

Business Studies - Position Statement

Context and background

St Marys has a well-established Business Studies department. The school offers GCSE Business as an option subject at KS4 and responds to occasional need to deliver Enterprise sessions at KS3. The subject has always been a popular choice for students. Traditionally this subject has had three option groups per year but as more pupils have recognised the benefit of the EBac this has decreased to two per cohort. This subject contributes positively to pupils overall GCSE results with on average pupils achieving results in excess of FFT20 expectations. The results of the department are also in line with national averages for the OCR course. Many pupils see this course as a starting point to further study and go onto courses such as A level Business, Economics or Law and BTec Enterprise. The course also gives pupils a very useful insight into recruitment, the world of work and financial skills.

Staffing

Business is taught by one member of staff, who is also the Head of Department. She has been in post since September 2020. This member of staff is an experienced Business teacher who has also been an OCR examiner for the subject, for many years.

Curriculum

The Business course offered is OCR Business J204.

The lessons broadly follow the two year scheme of work recommended by OCR. Units 1 to 3 are taught in year 10 and units 4 to 7 in year 11. Finance is taught before operations to allow more time for retrieval practice on the topic, this is because this is the topic which historically pupils find the most challenging.

All businesses have an ethical and environmental responsibility. This is becoming a more significant issue for business as they are asked to reflect upon the morality of how they operate and to be able to justify their business decisions to stakeholders not only in terms of profitability but also wider responsibilities. The external influences business face such as these, are taught at the end of year 11 however as we are studying this curriculum in a Catholic school, firmly rooted in Gospel values, we reflect throughout the course on the responsibility of business owners to balance the need for profitability and social conscious. The impact of faith is also explored in the trip to Cadbury World as that business grew out of the need for a product that met popular demand but was also acceptable to a strong Quaker family.

From very early on in the course, pupils are taught and practice, the key skills of applying theory to different businesses and evaluating data to make business decisions. Pupils do this by discussion in the classroom and in writing when practising how to structure a business decision which is firmly rooted in appropriate theory.

Regular reference to business news encourages pupils to see the subject in a wider context and apply their knowledge. This also give pupils the opportunity to widen their knowledge of the impact of business and finance in the wider world.

This course attracts a wide spread of academic ability and all pupils are supported to achieve their full potential. Some pupils will be supported to concentrate on theory recall using word lists and application using a range of differing examples whilst higher ability pupils will be encouraged to engage in effective business decision making using more complex sources of information or higher-level discussion.

Assessment

This course is split into six modules. In addition to the Year 10 exam and Year 11 mock, formal assessments are held as each module is completed. These end of module exams always contain past GCSE exam questions and are structured in the same way as the final exams, to gain familiarity and confidence. Pupils are given a percentage and exam grade based on previous OCR grade boundaries that are used to track their progress. Throughout the modules, classwork and homework is assessed for progress. Some of this work is written and some is electronic on packages such as E Revision.

Enrichment

In order to gain a real understanding of business theory in action, all pupils are offered the opportunity to visit Cadbury World during the summer term of Year 10. There they take part in a marketing workshop and also gain an insight into various production methods and the ethics of running a global business.

The department is aware of the needs of disadvantaged pupils and will always ensure that opportunities such as the trip and the purchase of supporting materials are available to all pupils.

Revision classes are offered to all year 11 pupils after school from the start of the latter half of the spring term.