

Options 2017

Introduction – Foreword

The Academy has a mission summary statement:

**“Aiming High” to achieve “Excellence for All” in
“A World Class Academy”**

Our mission summary statement indicates what the Academy would like to achieve. “We want the Academy staff and students to have high expectations: to aim high. Gifted students will be stretched; all students will be motivated by the choice of vocational and academic subjects on offer.”

One of the key elements of this mission is the curriculum offer at Key Stage 4. Our Academy has two excellent campuses; a large campus in Sleaford and a smaller campus in Ruskington. Both campuses will offer the same core Curriculum. However, we are committed to ensuring that students have a personalized curriculum – one which fits their individual interests and needs. If any student finds that his/her courses of choice are only available at the other campus, it is possible to apply to attend that campus during Y10 and Y11. We cannot guarantee that such an application would be successful, but we would hope to find places for the majority of such applicants, assuming there is room on the courses they have chosen.

At St George’s we recognise the importance of adaptability and flexibility. We need to be innovative, while ensuring that the key basic skills are strong and can be transferred into a variety of contexts, so that our young people will be able to adapt to the challenges to be faced in a changing world. We aim to lead the way in curriculum innovation and learning.

The government has put an extra emphasis on performance in more traditional subjects, so students who gain GCSEs in English, Maths, Science, Humanities (Geography or History) and Foreign Languages (French, German or Spanish for most of our students) will find that their qualifications are highly prized in many circles.

This does not mean that other subjects will not be as highly valued. Anyone who has tried to secure the services of a skilled worker recently will realise that there is a real shortage in some areas. So-called ‘vocational’ qualifications are recognised by many as just as valuable as more traditional ‘academic’ courses and many provide access routes into further and higher education.

Now is the time for students to decide, with guidance from parents and the Academy, what subjects they will be studying in Years 10 and 11, leading to external examinations.

In Years 7, 8 and 9 the timetable has been made up of compulsory subjects. There has been no choice available, as we have aimed to give students a broad and balanced curriculum.

A few words of advice as you consider your options:

- Whatever courses you choose, the key is **SUCCESS**. Choose subjects you enjoy and subjects you can succeed in. We want students to be successful in school to give them the best chance of being successful in life.
- If your teachers say you are capable of making good progress in a Humanities subject (Geography or History) and a Foreign Language, you really should continue with at least two subjects of that type.
- If you wish to study Academic Level 3 courses in the Sixth Form you need to achieve 5 GCSE's at grade 5 or above with at least a 4 in GCSE Maths and English Language.
- If your strengths are elsewhere and your teachers suggest making progress will be difficult in a certain subject, pick something else you enjoy and will succeed in.
- To help students avoid making inappropriate choices we have included restrictions on certain courses, which we know to be particularly challenging without having the necessary mathematical and scientific abilities.
- Some students are more suited to the portfolio and terminal examination style of assessment of the vocational subjects and choose mostly vocational courses. Others actually prefer to work towards a terminal examination only and choose no vocational courses. Many, however, will choose a mixture of the two, to maintain a balanced curriculum and to keep their options for the future open.
- There are Curriculum Evenings at the Ruskington and Sleaford campuses. You really must come along to one of those to find out more about the process and the courses on offer.

T G Crawshaw
Vice Principal

Introduction – Choosing the Right Options

The purpose of this Booklet, along with the Curriculum Evening on **Wednesday 25 January 2017**, is:

- a) to give details of the compulsory courses students will follow in Years 10 and 11
- b) to explain how the option choices work
- c) to give you the information you need to make the right choice from the list of Options

The booklet is divided into two main sections.

Section 1 Core Curriculum

This section describes the courses on offer in the compulsory element of the curriculum.

The key qualifications required by many employers include GCSEs in English and Mathematics.

The key indicators of success used by the government are the students' performance across their 'best eight' subjects, the students' level of progress in comparison to similar ability peers and the number of students who attain the English Baccalaureate. Our core curriculum emphasizes the importance of English and Mathematics by giving extra time to these subjects.

Science is increasingly included in the measures of success, alongside English and Mathematics so all students are given the opportunity to gain at least two GCSEs (or equivalent) in Science. Those students who are in the **top two Science sets will have the option to study three separate Sciences.** There may be a few other students from set 3 invited to choose the three separate Sciences, based on teacher recommendation.

Section 2 Options

This section describes the courses available in the Option columns. Students can study **four** subjects from the list, but we want **all** students to choose **one** from a range of EBacc subjects. The EBacc subjects are "triple award" Science (students in the top two Science groups are generally the only students to have the option to choose this course), History, Geography, Spanish, French or German. A small number of students will be selected to follow an **alternative curriculum** in place of an EBacc choice to support their further progress in English & Maths. The remaining **three** choices are from the complete range of subjects available, where we ask that students choose **six** subjects in **priority order**. We will make every effort to give everyone four of their chosen subjects, but that may not always be possible.

Having read the booklet, students (and parents) find out more about the subjects at the Curriculum Evening. This is preceded, a week earlier, by the parents' evening on **Wednesday 18 January 2017**. Students should talk to their teachers about their suitability for the courses they are thinking of choosing.

Finally, we will have to know what subjects students have chosen. Students must fill in the blue option reply form (**which will be given out at the Curriculum Evening on 25 January**) and return it to form tutors **before Friday 3 February 2017**. We cannot guarantee a place on your chosen course, as some combinations of subjects may not be possible and some subjects may be very popular and over-subscribed. We will, however, try our best to give students their chosen subjects. **Make sure that the Option Reply Form is returned before the deadline** – some have missed out on their chosen subjects in the past because the form was handed in late.

Introduction – Curriculum Structure

In Year 10, certain subjects remain compulsory (core curriculum) but students are able to choose some of their subjects, as they start to think about the qualifications they would like to gain in preparation for their future careers.

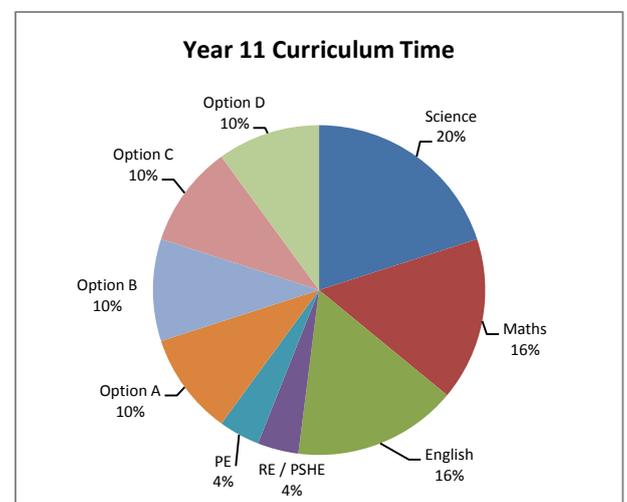
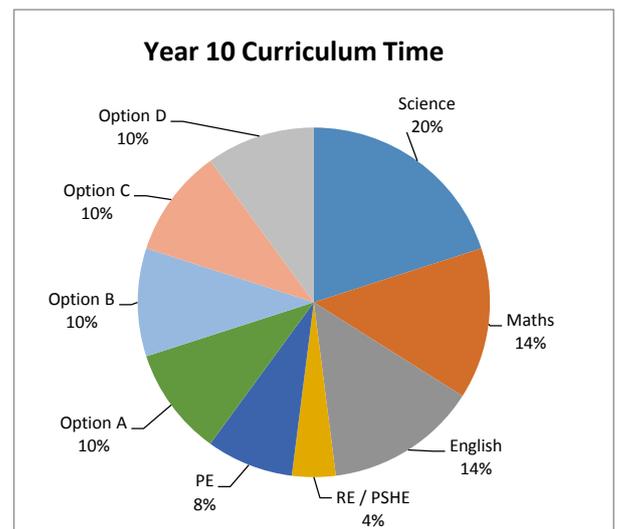
The decision of what subjects to choose is an important one. Teachers are happy to discuss the individual strengths of students and offer advice about whether a course is appropriate.

The diagrams below show how we expect the curriculum to be structured during Years 10 and 11 from September 2017. They show how the 50 periods are distributed over a two-week period between compulsory ‘core’ subjects and Option subjects.

Year 10

Year 11

ENGLISH		ENGLISH
MATHEMATICS		ENGLISH
MATHEMATICS		MATHEMATICS
MATHEMATICS	20%	MATHEMATICS
MATHEMATICS		MATHEMATICS
SCIENCE		MATHEMATICS
SCIENCE		MATHEMATICS
SCIENCE		SCIENCE
SCIENCE		SCIENCE
SCIENCE		SCIENCE
SCIENCE	40%	SCIENCE
SCIENCE		SCIENCE
PE		SCIENCE
PE		SCIENCE
PE		PE
PE		PE
RE / PSHE		RE / PSHE
RE / PSHE	60%	RE / PSHE
OPTION A		OPTION A
OPTION B		OPTION B
OPTION B	80%	OPTION B
OPTION B		OPTION B
OPTION C		OPTION C
OPTION D		OPTION D
OPTION D	100%	OPTION D
OPTION D		OPTION D



Key

	Core Curriculum
	Option Subjects

Introduction – Key Features

Below are some of the key features St George's has incorporated into its Key Stage 4 Curriculum to prepare our students for the many demands that lie ahead of them. Before making any decisions, please take time to read the information included in this booklet and, if needs be, seek further advice.

✓ **Partnership with Parents**

St George's is keen to develop a strong partnership with parents and to improve **home-school links**. Day-to-day contact with parents is maintained via the **students' planners**, which we expect them to sign once a week. We will keep parents fully informed about students' progress through **termly assessment grades** and a **full annual written report**. Each year, there will be a **Parents' Evening** but parents should not hesitate to contact the Academy or to make an appointment if they have concerns. We expect parents to ensure that their child attends regularly in the appropriate uniform and hope that they take an active interest in all aspects of school work, especially **homework**. The Academy Libraries and Information & Resources Centres are open every day after school - students are able to join a **Homework Club** offering help and support.

All parents are invited to join the **Friends of St George's**, which organises social events, sponsors prizes to recognise students' achievement and raises additional funds for the benefit of the students in the Academy.

✓ **Excellence for All**

St George's staff have high expectations of all students. By '**Aiming High**', students are encouraged to achieve personal bests. Students' potential is measured on the basis of their performance in national assessment tests. Minimum expected and Aspirational target GCSE grades are calculated, and students' progress towards these are monitored by their subject teachers and Form Tutor. Students are encouraged to **aim high for their aspirational target**.

Introduction – Key Features

✓ **Specialist Status**

As an Academy, St George's places particular emphasis on Mathematics and Computing, but also specialises in vocational learning. The Academy is also an initial Teacher Training provider leading a partnership of primary & secondary schools to deliver teacher training across Lincolnshire.

✓ **Computer Science, Digital Literacy and Information Technology**

St George's has an Academy-wide industry-standard computer network with access to the Internet. On entry to St George's, each student is given an individual network account. Over the years, students increase their general ICT knowledge, understanding and skills as well as network literacy. In Key Stage 4, students are expected to take more responsibility for their own learning and to become more independent learners. They are encouraged to use ICT for their learning by, for example, accessing on-line information and communicating with others. ICT is one of the **Key Skills** which students will need to develop for further studies and work.

✓ **Independent Learning**

St George's subscribes to several on-line packages of revision and curriculum materials that students can access remotely by using a password. The most widely used is the revision program called '**Sam Learning**', which, if used to good effect can improve grades in the GCSE dramatically.

✓ **In-House Progression Routes post-16**

When considering option choices for the next two years, students should look ahead and think about what they want to do later on. "**Staying on**" in education until the age of 18 or 19 is now the norm. Achieving good results in summer 2018, will put students in an ideal position to take full advantage of the post-16 qualifications on offer. We have added more vocational pathways post-16, so that students are able to study more practical skills like catering, social care, construction, electronics or engineering, which could prepare them for a specific type of employment.

✓ **ILID Days**

Our Innovative Learning and Immersion Days have been developed to enable students to deepen their learning and understanding by spending extended periods in one subject area. Instead of the usual diet of one-hour lessons, students are "immersed" in the learning of one subject for at least half a day. This gives us the opportunity to try out more innovative ideas, which are not possible within the restrictions of the "normal" timetable. It also gives students in Years 10 and 11 well-needed, additional time for Option subjects as well as Science and English.

Vocational Qualifications (including BTEC, CTEC, WJEC and L2 Technical Awards)

There are a variety of vocational qualifications available, which assess a student's ability to perform a certain task or demonstrate a certain skill during the course. They are, generally speaking, assessed by producing a portfolio of evidence in conjunction with an examination.

These qualifications cover the full ability range from Entry Level (pre-GCSE) to Level 1 (equivalent to GCSE grades D-G) and Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE grades C- A*). Students can also continue to study BTECs and CTECs to level 3 in the 6th form (equivalent to A levels).

Other Key Considerations

English Baccalaureate

The government was at one point going to introduce an additional qualification, called the English Baccalaureate, which would be a simple way of recognising academic excellence. In the end the qualification did not materialize, but the term "EBacc" has made its way into the consciousness of employers, parents, teachers, higher education, students – everybody. Subjects that were going to make up the qualification - English, Mathematics, Science (or Computer Science), a Humanity (Geography or History) and a Language – are still referred to as "EBacc" subjects. Our Options process has been developed to show the value placed on these subjects and to create a broad and balanced curriculum, which equips students to compete in a competitive academic and job market.

T G Crawshaw
Vice Principal

Frequently asked questions

Can I change my mind later?

The subjects you choose are for the next two years. We expect everyone to complete their courses once they have decided on them. Therefore, it is very important that the right choice is made at the outset. As a result, we ask you to spend quite a long time considering your decisions. It is only in exceptional circumstances that students are permitted to change their courses once they have begun in September. Please bear this in mind.

Will I have to do more homework and independent study?

Yes. You will have to spend more time on homework for each subject as the courses you are following involve more independent study. You will be set homework for an average of about 2 hours per day.

Regular work at school and home and good study habits will be essential to relieve the pressure and help you to achieve success.

Will I definitely have all the subjects I ask for?

The majority of students will be allocated the selection of courses they have chosen. However, each year minor changes do need to be made. This affects only a very few students and we will do everything within our power to offer the selection you make

Somebody said if there aren't enough students opting for a subject then that subject will not run. Is this true?

Yes! Obviously we cannot run a course for just a handful of students. This would cost too much and it wouldn't be fair to teachers & students that have class sizes approaching thirty.

How many qualifications will I be studying for?

You may find that you are following between 10 – 11 accredited courses. Science is at least a double award subject (two GCSE's). Each of your options count as one subject. Everyone studies Mathematics and two English qualifications

Introduction – Careers & Work Related Learning

THOUGHTS ON YOUR OPTION CHOICES IN YEAR 9

Now you are about to make your option choices for the next school year AND BEYOND ... The leap you are about to make is not just into the next school year, it is a leap into the future and ultimately the world of work.

Making Decisions

This may be the first time you have been asked to make a decision that will affect your future and it will sound a bit daunting! Decisions are important, but by taking the time to carefully consider them you can be confident that the decisions you make are the right ones for you.

Getting Help Making Decisions

Make sure you have researched some careers ideas using the library of books, leaflets and computer programmes in the Careers Centre, such as u-explore and Kudos. You may need to have studied a particular subject at GCSE to enter some careers.

- * Go on to the careers section of The Academy website and access the available careers sites
- * Talk to your Careers Adviser who can give you independent, unbiased advice over the various choices you will have to make.
- * Talk to your form tutor who sees you in an all-round school situation.
- * Talk to subject teachers who provide an objective view of your subject abilities.
- * Talk to your parents who know you best of all as a person.

Remember: Good academic & vocational qualifications are the foundation stones for future learning.

Options Leading to Qualifications

Think of qualifications as keys which will open doors: Sixth Form, Applied Learning Courses, Training & Modern Apprenticeship, Higher Education, and eventually Employment.

The difficulty could be that you are not yet sure which doors you want to open (or even what they mean) or you may change your mind. Therefore, you won't know which keys to choose.

Of course the bigger your bunch of keys the more doors you will be able to open. BUT don't overstretch yourself – better to have 6 good keys (qualifications) than 10 not so good ones.

REMEMBER you will have to take some subjects as part of your studies (eg Maths, English, Science) so you will have a good base of 'core' subjects which you need to work at so as to achieve the highest (for you) possible grade.

You will also have a choice of other subject areas and these could be chosen with a specific career in mind. But remember you may change your mind, so choose subjects you will enjoy and do well at because later on Colleges, Universities and Employers will want to see evidence of breadth and depth of study.

Work Experience

All Year 10 students undertake one week's work experience at the beginning of July. This opportunity provides our students with first-hand information on employees' responsibilities, giving them a taste of what it is like to have a full working day without bells ringing every hour!

Our students have a good choice of placements from a variety of working environments, nevertheless limited by the nature of the local economy. Students use the Careers Centre in the Art Block Library extensively as they explore career options and make their work experience choices.

Each student is able to make four choices from the list of general placements that are offered to the Academy. This list is available for students and parents to view on the internet. When each student has made their choices, students are allocated one of their four choices (by a panel of staff). This system ensures that a high percentage of students are given one of their top four choices. Unfortunately, not all students will be allocated one of their preferred choices and will have to select one of the remaining placements, or arrange a "self- placement."

We are relying to an increasing extent on "self-placements." Students are encouraged to use family connections and friends to find a placement, for themselves or another student. "Self-Placement" forms can be obtained from the Careers Centre. The procedure is explained in a letter which is sent to parents. This contains a list of placements, which should not be contacted as, in most cases, they have already offered a place to the Academy.

Our students almost always return with a very positive view of their experience and invariably employers praise students efforts and behaviour. However, we realise that the idea can be very daunting for some and vaguely worrying for many, so we make sure that students are well prepared by a series of briefing sessions, which take place during their Life Skills lessons. This includes Health and Safety issues. Students will also make an informal visit to the placement beforehand, so that places and faces are familiar when they start, and to enable an "employer agreement" to be signed.

A debrief session will take place on the first day back to school after Work Experience. Here Year 10 students, with the help of teachers, share experiences, reflect and try to get the maximum benefit from the previous week. A second week of work experience will be available during Year 12.

Miss D Jarvis

Careers Officer