

**Admission Appeal Defence Statement
Secondary School – The Rochester Grammar School
Admission Appeal for Year 7 in September 2021**

Published Admission Number: 205
Number of Applications received: 829 of which 652 were Grammar Assessed
How many places were offered on national offer day and what is the position today: Offer Day: 205 Current: 205

Places Offered – (Please catalog oversubscription criteria)	Numbers
1. Looked after children	1
2. Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding	4
3. Sibling who at the time of admissions attends RGS	30
4. Children who attend any Thinking Schools Academy Trust primary school	10
5. Children of staff employed by the academy	0
6. Child's health reasons	0
7. Children who live closest to the school	160
Total number of pupils offered a place	205
Rank position of last child offered a place (for criterion 7 above)	533

Distance of last child allocated a place (N/A if not applicable); 28,668.87 metres

Up to and including the 2019-20 intake the RGS PAN was 175. In 2015-16, 2017-18 and 2018-19 we did viability studies of rooming, capacity, size of site and staffing and agreed to accept an additional 30 students over our PAN, allowing more students to access the school. As part of the government expansion programme in 2018, RGS was successful in a bid to build a new sports hall, 2 new Art/DT rooms and to convert 2 classrooms into science labs. As part of this bid RGS increased its PAN to 205 permanently from September 2020. In September 2020, the school agreed to accept an additional 30 students over PAN (235).

If 5 more students were to be allocated a place at RGS this year through the appeals process we would have 7 groups in Yr7 with 30 students in each and RGS would be at capacity. We could not admit more students without causing detriment to learning. This is something that we would want to avoid as RGS is a school that prides itself on giving its learners the best learning community.

From the school's perspective, 30 in a class is our absolute maximum for several key reasons. Firstly we have many classrooms in the school which are not large enough to hold a class of 30: B16, B59, several languages' classrooms, some English classrooms and all of our S Block rooms (7 classrooms) can only hold 25 and that is not a comfortable learning environment. This poses capacity and rooming challenges.

In some cases, e.g. Creative and Expressive subjects (e.g. Design and Technology and Food Technology which is delivered to all Yr7 students), 30 students would pose

us with a big issue in regards to Health and Safety. The specialist classrooms for these subjects can only support smaller groups of 23 students for Health and Safety. We have calculated that we can sustain smaller class sizes as we have the budget and staffing to accommodate splitting the year group into smaller groups. Any more than this would mean that an extra class will be needed which would cause financial restraint for the school – this, in itself, could mean that we have to reduce our curriculum offer as we do not have the budget to employ more specialist staff, nor do we have the number of specialist rooms needed for extra groups. Reducing the curriculum offer would obviously hinder the breadth of subjects that we could offer which is not conducive to students' holistic learning.

Our staffing model for September 2021 is designed for 205 students in year 7 across 7 teaching groups. If more than 5 students were admitted to RGS this year, we would not have the staffing capacity to timetable this.

We operate a vertical tutor group system where form groups contain students from across years 7 to 12. One house has had to accommodate an extra 30 students into tutor groups next year which takes form groups to capacity. We do not have the staffing, capacity within the pastoral team or rooms to create another form group. This is in addition to the extra students who joined over PAN in 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2020.

It is also important to note that funding for Year 7s is lagged which means we do not receive the funding until the year after. This does have a significant impact on our educational resources for one year which can cause detriment to learning. We have budgeted to manage this based on accepting 205 next year.

In the past we have had to narrow our curriculum offer in creative subjects. Sixth Form Product Design has been taught at Victory Academy and we could only run one GCSE class despite more students wanting to study it. It has put a lot of pressure on the school and narrowed our curriculum offer, something we must be aware of for a top performing grammar school. I am sure all parents would want us to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, but admitting more students puts pressure on this as we need to reduce the subject offer to effectively staff lessons across the school.

This also has an impact further up the school as these larger year groups move through. If, for example, our Combined Science classes are completely full as students start Year 9 we have no flexibility to personalise students' curriculums, e.g. a student finding triple science too challenging is unable to move to Combined Science.

Increased numbers of students mean interventions have had to increase. Class sizes are increasing at all levels across the school which has a detrimental effect on the interventions and support available within lessons. Success Maker, our catch up and support club, has to run every evening except a Friday and there are more students accessing Learning Support.

We have one SENCO in the school and she also is the academic support for our Additional Educational Needs students. In total we have 33 students on the SEND register which the SENCO works with and she supports AEN students on an ad hoc basis. She does also have a teaching role so is a resource which is already stretched. We have one student in school who has an EHCP and we do not have any non-teaching pastoral support staff or TAs in the school.

Increased numbers of students mean we have to monitor and manage the number of students trying to access the hall at break as they enter for snacks etc or top up their money on the biometric units. There is a lack of indoor communal space and a shortage of space for seating during lunchtime – we already have to put seating on the stage.

Assemblies are very difficult as a whole year group does not fit in certain areas. We run 3 whole school assembly sittings a week and where we have taken over PAN in other years we are at maximum capacity to sit all students in the Hall. If more than 5 students are admitted on appeal, this will compromise the health and safety of students in this space.

Parents' Evenings are becoming very challenging as the number of students increasing means it is more difficult for parents to see all members of staff especially where some members of staff teach multiple classes in the same year group.

Increased numbers also have an impact during exam sessions. When we have full mocks or external exams we have to re-room classes. This is becoming more and more difficult as not all rooms can be used or hold 30 students.

Not all of our Science lessons are currently not able to be timetabled in Science classrooms.

Going beyond our PAN would mean that we would have to significantly increase the capacity of the pastoral teams, something that we cannot financially afford to do. Also, access to the Head of House (HoH) will become more limited if we have more than our expected number of students and we want our HOH to really know their children and their families.

We do not have the resources or finance to accommodate more students. Admitting more than 5 students on appeal would be putting the school into a very difficult financial position, rooming position and health and safety position.

Students on roll (1216):

Year 7	235
Year 8	172
Year 9	201
Year 10	201
Year 11	171
Year 12	102
Year 13	134