning and are carefully integrated into the school year.



*"We believe if pupils feel happy, secure and supported at school they will naturally benefit from our outstanding educational opportunities and enjoy the wealth of stimulating extra-curricular activities on offer."*

*Edward Lee*

# YEAR 9 (Lower Fifth) TIMELINE

## **NOVEMBER 2024:**

Year 9 Entry Information Evening

## **JUNE 2025:**

Year 9 Transition morning (for pupils)

Year 9 Transition Evening (for parents)

## **MICHAELMAS TERM**

October: MidYis testing, internal school tests followed by set changes where needed.

December: Parents' Evening

## **LENT TERM**

February: Pupil presentation for GCSE choices

Parents' Curriculum Evening for GCSE choices

March: Return of GCSE Options Form

## **SUMMER TERM**

In June: End of Year exams, followed by set changes where appropriate

June: Outdoor Education Week



# YEAR 9 (Lower Fifth) CURRICULUM

## SUBJECT

## LESSONS PER FORTNIGHT (55/60 MINS)

Art and Design	2
Computer Science	2
Design and Technology	2
English	8
Games	4
Geography	4
History	4
Mathematics	7
Physical Education	2
Outdoor Education	2
PSHEE	2
Religious Studies	3
Science:	
Biology	3
Chemistry	3
Physics	3

## OPTIONAL

French	3
Spanish	3
Latin	3
EAL	3
Drama	3
Music	3
Explore Maths	3
Living English	3



# The Year 9 Curriculum

All courses run for the whole academic year



# ART & DESIGN

The Lower Fifth Art course is designed to stimulate visual awareness. It enables pupils of varying artistic abilities to experience, and enjoy using, a variety of media, to observe, analyse and develop ideas and to express themselves in visual terms. Pupils are offered the opportunity to experiment with a wide range of materials and processes, including ceramics, printmaking, drawing and painting, sculpture, photography, textiles and through the department's multimedia computers. Pupils are encouraged to look at different examples of Art and Design, responding to the work of artists and designers through their own work.

Pupils work in three different areas over the course of the year. The experiences offered in each of these areas are based on mini GCSE-style projects to give pupils an insight into the options they have in Middle and Upper Fifth. Sketchbooks are used to record and develop ideas and research artists' work.

## **2D Art**

Using the theme Colour and Pattern pupils explore drawing, painting and

mixed media approaches to a variety of natural and manmade starting points

This may include some digital photography to record and develop ideas. Pupils research, explore and develop ideas in their sketchbook, leading to a final piece in their choice of media.

## **Ceramics**

The theme Natural Form is used as a starting point for individual projects. Pupils use sketchbooks to research, record and develop ideas which are translated into three dimensions using clay. There is an emphasis on form, colour and pattern in natural objects.

## **New Media**

Pupils are introduced to the work of a range of artists and designers. They respond in two and three dimensions using traditional as well as unconventional media and processes to develop creative and independent ideas and outcomes, whilst learning new techniques. Preps take the form of sketchbook work as well as some inventive three dimensional pieces.

Lower Fifth pupils are encouraged to attend art clinics after school to extend their class work.





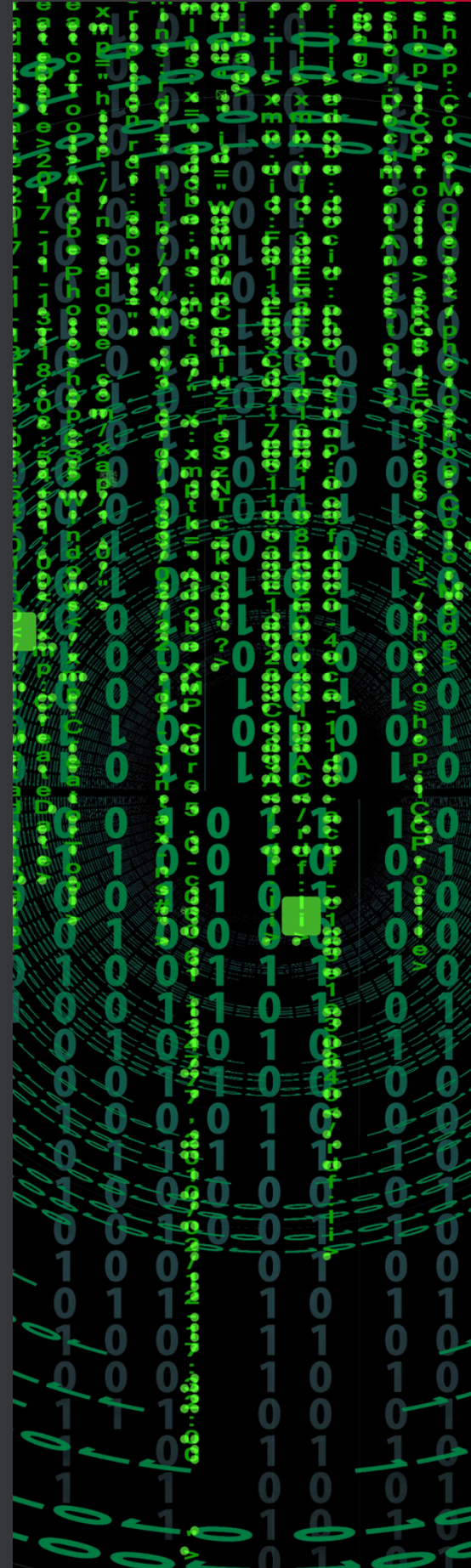
# COMPUTER SCIENCE

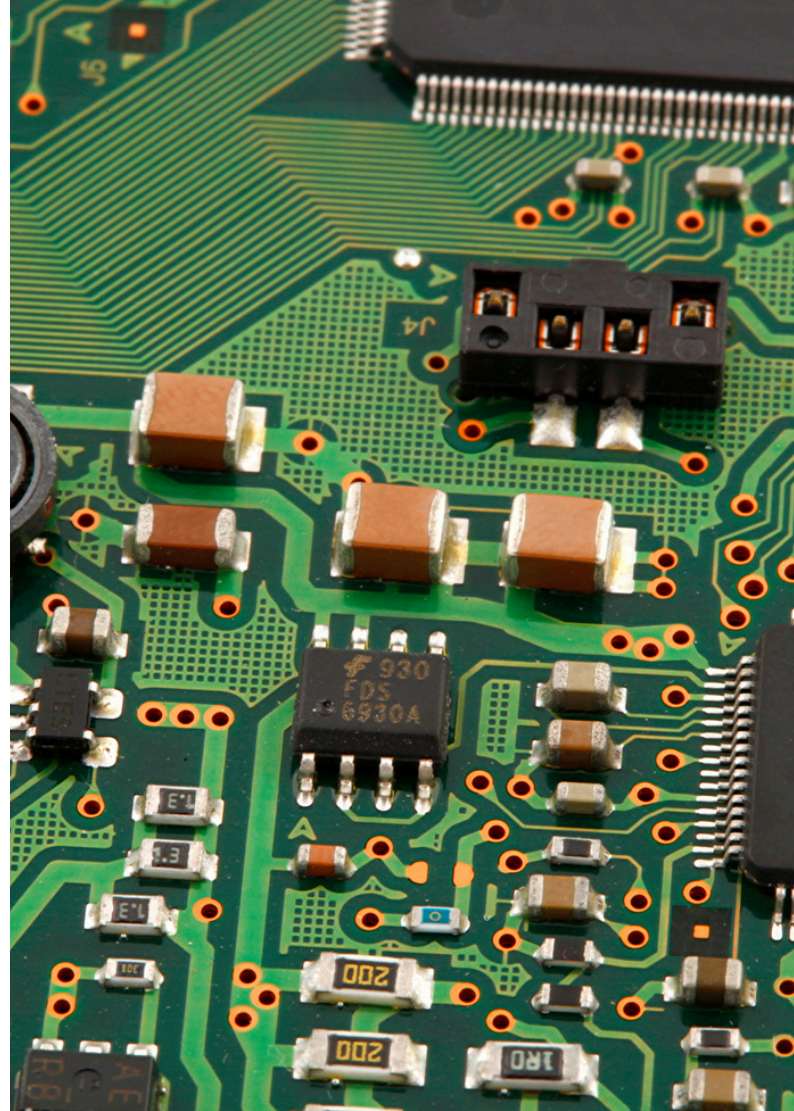
Computer technologies are everywhere; from the way we communicate, to the cars we drive; the movies we watch; and the ways businesses and governments deal with us. The demand to make hardware smaller, work faster, and provide access to new and exciting software has never been greater. Understanding the different dimensions of computing is part of the necessary skill set for life in the 21st century.

Computing in Lower Fifth provides students with the opportunity to develop and extend capability, creativity and knowledge in the Information Technology, Digital Media and Computer Science disciplines at sufficient depth to progress to GCSE level.

Students develop and apply a wide range of transferable skills deemed essential for any career path option. These include ICT competence, computational thinking and problem-solving; collaborative working and leadership; numeracy; and research and design techniques.

In addition, this course cultivates and maintains a crucial understanding of how changes in technology affect safety, including new ways to protect their online privacy and identity, and how to identify and report a range of concerns.





# DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

Designing and making is the most powerful way that we solve problems, express ideas and shape our world. What and how we make defines who we are, and communicates who we want to be. For many people, making is critical for survival. For others, it is a chosen vocation: a way of thinking, inventing and innovating. For some it is simply a delight to be able to shape a material or combine ingredients and say “I made that.”

The Lower Fifth course builds on pupils’ previous knowledge and enables a deeper understanding of the design process. All of the subject areas share the common themes of designing and making, and foster skills in all the practical aspects of the subject. Pupils undertake a variety of projects and work to produce products that are fit for purpose, taking into account the needs and wants of different user groups of people.



# DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

## **Product Design**

In Product Design schemes of work are designed to encourage pupils to be able to design and make products with creativity and originality using a range of materials and techniques. Packaging, labelling and instructions are encouraged as part of the complete design proposal and advertising, points of sale, etc. can be used to supplement the making experience and help create products which can be evaluated for their commercial viability.

Pupils will develop an understanding of the iterative design process and an appreciation for the history of design. Pupils will develop their knowledge regarding the working characteristics of a range of materials such as wood, metal, plastics and textiles. Practical skills are developed through various manufacturing activities such as sublimation printing, the use of smart materials, 3D printing and traditional workshop skills. Focus is also given to advertising, product branding and marketing techniques.

## **Food Preparation and Nutrition**

With the increase in popularity for all things culinary, St Edmund's are pleased to give our students the opportunity to take their cookery lessons to another level, ignite creativity and inspire in 'all things food', using a variety of presentation skills to deliver a mixture of modern and traditional cuisine. This course enables pupils to cook for a range of different occasions and a number of people.

Pupils learn how to cook from scratch, how to work safely in a kitchen environment and how to produce stunning and creative dishes such as Indian spiced dhal with rice, lamb koftas with pomegranate, salmon with a mustard and dill crust and a menu of sumptuous desserts. Awards for 'Chef of the Week' are hotly contested during this challenging course.

# ENGLISH

The English department provides an exciting and challenging course at Lower Fifth level. Pupils are introduced to the origins and development of English and English literature through the close study of grammar, work on etymology and the reading of non-fiction excerpts and passages extracted from Homer, Virgil, Beowulf, Milton, Spenser and Chaucer, as well as Shelley, Poe, Dickens and, of course, Shakespeare. The department aims to facilitate high quality creative and factual writing; to improve accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar; to promote enjoyment and judgment in reading and to develop good speaking and listening habits in all pupils.

English offers more than the basic minimum required by the National Curriculum, providing for both Junior School Form 8 and external entrants. Each pupil is encouraged to read widely and the Librarian regularly updates pupils on new fiction. Books to supplement the regular class readers can be acquired through departmental resources, via the Library or through the Accelerated Reader programme, to which the school subscribes.

The department considers the teaching of basic writing skills as essential, not only for progress towards GCSE, but also to provide a secure foundation for writing across all subjects. Written work, including spelling, punctuation and grammar, is assessed frequently and pupils' understanding and skills evaluated through half-termly formal assessments. Throughout the year there are chances to write imaginatively and argumentatively, analytically and persuasively. In addition to improving accuracy, pupils are encouraged to consider how they express themselves so that style and technique are developed and honed.

Speaking and listening skills are practised through reading, debating, group discussion and presentation. Extra-curricular opportunities are provided for public speaking and participation is encouraged in prize-essay and poetry competitions.

Any pupil with difficulties in English is identified early by our Head of Learning Enhancement. Overseas pupils are helped in small groups by the EAL Department.



# GEOGRAPHY

Geography is all around us, every day and everywhere. We aim to develop an understanding of the world we live in and to prepare our pupils to be good global citizens, aware of the demands of sustainability for the benefit of all those on the planet. Geography at this level has a primary aim to foster a life-long interest in the subject. One of our key objectives is teaching pupils how to learn - inquiry, problem solving and thinking skills activities often form the basis of classroom learning.

During the Lower Fifth we investigate how the planet influences people and how we are, in turn, having a dramatic influence on the planet. Throughout the course, pupils develop and improve a wide range of transferable skills, including drawing and interpreting maps, drawing sketches, diagrams and graphs, interpreting photographs and satellite images, developing GIS skills as well as refining powers of analysis and the ability to express thoughts and ideas in clear and detailed writing. These will, we hope, prove valuable for other subjects, particularly Science, History and Mathematics.

The course currently covers a range of human and physical units including The Future of Food, Ecosystems, The Truth About Development and Natural Hazards. In the summer term we begin an introduction to GCSE, starting with a unit on Coasts. Fieldwork includes a woodland ecosystem investigation, as well as a day at the coast to explore elements of the GCSE specification. We keep our studies relevant and we incorporate current issues into our teaching wherever possible.



# HISTORY

The History Department provides pupils with the opportunity to study a range of different types of History as well as introducing them to the skills necessary for GCSE success. We build on the knowledge and skills the pupils arrive with and create a learning environment which encourages development of a natural inquisitiveness for History.

We begin the Lower Fifth year with a wide-ranging investigation into the concept of Empire. Following an overarching view of empires throughout history, we focus on the British Empire, studying what allowed it to expand so rapidly in the 18th and 19th centuries and what its legacy is today. The second half of the year focuses on the First and Second World Wars. The pupils look at the causes of both conflicts as well as the nature of the fighting.

Many opportunities are given for pupils to develop independent skills of research; they are exposed to a range of sources which feeds directly into developing the pupils' analytical skills as well as essay writing. This introduction to important GCSE skills provides a clear awareness of the demands of study at this level.





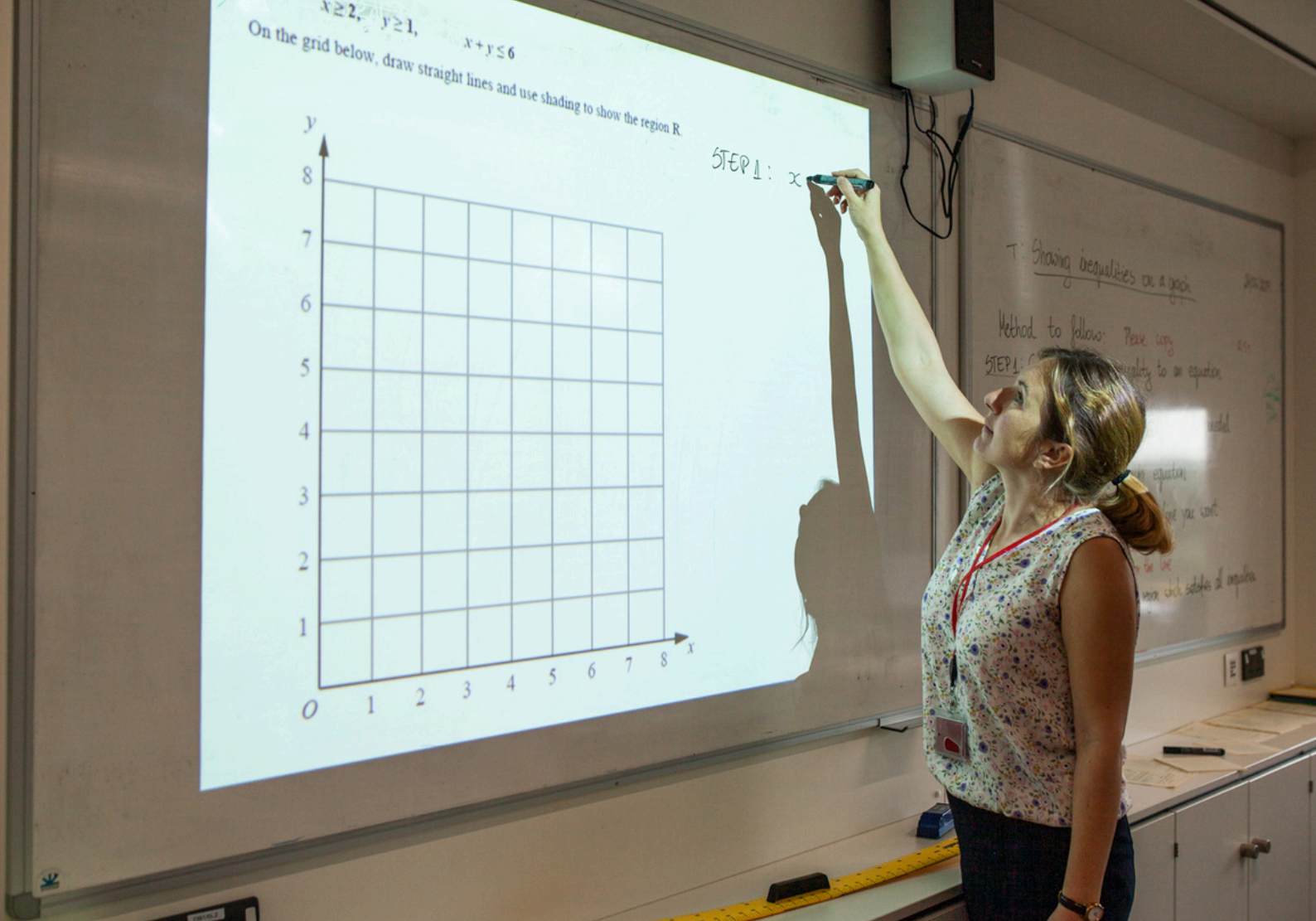
# MATHEMATICS

Some people love learning and exploring Mathematics whilst others find it intimidating and daunting. Whatever your aptitude may be we will help to guide you through this compulsory subject and build upon your level, enhancing upon your understanding and improving your confidence. Even if a career in mathematics or a related field is not your intention, confidence with numbers is a real bonus in everyday life as well as at work. And for those with a keen interest in the subject, we will thoroughly prepare you for advanced study.

Pupils are taught in sets to ensure that work is covered at a speed with which they will feel comfortable. Higher sets move along quickly and create time for extension work to stimulate interest in the subject and to provide students with the strongest possible foundation for further study. Lower sets move more cautiously, allowing ideas and concepts to become fully grasped before moving forwards. The placement of individuals into ability sets is continually reviewed so that every pupil has the greatest opportunity to realise his or her full potential.

The Lower Fifth course covers topics under five broad headings:

- Using and Applying Mathematics: choosing appropriate mathematical techniques to solve everyday problems
- Number: developing knowledge of decimals, fractions, percentages, ratios, negative numbers, standard form, accuracy and rounding
- Algebra: using algebraic ideas in the investigation of number patterns, graphs
- Shape, Space and Measure: looking at fundamental shapes and solids such as triangles, quadrilaterals, cones and spheres; symmetries and angle properties
- Data Handling: collecting, analysing and interpreting numerical information, together with work on probability.



# OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Pupils have two lessons of Outdoor Education per fortnight. During the summer term, there is a week off timetable which is devoted to the Outdoor Education Programme. During this week, many Lower Fifth pupils achieve their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards

'Outdoor Education' is a wide-ranging range of activities, including recognised sports with an adventurous component, such as canoeing, climbing, hill walking, orienteering or sailing; outdoor leisure pursuits, such as camping or hill walking; outdoor activities purposely designed for their educational/learning impact, such as fieldwork, forest schools, trails, bushcraft, initiative challenges and rope courses; and the use of the outdoors as a learning or experiential environment for both cognitive and non-cognitive development. Such experiences may occur on or close to a school or centre site, at a distance from that site or during a residential or expedition experience.

Outdoor education is primarily an approach to teaching and learning through these and other similar activities and through broader experiences in the outdoors. The best outcomes are achieved when outdoor learning is designed as a frequent and progressive activity relating to broader learning that links to everyday experiences in a classroom and to real-life experiences beyond<sup>18</sup>

The common thread is the focus on positive outcomes in personal and social development. However, it must not be forgotten that the experiences are in themselves hugely memorable and, more often than not, great 'fun', having merit as experiences in their own right. This guide focuses on the delivery of high quality outdoor learning – what it looks like and how to achieve it. It recognises that outdoor learning takes place, not only in the formal education sector and through outdoor providers, but equally in youth services and voluntary youth organisations, as well as in a wide range of outdoor activity clubs that cater for young people, and in peer and family group



# PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND GAMES

Pupils have one lesson of P.E. and one Games afternoon per week. Facilities include many games pitches, a sports hall, a gym, tennis courts, Astroturf pitch, squash courts, and a heated outdoor swimming pool.

The Lower Fifth programme not only builds on the pupils' previous sporting achievements but introduces them to new sports, providing a foundation for those wishing to follow the OCR Cambridge National course in Sports Science in Middle and Upper Fifth (Years 10 and 11).

There are opportunities to represent House and School in many sports. Many pupils over the years have represented both District and County at this age level and every encouragement is given to talented pupils to gain representative honours. Expert guidance is given by the staff of the Physical Education Department, and by members of staff who are qualified coaches.

There are opportunities to participate in the following sports:

**Athletics**  
**Dance**  
**Indoor Rowing**  
**Tennis**  
**Badminton**

**Fitness**  
**Netball**  
**Trampolining**  
**Basketball**  
**Football**

**Rounders**  
**Touch Rugby**  
**Cricket**  
**Handball**  
**Squash**

**Cross-country**  
**Hockey**  
**Swimming**





# PSHEE

*(Personal, social, health & economic education)*

The PSHEE programme looks in depth at how we organise our lives and our society, and how we approach the social and moral issues which affect us all. It is an arena in which teenagers can explore, debate, talk freely, and learn from the experience of others, as well as from informed adults. Issues covered include drugs, alcohol use and abuse, smoking, sex and healthy relationships, sexuality, parenthood, boundaries, morality, decision-making, respect for others, conflict management, bullying and cyber-bullying, food and diet, sleep, stress management, revision techniques, careers and the future.

A vital part of the PSHEE syllabus is to equip our pupils with the knowledge that they need to deal with the increasingly complex world in which we live, and to ensure that they are able to make informed choices. Many of the issues we discuss are topics on which young people have strongly held opinions. The opportunity to express their own opinions and hear the ideas of others in a supportive and safe environment is a vital part of our pupils' emotional and moral development. PSHEE is timetabled for two periods a fortnight in the Lower Fifth.

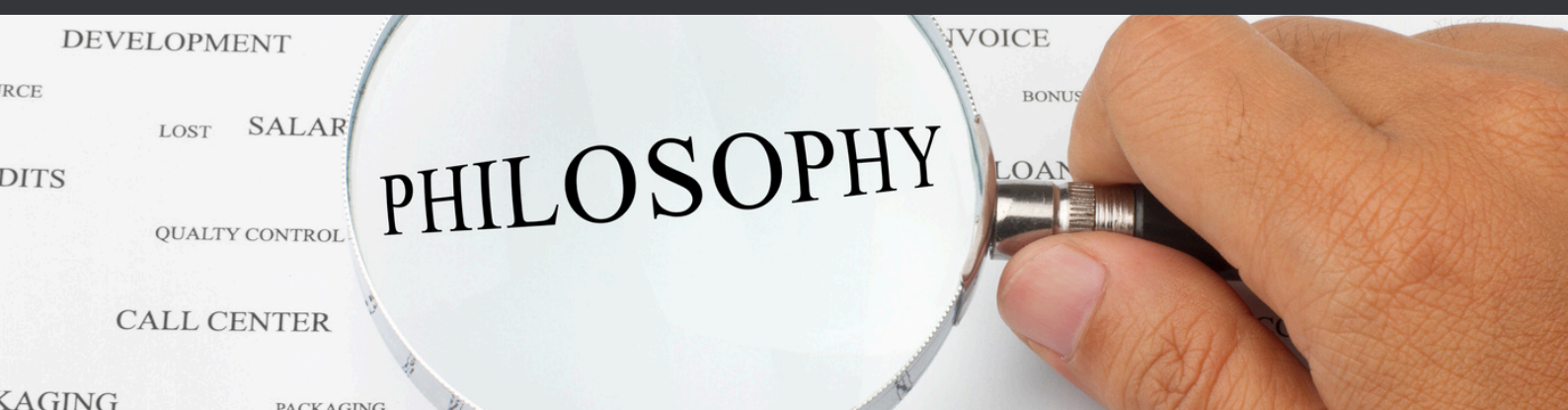


# RELIGIOUS STUDIES & PHILOSOPHY

In the Lower Fifth we start by introducing the six major world religions through narratives, with stories from Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These stories allow pupils to explore, compare and contrast characteristic themes and belief systems from both Eastern and Western traditions. In the Lent Term pupils study morality: how we learn it and what it means to be 'good'. During the final term pupils have the opportunity to enter the national Spirited Arts Competition before focusing on an independent research project which explores the life and work of a particular individual who, influenced by their beliefs, has changed the world.

In all that we study we attempt to understand how religious belief can affect and shape our behaviour through participation in a 'Community of Enquiry'. Within this 'Community' pupils are encouraged to develop not only critical and analytical skills but also the ability to formulate ideas at a philosophical and abstract level.

Building on this aim, we run a Philosophy course as part of the Religious Studies curriculum. All pupils in Lower Fifth have one hour a fortnight when they learn about the development of ideas through a chronological study of notable philosophers. Starting with the Greeks and Romans, followed by Mediaeval and Enlightenment thinkers, we finish with 21st century philosophers. The course provides an overview and a taste of philosophy. One of the main aims is to encourage pupils to creatively build on each other's ideas in order to achieve a higher level of understanding and to practise problem-solving at an abstract level.





# SCIENCE

All pupils have three periods per fortnight each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics, in well-equipped laboratories.

Our objectives during the Lower Fifth are to:

- Complete the teaching of the programme of study for Key Stage 3 of the National Curriculum, using the AQA Key Stage 3 Scheme of work  
Give pupils a broad experience of practical, investigative Science  
Lay the foundation for the GCSE Science qualifications
- Ensure that new pupils entering St Edmund's at Lower Fifth have, by the end of the year, the same scientific knowledge as pupils who have progressed through our own Junior School
- Ensure that all pupils, whatever their ability, have the scientific knowledge to make informed decisions about scientific issues that will affect them in later life.



# SCIENCE

## **Biology**

The course provides a solid foundation on which pupils can build for success in the Middle and Upper Fifth. The work encourages pupils to develop an enthusiasm and respect for the living world and 'things biological' whilst developing a scientific approach to practical work, problem-solving and new situations. Topics covered during the year include: breathing, gas exchange, smoking, alcohol and drugs, diet and digestion, respiration and photosynthesis, evolution and genetics.

## **Chemistry**

This is a largely experimental subject although some time is also spent on more theoretical ideas, such as atomic structure and kinetic theory. Pupils are introduced to the periodic table and electrolysis - they study the reactivity series, the extraction of metals, acids, bases and neutralisation, and they investigate a wide variety of chemical reactions. We make the work relevant to the modern world, and subjects like industrial processes, the finite nature of resources and pollution (both causes and remedies) are included in the course.

## **Physics**

The course is based largely upon practical work; it introduces topics that will be covered in more detail in the GCSE course. Pupils start by studying forces and their effects and energy and power; then they investigate magnetism and the properties of waves through examples of sound waves, light and other electromagnetic waves, laying a firm basis in preparation for the GCSE course.



# OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

With GCSEs on the horizon, we feel that pupils in Year 9 benefit from the opportunity to specialise earlier and that this allows for greater progress and higher attainment.

Most pupils in Year 9 continue to study at least one language. Pupils then choose another two optional subjects from this list\*:

- Drama
- Music
- French
- Spanish
- Latin
- Explore Maths
- Living English

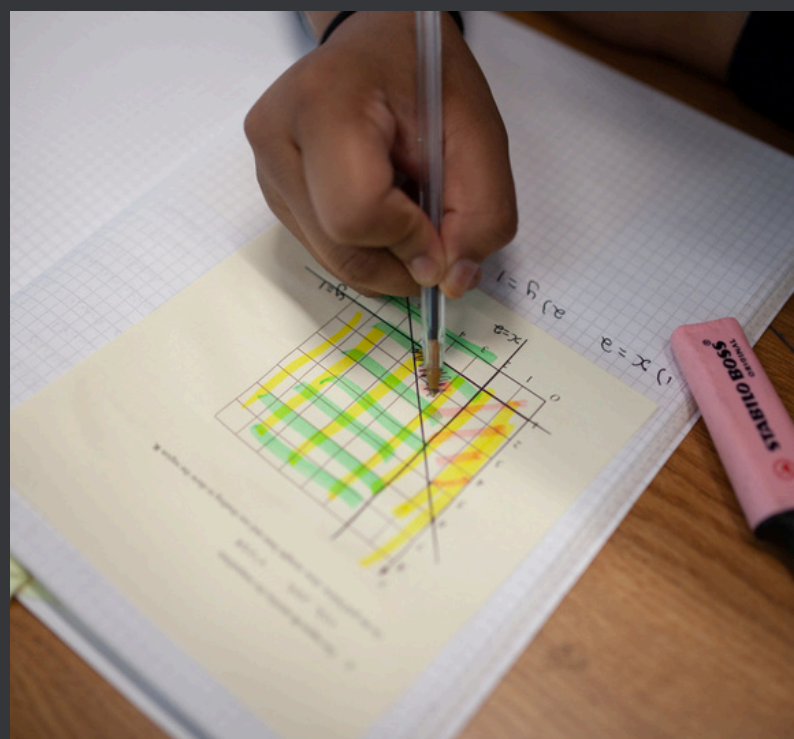
\*It is not possible to choose the same subject twice.

Each optional subject is taught for three hours per fortnight.

The option Choices form is [here](#):

Please do not worry if the choice present a problem, It is quite common, for example, for some pupils to want to study Latin, Spanish, Drama and Music. We accommodate this by running Spanish 'off timetable' during lunchtime per week. This has worked extremely successfully in recent years. If your son or daughter wishes to study more subjects, please indicate this within the 'Comments' section of the form and we will make the necessary arrangements.

If you have any questions or queries about this, please email me at [aeb@stedmunds.org.uk](mailto:aeb@stedmunds.org.uk)



# DRAMA

This course inspires pupils to develop a set of fundamental dramatic skills that will enable them to progress to study the subject at GCSE level. Lessons introduce pupils to key skills and techniques that range from storytelling, use of improvisation and working with scripts to basic stagecraft. Furthermore, pupils learn about a wide range of general topics which are studied from a dramatic perspective.

The work done in the Lower Fifth year provides a range of opportunities for pupils to express themselves, as well as aiding the development of imagination and artistic awareness. It increases and improves social interaction through group work and the use of role-play and helps pupils develop their mental agility, fluency of speech, knowledge, self-discipline and self-confidence.

Through the study of dramatic techniques and the use of different texts originating from a variety of social, cultural and historical contexts, the course also helps our young people learn about the wider world and mature emotionally, preparing them for adult life. The benefits not only accrue through pupils participating actively in drama; they can also learn from observing others, particularly when encouraged to evaluate peers' work constructively.





# LANGUAGES

Languages are part of the cultural richness of the world in which we live; the ability to understand and communicate in another language is a lifelong skill for education, employment and leisure. The Languages Department enables pupils to continue their previous study of French, Spanish and Latin. The aim is to enable pupils to acquire good linguistic skills whilst also making language learning an enjoyable experience. All three languages may subsequently be taken to GCSE and A-Level.

Lower Fifth pupils usually study two languages. Occasionally, pupils opt for one or fewer languages. For example, non-native speakers may study English as an Additional Language and, for those pupils for whom it is appropriate, time may be allocated in the Learning Enhancement Department.

## **French and Spanish**

The Lower Fifth courses are dynamic, vibrant and exciting, providing a sound grammatical base whilst placing lots of emphasis on building vocabulary and gaining the confidence to speak the language and build the foundations for GCSE. All courses include up-to-date content, reflecting contemporary issues and developing cultural awareness through media and current affairs. Dedicated online resources provide a variety of interactive comprehension tasks as well as grammar exercises with instant feedback. Teaching methods strive to stimulate pupils' curiosity, interest and enjoyment of language learning, whilst keeping communication at the heart of the learning experience. Both courses prepare pupils for the GCSE specifications of the AQA examining board.





# MUSIC

The Lower Fifth course looks at music from a broad range of cultures and traditions, and focuses on the three main skills of performing, listening and appraising, and composing. The course logically follows on from the first two years of Key Stage 3 and provides an ideal platform for those wishing to take the subject to GCSE and beyond, as well as providing a practical and enjoyable course of study for everyone.

The content of the course covers all styles and genres of music with performance, improvisation, composition and Music Technology being at the centre of class work. Topics include a revision of musical elements, forms and structures and an overview of music from 1600 to the present day.

All Lower Fifth lessons are taught in the Music School with state of the art facilities. Pupils use Yamaha keyboards and specialist music software, including Sibelius 7, Logic and Garageband, as well as percussion, ethnic and non-western instruments.





# EXPLORE MATHS

Explore Maths encourages curiosity, problem-solving, and real-world applications of mathematical concepts. Through hands-on activities, collaborative projects, and inquiry-based learning, students develop critical thinking, creativity, and confidence in maths.

Topics include decorating a room, patterns and sequences, geometry in art and design, data analysis in everyday life, personal finance and problem-solving using algebra. Activities might include investigating Fibonacci sequences in nature, exploring symmetry in architecture, or analysing sports statistics. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of topics, integrates STEM learning, and connects maths to everyday life, preparing students for academic success and future careers.



# LIVING ENGLISH

Living English guides pupils through key aspects of the human experience, offering a journey of self-discovery and reflection. The course begins with Self, exploring personal identity and perspective, before delving into broader themes such as Choices, Conflict, Freedom, Beauty, and Being Together.

Through this thematic approach, pupils will read, respond to, and be inspired by a diverse range of texts. These include autobiographies that delve into personal journeys, thought-provoking teen fiction that captures the challenges of adolescence, powerful writings on war and conflict, and the literature of freedom and civil rights that addresses humanity's fight for justice and equality.





# ST EDMUND'S SCHOOL CANTERBURY

