



*"A community of Learners,
Believers and Friends"*

This guide is designed to help you make informed decisions for the best choice of options to set you on the right path for your future

Y9 OPTIONS

Course information
2024



MSJ CAREERS 
SETTING YOU ON THE RIGHT PATH FOR THE FUTURE

GCSE Core Subjects

The following GCSE qualifications are compulsory and must be studied throughout Key Stage 4 in years 10 and 11.

Course Title: **Mathematics**

Qualification Type: **GCSE**

Exam Board: **Pearson/Edexcel**

Each year students will build and embed the knowledge they have gained from previous years all building to prepare them to think mathematically, to reason and explain approaches to problems. In years 10 and 11 students will also start to focus on preparing for their GCSE Maths exams. The final exams will take place in the summer of year 11. These will assess the knowledge and skills students have been taught from year 7 to year 11.

They will continue to develop skills in the following six key strands:

- 1) Number
- 2) Algebra
- 3) Ratio, proportion and rates of change
- 4) Geometry and measures
- 5) Statistics
- 6) Probability

Students will learn how to use and apply standard techniques, reason, interpret and communicate mathematically and solve problems within mathematics and in other contexts.

There are two tiers of entry; foundation and higher. Students will more than likely continue on the tier they have already started, although end of year 10 assessment results will be taken into consideration. Students can achieve a grade 1 to 5 on foundation and a grade 4 to 9 on higher. The final assessment consists of three papers, one non-calculator and two calculator papers, each one and a half hours long.



Course Title: English Language

Qualification Type: GCSE

Exam Board: AQA

The AQA GCSE English Language course is designed to inspire, motivate and challenge. It requires students to read a wide breadth of texts from across the 19th, 20th and 21st century. The course enables students to develop skills needed to read, understand, analyse and criticise a range of texts. In addition, students are required to write clearly, coherently and accurately for a variety of purposes. The specification offers two equally balanced linear assessments.

The two assessments are: Paper One, Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing. Section A requires students to explore how writers use narrative and descriptive techniques to engage the interest of readers. Section B requires students to create a narrative or descriptive piece of writing. Paper Two, Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives. This examination requires students to analyse how writers present a similar topic over time. The writing task requires students to express their viewpoint on a controversial issue, whilst utilising a range of linguistic devices and sentence structures to create interesting effects. Both examinations are worth 50% of the GCSE course.

Spoken language is assessed and separately endorsed through the delivery of a formal presentation. Students will be able to choose a topic of personal interest. The presentation must be delivered in front of an audience and video recorded.

Course Title: English Literature

Qualification Type: GCSE

Exam Board: AQA

The AQA GCSE English Literature course aims to inspire, motivate and challenge students. The specification takes a skills-based approach across the genres. Students will have the opportunity to analyse a nineteenth century novel: Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. They will also study a modern play: *An Inspector Calls* by J.B. Priestley. The Shakespeare component is William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Students will also study a range of poetry by contemporary poets and poets from literary heritage, centred around the theme of Power and Conflict.

The department continually offers students the chance to see the plays or novel that they are studying in performance to help enhance understanding of characterisation and themes. Students will complete two examinations. The two assessments require students to respond critically and imaginatively to the various texts studied over the two-year course. The two assessments are: Paper 1 - Shakespeare and the 19th century novel. This is worth 40% of the GCSE. Paper 2 - Modern texts and poetry. This is worth 60% of the GCSE.

Course Title: **Combined Science**

Qualification Type: **GCSE**

Exam Board: **AQA**

You are lucky to be living in the most exciting time in history for science. Your mobile phone is more powerful than the computer that put man on the moon. You are vaccinated against diseases that in the past would kill you. Right now, we have probes on Mars, asteroids and in the outer reaches of our solar system looking for clues that we are not alone in the universe. Professor Brian Cox, Professor Stephen Hawking, British astronaut Tim Peake and Steve Jobs have made science cool again. Now you have the opportunity to learn all about the exciting world of science. You will study biology, chemistry and physics units that have been updated with modern advances such as the wonder material 'graphene' and advances in DNA technology. Assessment is 100% examination with a strong element of mathematics and scientific investigative skills.

Course Title: **Religious Studies**

Qualification Type: **GCSE**

Exam Board: **Pearson Edexcel A**

Religion is one of the most powerful and controversial forces in the world today, it shapes peoples' views on a wide range of philosophical and ethical issues.

GCSE Religious Studies is an engaging, stimulating and demanding course which explores what it means to be human. It is a subject that encourages discussion and debate, thoughtful reflection, and the skills to assess and critically analyse different opinions and beliefs in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance and respect. The students will follow the Edexcel Route A and will study the following topics:

Paper 1: Catholic Christianity (50%)

Catholic Beliefs

Catholic Practices

Sources of Wisdom and Authority

Forms of Expression

Paper 2: Judaism (25%)

Jewish Beliefs and Teachings

Jewish Practices

Paper 3: Ethics and Philosophy (25%)

Existence of God

Relationships

Religious Studies is a well-established academic subject that is highly regarded by universities and professions such as journalism, social care and community work, childcare and education, police work, business and law, medicine, charity and diplomatic work.



Humanities Subjects

All students must pick one humanities subject.

Course Title: **Geography**

Qualification Type: **GCSE**

Exam Board: **AQA**

The course offers engaging and topical content such as natural hazards, ecosystems and the development gap. Stimulating blends of traditional and contemporary geography will suit students of all abilities. Students will study physical and human geography in discrete, self-contained topic areas. There is a focus on physical processes and factors that produce diverse and dynamic landscapes over time. The course offers relevant and vital skills such as communication skills, graphical and cartographical skills, technological skills including ICT, interpersonal skills through debate and discussion, literacy and numeracy skills, problem-solving skills, entrepreneurial skills and awareness of career possibilities.

GCSE Geography is assessed through three written exams:

Living with the physical environment (35%)

Challenges in the human environment (35%)

Geographical applications (30%) assessing the skills used during fieldwork carried out by the students whilst undertaking two geographical enquiries



Course Title: **History**

Qualification Type: **GCSE**

Exam Board: **Pearson/Edexcel**



The course is a collection of diverse and interesting historical studies, with an emphasis on developing skills that will be beneficial regardless of your career pathway.

GCSE History is a challenging course, with the reward of being one of the most highly respected GCSE qualifications. Students will study medicine through time in paper 1, in which they will be identifying changes in attitudes towards medicine, such as the cause of disease. They will explain why these changes in attitudes, science and technology have taken place from c1250 to present day. This would be a great opportunity for someone who is interested in a medical career later on. Paper 2 includes two historical time periods. Students will study Elizabeth I and the challenges she faced throughout her reign as Queen of England before then studying the Spanish Empire and how they conquered large parts of the Americas from 1492. This will build on students' understanding of empire and the effects of empire on the indigenous people. Finally paper 3 is Weimar and Nazi Germany, whereby students study Hitler's rise to power and how he maintained his control over German society. Throughout the History course, students will develop a range of skills including analysing historical interpretations and sources, debating arguments and forming clear judgements.

You will be studying the Edexcel Linear GCSE. Government changes mean GCSE History no longer has a coursework element, so just like geography you will sit 3 examinations at the end of year 11. These exams will include:

- Medicine in Britain from 1250 to World War I
- Elizabethan England & Spain and the New World
- Nazi Germany 1918 to 1939

Modern Foreign Languages Subjects

We offer French and Spanish – students may choose one.

Course Title: French

Qualification Type: GCSE

Exam Board: AQA

The study of a modern foreign language is an exciting and stimulating activity. It makes an invaluable contribution to the individual's ability to understand other cultures within our own multi-cultural society.

Studying French will help you to communicate, as well as helping you to understand the language in speech and writing. The French you will learn is practical, modern and useful in real life situations. Many interesting and well-paid jobs today expect candidates to have knowledge of a foreign language such as French.

The MFL GCSE exam is in four parts:

Listening 25%
Reading 25%
Speaking 25%



Course Title: Spanish

Qualification Type: GCSE

Exam Board: AQA

The study of a modern foreign language is an exciting and stimulating activity. It makes an invaluable contribution to the individual's ability to understand other cultures within our own multi-cultural society.

Studying Spanish will help you to communicate, as well as helping you to understand the language in speech and writing. The Spanish you will learn is practical, modern and useful in real life situations. Many interesting and well-paid jobs today expect candidates to have knowledge of a foreign language such as Spanish.

The MFL GCSE exam is in four parts:

Listening 25%
Reading 25%
Speaking 25%

Creative Arts Subjects

There is a mixture of GCSE and BTEC qualifications available to choose from in this department.

Course Title: **Art, Craft & Design**

Qualification Type: **GCSE**

Exam Board: **AQA**



GCSE Art, Craft and Design is a dynamic course designed to inspire students and equip them with the skills needed to continue development of their artistic talents with confidence. Art can be a way of exploring an idea or conveying an experience. Craft can be described as the practice of making something from certain materials, using specific tools, and following a process to enable creation. And design can be defined as a way of developing a response to a specific need, taking account of parameters. Students can choose to express and display their artwork in various forms such as painting, sculpture, illustration, fashion, ceramics and portraiture.

This course provides students with a wide range of creative, exciting and stimulating opportunities to explore their interests in ways that are both personally relevant and developmental in nature. Students will learn how to communicate and then create their own ideas in a variety of mediums.

This two-unit specification enables students to develop their ability to actively engage in the processes of art and design – to build creative skills through learning and doing, to develop imaginative and intuitive ways of working and develop knowledge and understanding of media, materials and technologies in historical and contemporary contexts, societies and cultures.

It is a strong foundation for further progression to art and design related courses such as A-level Art and Design and enhanced vocational and career pathways.

Assessment is by a portfolio and an externally set task. Students must demonstrate the skills of development, refinement, recording and presentation of their ideas through their portfolio, which must show drawings using colour, line, forms, shape, tone and texture along with written annotations.

Unit 1: Portfolio of Work (Controlled Assessment) is worth 60% of the overall grade and Unit 2: Externally Set Task is worth 40%

Course Title: **Photography**

Qualification Type: **GCSE**

Exam Board: **AQA**

GCSE Photography is a dynamic course designed to inspire students and equip them with the skills needed to continue development of their photography skills with confidence. Photography is 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.

Learners will produce work within at least one of the following areas of photography: portraiture, location photography, studio photography, experimental imagery, installation, documentary photography, photo-journalism, fashion photography and moving images like film, video and animation. They will look at a variety of techniques and use both long shots and close ups to display work and think about how an audience can interpret images differently. Learners will also demonstrate their understanding of lighting, viewpoint and shutter speed for example and show they can recognise and appreciate the different visual elements such as colour, tone and scale.

Students do not need their own camera to choose this course as they will have access to advanced equipment within school in order to develop their photography skills. They will learn how to use DSLR cameras and the different modes and functions in order to shoot successful images. They will then develop photo manipulation skills through the use of Mac computers, preparing them for industry. Students will be set a number of themes to work to and will have the opportunity to go off out to shoot on location.

Assessment is by a portfolio and an externally set task. Students must demonstrate the skills of development, refinement, recording and presentation of their ideas through their portfolio, which must be annotated.

Unit 1: Portfolio of Work (Controlled Assessment) is worth 60% of the overall grade and Unit 2: Externally Set Task is worth 40%



Course Title: **Performing Arts**

Qualification Type:

BTEC Tech Award Level 1-2

Exam Board: **Pearson/Edexcel**



There are three components to this course that need to be completed over years 10 and 11. The first is the 'Exploring the Performing Arts' component and the second is the 'Developing Skills and Techniques in the Performing Arts' component, both of which are assessed internally. The third component, assessed externally, is called 'Responding to a Brief'.

Students will have the option to be put forward as a performance or production candidate. This means they can be assessed on their performance skills or their design skills. Pupils will have three drama lessons a week in which they will have access to our studio with space to perform and hone their design skills.

Students will also have the opportunity to watch live theatre and read plays.

In component 1 students will develop their understanding of the performing arts by examining the work of performing arts professionals. Learners will watch recorded or live performances in at least three different styles such as acting, dance and musical theatre. Students will examine the roles of not only the performers but also the writer, director or choreographer for instance. They will also learn about the skills required in these roles, the importance of the casting stage and rehearsals, along with the different styles used to entertain, educate or challenge viewpoints.

In component 2 learners will develop their performing arts skills through either acting, dancing or musical theatre as performers or designers. All students will have to show they can consider health and safety, behaviour and attitudes to others when working in a team, be punctual, reliable, supportive and cooperative as either a performer or designer through their engagement in workshops, rehearsals and performances. In particular performers will be assessed on how they warm up, recall lines of script, take direction, use body language and expression, and their vocal and musical skills for example. Designers will be assessed on their interpretation of a brief, research, how they pitch ideas, costume and makeup, set design and props along with sound and lighting to name just some of the techniques. Progress must be tracked throughout this component with learners reviewing their work and responding to feedback.

Component 3 is the module that includes the externally assessed exam.

Students will work as part of a group to contribute to a performance in response to a brief. They will need to understand how to respond to a brief, be aware of parameters, consider the style with their audience in mind, plan and structure their work, contribute individually but also take part in the group rehearsals. After the performance learners will also evaluate their work.

This course is suited to creative students with a passion and appreciation for the arts.

Course Title: **Music Practice**

Qualification Type:

BTEC Tech Award Level 1-2

Exam Board: **Pearson/Edexcel**

There are three components to this course that need to be completed over years 10 and 11. The first is the 'Exploring Music Products and Styles' component and the second is the 'Music Skills Development' component, both of which are assessed internally. The third component, assessed externally, is called 'Responding to a Music Brief'.

Students will have three music lessons a week in which they will have access to instruments and computer software to aid them in their studies. The students will also have the opportunity to watch live music and perform for an audience themselves.

In component 1 students will explore the techniques used in the creation of different musical products and investigate the key features of different musical styles. Students will study three forms of popular music from across multiple genres for example rock 'n' roll, Motown and soul, heavy metal, synth pop, Britpop or dubstep. Learners will also explore two other styles, which come from world music, music for media, western classical or jazz and blues. This allows learners the opportunity to explore different avenues of music, according to their preference.

In component 2 learners will have the opportunity to develop two musical disciplines through engagement in practical tasks. They will document their progress and make plans for further improvement. Within this unit students will explore the expectations and skills required to succeed in the music industry. Students will take part in sessions of music production, creating original music and music performance.

Component 3 is the module that includes the externally assessed exam. Students will present music in response to a brief. They will need to understand the aim and requirements of the brief, consider their target audience, be expected to plan and research to a timeline and may even reflect on set design and lighting. After the performance learners will evaluate their work. The music industry is an exciting and highly competitive one, constantly evolving and offers many different work opportunities. This course is suited to creative students with a passion and appreciation for creating as well as performing music.



Computing & Technology Subjects

There is a mixture of GCSE and BTEC qualifications available to choose from in this department.

Course Title: **Digital Information Technology**

Qualification Type:

BTEC Tech Award Level 1-2

Exam Board: **Pearson/Edexcel**

This qualification is equivalent to a GCSE in computing. The digital sector is a major source of employment in the UK. The modern world expects digital skills to be as important as English and maths. As a result, Mount St Joseph believes that this qualification equips students with the necessary skills for future employment and is offered as a compulsory subject in both year 10 and year 11. There are three components which focus on the assessment of knowledge, skills and practices.

Component 1: Exploring User Interface Design Principles and Project Planning Techniques (30%) Internal Assessment

Component 2: Collecting, Presenting and Interpreting Data (30%) Internal Assessment

Component 3: Effective Digital Working Practices (40%) Written Exam (60 marks)



Course Title: **Computer Science**

Qualification Type: **GCSE**

Exam Board: **Pearson/Edexcel**

GCSE Computer Science allows students to develop programming skills and explore how computers work and to apply computational thinking skills to a range of problems. They gain experience of designing, writing and testing computer programs in different situations. They understand the impact of computing on individuals, society and the environment, including ethical, legal and ownership issues. This subject relies heavily on mathematics and requires students to be both independent and resilient.

Assessment: Students complete two examinations-

- Paper 1: Principles of Computer Science (50% = 75 marks)
- Paper 2: Application of Computational Thinking: Practical Coding Exam (50% = 75 marks)

Course Title: Food Preparation & Nutrition

Qualification Type: GCSE

Exam Board: WJEC

Want to be the next Jamie Oliver, Gordon Ramsey or maybe Nigella Lawson? Do you want a career in catering, health or fitness?

If the answer is YES to one or all of these questions then this subject is for you!

The course is assessed through 50% written exam and two controlled assessment tasks; Non-Examination Assessment 1 (NEA 1) is worth 15% and is based around a Food Science Investigation, Non-Examination Assessment 2 (NEA 2) is worth 35% and involves research, planning and making 3 dishes in 3 hours, along with evaluating your dishes.



Course Title: Design & Technology

Qualification Type: GCSE

Exam Board: Pearson/Edexcel

This course is suitable for creative students who enjoy designing and making products. Students will design and make products to solve practical problems using the following materials: wood, metal and plastic and develop their skills with CAD/CAM.

In year 10 a number of projects will be undertaken in order to develop design and making skills including computer-aided design and manufacture. It is important that students also develop their research and analysis skills and are able to review their work.

The course will help students understand industrial manufacturing processes and could lead to local work placements with manufacturing/engineering companies.

The projects will allow the students to develop their own interests and to work independently to solve a problem of their choice.

This course is a good foundation for those students looking towards a career in a broad range of industries including automotive, architecture, manufacturing, graphic design and engineering.

The overall grade for this subject comprises of 50% controlled assessment and 50% exam.

Other Subjects

Here you will find a mix of vocational and GCSE subjects.

Course Title: Sport

Qualification Type: BTEC Tech Award Level 1-2

Exam Board: Pearson/Edexcel

BTEC Tech Award in Sport is a GCSE equivalent course, designed for learners interested in taking a hands-on course alongside their GCSEs, that will offer them an insight into what it is like to work in the sports sector. As this qualification is vocational the assessment for this course is around 75% coursework and 25% written examination. It covers theoretical and practical based content that requires participation in applied learning to develop transferable and technical skills that are needed in the sport industry. The course consists of three lessons per week, two of which are theory lessons and one is most often practical. Students will now be assessed through a mixture of internal and external assessments, written assessments, presentations and practical areas.

In component 1, students will be taught how to prepare and lead others to take part in sport and physical activity. Students will explore the different types and provision of sport and physical activity available for different types of participants, barriers to participation and ways to overcome these barriers to increase participation in sport and physical activity. They will also research equipment and technological advances in a chosen sport or physical activity and how to prepare our bodies for participation in sport and physical activity. Component 2 is all about taking part and improving other participants' sporting performance. Students will investigate the components of fitness and their effect on performance, take part in practical sport, explore the role of officials in sport and learn to apply methods and sporting drills to improve other participants' sporting performance.

Finally, component 3 is the external examination and focusses on developing fitness to improve other participants' performance in sport and physical activity. Learners will be introduced to and develop an understanding of the importance of fitness and the different types of fitness for performance in sport and physical activity. They will also develop an understanding of the body and fitness testing.



Course Title: Enterprise

Qualification Type: BTEC Tech Award Level 1-2

Exam Board: Pearson/Edexcel

This course allows you to investigate a range of businesses and understand their success. You will write assignments for two units of coursework and sit an exam as part of your studies. You will be asked to create a Business Plan for an enterprise idea and learn how to set up a small business. You can learn practical skills that employers value such as managing accounts and delivering presentations.

Component 1: Exploring Enterprises (Assignment)

Component 2: Planning and Presenting a Micro Enterprise Idea (Assignment)

Component 3: Marketing & Finance for Enterprise (Examination)

Choose this if you are interested in how businesses run and want to learn new skills.

You must enjoy writing detailed assignments independently and be able to meet deadlines.

Do not choose this if you will find writing long assignments alone difficult or you do not meet homework deadlines.

The assessment for this course is 60% coursework and 40% examination.

Course Title: Health & Social Care

Qualification Type: BTEC Tech Award Level 1-2

Exam Board: Pearson/Edexcel

This course will help to develop your understanding of how health and social care professionals carry out their work. You will study how people develop through life stages from babies to the elderly and investigate how their needs change. You will also learn about healthy living and negative impacts on health. You will learn to measure health and create plans to improve health. You will write assignments for two units of coursework and sit an exam as part of your studies.

Component 1: Human Lifespan Development (Assignment)

Component 2: Health and Social Care Services and Values (Assignment)

Component 3: Health and Wellbeing (Examination)

Choose this if you are interested in how health and social care professionals support people in their care.

You must enjoy writing detailed assignments independently and be able to meet deadlines.

Do not choose this if you will find writing long assignments alone difficult or you do not meet homework deadlines.

The assessment for this course is 60% coursework and 40% examination.

Course Title: **Separate Science – Biology, Chemistry and Physics**

Qualification Type: **GCSEs**

Exam Board: **AQA**

Why does my mobile phone lose signal? What will we use for fuel when all the oil has run out? How will we put a human on Mars? In science we are always asking the questions 'why?' and 'how?' If you study separate sciences you will be encouraged to be curious, to question everything. The science of today is the technology of tomorrow. You could be the person who finds a cure for cystic fibrosis. You could be the person who discovers a new planet. You could answer the question, 'is time travel possible?' Separate sciences are also the option for you even if you have slightly more modest ambitions such as being a doctor, vet, microbiologist, pharmacist, optician or zoologist. The course will mean you achieve three completely separate GCSEs in biology, chemistry and physics.

