



King's College

Saint Michaels

PRE-A LEVEL COURSE OUTLINE

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Introduction

King's College Saint Michaels is dedicated to helping students achieve the combination of skills and qualifications which will enable them to make a successful next step in their education and to prepare them for adult life beyond school or college.

The Pre-A level course provides the opportunity for students to study a selection of subjects that will help them make a smooth and successful transition to the A level course of their choice or the university accredited Foundation Programme. The course is one year in duration, although students can join for shorter periods of time to help them develop their knowledge base before further study at home or in the UK.

Students joining our Pre A level course enjoy small class sizes allowing for support of all the students, whatever their level. There are great opportunities to develop English skills both in the dedicated English lessons but also in all the academic lessons where gaining English for academic purposes is a primary aim.

In addition to their academic studies Pre-A level students take part in our Sports programme and have access to all the clubs and activities available in the school. Completion of the full one year course will help students develop the skills and confidence to make a great start in their A level or University Foundation studies, should they choose to move on to further study. However for those students who join us for a shorter period of time, following the Pre-A level course will give an insight into the knowledge and skills needed for future study in the UK but will also provide an excellent opportunity to enhance their English skills, get a taste of life in a UK school and gain some great knowledge in their chosen pathway.

At KCSM we take pride in our strong pastoral support. Students have designated house staff, who take responsibility for their wellbeing in boarding, and a Form Tutor, who is their first point of contact and support for academic matters. We have a Wellbeing committee who discuss and act upon any concerns arising to do with our students. Our Student Council provides the opportunity for students to have their say on matters relating to the running of the school, whilst our Prefect team take responsibility for individual areas and provide a bridge between staff and students.

The College welcomes students from over 30 different countries and is well equipped to support all student learning requirements, whatever their level of English. Our experienced team provides individualised support to our students to help them to achieve English language qualifications and to improve their language skills in each subject area.

Course Structure

Our Pre-A level course is offered through two pathways: Science or Humanities. Each pathway offers a foundation of skills and knowledge needed for students wanting to progress to either A level study or the University Foundation programme. It offers a great alternative preparation for students who have not been able to complete the traditional two year GCSE programme.

The course also offers students the opportunity to continue to develop their English language skills, with particular emphasis on English for academic purposes. Although students undergo a range of internal assessments to monitor progress there is no pressure from external examinations on the course. This gives the students more time to really focus on developing their understanding and enthusiasm of their chosen subjects.

Core Modules

MATHEMATICS

The mathematics syllabus builds on the number, algebra and geometry work that students will have previously studied. Emphasis is given to developing students' confidence in the key skills so that those who wish to can make a smooth transition to studying A level mathematics.

The syllabus includes:

- Data collection, display and analysis
- Algebraic skills and manipulation
- Probability
- Area and Volume
- Number including ratios, percentages, indices and sequences
- Trigonometry
- Circle theorems
- Graphical work

As with all the modules in this course, assessment is from regular end of topic assessments, projects and regular consolidation tasks to be completed outside of lessons.

ENGLISH

The aim of this module is to develop students' skills in the five areas of the English Language:

Writing

By the end of the course students will be expected to be able to produce a number of written pieces of work dependent on their level, these being:

- Formal and Informal letters
- Reports
- Summaries
- Stories
- Articles
- Academic Style Essays

Furthermore students will receive support for any subject specific pieces of written work they may need to produce in-line with the tailored support each student has access to (i.e. the writing up of practical's in Science)

Speaking

Dependent on their level, by the end of the course, students will be expected to:

- Be able to provide information about themselves
- Make and respond to suggestions, discuss alternatives, make recommendations and negotiate agreement
- Describe photographs and other images
- Talk about opinions, likes/dislikes, habits and experiences
- Present chosen information in a seminar setting
- Hold and defend a position during debate

Listening

Dependent on their level, by the end of the course students will be able to:

- Listen to lectures/texts to find key information
- Listen to find specific information and detailed meaning
- Listen for attitude and opinion

Reading

Dependent on their level, by the end of the course students will be expected to:

- Read notices and other shorts texts to find specific information
- Skim read texts to gain a general understanding of the content
- Scan read texts to find specific information.
- Complete cloze exercise using information derived from a text
- Read text in detail for full understanding of the information present within the text
- Understand vocabulary and grammar present in written text

As with the writing strand of the course students will also have access to subject support for any subject specific texts they are required to read.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is recognized as an often overlooked but key facet of development in the English language and will be an area of focus throughout the course, with an appropriate amount of time dedicated to it over the course of the academic year.

Focusing on Academic English the aim of the course is to help prepare and support students in their subject studies to help them achieve their full potential at the school. Students study alongside GCSE students of the same ability allowing them to develop their language skills at an appropriate level and pace.

There are also additional opportunities in the timetable for more individual support lessons to help students make more rapid progress in their English language development. These lessons are tailored to the students' individual needs and are there to provide lesson specific support for the student.

For those students who would benefit, there is a possibility of up to ten lessons of English per week but the core offer is six lessons per week.

In line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) guidelines we would expect each student, after a year of study, to increase their level by one tier. Therefore, a student beginning the course at a B2 level should expect to have reached level C1 by the end of the course.

Course Content: Option Strands

Science Pathway

Those students who opt for the science pathway study Biology, Chemistry and Physics in addition to mathematics and English. The students have six lessons of each science per week. The curriculum is designed to give the students a foundation of scientific knowledge to enable them to commence studying any of the three sciences at A level. In addition to academic knowledge students are encouraged and supported to improve their practical scientific skills with a hands on approach to learning. There is also a look at the application and implications of Science, within each of these subjects.

Each subject is assessed regularly through the course.

BIOLOGY

The Biology course is subdivided into five main areas:

1. The nature and variety of living organisms: this includes looking at plants, humans and other animals as living organisms.
2. Structures and functions in living organisms: this includes work about Cells and some Biochemistry.
3. Reproduction and inheritance: reproduction, genes and DNA
4. Ecology and the environment
5. Use of biological resources

Each of the sections is subdivided into different topics. Assessment is from regular end of topic tests and regular consolidation work to be completed outside of lessons.

CHEMISTRY

The Chemistry course has four main themes

1. Principles of chemistry: this includes looking at the structure of the atom and the bonding between them
2. Chemistry of the elements: periodic patterns, reactions of Group 1 and Group 7 elements
3. Organic chemistry: hydrocarbons, fuel chemistry, alcohols
4. Physical chemistry: rates of reaction, energy, pH and acids, mol calculations

Assessment is from regular end of topic tests and regular consolidation work to be completed outside of lessons.

PHYSICS

The course covers seven section areas. Each of the sections is subdivided into different topics.

1. Forces and motion, including momentum, gravity and astronomy
2. Electricity, including a.c. and d.c circuits
3. Waves, including light and sound
4. Energy resources and energy transfer
5. Solids, liquids and gases: density, gas laws, pressure, heat capacity
6. Magnetism and electromagnetism, including electromagnets, motors and generators
7. Radioactivity and particles

Assessment is from regular end of topic tests and regular consolidation work to be completed outside of lessons.

Humanities Pathway

The Humanities pathway is always very popular with students who have long term plans to study business or want to work in accounting and finance or have an interest in management, economics and international relations. Students have six lessons per week in Business, Economics and Geography. Alongside the core modules in mathematics and English, this pathway makes an ideal preparation for studying A levels.

ECONOMICS

The Economics module is a great introduction to a range of crucial ideas for those thinking about further A level study or have a general interest in the UK and international economy. Topics covered include:

- Competitive markets
- Supply and Demand
- Economic Growth
- Inflation
- Monetary Policy
- UK Economy and Globalisation
- European Union
- International Trade

Assessment is from regular end of topic tests and regular consolidation work to be completed outside of lessons.

BUSINESS STUDIES

The Pre-A Level course in Business Studies qualification is designed to support students to:

- develop an interest in, and enjoyment of, business subjects that will be sustained in later life
- use relevant terminology, concepts and methods effectively and recognise the strengths and limitations of the ideas used
- develop and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to current issues in a wide range of appropriate international and UK contexts
- use an enquiring, critical approach to distinguish between facts and opinion and evaluate qualitative and quantitative data, to help build arguments and make informed judgements
- appreciate the range of different stakeholder perspectives in relation to business activities
- have an understanding of the dynamics of business activity and the related considerations of ethics and sustainability in business.

Topics covered include:

- Business Activity and the Changing Environment – examines the objectives of businesses, the changing environment and the criteria for judging success. The focus is on the importance of having clear business objectives and how the business environment provides opportunities for, and imposes constraints upon, the pursuit of those objectives.
- Human Resources – looks at people in organisations focusing on their roles, relationships and management in business.
- Accounting and Finance – explores the use of accounting and financial information as an aid to decision making.
- Marketing – focuses on identifying and satisfying customer needs in a changing and competitive international environment.
- Production – examines the way organisations use and manage resources to produce goods and services.

Assessment is carried out at the end of a section using scenario based questions. This includes an end of topic test.

GEOGRAPHY

The Geography module is for those who have an interest in the natural world, how people affect it or are affected by it. During the year students develop and use a range of skills in looking at a combination of Human, Physical and Environmental themes and how these all interact. Geography encourages students to appreciate the importance of places and environments on both a local and global scale.

Topics covered include:

- River environments
- Economic activity
- Energy
- Coastal environments
- Natural hazards
- Development and human welfare
- Ecosystems

Assessments are carried out at the end of each unit and through regular consolidation work completed outside of lessons

Looking Ahead

A Level subjects needed for degree courses

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/a-level-choices/what-a-levels-do-you-need-for-the-degree-you-want-to-study>

Information on Facilitating Subjects

<http://russellgroup.ac.uk/for-students/school-and-college-in-the-uk/subject-choices-at-school-and-college/>