



St. Matthew's
Roman Catholic High School
VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

SMRCHS Options 2026



We Pray • We Care • We Achieve

**Supporting you to make the
right choice for the future**

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SMRCHS Options 2026: Introduction



This booklet has been designed to help you think about what future pathway you may wish to take in your final two years at St Matthew's. This will be the first real chance for you to make some choices about what you want to study. You may feel under pressure to make the right decisions or worry about making the wrong ones. Don't worry - you will be offered lots of help to make these decisions.

We believe that the curriculum you follow in years 10 and 11 is incredibly important in supporting you to follow the most appropriate pathway when you leave St. Matthew's. You will receive specific guidance with regards to the curriculum you follow and within this guidance there will be some choices that you will be able to make.

Making these decisions can seem very daunting but pupils of your age in almost all schools have to make the same kind of decisions so you are not on your own. Before you make your choices, discuss them with your parents or carers, your friends, your teachers, our careers advisor - or anyone who knows you well and whose advice you can trust. You should get as much advice and guidance as you can before you decide - but the choices you make will be yours in the end.

We expect all of our students to study an appropriate range of subjects to allow them to achieve a good range of qualifications.

Both Xaverian and Loreto Sixth Form Colleges require students to have six GCSE passes (two of which must be Grade 6 or above), for any student wishing to start on the three or four A Level route. Please consider this carefully.

SMRCHS Options 2026: Introduction

How do you decide what to choose?

Your choices should be:

Relevant...

The courses you choose should help you towards your chosen educational or careers pathway.

Enjoyable...

You are much more likely to be successful in a course that you enjoy.

Achievable...

It is always good to aim high but there is no point in choosing a course which will be too difficult for you.

Your choices should help you to be as successful as possible when you leave us. The main aim of Years 10 and 11 is that you leave with the best qualifications possible which allow you to continue your chosen education and career pathway in the future.

How do you begin?

The best place to start is by thinking about yourself. Think about the things you enjoy and are good at doing.

Think about how your chosen subjects go together

Are they very similar? Remember that at the moment you have lots of different subjects and different activities in a school week. Will you be doing the 'same thing' all week? Some subjects share similar themes or have a lot in common. Would this suit you or not?

If they are too similar you will not be able to choose them, as we want you to have a good balance of subjects.

What if I don't yet know what career path I wish to follow?

Don't worry – it's alright not to know what career path you want to follow. Make sure that your choices will bring you success and that there will be some flexibility when you finish Year 11.

Do not choose all your subjects from the same 'subject family' because this closes off other pathways. It is much better to choose a variety of subjects, which leave a few different pathways to follow. If you need any extra advice and would like to chat to our careers advisor then speak to your form tutor who can arrange a meeting for you.

At St. Matthew's, we aim to provide a broad, balanced education for all of our students.

SMRCHS Options 2026: Introduction

How can I find out more about a course?

Reading this booklet is a good starting point but you will want more detail about what a course is like – particularly if it is a subject that you have not studied before. Speak to a teacher who teaches that subject but you can also speak to older pupils who are taking that course themselves. Ask them what it is really like! There is also a lot of information on the various examination board websites.

Will I definitely be able to study all my choices?

Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that you will be given all of your choices. Once all pupils have made their choices, we organise them into three blocks. This means that certain combinations of subjects do not work because they are taught at the same time and you cannot be in two places at once.

Finally...

Make sure that you read all the subject pages carefully and try to get a better understanding of what each subject involves. Think about the three subjects you want most but also about a 'reserve' choice in case your combination of subjects proves impossible.

Some GOOD reasons for choosing a course...

- You enjoy it and you think you will do well.
- It goes well with your other choices
- You are thinking of studying the course post-16.
- It will give you useful skills for the future.
- It helps you towards what you want to do for a career.

Some BAD reasons for choosing a course...

- You think it sounds easy.
- You think that you won't have to work hard.
- Your friends have all chosen it.
- You like the teacher who teaches it (you may have a different teacher next year).

SMRCHS Options 2026: Introduction

Year 9 Option Choices

All students in years 10 and 11 will study all the core subjects.

Core Subjects:

- GCSE RE
- GCSE English Language and English Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Science (Combined Science unless you choose Triple Science as an option)
- Core PE (this does not lead to a qualification)
- PSHE (this does not lead to a qualification)

Please note:

To ensure that all students have a strong academic base to their curriculum, students must choose at least **one** of the following subjects:

- GCSE History
- GCSE Geography
- GCSE French
- GCSE German
- GCSE Spanish

This is the full list of subjects that you can choose from:

- GCSE Art and Design
- GCSE Computer Science
- GCSE Drama
- GCSE French
- GCSE German
- GCSE Spanish
- GCSE Geography
- GCSE History
- GCSE Photography
- GCSE Music
- GCSE Triple Science
- BTEC Tech Award Creative Media
- BTEC Tech Award Digital IT
- BTEC Tech Award Enterprise
- BTEC Tech Award Fashion & Textiles
- BTEC Tech Award Health & Social Care
- BTEC Tech Award Music Practice
- Cambridge National in Sports Studies
- WJEC Level 2 Hospitality & Catering

*Please note it is possible that not all of these courses will run. If a course is not available once all students have made their choices, you will be informed and asked to choose another subject.

SMRCHS Options 2026: Core Curriculum

GCSE Religious Studies

Course Outline

All pupils will study for a GCSE in Religious Studies in Key Stage 4. The specification followed is GCSE 9-1 Edexcel Specification A.

Pupils will sit 3 examination papers at the end of year 11. There is no coursework component for this GCSE.

Pupils will study the following units over the course of two years:

Paper 1: Catholic Christianity

Duration: 1 hour 45minutes

Topics:

Unit 1: Catholic Beliefs

Unit 2: Catholic Practices

Unit 3: Sources of Wisdom and Authority

Unit 4: Forms of Expression

Paper 2: Judaism

Duration: 50 minutes

Topics:

Unit 1: Jewish Beliefs

Unit 2: Jewish Practices

Paper 3: Philosophy and Ethics

Duration: 50 minutes

Topics:

Unit 1: Arguments for the Existence of God

Unit 2: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

Question Format

- (a) Outline/State three
(3 marks)
- (b) Explain 2 reasons
(4 marks)
- (c) Explain 2 reasons with SOWA
(5 marks)
- (d) “Statement”, Evaluate this statement, giving arguments for and against
(12 marks)

You will answer a set of (a), (b), (c) and (d) questions on each unit of each paper.

Assessment

Pupils will be assessed in the following ways:

In Class Assessments

You will complete a series of checkpoints and end of topics assessment throughout each unit

Pre-Public Examinations

Autumn and spring terms in year 11

GCSE Examination: Summer 2027

You will complete weekly tasks on the online platform Seneca which uses a variety of different techniques to aid revision

SMRCHS Options 2026: Core Curriculum

GCSE English Language and English Literature (AQA)

During the course of Key Stage 4, each student works towards achieving two GCSEs in English – Language and Literature. Both Language and Literature GCSEs will be studied across Year 10 and 11 with exams taking place at the end of Year 11. Both English Language and Literature are exam based with no coursework options.

GCSE English Language (AQA)

Our GCSE English Language course and qualification offers students a stimulating learning experience in which to develop skills and understanding, along with their passion for the English language. Students will have the opportunity to study critical reading and comprehension as well as written and spoken language.

The Course

Component 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes / 50% of the qualification

SECTION A: Reading: One literature fiction text

SECTION B: Writing: Descriptive or narrative writing

Component 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives

Written examination: 1 hour and 45 minutes / 50% of the qualification

SECTION A: Reading: One non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text

SECTION B: Writing: Writing to present a viewpoint

GCSE English Literature (AQA)

Our GCSE in English Literature encourages learners to develop knowledge and skills in reading, writing and critical thinking. The qualification provides learners with opportunities to read widely for pleasure across a range of high quality texts in the genres of prose, poetry and drama and to develop an understanding of how literature is both rich and influential. It enables learners to make connections across their reading and develop a clear understanding of literary works and also prepares them for the study of literature at a higher level.

The Course

Component 1: Shakespeare and The 19th Century Novel

Written examination: 1 hour 45 minutes / 40% of qualification

SECTION A: Students will answer one question on a Shakespeare play which is '**Macbeth**'. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the play and then to write about the play as a whole.

SECTION B: Students will answer one question on a 19th Century novel which will be '**A Christmas Carol**'. They will be required to write in detail about an extract from the novel and then to write about the novel as a whole.

Component: 2 Modern Texts and Poetry

Written examination: 2 hours and 15 minutes / 60% of the qualification

SECTION A: Students will answer one essay question from a choice of two on the modern prose or drama text they have studied, which is '**An Inspector Calls**'.

SECTION B: Students will answer one comparative question on one named poem on the paper and one other poem from an AQA poetry cluster section of the poetry anthology.

SECTION C: Students will answer one question on one unseen poem and one question comparing this with a second unseen poem.

These courses are very demanding and will require a lot of effort and excellent attendance to ensure success. Your English teacher will be on hand to give you advice and support but you must be prepared for the hard work that lies ahead!

SMRCHS Options 2026: Core Curriculum

Mathematics GCSE (Edexcel)

Duration of course: 2 years

Course type: GCSE

Overview

All students will follow the GCSE Mathematics course. Groups will be split into Higher and Foundation Tier groups based on ability. It is expected that around 35% of students will sit the Higher Tier exam – these students will be placed in sets 1 or 2. Movement between different tiers is possible, and decisions on tier of entry will be made based upon the mathematical strengths and weaknesses of each individual student.

Assessment Method and Component Percentages

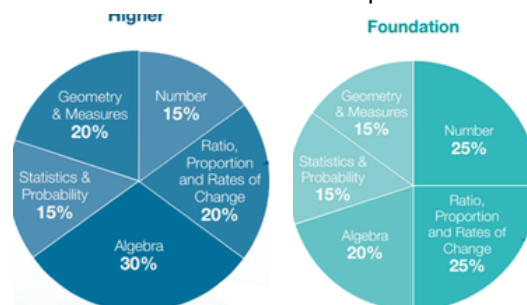
- 100% examination
- 3 written papers at GCSE (all 1hr 30 minutes long, 80 marks per paper, 1 non-calculator and 2 calculator papers).
- Students are required to have their own scientific calculators – preferably Casio Fx85-GT.

Students will be assessed each half term against GCSE questions on the topics that they have learnt to date. At Higher Tier, grades 4 – 9 are available. At Foundation Tier, grades 1 - 5 are available. Students not achieving the lowest grade on their paper will achieve a grade U (ungraded).

A 'Strong Pass' is now classified as a Grade 5 (this is of a higher standard than the previous good pass, grade C). Although it is possible to gain entry to 6th form or college with a grade 4, many further education courses (including universities) require a grade 5, therefore all students gaining below a grade 4 will be required to resit, and any gaining a grade 4 are encouraged to resit to achieve a grade 5.

What will I learn?

The Mathematics GCSE is split into 5 strands:



- Students will build upon and extend their knowledge from Key Stage 3.
- The ability to 'problem solve' is assessed at both Higher and Foundation Tier.

How will I learn?

You will learn mathematics through a combination of investigations, exploration and practice of the subject, in a similar way to KS3, but with far higher demands placed on the student.

Departmental Expectations

- All students come to lessons with an open mind and 'can-do' attitude towards mathematics.
- All students bring their own equipment – a pen, pencil, ruler, protractor, compass and calculator.
- All students complete a minimum of 40 minutes of private study, SPARX homework per week, this increases to 1 hour in year 11.

Career Potential

There are many potential careers which are rooted in mathematics. These include, but are not limited to – Computer Science, Game Theory, Accountancy, Investments & Finance, Medicine, Engineering and Teaching.

Future Progression

A Level Mathematics (Grade 7+ required), Further Mathematics (Grade 8+ required) or Core Mathematics (Grade 5+ required). A Level Physics, Biology, Chemistry and Computer Science also require students to achieve at least a Grade 6 in GCSE mathematics.

Contact: Director of Maths: Mr Walker
r.walker@smrchs.com

SMRCHS Options 2026: Core Curriculum

Science GCSE (AQA)

GCSE Science

The Key Stage 4 course presents Science as a set of ideas about the material world. It involves investigating, observing, experimenting or testing out ideas and thinking about them.

The way scientific ideas flow through the course will support students in building a deep understanding of science. This will involve discussing reading and writing about science plus studying a series of required practical tasks that will be examined as part of the terminal assessment of the course. Students will need to display a consistent, high quality approach to learning in order to attain a secure grasp of key ideas and information. They will be supported throughout the course by a wide range of helpful resources such as our Science YouTube channel (SMRCHS Science) which is full of clips to support and extend students learning beyond the classroom and weekly online Educake assessments to track progress which are completed at home.

Most pupils in years 10 and 11 will study AQA Trilogy Combined Science. This will provide pupils with two GCSEs at the end of year 11. The content of the course is split equally between Biology, Chemistry and Physics with required practicals embedded into each discipline. There are 16 required practical experiments that will be completed during the course and could feature on the examination.

Assessment

AQA GCSE Trilogy (Combined Science)
2 GCSEs

Biology

Paper 1: 1hr 15 mins (70 marks)

Paper 2: 1hr 15 mins (70 marks)

Chemistry

Paper 1: 1hr 15 mins (70 marks)

Paper 2: 1hr 15 mins (70 marks)

Physics

Paper 1: 1hr 15 mins (70 marks)

Paper 2: 1hr 15 mins (70 marks)

Total marks available = 420

Grade boundaries set by AQA after exams have been taken.



Separate Science Option

This course offers students three GCSE qualifications, one in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Due to the demanding nature of the course, pupils wishing to take Separate Science will complete a short assessment. Separate Science has an increased curriculum content and is therefore taught at a greater depth, mathematical demand and extended scientific reasoning than Combined Science. The aim is to ensure pupils are placed on the course where they are most likely to succeed and enjoy science, with teacher judgement also taken into account when making final decisions.

Separate Science GCSEs provide a deeper insight into each subject area. Pupils will learn about the solar system, how the eye works, how monoclonal antibodies are used and what nanoparticles are. Separate Science GCSEs may be of interest to pupils who have an active interest in science and those who aspire to study science at a higher level in the future.

Separate Science Assessment

Pupils will be expected to sit six examinations in total, divided into paper 1 and paper 2 for each subject area.

The duration of the exams will be 1 hour 45 minutes. There will be required practical experiments that pupils must complete. Some of these will be assessed during the examinations.

Assessment

AQA GCSE (Separate Science)
3 separate GCSEs

Biology

Paper 1: 1hr 45 mins (100 marks)

Paper 2: 1hr 45 mins (100 marks)

Chemistry

Paper 1: 1hr 45 mins (100 marks)

Paper 2: 1hr 45 mins (100 marks)

Physics

Paper 1: 1hr 45 mins (100 marks)

Paper 2: 1hr 45 mins (100 marks)

Total marks available = 600

Grade boundaries set by AQA after exams have been taken.

SMRCHS Options 2026: Core Curriculum

Core PE / Games



Full St Matthew's PE Kit is required for all Core PE lessons

The main aim of Physical Education at Key Stage 4 is participation, enjoyment and social interaction whilst gaining a sound understanding of the benefits of leading an active lifestyle and developing their physical abilities.

During Year 10 pupils will continue to cover the national curriculum activities with a focus on their organisation, participation, and leadership within the sports.

In Year 11 pupils choose activities that they would like to participate in on a half term basis. Within these activities they have an increased responsibility to lead and organise the sessions/games so that they run effectively developing further their sports leadership skills and independence to be physically active.

All pupils must change into their school PE kit for their lessons and have appropriate footwear i.e. trainers or artificial grass/firm ground football boots for use on the 3G. If injured, pupils should still bring their kit to change into with a written note from a parent or carer and they will be given an alternative role within the lesson such as officiating or coaching so that they are still actively involved.



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GCSE Geography (AQA)

“The skills, knowledge and understanding gained in Geography make students some of the most favoured by employers!”

Geographical Association

Geography is the study of places and relationships between people and their environments. Geographers explore the physical properties of the Earth's surface and the human societies spread across it. What could be more important for the future? As part of the GCSE, you will have the opportunity to undertake two fieldwork enquiries in two contrasting locations.

St Matthew's students completing fieldwork



Tectonic Hazards is part of the GCSE course!



Topics studied in year 10 and year 11 include:

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment

1 hour 30 minute examination
(35% of the qualification)
88 marks

- Section A- The challenge of natural hazards
- Section B- The living world
- Section C- Physical landscapes in The UK

Paper 2: Challenges of the human environment

1 hour 30 minute examination
(35% of the qualification)
88 marks

- Section A- Urban issues and challenges
- Section B- The changing economic world
- Section C- The challenge of resource management

Paper 3: Geographical applications

1 hour 30 minute examination
(30% of the qualification)
76 marks

- Section A- Issue evaluation
- Section B- Fieldwork

SMRCHS Options 2026

GCSE History (Edexcel)

The aim of GCSE History is to give you the opportunity to study a wide range of British and international history. You will investigate some of the most intriguing questions the past has to offer: Why was the Black Death so deadly? Did the Elizabethans change England forever? Who was responsible for the Cold War? How did Hitler rise to power?

History is far more than 'lots of writing', we explore the work of historians, develop arguments, analyse sources from the past and explain why things happen.

Topics studied include:

- **Medicine in Britain, c1250 to the present day**
- **Elizabethan England, c1558-1588**
- **Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941-91**
- **Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1919-1939**

Examinations

Paper 1:

Medicine in Britain

30% of the GCSE

Paper 2:

Elizabethan England and the Cold War

40% of the GCSE

Paper 3:

Weimar and Nazi Germany

30% of the GCSE

HISTORY DEPARTMENT:
Mrs McKechnie, Miss Quigley,
Miss Higgins and Mr Collins

GCSE History is a subject which is favoured by the top colleges, universities and employers in the country. It opens up careers in law, journalism, film and television, education and much more.



Modern Foreign Languages (AQA)

Why should I choose a Language?

Extracts from House of Lords debate:

- 80% of English exporters are unable to conduct business in a foreign language.
- 77% British exporters believe they lose business because they can't speak other languages.
- Exporters who use language skills achieve on average 45% more sales.
- More than 30% UK business want people specifically for their language skills.
- Research suggests the UK is missing out on contracts worth up to £21 billion a year because of the lack of language skills in the workforce.
- Modern linguists earn more than graduates from any other discipline except medics, architects and pharmacologists.



Languages are becoming increasingly essential not only in the work place but throughout all employment sectors. Many companies in and around Manchester are owned by or are in partnership with other European firms.

It is now common for U.K. citizens to take jobs in other European countries and the advantage of knowledge of a foreign language and culture - or simply the ability to cope with the situations of everyday life in the language - is very important.

With more and more people taking breaks abroad nowadays, some basic knowledge of a foreign language is not only useful but often adds to the enjoyment of the stay in that country.

What is more, to have studied a foreign language to this level is evidence of trying to broaden your horizons, and is seen as a sign of an excellent all-round education. The skills learned during the course are transferable and will impact positively on other subject areas. Once you have learned one language, acquisition of another in later life is easier.

Languages are important qualifications in many career areas...

Here are just some of the careers where a language qualification will prove to be a huge advantage:

- Law
- Hotel & Catering
- Import/Export
- Software Development
- Ship Broking
- Interpreting
- Fashion
- IT Support
- Airlines
- Media
- Translating
- Computer
- Games
- Commerce
- Banking
- Primary Education
- Customs & Excise
- Civil Service
- Teaching
- Tourism

Modern Foreign Languages (AQA)

Colleges and universities also like to see evidence of having achieved a qualification in a modern foreign language. Students with a foreign language qualification are immediately at an advantage when applying for jobs and university places.

Choosing a Language

You can choose to study a GCSE full course in French or Spanish. You must have studied the language at KS3 to opt for the subject.

French and Spanish

A two year course is offered which leads to GCSE. You will study all the following four aspects of the languages to develop what you did at Key Stage 3.

Students study all of the following themes on which the assessments are based.

Theme 1: People and Lifestyle

Theme 2: Popular Culture

Theme 3: Communication and the World Around Us



Speaking

Conversation in the language is practised, as in years 7, 8 and 9, in pairs, and in groups. The exam takes the form of a role play, a reading aloud task and unprepared conversation and a photo card discussion.

Listening

You will work on this skill by listening to the teacher, audio clips, video clips and online resources. The exam consists of comprehension questions in English and dictation sentences in the target language.

Reading

There is plenty of reading material to widen your understanding and to help you cope with everyday situations. There will also be extracts from literary texts. The exam consists of pupils responding in English to comprehension texts in French and Spanish.

Writing

Pupils will write short messages, short passages, translated from English to French / Spanish, structured writing tasks and an open-ended writing task (Higher candidates) and a short grammar task.

To summarise the GCSE exam consists of:

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

SMRCHS Options 2026

GCSE Art, Craft and Design (AQA)

This title promotes learning across a variety of experiences and through various processes, tools, techniques, materials and resources to generate different kinds of evidence of working and outcomes. Emphasis is on an increased breadth of approach commensurate in demand with the other titles.

The context of practice, rather than the breadth of activities and/or range of media employed, determines whether a student's work can be described as art-based, craft-based and/or design-based.

Component 1: Portfolio

What is assessed?

A portfolio that in total shows explicit coverage of the four assessment objectives. It must include a sustained project evidencing the journey from initial engagement to the realisation of intentions and a selection of further work undertaken during the student's course of study.

How it is assessed:

- No time limit
- 96 marks
- 60% of the GCSE

Non-exam assessment (NEA) set and marked by the school/college and moderated by AQA during a visit. Moderation will normally take place in June.



Component 2: Externally set assignment

What is assessed?

Students respond to their chosen starting point from an externally set assignment paper relating to their subject title, evidencing coverage of all four assessment objectives.

How it is assessed:

- Preparatory period followed by 10 hours of supervised time
- 96 marks
- 40% of GCSE

Non-exam assessment (NEA) set by AQA; marked by the school/college and moderated by AQA during a visit. Moderation will normally take place in June.

SMRCHS Options 2026

GCSE Computer Science (OCR)

“Computer Science is engaging and practical, encouraging creativity and problem solving. It encourages students to develop their understanding and application of the core concepts in computer science. Students also analyse problems in computational terms and devise creative solutions by designing, writing, testing and evaluating programs.”

Computer technology continues to advance rapidly and the way that technology is consumed has been changing at a fast pace over recent years. The growth in the use of mobile devices and web-related technologies has exploded, resulting in new challenges for employers and employees. For example, businesses today require an ever-increasing number of technologically aware individuals. This is even more so in the gaming, mobile and web related industries and this specification has been designed with this in mind.

Students studying this course will learn at least two of the following programming languages:

- C#
- Java
- Pascal/Delphi
- Python
- VB.Net

In addition, they will:

- Learn how to create simple computer games.
- Gain an understanding of the fundamental concepts around creating software applications.
- Have opportunities to work collaboratively.

Computer Systems

Aim: Understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of Computer Science, including abstraction, decomposition, logic, algorithms, and data representation

Assessment: Externally Assessed, 90 minutes exam in year 11 worth 50% of the total qualification

Systems architecture, memory and storage, computer networks, connections and protocols, network security, systems software and ethical, legal, cultural and environmental.

Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programing

Aim: Analyse problems in computational terms through practical experience of solving such problems, including designing, writing and debugging programs

Assessment: Externally Assessed, 90 minutes exam in year 11 worth 50% of the total qualification

Algorithms, programming fundamentals, producing robust programs, Boolean logic, programming languages and integrated and development environments

Where can this qualification lead to?

Learners will gain a range of practical skills in IT and explore some of the following occupational areas and focus on the system life cycle to design, create, test and evaluate a solution to an IT problem.

Learners will underpin this with fundamental knowledge and understanding of IT including:

- IT Systems
- Hardware
- Software
- Networks
- Securing IT systems
- Data and Information
- Emerging Technologies

Successful pupils on this course are:

***Maths Lovers *Problem Solvers *Logical Thinkers *Positive *Puzzle Lovers *Imaginative *Resilient *Ambitious *Analytical *Self Motivated *Independent *Engaged**

SMRCHS Options 2026

GCSE Drama (WJEC/Eduqas)

The GCSE Drama specification is designed to give you a broad and balanced experience of Drama. You will be given the opportunity to develop not only your performance skills but also your design skills in areas such as:

- **Lighting Design**
- **Sound Design**
- **Set Design**
- **Costume, Hair and Make-Up Design**

You will collaborate in devising your own piece of theatre and perform in a performance from a text. You can choose to concentrate on acting or design.

You will explore a range of texts and view a variety of live theatre productions.

The Eduqas GCSE Drama specification has three components:
Devising Theatre, Performing from a Text, and Interpreting Theatre.

Component 1: Devising Theatre **40% of the GCSE**

You will participate in the creation, development and performance of a piece of devised theatre. You will produce:

- A written portfolio showing how ideas were developed throughout the devising process.
- A performance lasting between 5-16 minutes.
- An evaluation of the final performance.

Teacher assessed, and externally moderated

Component 2: Performing from a Text **20% of the GCSE**

You will perform from a range of texts published before 2000.

You can choose to be assessed on acting or design.

You will produce:

- A group performance lasting between 5-14 minutes using extracts from your chosen play.

Externally assessed by a visiting examiner

Component 3: Interpreting Theatre **40% of the GCSE**

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes. You will answer:

- Section A: Set Text - A series of questions based on the set text 'An Inspector Calls', J. B. Priestley.
- Section B: Live Theatre Review – One question from a choice of two, analysing and evaluating a given aspect of a live theatre production seen during the course.

Externally assessed examination



V. O'Brien (Head of Department) / J. Ackers
Qualification Accreditation Number: 601/8420/6

SMRCHS Options 2026

GCSE Music (AQA)

What will you study?

Component 1: Understanding Music

What is assessed?

Listening and Contextual Understanding

How is it assessed?

- Exam paper with listening exercises and written questions using excerpts of music
- This component is worth 40% of GCSE marks (96 marks)

Component 2: Performing Music

What is assessed?

Music Performance

How is it assessed?

- As an instrumentalist and/ or vocalist and/or via technology
- Performance 1: Solo performance (36 marks)
- Performance 2: Ensemble performance (36 marks)
- A minimum of four minutes of performance in total is required, of which a minimum of one minute must be the ensemble performance
- This component is 30% of GCSE marks (72 marks)

Component 3: Composing Music

What is assessed?

Composition

How is it assessed?

- You must compose two pieces of music, internally marked and verified externally
- A minimum of three minutes of music in total is required
- This component is 30% of GCSE marks (72 marks)

Who should take the course?

Anybody with an interest in music!

If you play, sing, or compose your own music there is something in this course for you!

The study of music allows the new generation of young people to excel more on creative thinking, problem solving and perceiving life positively.



SMRCHS Options 2026

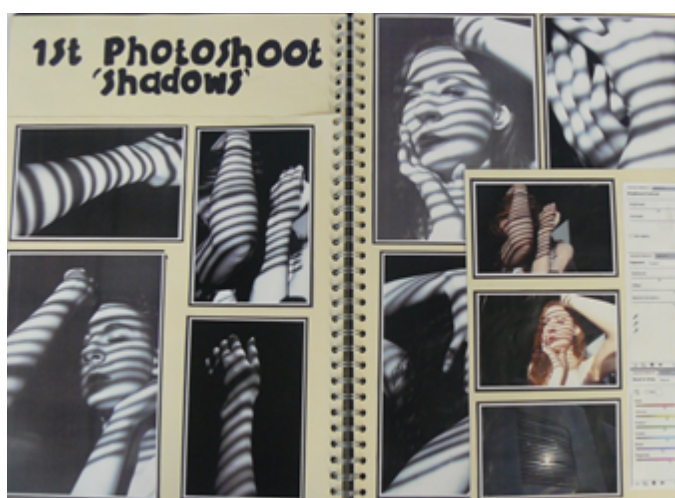
GCSE Photography (AQA)

Photography is defined here as the practice of producing images using light-sensitive materials such as photographic film, or digital methods of development and production to create static or moving images.

Areas of study

In Component 1 and Component 2 students are required to work in one or more area(s) of photography, such as those listed below:

- Portraiture
- Location photography
- Studio photography
- Experimental imagery
- Installation
- Documentary photography
- Photo-journalism
- Moving image: film, video and animation
- Fashion photography



Component 1: Portfolio

What is assessed?

A portfolio that in total shows explicit coverage of the four assessment objectives. It must include a sustained project evidencing the journey from initial engagement to the realisation of intentions and a selection of further work undertaken during the student's course of study.

How it is assessed:

- No time limit
- 96 marks
- 60% of the GCSE

Non-exam assessment (NEA) set and marked by the school/college and moderated by AQA during a visit. Moderation will normally take place in June.

Component 2: Externally set assignment

What is assessed?

Students respond to their chosen starting point from an externally set assignment paper relating to their subject title, evidencing coverage of all four assessment objectives.

How it is assessed:

- Preparatory period followed by 10 hours of supervised time
- 96 marks
- 40% of GCSE

Non-exam assessment (NEA) set by AQA; marked by the school/college and moderated by AQA during a visit. Moderation will normally take place in June.

SMRCHS Options 2026

BTEC Tech Award in Creative Media Production

The Creative Media Production Sector

The skills developed through an education in creative media are integral to many roles within the creative sector, which is a collection of exciting and vibrant industries including film, television, games, web and app development and publishing. As digital technology continues to evolve, media techniques have become more sophisticated and media products are becoming more advanced. However, what has not changed is that media products still have the power to enthrall, intrigue and affect audiences. Collectively, the creative sector in the UK contributed nearly £112 billion to the economy in 2019 and has grown by 7.4% since 2017, a rate of growth five times that of the overall UK economy.

What does the qualification cover?

The qualification is the same size and level as a GCSE. It is aimed at those who may be interested in pursuing a career in creative media production. The qualification helps you to explore the sector by undertaking practical media projects.

This course is comprised of three components:

Component 1: Exploring Media Products

- Aim: To know how and why media products are created to appeal to their target audiences.
- Investigate products in the audio / moving image sector, publishing and interactive products.
- Assessment: Internally assessed, externally moderated.

Assignments = 30% of the total qualification

Component 2: Developing Media Production Skills

- Aim: To learn how to edit still and moving images using Adobe Photoshop and Premiere.
- To create a digital portfolio of media work showing off a range of diverse skills.
- Assessment: Internally assessed, externally moderated.

Assignments = 30% of the total qualification

Component 3: Create a Media Product in Response to a Brief

- Aim: To respond to the brief issued by the exam board and make a media product that fulfils their requirements through 3 tasks - research, planning and making the media product.
- Assessment: Scenario based external assessment where students demonstrate their knowledge and skills to make a final outcome. This component is completed in a 10-12 week period at the end of year 11.

**Exam = 40% of the total qualification
Assessed externally**

Where will this take me?

When you have completed the qualification you will have developed a practical understanding of creative media production skills. You will have acquired knowledge and developed useful skills, which are not generally covered in GCSE courses. This will give you a better idea of whether the creative media sector is for you and, if so, which part of it you might want to study further. After you have finished the course you may want to go on to further study, such as A Levels, BTECs or a mixture of both. You will find that many of the ideas covered here are further developed in qualifications such as BTEC Nationals in Creative Digital Media Production, Art and Design, and Information Technology.

Alternatively, you might want to find work in the creative media sector as an apprentice or as a trainee. The best option for you will depend on the grades you achieve in this qualification and in any other qualifications you have taken, what you enjoy doing and the advice you can access about further learning and training opportunities available in your area.

Where can I find out more?

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-tech-awards/creative-mediaproduction.html>



SMRCHS Options 2026

BTEC Tech Award in Digital Information Technology Level 2

“This qualification is aimed at learners wishing to gain valuable thinking and programming skills that are extremely attractive in the modern workplace.”

Digital IT is engaging and practical, encouraging creativity and problem solving. It encourages students to develop their understanding and application of the core concepts in computer science.

Students also analyse problems in computational terms and devise creative solutions by designing, writing, testing and evaluating programs.

Component 1: User interface Design

- Aim: How to project plan the design and development of a user interface
- Assessment: Internally assessed

Assignments worth 30% of the total qualification

You will explore user interfaces, discover how to develop and review them, and investigate how to use project planning techniques.

Component 2: Planning and Interpreting Data

- Aim: Process & interpret data and draw conclusions (Spreadsheet/Databases)
- Assessment: Internally assessed

Assignments worth 30% of the total qualification

You will learn how data impacts various factors. You will develop a data dashboard, which helps draw intelligent conclusions.

Component 3: Digital Working Practices

- Aim: Explore how organisations use digital systems and the wider implications associated with their use.
- Assessment: Scenario based external assessment where students demonstrate their knowledge to propose digital solutions to realistic situations worth 40% of qualification.

Exam = 40% of the total qualification

You will explore how modern IT is evolving. Understand what cyber security is and how to safeguard against it. Consider legal and ethical issues in data and information sharing.

Where can this qualification lead to?

Pupils can continue on to further computing related vocational and academic qualifications at A Level or BTEC. As well as apprenticeships and traineeships... Pupils will also gain skills that they can transfer into other subject areas or life in general.

Successful pupils on this course are...

- Creative
- Hardworking
- Logical
- Curious
- Imaginative
- Analytical
- Problem Solvers
- Resilient
- Independent
- Positive
- Ambitious
- Engaged

For more information contact
Mr Walton-Whitelock:
a.walton-whitelock@smrchs.com

SMRCHS Options 2026

BTEC Level 2 Tech Award in Enterprise

This qualification allows pupils to explore what it means to set up and run a business enterprise, as well as develop key skills and insight into this sector.

All businesses need enterprising employees to drive their organisations forward, to have ideas and initiatives to instigate growth, and to ensure that businesses survive in this fast-changing world. Enterprise is a key government focus and is set to form an important part of the UK's global economic status, both now and in the future.

Enterprise skills provide a fantastic progression pathway into a number of roles in an organisation and are transferable into all businesses.

This L2 Tech Award is a demanding qualification in that the vast majority of learning is brand new terms and concepts, and you are required to think in ways you may not have before. Strong English language skills are required due to the written Controlled Assessments and a good mathematical ability to support the examined element which includes the requirement to work with an enterprise's financial information.

The course has two internally assessed components and one that is externally assessed.

Component 1: **Exploring Enterprises**

Examining different enterprises to develop knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of enterprises and the skills needed by entrepreneurs.

Internally Assessed

Component 2: **Planning and Presenting a Micro Enterprise Idea**

Selecting an enterprise idea to plan, pitch and run. Pupils consider a number of ideas before developing a plan for a realistic micro-enterprise activity.

Internally Assessed

Component 3: **Marketing and Finance for Enterprise**

Exploring promotional methods, financial records, planning and forecasting. Analysing financial information to monitor the performance of an enterprise and suggest strategies to improve its performance.

Externally Assessed

Where can this qualification lead to?

Pupils can continue on to further business studies related vocational and academic qualifications at Level 2 and Level 3, as well as apprenticeships and traineeships.

Successful pupils on this course are...

- Curious
- Analytical
- Logical
- Realistic
- Imaginative
- Creative
- Problem Solvers
- Hard Working
- Independent

For more information contact
Ms Darlington:
l.darlington@smrchs.com

SMRCHS Options 2026

BTEC Tech Award in Fashion and Textiles

Who is this qualification for?

This qualification is intended for learners aged 14-16 who are interested in using textiles in a practical way within the context of the fashion industry and wish to develop skills and knowledge that will prepare them for further study and employment within this sector. It will particularly appeal to learners who are looking for a course that is practical in nature.

The BTEC Tech Award in Textiles will give learners the opportunity to develop an understanding of:

- The processes used in creative response to briefs
- Generating, prototyping, developing, reviewing and refining ideas
- Planning, organisation and communication
- Key technical terminology related to materials and properties
- Commercial and industrial practices within the Fashion and Textiles industries
- Career opportunities in the sector

What will I study as part of this qualification?

Textiles is studied through 'Art and Design' Technical Award. This allows them to investigate the design process, generate ideas and develop research skills. Pupils will produce products as a response to vocational design briefs. The award is broken into two units.



Unit 1 : Creative Practice

This unit has 4 learning aims that need to be completed over the designated time period following a brief set by the exam. The learning aims are:

- (A) Use investigation and experimentation processes in textiles
- (B) Generate and communicate design ideas
- (C) Develop practical skills through application and review
- (D) Record and communicate skills development

Through these learning aims pupils will experiment in a range of skills, demonstrating that they can follow a given brief to create ideas and research into a specific product before producing their own interpretation of what is required. We develop the decorative and construction techniques including tie dye, batik, silk painting, block printing, embroidery and appliqué.

Unit 1 = 60% of the final grade + internally assessed and externally moderated

Unit 2: Responding to a Brief

This unit is set and assessed by the examination board through a practical examination. A vocational brief is given to the students and using the skills they have developed in unit 1, they are required to design ideas and create an appropriate product that fulfils the brief.

Unit 2 = 40% of the final grade + externally assessed

CAREERS IN TEXTILES... BTEC Textiles can open the door to many different careers within the Textiles industry such as:

- Fashion Designer
- Fashion Stylist
- Fashion Buyer
- Visual Merchandising
- Fashion Journalism
- Interior Designer
- Garment Technologist
- Fashion Marketing
- Costume Designer in Film/TV

SMRCHS Options 2026

BTEC Tech 1/2 Tech Award in Health and Social Care

Why choose BTEC Tech Award in Health and Social Care?

- Care values are at the heart.
- Students apply their learning to a real-life scenario.
- The components build on each other so that you grow in confidence.
- Practical tasks rather than written exams.
- There is a world of opportunities open to BTEC students.

How does the course work?

The course is made up of three components: two internally assessed and one that is externally assessed. Our three-block structure, explore, develop and apply, has been developed to allow students to build on and embed their knowledge. This allows them to grow in confidence and then put into practice what they have learned. Our assessment structure is also designed so that students can build on what they learn, and develop their assignment skills, as they move through the course.

Explore - Component 1

Human Lifespan Development

Aim: To understand how we grow and develop throughout our lives

Assessment: Internally assessed assignments

Weighting: 30% of total course

During Component 1 students will:

- Explore how individuals develop physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually over time.
- Investigate how various factors, events and choices impact individuals' growth and development.
- Discover how people adapt to life events and cope with making changes.



Develop - Component 2

Health and Social Care Services and Values

Aim: To get to know how the Health and Social Care sector works and the care values that lie at the core of it

Assessment: Internally assessed assignments

Weighting: 30% of total course

During Component 2 students will:

- Learn which health and social care services are available.
- Identify why people might need to use these services.
- Discover who is involved in providing these services.
- Explore what might stop people from accessing the services they need.
- Look at the care values the sector has to make to ensure that people get the care and protection they need.

Apply - Component 3

Health and Wellbeing

Aim: To help improve someone's health and wellbeing

Assessment: Externally assessed task, in which students create a health and wellbeing improvement plan for an individual, based on a brief

Weighting: 40% of total course

To achieve this aim, students will:

- Learn what 'being healthy' means to different people.
- Explore the different factors that might influence health and wellbeing.
- Identify key health indicators and how to interpret them.
- Assess an individual's health using what they have learned.
- Create a health and wellbeing improvement plan for that person, which includes targets and recommendations of support services available.
- Reflect on the potential challenges the person may face when putting the plan into action.

SMRCHS Options 2026

BTEC Award in Music Practice

Component 1: Exploring Music Products and Styles

What is assessed?

Learners will explore the techniques used in the creation of different musical products and investigate the key features of different musical styles. You will explore how musical elements, technology and other resources are used in the creation, production and performance of music. Learners will explore a variety of musical styles and understand the key features of different styles of music and their use of musical elements.

How is it assessed?

Portfolio of evidence: Audio recordings, presentations, video recordings, podcasts marked internally.

Component 2: Music Skills Development

What is assessed?

Learners will explore a variety of musical styles and understand the key features of different styles of music and their use of musical elements. They should apply stylistic features to performance, composition and music production activities through three disciplines:

- (1) Music performance
- (2) Creating original music
- (3) Music production

Students will focus on two of the above three disciplines and will select and develop their individual musical and professional techniques appropriate to context and style.

How is it assessed?

Portfolio of evidence: Audio recordings, presentations, video recordings, podcasts marked internally.



Component 3: Responding to a Music Brief

What is assessed?

This component will allow you to work to your strengths and interests and apply the skills that you have learned throughout your course in a practical way. You will focus on a particular area of the music sector that excites and appeals to you and respond to a music brief as a composer, performer or producer. Learners will have the opportunity to develop two musical disciplines through engagement in practical tasks, while documenting their progress and planning for further improvement.

How is it assessed?

This component is marked externally and builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired and developed in Components 1 and 2.

Who should take the course?

Anybody with an interest in music. If you have basic music/keyboard skills, are interested in technology and like listening to music, there is something in this course for you.

Career Opportunities:

- Sound Engineer
- Music Producer
- Music Journalist
- DJ
- Composer
- Music Therapist
- Music Teacher

SMRCHS Options 2026

OCR GCSE PE

Cambridge National in Sports Studies (OCR)

We offer two courses in PE:

- **OCR GCSE PE**
- **OCR Cambridge National in Sports Studies.**

If you decide to select PE as one of your options, the PE Department will guide you onto the correct course. Both courses are very demanding and time spent participating in sport outside of school is vital as you will be assessed in both team and individual sports based on your knowledge and performance.

What will I study?

GCSE PE - provides a comprehensive and detailed study into physical education and sport both through theory and in practice. In theory, you will study over fifty topics ranging from the body systems to social groupings, health and fitness to sponsorship and media, components of fitness/testing to interest and motivation, drugs in sport to diet plus much more. In practical, pupils 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 must be in an individual activity, with the third being in either a team or individual activity.

Sports Studies - provides a comprehensive and detailed study into physical education and sport both through theory and in practice. In theory, you will study a wide range of topics including the media in sport, barriers to participation, sportsmanship and the Olympics and the values around it. In practical, pupils are to be assessed in two different activities in the role of player and official. One of these assessments must be in a team activity and one must be in an individual activity. Additionally, you will be assessed planning and leading a sporting event/practice.

What skills will I need?

Pupils considering either course **MUST** have very strong, suitable, practical ability and interest in more than one sport/PE activity within **AND** out of school. The course is both physically and mentally demanding. An enthusiastic and disciplined approach is the key to success. You will need to be able to work well, both independently and as part of a team. You will need to be confident, a good communicator, well organised and assertive. All these qualities will assist you in your role as a player/ performer. The PE staff will give advice on your suitability if in doubt.

How will this course be assessed?

GCSE PE Assessment:

30% Practical - assessed in three practical areas, 60% Theory - assessed in two written exams and 10% coursework. At the end of Year 11 you will sit two theory exams (both 1 hour). Practical units are assessed throughout Year 10 and Year 11.

Sports Studies Assessment:

40% written exam on Contemporary Issues in Sport. 30% on Practical Performance and Leadership in Sports Activities where you will be assessed in two sports & 30% on Sport and Outdoor Adventurous Activities.

Why study Sport and PE?

Are you a motivated, committed and determined pupil who works well as an individual and as part of a team? If so, either course is a fantastic opportunity for you to gain a highly recognised qualification and develop key life skills within a fun, stimulating learning environment.

What will this course enable me to do after I leave SMRCHS?

Studying Sport and PE will assist you in furthering your education e.g. A Levels, BTECs and coaching awards and in your future career choices such as physiotherapy, journalism, teaching, coaching, fitness instructing and sports management. Past pupils have gone onto become teachers, leisure centre managers, and sports journalists.

What SMRCHS pupils say about this course:

"It's good - you learn all about the body and what exercise does for you." "You develop strategies and tactics in order to win." "The theory and practical combine so what you learn in theory - you can play in practical lessons."

SMRCHS Options 2026

WJEC 1/2 Vocational Award in Hospitality and Catering

The WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Award in Hospitality and Catering has been designed to support learners in schools and colleges who want to learn about this vocational sector and the potential it can offer them for their careers or further study. It is most suitable as a foundation for further study. This further study would provide learners with the opportunity to develop a range of specialist and general skills that would support their progression to employment. Employment in hospitality and catering can range from waiting staff, receptionists and catering assistants to chefs, hotel and bar managers and food technologists in food manufacturing. All of these roles require further education and training either through apprenticeships or further and higher education. They are graded L1 Pass, L2 Pass, L2 Merit, L2 Distinction and L2 Distinction*.

The WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Award in Hospitality and Catering is made up of two mandatory units.

Unit 1:

The Hospitality and Catering Industry

This unit is externally assessed

This is available in June each year.

Students can complete the exam on screen or paper

The exam is 90 minutes and worth 90 marks

Learners apply their learning by considering all aspects of the vocational sector. They should acquire knowledge of all aspects of the industry and be able to propose new hospitality and catering provision for specific locations. Learners will be able to use their learning of different types of establishment and job roles to determine the best option. They will then apply their learning in relation to front of house and kitchen operations to determine how the proposed hospitality and catering provision will operate efficiently, legally and be financially viable whilst meeting the needs of their potential market.

This unit provides a broad introduction to the vocational sector in a way that is purposeful and develops a range of transferable skills.

Unit 2:

Hospitality and Catering in Action

This unit is internally assessed

This is where students will be given a brief for a particular event and put their skills into practice. Learners apply their learning to safely prepare, cook and present nutritional dishes. They will draw on their learning of different types of provision and kitchen and front of house operations in Unit 1, as well as personal safety in their preparations. The content is relevant not only to employees within food production, but also those with a responsibility for food safety in the industry, nutritionists and managers and owners. This extends the learner's appreciation of the whole vocational area beyond the kitchen environment.



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Notes

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St. Matthew's

Roman Catholic High School
VOLUNTARY ACADEMY



CONTACT@SMRCHS.COM

We Pray • We Care • We Achieve