

Raising Aspirations, Delivering Excellence



The Rochester
Grammar School



Welcome

Dear parents, carers and students

We are all very proud of our school and the way our community of students, parents, staff and governors work together to provide a learning environment for the 21st Century. We are educating our children for a world that is rapidly changing, a world that we expect will be very different by the time they have graduated from university compared with the time they joined us in Year 7. This requires not only an excellent foundation of learning, but also the acquisition of habits of flexible thinking and learning and confidence in solving problems as an individual and within a team. Our innovative curriculum is very much tailored towards meeting individual learning needs; we expect every student to achieve their full potential whilst they are with us.

In our last Ofsted report, we were judged to be outstanding in every category. We were reaccredited by Exeter University as an Advanced Thinking School in October 2019, having retained this status since 2010. We are a Multi-Academy Trust, (Thinking Schools Academy Trust) with seventeen schools across Medway, Deal, Portsmouth and Plymouth. These include secondary, primary, junior and infant schools. Our Trust's mission is 'Every young person in our community deserves to have the best opportunities at life regardless of their individual circumstances'. Education is the key to accessing these opportunities and we support and develop every member of our community to

- Think about their Thinking
- Be the Best
- Shape their Success

In this way Thinking Schools Academy Trust transforms life chances. Outstanding teaching and learning is at the heart of our ethos and we have been recognised by the Department for Education (DfE) as a sponsor for other schools.

We all learn best when we are happy and valued; supported, challenged and encouraged. We want each student to have a personalised passion for learning, a desire to enquire, to question and to think and to act responsibly. The school aims to nurture successful ways of thinking and effective tools for life.

Finally and most importantly, we believe that every student is unique: we endeavour to build on the raw talent and energy that your child brings, to enable them to achieve personal success.

We look forward to working in partnership with you over the next few years.



Mrs C Brinklow BA (Hons) Msc
Principal

A Community Of Families

Within the school community of RGS, each student is a member of a House group. During their time in the school they will get to know most of the members of their House, not only in her own year group, but from across the school. Her daily contact with a form tutor will be as part of a smaller division of her House community, containing students from Years 7 to 12.

All new students are 'buddied' with a Year 8 mentor who can closely relate to any worries that they might have about settling in. Students settle very well into the school and within weeks many are eager for positions of responsibility.

Student voice plays an important role in the school and students are represented on numerous groups and working parties, including the Student Thinking Team.

We aim to nurture the whole student with our mindfulness and wellbeing programme and students have access to a range of staff to help them settle in.



“The pupils feel it’s an extremely supportive community. There isn’t a person who won’t help you’, says one.”

Good Schools Guide





Furthering Excellence

We are proud of our external examination results; we consistently feature amongst leading schools nationally in performance tables.

High quality teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and tracking of student progress are at the heart of the curriculum.

Within a secure and stimulating environment we provide personal challenge and enjoyment of learning – the foundations for academic success.

When students reach Year 9 they embark on an enquiry based study, allowing them to use their toolkit to explore big questions and come to carefully considered conclusions which forms an excellent transition towards their GCSE studies.



“The teachers make it fun to learn. They help you to perform to your best ability and improve your knowledge in a fun way.”

Rebecca, Year 7

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Unique & Principled

Each student has unique talents and abilities, though all share in the need to develop sound, enduring values. Our child-centred education promotes not only academic achievement, but the development of integrity and compassion.

All students have personal passions and talents, and all develop their own interests through our PREP programme (Philosophy, Research, Experience and Personality) that enables particular academic interests to be demonstrated.

The IB Learner Profile identifies specific skills and values for long term education that go beyond academic success. Through learning, the skills are developed to help students become knowledgeable, caring young people who help to create a better world through understanding and respect.



A Foundation for Thinking

To be a student at RGS is to be special. We plan for each child to develop their thinking skills to the full. Rather than studying subjects in isolation, students understand how they work together as a body of knowledge.

We provide all students with 'thinking toolkits' to map and organise their learning experiences and we have been reaccredited as an Advanced Thinking School for the second time.

The tools allow all children to approach their learning in different ways. They encourage flexibility, creativity and critical thinking. Students will not just ask "What is the right answer?" but "What are the different ways I could approach this problem?"

The school has introduced a dedicated Learning Hub for quiet reading, reflection and study. Doubling up as a library, students can use this facility at lunch time and after school to extend and enhance their learning.

Each student will develop the dispositions of the IB Learner Profile such as being reflective, an effective communicator, an inquirer and being open-minded, which they will carry with them beyond their time at RGS.

Students will also engage in weekly activities in their Mastery Journal, which provides regular opportunities for students to reflect upon their learning, understand their own development and foster the attributes identified in the Learner Profile.



“Cognitive approaches are so embedded in the ethos and culture of the school that it feels as if the school is drenched in thinking!”

Fiona Knapp, Exeter University Cognitive Education Development Unit



Advanced Technologies

Within lessons students are expected to be actively engaged, for example using the advantages of the electronic white board as tools for solving problems and creating ideas.

RGS has multiple ICT suites, along with excellent facilities where students can work collaboratively using desktops, laptops and various electronic media tools to enrich their learning.

RGS is committed to developing the digital skills of our students by making use of a multitude of applications and software across the whole curriculum. Microsoft Teams is used as our primary virtual learning environment. This allows teachers to share resources with their classes and enables students to view and submit home learning assignments digitally. As part of our digital learning drive, teachers have embedded a range of Office365 applications such as OneNote, Forms and Sway, within their curriculum to ensure that students are offered an enriching digital learning experience both inside and outside the classroom.

Teaching staff also make use of our virtual learning environment for extra-curricular purposes, for example to post updates about House competitions and to inform students about the wide variety of lunchtime and after school clubs that we have to offer.

Students are able to access Microsoft Teams outside of school via any device that supports the application, such as a laptop or smartphone, and can also be accessed via an internet browser, ensuring great accessibility to their education at any time.



“We use computers in a lot of lessons, for me they help to bring the subject to life.”

Alex, Year 10





Beyond the Boundaries

A school year will offer a kaleidoscope of activities – in the arts, in sport, in debating, and in science and humanities events. There are opportunities for students to meet with adults from the wider community through work shadowing, Year 12 Careers Fair, guest speakers and competitions.

We have one of the highest number of students taking the Duke of Edinburgh award at all levels in the country. RGS has been a National Citizen Service Champion School since August 2017. Each year our students have the opportunity to take part in a variety of events including drama and musical performances. Students enjoy taking part in Charity Weeks and events throughout the year.

There are a vast array of extra curricular clubs including choirs, orchestra, drama, Chess club and STEAM to name a few. All of these events and activities are invaluable in building a well-rounded individual.



“The school celebrates students’ non-academic achievement, knowing that this contributes to the development of the girls’ enjoyment of school life and to their individual personalities and maturity.”

Ofsted

Artsmark

As part of Rochester Grammar School's mission to "transform life chances", we believe we have a responsibility to build our young people's cultural capital as much as possible: this means offering opportunities for our students to explore culture in its various forms, immerse themselves in the Arts and learn about the world beyond their personal location and circumstances. We believe that in expanding our students' cultural knowledge and encouraging them to engage in new experiences, we can support their personal growth and extend their knowledge beyond the taught curriculum.

Every student at Rochester Grammar School has a Cultural Passport which encourages them to record and reflect on their cultural experiences. The Passport offers a range of activities and ideas for broadening students' horizons and developing their skills, from managing a budget and learning a survival skill to visiting an art gallery and trying foods from different countries. Our school offers as many opportunities as possible to equip our young people with a diverse set of experiences, skills and knowledge.

In order to offer a full and enriching experience which builds cultural capital, Rochester Grammar School has committed to our Artsmark journey, ensuring the cultural and creative education we provide is broad, diverse and engaging. In 2022-23, our school is working towards the GOLD Artsmark Award, to recognise the success of our mission to incorporate creativity and cultural education across our curriculum and school ethos.





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Transforming Life Chances

We expect all of our students to be in a position to enter our Sixth Form, where they are joined by students from outside of RGS, keen to benefit from our high reputation and standards.

We have a mixed Sixth Form in which all students are enabled to become young adults and to prepare for the full independence of life at university and in employment. All students in our Sixth Form study the unique and prestigious International Baccalaureate Diploma. As part of the IB, students study six subjects; three at Higher Level and three at Standard Level. Students also study Theory of Knowledge, complete Creativity, Action, Service hours and a 4000 word essay in an area of their choosing. We are very proud that since 2013 RGS has been regularly listed by the Times as the top state school in the UK for IB points. Students interested in applying for Medical School or Oxbridge have a tailored programme to give them the maximum chance of success in these competitive areas.

More than half of the year group stand for election as School Officers, and all students participate in some way as role models and as leaders of the school, for example, as academic mentors or as organisers of clubs and events.



Global Perspectives

For over 10 years RGS has been an International Baccalaureate World School, and our Sixth Form programme expects all of our students to recognise that they are 'global citizens'.

Students at RGS will feel part of their community of close friends, they will feel part of their House community, and they are also encouraged to feel part of wider communities, locally, nationally and internationally.

Charitable fund raising enables students to identify with others in need of their support. Cultural visits abroad include exchanges with families in France, Germany and Japan which also broadens their horizons. In 2017, RGS was awarded the British Council's prestigious International School Award in recognition of its work to bring the world into the classroom.

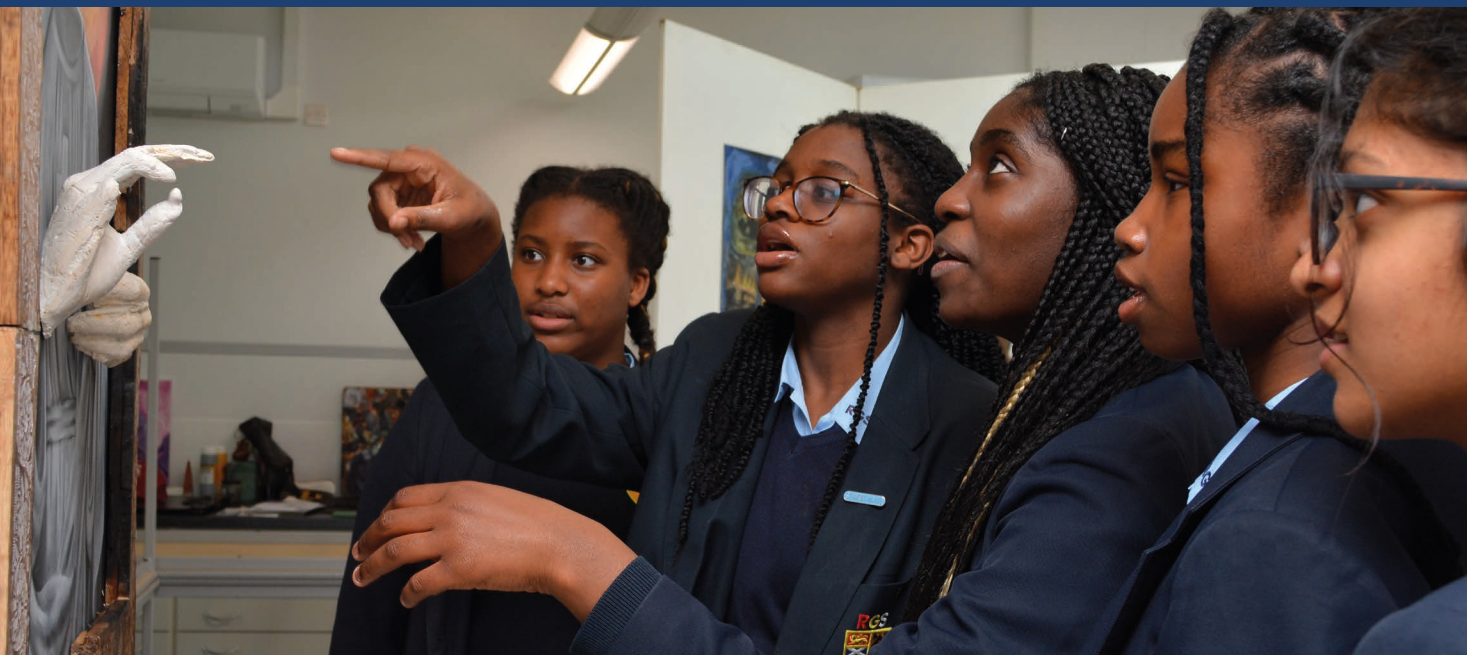
Students have the opportunity to embark upon World Challenge expeditions to improve the quality of life of communities in less economically developed countries.

At RGS, students are taught the British values of democracy, individual liberty, rule of law, mutual respect and appreciation of those with different faiths and beliefs. We believe that these values are essential for life in multicultural Britain and enable students to understand and reflect upon global issues and events in a principled and balanced way, thus promoting tolerance of all groups and societies. This diversity is celebrated in multicultural week, as well as assemblies and events throughout the year.

As a school that respects global cultures and diversity, we have a dedicated multi-faith prayer room for students to use during lunchtimes.

We have been recognised as a 'Rights Respecting School', an award given to schools on behalf of Unicef UK. RGS pupils learn about their rights by putting them into practice every day. A Rights Respecting School models rights and respect in all its relationships.





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