



GCSE Options

2023



SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL

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2023

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Introduction

Our Third Form pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum which gives them the opportunity to study subjects in every discipline leading to GCSE choices which are bespoke to them.

In the Michaelmas Term pupils enjoy a Discovery Term. This will enable them to study exciting aspects of the different subjects in each of their timetabled lessons. The teachers have produced a curriculum which will not only prepare pupils for GCSE study but also really inspire and engage them. Pupils are also encouraged to complete their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award through CCF.

From the start of the Lent Term of the Third Form, pupils begin most of their GCSE courses. This will enable classes to complete the course content well before the start of the Summer Term of Fifth Form and offers plenty of opportunity for consolidation, exam technique and revision. By starting some GCSE courses slightly early, pupils can gain a very good taste of the subjects on offer and this will help them to decide which to continue, alongside the core subjects, into the Fourth Form. You will see from the subjects listed in this booklet that they are not all taught as part of the Third Form curriculum. Where applicable, some subjects will be started in September 2023. In addition to the Core subjects of English Language, Mathematics, and one Science, all pupils will study a compulsory ICT course to ensure our pupils have excellent ICT skills to help them in School and in the future.

Most pupils will study for nine GCSE subjects. Pupils who receive Learning Support within the curriculum work towards eight GCSEs, whilst those who choose CCF on a Wednesday afternoon will take an additional Level 2 (GCSE equivalent) leadership qualification. Some of the GCSEs we offer are IGCSE qualifications and these have been chosen very deliberately by our Heads of Department because of the course content. They have exactly the same academic value as GCSEs.

We pride ourselves on the bespoke nature of the curriculum we offer our pupils and you and your child will have the opportunity to talk to the Heads of Department about academic subjects at the end of the Michaelmas Term. Our option blocks enable our pupils to specialise, whilst also having a wide range of choice. We can accommodate those who would like to take three sciences, a single or double combined course just as easily as our linguists; those who want three humanities; our creative pupils and those who may need a very bespoke curriculum. This individualised approach allows us, as experts, to support each pupil, and have honest conversations about their strengths and weaknesses to enable them to make choices which will result in achievement and success.

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The Core Curriculum (studied by all)

English Language

Games and PE

ICT

Mathematics

PSHE

Science

One of these options will be taken by all students:

- IGCSE Single Science*
- GCSE Double Science
- Separate Sciences by letter invitation only:
 - Biology*
 - Chemistry*
 - Physics*

GCSE Options 2023-2024

Art

CCF

Computing

Design and Technology

Drama

Economics*

English as an Additional Language (EAL) (International students only)

Film Studies

French

Geography

History

Learning Support*

Media Studies

Music

Photography

Physical Education

Religious Studies

Spanish

*Invitation only or entry requirement

The Core Curriculum

English

Board: Edexcel IGCSE

Pupils study both English Language and English Literature as distinct GCSE subjects.

Most pupils will take both subjects, but English Language is the only requirement for entry to the Sixth form and university; for some pupils the Language-only option is the best choice.

Examination: 60%

Coursework: 40%

English Language

Examination: 60% Two hours 15 minutes

Externally assessed; non-fiction and transactional writing.

Coursework: 40%

Two assignments – a) Poetry and prose texts and b) Imaginative writing

The assignments are internally set and assessed, then moderated by the exam board.

English Literature

Examination: 60% Two hours

Externally assessed; poetry and modern prose.

Coursework: 40%

Two assignments on play texts – a) Modern drama and b) Shakespeare

The assignments are internally set and assessed, then moderated by the exam board.

“The great thing about English is that it encompasses so many different voices and subjects. English not only widens your sense of the literary world, but it also vastly opens your perception of the modern and pre-modern world from multiple angles.”

Mathematics

Board: Edexcel IGCSE

Examination: 100%

All pupils will study the IGCSE Mathematics qualification. There is no coursework or controlled assessment component. It is a purely linear course, assessed by terminal examination.

There are two examinations to be taken. Both are two hours in length, and both are calculator papers. Pupils will be examined on number, algebra, ratio, geometry, probability and statistics. Each paper is equally weighted with a range of topics examined. Pupils will sit either the Higher or Foundation tier.

Pupils will be awarded with grades 1-9 with 9 being the top grade available. All pupils will need to secure a grade 4 or above.

Pupils in the A set will take the IGCSE examination in the January of the Fifth Form. They will then embark on the AQA GCSE Further Mathematics course and sit the examination in the Summer Term.

“Mathematics teaches a logical, structured approach in a confusing and complex world. It opens doors that are helping me to reach my full potential. Mathematics lessons are the best 3300 seconds of my day!”

Single Science (BTEC)

Board: Pearson BTEC

Examination: **One** external assessed paper (25% of total), internally assessed assignment briefs (75%)

The syllabus content that follows is divided into three sections: Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Candidates must study all three sections.

Assessment: The qualification contains 4 mandatory units. Unit 1 is externally assessed in a written examination (1hr long). Units 2-4 are internally assessed through completion of a variety of assignment briefs including posters, brochures, experimental plans, powerpoint presentations and research. Unit 1 reflects content from all science disciplines.

Topics include (but are not limited to):

Biology: Characteristics of living organisms; Cells; The Nervous System; Ecosystems; Homeostasis.

Chemistry: The particulate nature of matter; Experimental techniques; Atoms, elements and compounds; The Periodic Table; Reactions ; Air and water.

Physics: Energy Transfers, Radiation, The Universe, Wave Characteristics.

This BTEC qualification awards the equivalent to **ONE** GCSE (120 Guided Learning Hours). This is awarded in the following grades: Level 2 Pass, Level 2 Merit, Level 2 Distinction, Level 2 Distinction*, Level 1 (when Level 2 is not quite reached) and Unclassified.

This course is offered on an individual needs basis.

“ I really enjoy doing this BTEC as it has helped make sciences easier to understand. I like the way we can be more creative and get to know about each science. I also enjoy how it shows why we learn something in science by linking it to real life examples. ”

Double Science

Board: Edexcel GCSE

Examination 100%

The syllabus content that follows is divided into three sections: Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Candidates must study all three sections.

There are six examination papers at the end of the course – two for each science. The papers feature a mixture of different question styles, including multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, calculations and extended open-response questions. After the Fourth Form internal examinations,

Science teachers will advise whether pupils should enter the Foundation Tier (Grades 1-5) or the Higher Tier (Grades 5-9).

Topics include:

Biology: Cells and control; Genetics, Natural selection and genetic modification; Health, disease and the development of medicines; Plant structures and their functions; Ecosystems and material cycles.

Chemistry: States of matter and mixtures; Chemical changes; Extracting metals and equilibria; Groups in the periodic table; Rates of reaction and energy changes; Fuels and Earth science assessment overview.

Physics: Motion and forces; Conservation of energy; Waves; Light and the electromagnetic spectrum; Radioactivity; Energy - Forces doing work; Forces and their effects; Electricity and circuits; Magnetism and Electromagnetism and Particle Theory.

This qualification awards **TWO** GCSEs.

“This course has really helped me understand each of the different science subjects. What has been great is that often some of the skills I learn in one science help me with another. We also get the chance to complete interesting experiments.”

Biology*

Board: Edexcel GCSE

Examination: 100%

Paper One: 50% One hour 45 minutes

This paper will examine pupils across topics one to five. It will include a mixture of different question styles, including multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, calculations and extended open-response questions.

Paper Two: 50% One hour 45 minutes

This paper will also examine pupils in topic one, as well as topics six to nine. It will again include a mixture of different question styles, including multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, calculations and extended open-response questions.

There are nine topics in the specification:

- **Topic One** – Key concepts in biology
- **Topic Two** – Cells and control
- **Topic Three** – Genetics
- **Topic Four** – Natural selection and genetic modification
- **Topic Five** – Health, disease and the development of medicines
- **Topic Six** – Plant structures and their functions
- **Topic Seven** – Animal coordination, control and homeostasis
- **Topic Eight** – Exchange and transport in animals
- **Topic Nine** – Ecosystems and material cycles

*By letter invitation only

“There is nothing more exciting than uncovering the inner workings of the human machine. Every lesson allows us to better understand ourselves and the way we interact with the world. Biology is the study of life, and that, in itself, is fascinating.”

Chemistry*

Board: Edexcel GCSE

Examination: 100%

Examinations: One hour 45 minutes each
Two examination papers which are equally weighted.

There will be no controlled assessment, but there will be assessment of practical work at the end of the course.

The specification will set out the apparatus pupils should use and the techniques they should develop.

There are eight required practicals in the course and the written exams will include questions that draw on pupils' practical science experience. At least 15% of the marks for the GCSE will be allocated to practical science questions.

There are nine topics in the specification:

- **Topic One** – Key concepts in chemistry
- **Topic Two** – States of matter and mixtures
- **Topic Three** – Chemical changes
- **Topic Four** – Extracting metals and equilibria
- **Topic Five** – Separate chemistry 1
- **Topic Six** – Groups in the periodic table
- **Topic Seven** – Rates of reaction and energy changes
- **Topic Eight** – Fuels and Earth science
- **Topic Nine** – Separate chemistry 2

*By letter invitation only

“It is said that Chemistry is the study of matter, but I prefer to see it as the study of change. Chemistry lessons can be challenging but rewarding and the eureka moment when everything ties together makes the work worthwhile.”

Physics *

Board: Edexcel GCSE

Examination: 100%

Assessment: One hour 45 minutes each

Two examination papers at the end of the course, each worth 50%, containing a mixture of different question styles, including multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, calculations and extended open-response questions.

Practical work: There are eight mandatory core practicals that must be completed, and the work must be recorded, however these are not assessed.

There are 15 topics in the specification:

- **Topic One** - Key concepts of physics
- **Topic Two** - Motion and forces
- **Topic Three** - Conservation of energy
- **Topic Four** - Waves
- **Topic Five** - Light and the EM spectrum
- **Topic Six** - Radioactivity
- **Topic Seven** - Astronomy
- **Topic Eight** - Energy
- **Topic Nine** - Forces and their effects
- **Topic Ten** - Electricity and circuits
- **Topic Eleven** - Static electricity
- **Topic Twelve** - Magnetism and the motor effect
- **Topic Thirteen** - Electromagnetic induction
- **Topic Fourteen** - Particle model
- **Topic Fifteen** - Force and matter

* By letter invitation only

“Physics has many interesting topics that we can learn from, which help us to understand more about things in our everyday lives, such as the topic on Radioactivity where we learnt about both PET and CT scanners and how they work to detect cancer.”

ICT

Board: BCS (British Computing Society)

Examination: 100%

The course is based around giving pupils the skills they need to support other subjects whilst at Sutton Valence School, university and in the world of work. It is practical involving five exams that are taken on demand:

- Word Processing
- IT Security
- Presentations
- Internet
- Email

In addition to the practical skills in application, pupils will increase their capacity to transfer knowledge and skills between contexts; develop practical skills in creativity and problem solving, develop an understanding of the social and commercial impact of IT and improve their understanding of the legal, social, economic, ethical and environmental issues raised by IT.

Each examination is accredited so pupils who pass each examination will receive the BCS Level 2 Certificate in IT User Skills, which is the equivalent to a GCSE grade 6.

Games and PE

All pupils are encouraged to become proficient in a range of sporting activities, so PE and Games feature strongly in our curriculum. Pupils, in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Forms, have two Games sessions every week, together with a lesson of PE.

Pupils are also given every opportunity and encouragement to represent the School in fixtures, tournaments and representative sides.

Additional Options

Art and Design

Board: OCR GCSE

Portfolio: 60%

Externally set task, allowing pupils to work on one of five themes: 40%

Course content: Fine Art

Art at GCSE is a two-year course that comprises a unit of coursework and an externally set controlled test. Assessment is internally based with external moderation. The pupils are expected to show evidence of good drawing skills to support the development of their ideas. Research into the work of other artists forms an important part of the course as it helps to inform and enrich ideas. Candidates need to show clear evidence of the development of skills and understanding as they evolve towards a final piece. There are no restrictions on scale or media.

“GCSE Art and Design is a great subject choice which offers a wide range of skills to be learnt including creativity and time management. As well as this, being able to spend some time painting provides a great opportunity to relax amid other academic subjects.”

Combined Cadet Force (CCF)

Our CCF offers a range of exciting opportunities for pupils. These include shooting, whether for enjoyment or up to and including national level, gliding, flying and sailing. Cadets can also attend courses in signals, rock-climbing, kayaking and canoeing and attend leadership courses with all three services.

Being in the CCF also makes it easier to achieve the Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards; as the activities and residential courses available lend themselves to the Scheme.

The CCF in the Fourth and Fifth Form involves all cadets rotating through all three services where they will be given opportunities to fly, sail, climb and achieve a first aid qualification. They will also attend a field day with each section. The Fifth Form will focus on leadership and instructional skills to prepare the cadets to teach the younger cadets.

Pupils who choose this option should receive a BTEC Level 2 qualification, which is equivalent to a GCSE Grade 6.

The chargeable activities usually incurred by choosing the CCF, including gliding, sailing, first aid, skiing, climbing and the BTEC qualification will be spread as a subscription over the duration of the course to help manage costs over the two years, rather than higher periodic charges.

“In the Combined Cadet Force, you learn to rely upon others and therefore experience teamwork in a whole new respect. It is a regular opportunity to spend time outside of the classroom and develop new skills with friends.”

Computing

Board: OCR GCSE

Examination: 100%

This subject offers pupils the opportunity to study how a computer works – what happens when you switch a computer on and what goes on inside the processor. Students will also develop their skills in designing, writing, testing and refining programs using a high-level programming language and use their skills in a variety of programming tasks.

Examination One: 50% One hour 30 minutes

Computer systems: This will introduce pupils to the central processing unit (CPU), computer memory and storage, data representation, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, system security and system software. It also looks at ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with computer science.

Examination Two: 50% One hour 30 minutes

Computational thinking, algorithms and programming: Pupils will gain a deeper understanding of the concepts covered in paper examination one and additionally develop skills and understanding in computational thinking: algorithms, programming techniques, producing robust programs, computational logic and translators.

“Studying Computing shows how all that we do on the internet came to be and how it all works. I would recommend studying Computing because it is a great skill to have and one which will prove beneficial in the future as it is a skill required in many fields.”

Design and Technology

Board: AQA GCSE

Examination: 50%

Controlled Assessment: 50%

Design and Technology is a challenging subject which requires pupils to have good background knowledge, a passion for design and the ability to work independently, consistently and manage their time well within given deadlines. This course has a considerable coursework element, so it is vital that pupils commit to periods of work outside of lessons. GCSE Design and Technology will prepare students for an increasingly technological world.

Examination: 50% Two hours

The single paper will test the application of knowledge and understanding of materials, components, processes, techniques, technologies and commercial practices and products. Questions will largely address textile, graphical, electronic and resistant materials. At least 15% of the exam will assess Mathematics applied to Design and Technology and a further 10% of the exam will assess Science.

Controlled Assessment: 50%

The controlled assessment consists of a client-based project.

Candidates are required to submit a three-dimensional prototype and a design folder, with the appropriate ICT evidence. Candidates will be given a design brief, set by the exam board, and have the freedom to use the type and variety of materials necessary to satisfy the brief, often working in at least two materials; ranging from woods, metals, plastics, to graphic product materials such as Styrofoam, paper and card.

Manufacturing counts for 10% of the marks, with 20% coming from generating design ideas and design development. The remaining 20% is made up from areas such as research, investigation, producing design specifications, analysing and evaluating.

It is an opportunity for pupils to be creative and experiment when designing. Developing skills to refine their own ideas whilst considering costs, commercial viability and marketing of products.

“Design and Technology brings your own thoughts to life. You need nothing more than your own imagination and the tools to put it to use. It is a vital part of life, almost everything you have was designed. You design to solve problems and solve problems to design.”

Drama

Board: WJEC Eduqas

The GCSE in Drama is an exciting, inspiring and practical course. It promotes involvement in and enjoyment of drama, as performers and/or designers. Additionally, it provides opportunities to attend live theatre performances and to develop skills as informed and thoughtful audience members. Learners will investigate a practitioner or genre of drama, work collaboratively to develop ideas to communicate meaning and experiment with dramatic conventions, forms and techniques to produce and realise a piece of original theatre. They will also have the opportunity to participate in the performance of an extract from a play text.

Examination: 40%

Written exam focused on the theatrical interpretation of a set text, and a review of a live theatre piece.

Learners will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of drama, including their ability to interpret texts for performance, in a written examination. However, in preparation for this assessment, learners are encouraged to study their chosen text practically as a performer, designer and director.

Practical Coursework: 60%

Two group pieces of approx. 15 minutes each.

- one performance of an extract from a play (20%)
- one devised piece with an accompanying written portfolio (40%)

Learners have the option to work practically as performers and/or designers.

“ GCSE Drama is great. Not only can you work to make up your own play, but you also get to explore a scripted character in much more detail than ever before. It has improved my confidence and helped me work with others more productively. ”

Economics

Board: OCR

Examination: 100% (2 examinations)

The GCSE in Economics will teach learners to explain, analyse and evaluate the role of markets and the government within a market economy. They will learn about the basic market models and are encouraged to deepen their understanding of the economic concepts studied by applying these to relevant current and historical economic issues. Pupils will develop the ability to interpret and use quantitative data to justify economic decisions.

Examination One – Introduction to Economics: 50% of total GCSE grade

80 marks, 1 hour 30 minutes long

This component introduces learners to the fundamental economic terms and concepts. Learners will apply these to investigate and explain how markets work in contemporary and historical economic contexts. They will study the different roles and perspectives of the main economic agents (consumers, producers and the government) and how they interact in the economy. They will learn to appreciate that all economic choices have costs and benefits. This will encourage them to consider moral, ethical and sustainability issues that arise as a result of the impact of economic activity in a range of national and global contexts.

Examination Two – National and International Economics: 50% of total GCSE grade

80 marks, 1 hour 30 minutes long

This component provides learners with an understanding of the main economic objectives and role of the government in achieving them. Learners will investigate the effects of economic policies on markets. They will use and interpret quantitative evidence, such as unemployment figures, in contemporary and historical economic contexts. They will learn to appreciate the importance and impact of international trade by analysing data such as quantitative information on exports and imports.

*This subject is for students who are expecting to achieve a grade 6 or above in Mathematics.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Board: CIE IGCSE

The examination is made up of three examinations which will be taken at the end of the two-year course.

Speaking 20% 15 minutes

A general discussion about interests and hobbies and a discussion about a specific topic with five prompts.

Listening 20% 50 minutes

All answers will be written in English or multiple choice.

Reading and Writing 60% Two hours

The first three sections are reading comprehension and note-taking tasks. The last three sections assess the pupil's ability to write in English, including, a short summary, an informal email to a friend and either a formal article, review or report.

Topics covered include:

- Travel and tourism
- Shopping and the consumer society
- Science and nature
- Health, fitness and sport
- Family and lifestyles
- Media and films
- Technology
- Environmental issues

Film Studies

Board: EDUQAS GCSE

Examination: 70%

Screenplay: 30%

Examination One: 35%

Key Developments in US Film - this component assesses knowledge and understanding of three US films. Assessment consists of four questions on one pair of US mainstream films and one US independent film.

Pupils will study:

Dracula (Browning, USA, 1931)

The Lost Boys (Schumacher, USA, 1987)

The Hurt Locker (Bigelow, USA, 2008)

Examination Two: 35%

Narrative, Representation and Film Style of non-Hollywood Films.

Pupils will study:

District 9 (Blomkamp, South Africa, 2009)

Tsotsi (Hood, South Africa, 2005)

Skyfall (Mendes, UK, 2012)

Screenplay: 30%

Pupils will write an extract from a screenplay for a genre film (800 to 1000 words). The screenplay must be accompanied by a shooting script of a key section from the screenplay (approximately one minute of screen time, corresponding to approximately one page of screenplay). In addition, an evaluative analysis of the production (750 to 850 words) is submitted.

N.B. If a pupil is studying Media Studies, they are also able to choose Film Studies.

“Throughout the GCSE Film Studies course, we viewed a number of films, covering a wide variety of topics and issues. One of my favourite areas was the coursework, which involved creating our own screenplay. I enjoyed how it really let me explore my own creativity.”

Geography

Board: CIE IGCSE

Examination: 72.5%

Coursework: 27.5%

This syllabus allows candidates to develop lifelong skills, including:

- An understanding of the processes which affect physical and human environments
- An understanding of location on a local, regional and global scale
- The ability to use and understand geographical data and information
- An understanding of how communities around the world are affected and constrained by different environments.

Examination One: 45% 1 hour 45 minutes

Geographical themes

Examination Two: 27.5% 1 hour 30 minutes

Geographical skills

Component Three – Coursework: 27.5%

One centre-based assignment of up to 2000 words.

“I enjoy studying GCSE Geography because you get to learn about things that you see around you in nature and you can visualise what you learn. Another benefit to studying Geography is the field trips, which are a lot of fun.”

History

Board: CIE IGCSE

Examination: 100%

This syllabus offers the opportunity to study world history throughout the twentieth century. Pupils will explore history from a diversity of perspectives, including social, economic, cultural and political. Pupils will be encouraged to raise questions and think critically. They will be taught how to deploy historical knowledge and understanding in order to provide historical explanations in a written essay format.

Examination One: 40% Two hours
(Recall of knowledge and strength of explanation)

- Were the peace treaties of 1919–23 fair?
- To what extent was the League of Nations a success?
- Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?
- Who was to blame for the Cold War?
- How effectively did the USA contain the spread of Communism?
- How secure was the USSR's control over Eastern Europe, 1948–c.1989?
- Why did events in the Gulf matter, c.1970–2000?

Plus, an in-depth study on the USA, 1919–41.

Examination Two: 30% One hour 45 minutes
(Use of historical skills and interpretation)

Source-based paper on one of the topics taught for Paper One. The board will inform us which topic to prepare for at the beginning of the IGCSE course.

Examination Three: 30% One hour

One essay from a choice of two on the USA in the 1920s and 1930s. This will be sat as an external examination.

“I love studying GCSE history because the topics you cover are so interesting and relevant in today's society. It helps me make sense of the world we live in and has taught me about parts of the past I previously knew nothing about.”

Media Studies

Board: EDUQAS (WJEC) GCSE

Examination: 60%

Coursework: 40%

Examination One: 30% One hour 30 minutes

Section A: Exploring Media Language and Representation in print media forms:

- Magazines (*Pride, GQ*)
- Marketing (film posters – *The Man with the Golden Gun, Spectre*)
- Newspapers (*The Sun, The Guardian*)
- Print advertisements (*Quality Street, This Girl Can*)

Section B: Exploring Media Industries and Audiences in:

- Film (*Spectre*)
- Newspapers (*The Sun*)
- Radio (*The Archers*)
- Video games (*Fortnite*)

Examination Two: 30% One hour 30 minutes

Section A: Crime Drama: exploring media industries, audiences and media contexts and use of media language or representation, studying *Luther* and *The Sweeney*

Section B: Music (music videos and online media), media language and representation, media industries, audiences and media contexts in *Roar* (Katy Perry), *Uptown Funk* (Bruno Mars) and *Rio* (Duran Duran) and the accompanying websites for Perry and Mars

Coursework: 40%

Design both a DVD cover (front and back) and film poster, promoting a genre to be decided by the examination board

N.B. If a pupil is studying Film Studies as an option, they are also able to choose Media Studies

“Media Studies allows you to learn all areas of the media world, spanning from TV genres like crime dramas to adverts and video games meaning there is a subject for everyone. It also enables you to share your imagination and own ideas when it comes to media as a whole.”

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL): French and Spanish

Board: AQA

Pupils can opt for one or both languages. Each GCSE is made up of four examinations which will be taken at the end of the two-year course.

Speaking: 25% Ten to 12 minutes

Role play; picture stimulus; conversation to cover two themes (pupils nominate first theme).

Listening: 25% 45 minutes

Questions require a mixture of English, French or Spanish and non- verbal answers.

Reading: 25% One hour

Questions in English and in French or Spanish. There will also be a 50- word translation from French or Spanish into English.

Writing: 25% One hour 15 minutes

Three sections:

- Structured writing task with four compulsory bullet points;
- Open-ended writing task with two compulsory bullet points;
- A 50-word translation from English into French or Spanish.

There are three main themes which will be covered in all four sections of the GCSE examination:

- Identity and culture;
- Local, national, international and global areas of interest;
- Current and future study and employment.

“GCSE French allows you to gain a confident understanding of a second language, providing the ability to interact with people in French-speaking countries, with practice being the best way to improve your linguistic skills.”

Music

Board: AQA GCSE

Listening paper: 40%

Divided into two sections:

- Unfamiliar music based on music from the western classical tradition, popular and world music;
- Study of set works.

Music Performance: 30%

- Two performances recorded onto a CD;
- Both pieces must be of over one minute long (together must be over four minutes long) and be about grade 5 standard or above;
- Solo;
- Ensemble.

Composition: 30%

Two compositions. Composition, done to a brief issued by the board in September of the examination year, and free composition. Both compositions must total over three minutes long.

“My personal highlights of GCSE Music include performing with our instruments, as well as channelling our creative side on ‘Composition Friday’. There are many opportunities within the Music department, ranging from ensembles to individual performances.”

Photography

Board: OCR GCSE

Coursework Portfolio: 60%

Externally Set Task allowing pupils to work on one of five themes: 40%

Photography at GCSE is a two-year course that comprises a unit of coursework and an externally set examination project including a controlled test. Assessment is internally based with external moderation.

Pupils are exposed to a wide range of digital and chemical photographic techniques, including image manipulation in Adobe 'Photoshop' and traditional darkroom practice. Researching the work of professional photographers and digital artists forms an important part of the creative development process.

Candidates must have good analytical skills and show clear evidence of the ability to develop and refine imaginative ideas towards an inventive outcome. Photographic equipment (including Nikon DSLR cameras) is provided.

Students opting for Photography must have a laptop capable of running Adobe Photoshop. Whilst a Windows machine is preferred, a Mac will be acceptable as long as students are fully aware of how to use it.

“ I love the creativity of Photography and being able to go to different places and see things in a different way on shoots. I also love to present my work creatively in the sketchbook and to experiment with different techniques, digitally and in the dark room.”

Physical Education

Board: AQA GCSE

Examination: 60%

Assessment: 40% (30% practical, 10% written performance analysis assessment)

Examination One:

The human body and movement in physical activity and sport

Examination Two:

Socio-cultural influences and well-being in physical activity and sport

Non-exam assessment:

Practical assessment in three activities with accompanying written analysis.

“There are so many different pathways you can take after learning Physical Education at GCSE, whether you are interested in Hockey, Rugby, or any other sport. The subject is interesting and helpful for developing fitness, as well as knowledge.”

Religious Studies with Philosophy and Ethics

Board: EDUQAS GCSE

Examination: 100%

Examination One: 50% Two hours

Philosophy and Ethics: Pupils will study the following four themes:

1. Issues of Relationships
2. Issues of Life and Death
3. Issues of Good and Evil
4. Issues of Human Rights

Examination Two: 25% One hour

Study of Christianity: Pupils will study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity.

Examination Three: 25% One hour

Study of a world faith – Judaism: Pupils will study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Judaism.

“One of the main reasons why I love Religious Studies is the wide variety of topics covered. I enjoy learning about different beliefs, cultures and religions around the world, as well as learning about real world problems occurring at the present time.”

Activities

Academic achievement is often seen as the main tool for measuring an individual's worth. Its importance is in no doubt, but at Sutton Valence we value the holistic approach to the child. In addition to public examination success, we seek to develop the pupil by expecting participation in a wide range of challenges and leadership opportunities. Third Form pupils have one period of activities on a Monday afternoon.

Activities offered vary from time to time, but a typical menu includes art club, shooting, golf, soccer, dance, yoga, drama, craft club and running club, to name a few. These are distinct from, and in addition to, the sports programme. For some we use the wealth of expertise of our own staff and for others we hire in experts from outside.

Learning Support

For a very small number of pupils it might be appropriate to drop one of the optional subjects in order to free up the time for specialist tuition in small groups; this needs to be discussed and agreed in advance.

Some of our pupils may request one-to-one tuition which can be provided, with prior agreement. This will incur an additional cost and be charged as extra to fees.

How can parents help?

- By being aware of the expectations of the individual departments outlined in this booklet and by taking an interest in extended pieces of work as they arise;
- By making a quiet work area available at home where work can be done without interruptions or disturbance. Computers and access to the internet can be helpful at times but there are also far too many distractions that weren't there when you took your examinations;
- By helping them to plan their work sufficiently in advance and by monitoring their progress in major tasks; this is especially important during the holidays as exams approach;
- By keeping an eye on their workload and commenting if you feel there is too much, or too little homework. The setting of homework can be checked by logging in to SVEP, Sutton Valence E-Portal;
- On an average evening, pupils should be spending up to an hour and a half on homework; this also applies on Friday nights;
- By contacting your child's tutor if you have any concerns.

Monitoring

As our pupils work towards their GCSEs, we try to give you an idea of the grade that we feel they are capable of, their Target Agreed Grade (TAG), and the grade they are currently heading for. If they are ahead of their target, then they should be praised but if they are lagging, we will want to find out why and take remedial action. We also grade the effort that they are putting into their individual subjects, both in class and for prep. At Half Term, you will be sent a grade card which contains these grades, together with advice and targets set by your son's or daughter's tutor. At the end of term, you will receive a full report that will additionally include full comments from our academic staff, information about your child's involvement in the wider life of the School and a comment from the Headmaster. Parents' evenings are scheduled during the year, to give you an opportunity to have face-to-face conversations with your child's teachers.

To fall in line with the GCSE grading, the School's academic grades run from 1 to 9. Grade 9 is designed to recognise the very highest performing students and a grade 4 is considered an acceptable pass.

Effort in both the classroom and in prep is graded using the following criteria:

Comment	Effort in Lessons (E)	Effort in Prep (P)
Excellent	Excellent effort. A very enthusiastic attitude towards learning, independent, individual and positive in all lessons.	Exceptional effort over and above what would normally be expected. Resourceful and independent.
Good	A positive attitude and contribution to all lessons. Capable of enterprise. Looks to gain clarification when unsure.	A full prep record and any missed lessons effectively caught up. Evidence of considerable care.
Acceptable	Working satisfactorily with a good attitude.	Generally sound prep with no missing work.
Below expectations	Not doing enough work with regular lapses in concentration.	Several missed preps and / or perfunctory attempts to catch up when lessons have been missed. Poor presentation.
Unacceptable	Having an attitude in class that is unhelpful to their own learning or that of their peers.	Many late, incomplete or missing preps. Sanctions have proved ineffective.

