

***GCSE Choices Booklet
September 2017***

***R**ainham
Mark
Grammar
School*

Choices for GCSE, Years 10 - 11

Moving into Year 10, from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4, is an important stage in your educational career. This is the first time you will have had the opportunity to exercise some choice over your programme of study. Before this, everything you have studied will have been determined for you. Now you will have a chance to select some elements in your programme that are of real interest to you. Having such choices can be both exhilarating and daunting. It is important that you give careful thought to your choices and that you take notice of the advice you are given.

There are a number of ways in which you will receive advice and information. Firstly, you will have this booklet that contains an outline of all courses, including the optional ones. Secondly, there will be special lessons at school. Thirdly, there will be a parents' information and consultation evening on Thursday 26 January 2017. Fourthly, there are careers staff who can help you. It is also important that you should seek advice if you have a question you need to ask.

So think carefully, talk to people who can help you, read this booklet carefully, and enjoy choosing your option subjects for next year. You will need to make your final choices on the morning of Thursday 2 February 2017.

Career Ideas

Choosing a career takes a long time: it is a process which we began to help you with in Years 8 and 9 and will probably continue until you are 20 or 21 at least. In Years 10 and 11 we expect students to research different careers and to get a better idea of the opportunities available. We have lots of books, DVDs and computer resources in our careers room, which is open to all students most lunch times and after school. Please use the room!

Few students know exactly what they want to do as a career in Year 10 or 11 and many will change their minds over the next 4 or 7 years as they complete their A levels and degrees. It is important to stay flexible and to be prepared to take opportunities to get good qualifications. Although at times there are reports of graduates not getting jobs, it should be noted that graduates have better chances of work than school leavers and that of course their salaries are higher. Jobs which in the 1960s and 1970s were open to A level leavers now require a degree. Most of our Year 11 students stay on into the Sixth Form and of these well over 80% go on to university.

We are ambitious for all students at RMGS - girls and boys. Over the years our ex-students have gone on to a wide range of careers in areas such as science, engineering, law, banking and business. Both girls and boys should aim for high powered jobs.

University entrance is competitive. Selectors are looking for good academic standards and for people who can make a contribution to the university community. We have had successful applicants in every subject. It is important to remember, however, that the selectors refer back to GCSE results and the school reference when making offers of places. Good GCSE grades are therefore important, but so is other evidence: work experience, music, drama, playing in school games teams. Students in Years 10 and 11 need to work hard to take a full part in school life.

In addition to their individual research we give students lots of help with careers in lessons and pastoral time. Our Career Guidance & Employability Advisor is also available at set times during the two years for students and at parents' evenings. Students regularly review their academic progress and are expected to talk to their subject teachers about ways to improve.

If any student has any questions about careers, he or she should see Mr Price in the first instance.

Your Choices for Years 10 and 11

During the GCSE years you will study a number of 'core' subjects:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- A Modern Language: French, German or Spanish
- Geography or History

You will continue to take PE, RE and PSHE as non-examination subjects. Other subjects are optional; you have to make choices. You can choose two of the following GCSE subjects:

- A Modern Language: French, German or Spanish i.e., the other language that you currently study
- Business Studies or Economics
- Geography
- History
- Information and Communication Technology (Creative iMedia) or Computing
- Physical Education
- Art
- Drama
- Music
- Religious Studies
- Design Technology or Food and Nutrition

You will be given help and advice as you make these GCSE choices. Pupils should also talk to subject teachers. Information given in the careers room and in the following pages will help you to understand what each subject involves. Compulsory core subjects are described here too.

There will be an options evening when you and your parents can discuss choices with your teachers. During this evening, there will also be a presentation explaining the options process.

Please note that all GCSE specifications are changing and much of the information is not yet available. In particular, a number of subject specifications have not yet been approved by the government agency responsible, so may change before September.

Availability of Subjects

Although we describe all these subjects, please note:

- If insufficient numbers of pupils come forward for a subject to make an economically viable group, the subject cannot run.
- Only if staff are available can a subject be taught.
- If there is excess demand for a subject and we cannot provide enough sets some degree of selection will have to be made. The order of preference of subject indicated in the choices form will be taken into account.
- It may not be possible to take every combination of subjects.
- We strongly advise you to try to make a balanced choice.

GCSE SUBJECTS

To give you some guidance here are some brief descriptions of the subjects taught.

Core Subjects:

English

The two-year courses in English Language and English Literature follow the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Key Stage 4. Although taught in an integrated way, there are separate examinations and two separate certificates will be awarded. In English Language, a variety of literary, non-literary texts will be studied. Reading and writing will be assessed by two examination papers which focus on literary extracts, non-fiction and writing for specific purposes.

The English Literature syllabus focuses on the English literary tradition. In the two years of the course, four major set texts are studied covering Shakespeare, 19th century British literature, modern prose and theatre. There is a wide variety of poetry study undertaken, drawn from contemporary poets as well as the English canon. Assessment is via two examinations that gauge understanding of the set texts and unseen poetry.

Mathematics

The Mathematics course followed in Years 10 and 11 is a direct continuation of that started in the Lower School. There will be two high level express groups who will focus on attaining the 9 - 8 grades at GCSE Mathematics. There will be a further two high level groups aiming for grades 8 - 7. It is expected that all students will take the higher tier examination, where grades 9 - 4 are available. There is no formal coursework for GCSE Mathematics, although investigative work, problem solving and functional skills work are included in the course and the work is assessed by questions on the examination papers, 3 in total, the 1st paper non calculator the remaining papers requiring a calculator.

Following changes to the examination system the exam boards are no longer able to offer the Further Mathematics GCSE in its current format. However the department is investigating the possibility of alternative qualifications for students who wish to take a second Mathematics qualification.

Edexcel Maths: <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse15/maths/Pages/default.aspx>

The possession of a scientific calculator is essential. It should have at least one memory, at least one level of parenthesis, and the following functions: x^y , $y^{1/x}$ (also denoted by $x^{1/y}$), square root, sine, cosine and tangent. The average relatively low-priced scientific calculator will possess all of these features and often more besides. It is a disadvantage at this level to have a calculator with too many functions. Graphical calculators are not needed. For further information please contact the Head of Department.

Students who do not bring the correct equipment to lessons generally have a detrimental effect on the learning of others as well as on their own learning.

Science

Students started their Science GCSE studies whilst in Year 9. During Year 10, pupils continue with these as Science lessons lead to the Triple Award or Combined Award in Science. This means that by the end of Year 11 pupils will receive three separate GCSEs one in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics **or** two GCSEs in a Combined Science Award.

Pupils have to complete key practical assignments throughout the course which are examined in their final written examinations. Pupils have four lessons per two week cycle in the each of the three sciences and most will be taught by one subject specialist teacher. All students will sit a total of 6 Science GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11.

The main difference is that the Combined Science examinations will be 75 minutes in duration whilst the triple award will be 105 minutes, due to the increase in content.

In order to make progress throughout the course you will need to be aware of the levels of knowledge and understanding in all branches of Science.

In order to monitor your progress you will be assessed at regular intervals throughout the year by end of topic tests. These will be assessed and feedback given to how you are performing. This will enable your teachers to guide you towards the work you must do to achieve a high grade.

Additionally you will be given homework consisting of questions from examination papers which are related to the topics you will be studying at the time. These will be marked and will give another indication of your level of performance.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

All students take an Ethics and Values course. They have one lesson a fortnight to reflect upon and debate whether God exists, why humans are valuable, what we can know and whether conflict is inevitable.

Modern Languages

Modern Languages – French, German and Spanish

The need to learn a foreign language has never been more important. Research from Cardiff Business School suggests improving language skills could add an extra £21bn to the UK economy and that export businesses that use language skills boost their sales by 45%.

All pupils must continue to GCSE in at least one of the Modern Foreign Languages that they study at present. This means that pupils will choose French, German or Spanish, although it is also possible for them to continue with the other language that they have studied to date.

GCSE French, German and Spanish

The course enables pupils to understand, speak about and write about a variety of topics. They study three themes, all of which are assessed at the end of Year 11. These themes cover areas such as Identity and culture; Local, national, international and global areas of interest; Current and future study and employment.

The exam is split into four components which make up the final GCSE grade and they are weighted as follows: Listening 25%, speaking 25%, reading 25% and writing 25%.

To complement their language studies, we are pleased to offer pupils the opportunity to take part in study trips in Year 10. Currently we organise visits to the Loire Valley, the Black Forest in Germany and the area around Barcelona in Spain. On these trips pupils obtain first-hand experience of the language that they are studying, and greater awareness of the culture of the country.

Citizenship

At Key Stage 4 as in Key Stage 3, the various dimensions of citizenship are delivered across the curriculum, both in timetabled lessons and in pastoral time. However, the preponderance of the taught material is delivered through the core-curriculum Religious Education course that is described in the booklet.

Physical Education

Students follow an Option programme, both in Years 10 and 11. A variety of activities are offered to give students an opportunity to study some of their particular interests in greater depth, and to increase awareness and understanding of aspects which they may wish to develop in leisure-time and in post-school years i.e., ice skating, skiing etc.

It is anticipated that students will gain a sense of personal satisfaction, enjoyment and a level of achievement from participation, and that each will be challenged to reach his/her full potential, as well as an appreciation of the invaluable contribution that this area of the curriculum will also play in their personal and social development.

Every encouragement will be given for individual interests and talents to be catered for, either at representative level or on a more recreational basis, and a wide range of clubs and teams are organised for these purposes.

Students considering careers related to Physical Education and sport will be given guidance about prospects and opportunities, and will be encouraged to contribute in some way to the development of the subject by involvement with clubs and assistance with younger students. For further information please contact the Head of PE.

Optional Subjects:

Art and Design

This course provides a practical opportunity for students to develop their skills and understanding of the role, purpose and function of Art and Design. This is a broad course exploring practical and critical/contextual work through a range of 2D and 3D processes, new media and technologies.

Central to the course will be the development of students' creative and practical skills, an understanding of how to interpret visually what is seen, to develop as effective and independent thinkers and experience working with a broad range of media, materials and techniques.

Practical involvement in Art and Design will encourage students to develop skills in using materials in a personal and inventive way. They will be able to test their own ideas in seeking solutions to Art and Design themes and questions.

Critical and art history activities will be integrated with practical activities encouraging interest and investigation into the way a variety of artists, designers and cultures have worked.

Students will develop a portfolio of work. This must include more than one project which accounts for 60% of their final mark. They will also be given an externally set task for the other 40%.

The course will give pupils the opportunity to work in the areas of Drawing and Painting, Sculpture, Photography, Digital Media and Printmaking. Great talent is not essential. Students of average ability have been highly successful when they have enjoyed the activities, been interested in the subject and prepared to do the work. As there are twice as many periods given to the subject than in the lower school, students usually find their standards rise quite quickly. Universities (all faculties) welcome achievement in a creative subject at GCSE level by applicants. They see it as part of a 'rounded', full education.

Astronomy

Please note that GCSE Astronomy will run as an extra option ONLY on an after school basis and will take place on one evening a week between 3:30 pm and 5:30 pm.

The Astronomy course will make use of the school's powerful telescope and involves studying interactions between the earth, moon and sun. We also study the Solar system as well as investigating the stars and the major constellations. In addition, the course covers the galaxies and cosmology. A course that will appeal to students wishing to reach for the stars!

Business Studies

The Business Studies syllabus is designed to convey some of the basic information about businesses and their operations and to analyse their role in today's society. The central theme is the inter-relationship of business with the environment in which it operates. The subject content includes:

- **Businesses in the real world**
- **Influences on businesses**
- **Human Resources** - the recruitment, training, payment and motivation of employees
- **Marketing** - the design, pricing, advertising and promotion of products
- **Finance** - sources of finance and the interpretation of accounts
- **Operations** - production methods, quality, customers services and procurement

Assessment is split into two elements:

Paper 1: Influences of operations and HRM on business activity

Paper 2: Influences of marketing and finance on business activity

Both exams are 1 hour 45 minutes, worth 50% of the GCSE and are a combination of multiple choice and case study/data response stimuli with a variety of long and short answer questions.

The course is useful to those who choose to find an apprenticeship, wish to pursue a degree course in business or management or have an ambition to start their own business at some stage in their lives.

Economics

What is the best way of keeping inflation low? What can be done to reduce the level of unemployment? What can be done about road congestion? Why are house prices still rising? Should we give 'Trade or Aid' to less economically developed countries? These are questions familiar to most people. Economics looks at the way in which we allocate resources to gain the best possible advantage. The subject is therefore relevant to us as individuals as well as to the business world and government. Those students who have followed a course in Economics should be able to understand the workings of a complex modern economy.

They should be able to apply their knowledge to the above questions and to develop a clearer and critical understanding of matters which have a direct bearing on them. Students should also be able to collect, select, analyse and interpret data and to use tables, diagrams and graphs accurately and effectively in the communication of knowledge and ideas.

- The Basic Economic Problem – scarcity, choice and opportunity costs.
- The role of Markets and Money – demand and supply analysis, the labour market and the role of the financial sector in the economy.
- Economic Objectives and the role of the Government – the problems, the causes and the Government policies used to solve them.
- International Trade and the Global Economy – the role of international trade, balance of payments, exchange rates and economic development issues.

The course has excellent synergy with a variety of GCSE options and provides a good foundation in the analytical skills required for A Levels, including for those students specifically considering further study in A level Economics or Business Studies.

Assessment is split into two elements:

Paper 1: Introduction to Economics

Paper 2: National and International Economics

The papers are worth 80 marks and account for 50% of the GCSE each. Both are 1 hour 30 minutes and are a combination of multiple choice and long answer questions that will require a certain amount of real life application to be made.

What is the difference between Economics and Business Studies?

In simple terms economics looks at all activity which can be described as economic whether by individuals, businesses or governments. Business Studies concentrates on a specific area of economic activity, i.e., the business, and studies it in detail. Inevitably there is overlap. For example government policy affects businesses and the whole economy, so both subjects study this area but from different perspectives.

If you have any specific questions, do not hesitate to contact the Head of Department.

Dance

Please note that GCSE Dance will run as an extra option ONLY on an after school basis and will take place on one evening a week between 3:30 pm and 5:30 pm.

In the academic year 2017/2018 there will be one after school dance class open to students in both Years 10 and 11.

GCSE Dance - A challenging yet highly rewarding and enjoyable subject. Perform solos, duets and group pieces, choreograph your own dances and watch a range of professional dance works in different styles of dance. You will learn how to improve your dance skills, understand the process of choreography and performance, and create dances based on ideas and themes.

Design and Technology

The new Design and Technology GCSE will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world. Students will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors. Students will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise.

The course allows students to study core technical and designing and making principles, including a broad range of design processes, materials techniques and equipment. They will also have the opportunity to study specialist technical principles in greater depth.

In order to make effective design choices students will need a breadth of technical knowledge and understanding. The **core technical principles** are taught to all students. Students must then cover the **specialised technical principles** in the material category of their choice, the Design and Technology department will be offering the following material categories.

Papers and boards, Timber, Metal based products, Polymers, Textiles based materials.

Core Technical Principles

- New and emerging technologies
- Energy storage and generation
- Modern and smart materials
- Systems approach to designing
- Mechanical devices
- Materials and their working properties

Specialist Technical Principles (Chosen material category)

- forces and stresses
- ecological and social footprint
- scales of production
- sources and origins
- using and working with materials
- stock forms, types and sizes
- specialist techniques
- surface treatments and finishes

How it's assessed

Written exam

2 hours • 100 marks • 50% of GCSE

Section A – Core technical principles (20 marks)

Section B – Specialist technical principles (30 marks)

Section C – Designing and making principles (50 marks)

Non-exam assessment (NEA)

30-35 hours approx. • 100 marks • 50% of GCSE

Substantial context based design and make task

Students will produce a working prototype and a portfolio of evidence (max 20 pages)

Please note this specification is still in draft form and may change slightly before accreditation by Ofqual.

Food and Nutrition

Food is an essential part of our lives, and this course will study food from many different standpoints.

Year 10 Term Curriculum Content:

Project 1 - Food preparation skills

Students will be required to use general practical skills and knife skills to prepare and produce a wide range of food products. This will include preparing fruit and vegetables, meat, fish and a variety of carbohydrate foods. Students will have to show that they can use all food technology equipment proficiently while using all cooking methods to prepare, combine and shape food. Students will work to learn how to tenderise and marinade meat, sauce making, doughs with the use of raising agents and finish the project learning about setting mixtures.

Project 2 - Food, nutrition and health

In this project students will learn about macro and micro nutrients. Specifically they will learn their function in the body, their main sources and the effects of deficiency or excess. During this project students will also learn about the need for water in the body and the importance of hydration. Students will learn about how to make informed choices of food for a varied and balanced diet whilst learning about technological developments associated with better health.

Project 3 - Food science

Students will research why food is cooked. They will explore different cooking methods such as the use of an oven for baking, roasting, braising or the use of a hob for poaching, shallow frying, boiling. This term's project also examines the functional and chemical properties of food and their nutrients such as protein coagulation, gelatinisation and emulsification.

Project 4 - Food safety

Being an important subject, students will research food spoilage and contamination whilst discussing the positive use of microorganisms in food production. Students will explore how food should be stored and apply their knowledge of food safety when preparing and cooking food.

Project 5 - Food provenance

In this project food technology students will discuss factors affecting food choices related to religion, culture, ethical and medical conditions. They will study traditional British food and international cuisine. In this term students will learn sensory testing methods and how to test the sensory qualities of a wide range of foods. Students must learn the fast changing laws of food labelling and how it can affect consumer choice. They will research the meaning of current food labelling in accordance with the EU and Food Standards Agency.

Assessment:

Non-Exam Assessment: Food Investigation - Task 1

(Task issued from exam board in September of year 11)

Understanding of the working characteristics, functional and chemical properties of ingredients.

Practical investigations are a compulsory element of this task.

Non-Exam Assessment: Food preparation assessment - Task 2

(Task issued from exam board in November)

Knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to the planning, preparation, cooking, presentation of food and application of nutrition related to the chosen task.

- **End of Year 11 Written exam:**
- 1 hour 45 minutes
- 100 marks
- 50% of GCSE
- Multiple choice questions (20 marks)
- Five questions each with a number of sub questions (80 marks)

Drama

Please note: as well as a timetabled option; GCSE Drama will also run as an extra option after school on one night a week from 3:30 – 5:30 pm for those students who would like to earn an extra qualification

What is GCSE Drama all about?

Drama is all about understanding what it is like to put yourself in somebody else's shoes. Drama fosters your creativity, personal growth, self-confidence, communication and analytical skills through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding and the exercise of your imagination. It promotes your involvement in and enjoyment of drama as performers, devisers, directors and designers. It provides opportunities for you to attend professional and community dramatic performances and to develop your skills as informed and thoughtful audience members. Through the study of this GCSE, you will be given opportunities to participate in and interpret your own and others' drama. You will investigate the forms, styles, and contexts of drama and will learn to work collaboratively to develop ideas, to express feelings, to experiment with technical elements and to reflect on your own and others' performances.

The course is in three parts:

COMPONENT ONE: Devised Practical Performance, Controlled Assessment (40%)

TASK ONE - Devised Performance

You will devise a practical performance based on a theme, linked with a practitioner or genre.

- You may choose **either** acting or a theatre design skill;
- Your teachers record the work on DVD;
- The unit is internally assessed and externally moderated with task two.

TASK TWO – Written Portfolio, Controlled Assessment

You will complete a written portfolio on the practical work you completed in Task One, under formal supervision.

- The report will include details of live performances you have seen, that have influenced your practical work; details on decision making; the inclusion of technical elements and the content of the piece and an evaluation of their own work and that of the group;
- The unit is internally assessed and externally moderated with task one.

COMPONENT TWO: Performance from a Text, External Assessment (20%)

You will be assessed on **either** acting **or** a theatre design skill, in a scene from a published play.

- You will work in groups of between 2 to 5 members;
- No more than two additional design candidates per group, each working on a different skill;
- The unit is externally assessed by a visiting examiner in April/May of Year 11.

COMPONENT THREE: Written Examination, 1½ hours, (40%)

You will be assessed on your ability to analyse **one** set text as an actor, designer and director and to evaluate the practical work completed in Unit 2.

Will I enjoy this course?

You will enjoy this course if you want to study a subject that is both practical and creative. You may have always wanted to have a go at making a play, performing, making costumes, building a set or operating the lights but never had the chance. You will enjoy this course if you enjoy working as part of a team as drama involves a lot of group work.

How does it follow on from what I have learnt before?

GCSE Drama follows on from drama work that you will have done at Key Stage Three. You will develop your improvisation and acting skills to a higher level. You will also look at plays in more detail and look at ways of bringing a script alive on stage.

What about coursework and exams?

The course is highly practical consisting of two performance projects; one scripted and one devised plus a written portfolio of evidence; the drama journal, which you will maintain weekly throughout the

course. There is a written examination at the end of the course which tests your knowledge and understanding of your practical study of a set text and everything else you have learnt along the way.

What other skills might I develop?

As well as acquiring the skills involved in creating and performing drama, you will also be able to acquire skills in working with others, problem solving and communication. You will find that drama will help you feel more self-confident and prepare you to deal with a range of different situations and people.

What could I do next with GCSE Drama?

There are many things you can do with a GCSE in Drama. you could go on to take an AS or A Level in Drama & Theatre to progress further as a theatre maker. You may also follow a technical pathway such as lighting, sound, set/costume design, stage management etc. You might wish to go on into a job where it is useful to have had experience of drama or where you will need to use some of the skills developed during the course.

Geography

Geography is a wide ranging subject that combines well with many other GCSE subjects. Therefore it does not matter whether your preference is for scientific/mathematical subjects or for literary/creative subjects - Geography will link well with all of them. It involves study of the Earth's surface (Physical Geography), human activities (Human Geography) and emphasises the links between people and their environment. Geography is studied at all scales ranging from the global, through the national to the local. We also look at the contrasts between economically developed countries and the developing countries. The content of the course is extremely varied and students acquire a wide range of useful practical skills e.g. use of GIS, mapping, graphical, ICT, statistical, analytical and research skills. There are also two days of fieldwork to investigate geographical ideas in the real world.

The Geography specification is very much geared to the relevance of Geography to the real world. It has a strong emphasis on environmental management and sustainable development which are key ideas in many jobs today. The course is divided into three units:

Unit 1 – Living with the physical environment – this covers the challenge of natural hazards such as earthquakes, hurricanes, extreme weather in the UK and climate change, UK physical landscapes including coasts and rivers, and the living world, including ecosystems, tropical rainforests and hot environments.

Unit 2 – Challenges in the human environment – this covers urban issues and challenges, the changing economic world and the challenge of resource management, including the demand and supply of food, water or energy.

Unit 3 – Geographical applications – this involves issue evaluation, based on pre-released resources, fieldwork, based on two geographical enquiries carried out in contrasting environments and the use of a range of geographical skills.

Assessment

Assessment will be as follows:

Unit 1 – written paper of 1 hour 30 minutes	– 35%
Unit 2 – written paper of 1 hour 30 minutes	– 35%
Unit 3 – written paper of 1 hour	– 30%

Assessment is linear so students sit exams in June of Year 11. There is no coursework element.

If you would like any more details about the Geography course or the assessment please see the Head of Department, or your current Geography teacher.

History

The AQA GCSE History course is divided into four main topics, spanning a broad range of periods and testing a large number of valuable skills. The course will all be assessed by two examinations at the end of year 11, both of which will be 1 hour and 45 minutes long, and each will represent 50% of the course. The topics are as follows:

America, 1840-1895: An International Period Study – We will be looking at the development of America as a country, as it expanded its territory westwards. We will investigate how the 'Plains Indians' were affected by the migration of European settlers as well as considering the causes and consequences of the American Civil War.

Health and the People, c1000-the present day: A Thematic Study – We will learn about the changing nature of British medicine and health from Medieval times to our modern health service. There will be a particular focus on the level of change and continuity between different time periods. This topic will cover issues as varied as the Black Death to the establishment of the NHS.

Elizabethan England, 1568-1603: A British History Depth study – We will study the middle and final years of Elizabeth's reign to examine what life was like for English people at the time of the Spanish Armada, Mary Queen of Scots and Shakespeare's plays. There is also the opportunity to visit and study a particular place related to Elizabethan history to see how a physical environment can benefit our study of History.

International Conflict, 1990- 2009: Wider World Depth Study – To bring us right up to date in this century, we will investigate the causes and effects of the wars in Afghanistan and the two wars in Iraq, and consider their relevance to today. We will try to make sense of the rise of international terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and their atrocities on 11th September. We will also learn how and why historians produce different interpretations of these recent past events and look at how this can help us in our study of History.

We have attempted to put together a syllabus for our students that provides them with a real and varied understanding of the world around them. It was important for us to demonstrate to those students who choose to take this course, not only the big issues of war and politics, but also to give them an insight into the important decisions that ordinary people have to make every day.

We have attempted to balance the teaching between giving the students a firm understanding of British History, but also a view of the wider world. We wanted to show the creation of great powers in the development of the USA, but also the decline of another, as the Tudor period was brought to a close by Elizabeth I's death. We wished to investigate the roles of those in power and control, such as the Bush and Blair governments in the last few decades, but also highlight the plight of the subjugated and impoverished through studies of the Native Americans and the African slaves in America. Overall, we wanted provide an insight into human behaviour across all time periods, and provide our students with the ability to understand the good and bad elements of the world they live in, whilst also allowing them to look beyond just one side of the story.

Creative iMedia (Information and Communication Technology)

According to a recent news article, the UK has a shortage of suitably qualified creative employees (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-33974775>). As ever, many employers are demanding that their employees are equipped with skills in ICT. If your child is both creative and interested in technology it may be advisable for him/her to consider this course as an option. It has been designed to broaden the range of practical skills and the level of understanding of the media creation process.

Those who choose ICT as an option will be entered for the Creative iMedia qualification. This practical course consists of the following units:

- Website design
- Photography
- Graphics creation
- An examination based on pre-production skills and the creative planning process

This course is 75% coursework based. The three practical units are based on solving real problems. The students particularly enjoy the photography unit as it mainly assessed during a trip to Rochester. A wide range of compositional rules will need to be used, which will involve using the theory learnt throughout the term.

The basis of the course is to teach pupils how to create digital media so that they have transferable skills that are valuable in the IT and media industries. It would also suit those who wish to have a career path in the creation of web graphics or photography. The course has been designed to allow the learners to explore the areas of creative media that interest them. For more information, please ask your current ICT teacher or view this site: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/creative-imedia-level-1-2-award-certificate-j807-j817/>

Computing

The course will give learners a real, in-depth understanding of how computer technology works. Learners will no doubt be familiar with the use of computers and other related technology from their ICT lessons. However, the course will give them an insight into what goes on 'behind the scenes', including computer programming, which many learners find absorbing.

It will make an excellent preparation for learners who want to study or work in areas that rely on these skills, especially where they are applied to technical problems. These areas include engineering, financial and resource management, science and medicine.

Unit A451: Computer systems and programming (40%)

This unit covers the body of knowledge about computer systems on which the examination will be based.

Unit A452: Current trends in computing (30%)

An investigative computing task, chosen from a list provided by OCR, which assesses the following: research, technical understanding, analysis of problem, historical perspective, use of technical writing skills, recommendations/evaluation.

Unit A453: Programming project (30%)

Learners will need to:

- Understand standard programming techniques
- Be able to design a coded solution to a problem including:
 - Develop suitable algorithms
 - Design suitable input and output formats
 - Identify suitable variables and structures
 - Identify test procedures.
- Create a coded solution fully annotating the developed code to explain its function
- Test their solution:
 - To show functionality
 - To show how it matches the design criteria
 - Identifying successes and any limitations.

If you would like more information about Computing at Key Stage 4, please see the Head of Department or your current Computing teacher.

Music

The Music Department follows the OCR Music GCSE course. This course encourages learners to: engage actively in the process of academic music study; develop performing and composing skills; make links between different styles of music; broaden their musical experiences; develop imagination and foster creativity; recognise contrasting genres, styles and traditions of music, and develop an awareness of musical chronology. Students are able to learn about music they are already familiar with, and also about a number of styles from different times and cultures. The focus of learning is provided through five areas of study:

- Area of Study 1: My Instrument
- Area of Study 2: The Concerto through time
- Area of Study 3: Rhythms of the World
- Area of Study 4: Film Music
- Area of Study 5: Conventions of Pop

Assessment is carried out over three units, which draw together all the activities from the areas of study.

Unit 1 – Performing Music – 30%

Two pieces, one of which must be an ensemble performance. Total time must exceed four minutes, and students should be, as a minimum, at least Grade 3 standard.

Unit 2 – Composing Music – 30%

Two compositions, one of which is to a brief set by the exam board at the start of Year 11. The second is a free composition for the candidate's own instrument or voice.

Unit 3 – Listening and Appraising – 40%

A 1 hour 30 minute written paper comprising of 8 questions based on areas of study 2 to 5.

Proficiency on a musical instrument or voice is mandatory, and having started the course students will be expected to take up (or continue) regular lessons on one or more instruments with an approved instrumental teacher. As performing and use of notation are vital parts of the course, students are also expected to attend an appropriate teacher-led school ensemble, such as Choir, Big Band, Brass Group, Woodwind Group, String Group, or Guitar Club, each week. By Year 11 pupils need to be at least Grade 3 standard on their chosen instrument.

They are warmly encouraged to attend any other musical ensembles, both in school and outside, to develop and extend their skills, and also for the enjoyment of performing with other musicians. To access the course, students should have reached a minimum of level 9.7 in Music by the end of Year 9. Student motivation and independent study skills are essential, as the course is both highly practical and highly academic.

The course is extremely rewarding, and gives students an opportunity to:

- Go on trips to shows and concerts
- Take part in a music workshop as appropriate
- Access the Music Department's Music Technology resources
- Be part of ensembles both inside and outside school
- Take a fuller role in school concerts
- Foster musical sensitivity, creativity and aural perception
- Foster academic curiosity and resilience
- Promote cultural development
- Be involved in music as performers, composers and listeners
- Develop team work skills and self-confidence through creating and performing music with others
- Be prepared to study Music and Music Technology at A Level

If you have any questions, please talk to a member of Music Department staff.

Physical Education

The GCSE Physical Education qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams and submit all their non-exam assessment at the end of the course.

Subject content:

1. Applied anatomy and physiology
2. Movement analysis
3. Physical training
4. Use of data
5. Sports psychology

6. Socio-cultural influences
7. Health, fitness and well-being

Paper - What's assessed?

Applied anatomy and physiology
Movement analysis
Physical training
Use of data

This unit is assessed by a 1 hour 15 minute written examination (78 marks, 30% of GCSE). The examination is a mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.

Paper - What's assessed?

Sports psychology
Socio-cultural influences
Health, fitness and well-being
Use of data

This unit is assessed by a 1 hour 15 minute written examination (78 marks, 30% of GCSE). The examination is a mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.

Non-exam assessment - What's assessed?

Practical performance in three different physical activities in the role of player/performer (one in a team activity, one in an individual activity and a third in either a team or in an individual activity).
Analysis and evaluation of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.

This unit is assessed by teachers and moderated by AQA (100 marks, 40% of GCSE)

For each of their three activities, students will be assessed in skills in progressive drills (10 marks per activity) and in the full context (15 marks per activity). Students will be assessed on their analysis (15 marks) and evaluation (10 marks) of performance to bring about improvement in one activity.

The content of this GCSE Physical Education specification is designed to enable students to enjoy and understand the benefits of living a healthy and active lifestyle; to provide a route to study in Further Education awards, such as A Levels and to Higher Education in Physical Education as well as to related career opportunities.

Religious Studies

Religion is a significant force in the contemporary world. It motivates human ideas and behaviours, shaping societies and cultures both for good and ill. Religion is at the heart of many local, national and global acts of generosity and community building. It can also be a source of conflict and division, particularly where prejudice, ignorance and intolerance exist. Understanding how religion works can help you to understand current events. Understanding religion also helps you to understand people and what inspires them.

To study RS at RMGS is to look into the fundamental ethical questions which frame human existence such as: When does life begin? When is it ever just to start a war? What are the aims of punishment? Is Euthanasia ever right? How did the universe begin? Why is there terrorism? These are the fundamental ethical questions that are at the heart of GCSE Religious Studies at RMGS. These questions are studied through the perspective of Buddhism and Christianity, following the AQA syllabus A.

Buddhism is a major world faith which encompasses a philosophical way of life. It involves right thought as well as right action and addresses the individual holistically. Through the applied study of Buddhism and Christianity to these ethical issues students will develop their critical thinking skills.

A qualification in Religious Studies is a real asset for many careers and is of particular benefit to anybody working with other people.

The topics studied are as follows:

1. Relationships and families
2. Religion and life
3. Religion, peace and conflict
4. Religion, crime and punishment
5. Christian and Buddhist belief and worship.

The examination consists of two papers. Each 1 hour 45 minutes long.

Some Good Advice

The school tries to give you a good general education. Do use the opportunities and do not narrow your attitude down to an 'Is it in my GCSE syllabus?' approach to everything. You will eventually be judged as a person not as an examination machine.

Make sure information concerning examinations, trial examinations, tests and orals reaches your parents.

Do remember that your homework time-table is a **minimum** work schedule. It is slightly heavier (depending on subject choice) than in Lower School. But when you have completed your set homework task you should make it a regular habit to **review each of the lessons of the day**. Re-read text books, learn information new to you, make a note of anything you found difficult - with a text book reference if applicable - so that the next time you see your subject teacher you can **ask**. The most successful students are those who take responsibility for their own progress and are self-motivated.

GCSEs are demanding and coursework in particular takes many hours. So, do be careful about part-time jobs. They can be a good thing, the experience and the pocket money are useful, but they can draw away time and energy - particularly when the aim of raising the money is not to contribute to basic living expenses but to embark on an even more time and energy consuming social round.

There are legal restrictions on the employment of any student of statutory school age (i.e. up to the end of year 11.) Paper rounds and baby sitting are not included in these regulations but most other jobs (e.g., shop work) are included. Within Medway employers have to apply for a work permit for each student they employ and parents or guardians should counter sign that application form. The local authority can then check that the hours worked and the tasks undertaken comply with the law.

The onus on completing the paperwork lies with the employer. However, if a student has accepted an offer of a part-time paid job, they must let the school know in writing. A letter to the Head of Year should include brief details of the work and the name of the employer. This is to ensure that we can liaise effectively with the local authority. A further letter would be required, for any change of employer.

Rainham Mark Grammar School - Equal Opportunity Policy

The Governors have adopted a formal policy. What follows is the standard we expect pupils of all ages to adopt:

We all want RMGS to be a school where everyone feels secure.

We all want everyone to know where we stand on bullying, abuse, and harassment:

- no one should have to suffer sexist, racist, homophobic or other abuse
- no one should have to suffer name calling
- no one should have to fear or suffer physical violence
- no one should feel victimised in any way
- it is every pupil's responsibility to ensure that harassment is not tolerated

*The motto for pupils is: **If there is a problem share it.***

Financial Problems

In case of financial hardship, firstly refer to the schools Charging and Remission Policy on the schools website. If your request is not covered by this policy, please then write to the Headteacher as there may be other ways in which we can help. These requests will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Absence from School: message to your parents

We keep very exact registers and follow up all unexplained absences. Form Tutors keep the records. ***We have a dedicated 24 hour absence line – Tel 01634-308609.*** Please call this number to notify the school of ***any*** absences/lateness on the first day of absence. Further days of absence should also be notified using this absence line. If you know of an impending absence (hospital appointment, etc) please telephone our absence line

For long absences Form Tutors will, on request, arrange a supply of reading and other work: the same applies for children in hospital.

In the past we have encountered an assumption that requests for absence for family holidays in term time (up to a maximum of 10 days) must be allowed automatically by the school. This is a mistaken assumption. All leave for holidays is discretionary, not an automatic entitlement. RMGS is generally unwilling to authorise absence for family holidays in term time and does not give blanket automatic approval to parental requests. Each case is considered on its merits but most requests for holiday absences during term time are not authorised. It is very unwise, however, to interrupt your son or daughter's GCSE course for a holiday if this can be avoided. Coursework assignments are set throughout the two years, but especially during the period between January of Year 10 and March of Year 11. Students' performance in this important aspect of GCSE work can be seriously compromised if holidays are taken during term time. In any event, parents need to make their requests in good time using the appropriate form which is obtainable from the school office.

Finally

The school exists to help you.

At some stage many boys and girls have personal problems: financial difficulties at home; difficulties between parents; difficulties with parents; health problems; boyfriend or girlfriend problems; career choice crises; failure with work; appearance in Court; psychological problems, etc.

Most of these are solved, or go away, after a talk with parents or some other expert. There are a number of people who can help you, your Head of Year, The Inclusion Manager - who deals with all kinds of special needs, our Career Guidance & Employability Advisor, our School Counsellor, your form tutor or any other teacher you feel at ease with for a private talk.

SCHOOL UNIFORM: Girls

The uniform for girls is as follows:

- Black blazer with school badge and house flash
- Mid/dark grey skirt (pleated from the waist) **OR** Dark grey/black trousers (which should be purchased from either of the two uniform suppliers named below - a choice of styles is available)
- Plain white shirt reverse-neck blouse
- White ankle socks or black tights with a skirt (black socks with trousers)
- Black leather upper shoes (not boots, trainers or sandals)
- Black V-necked pullover with red trim
- A weatherproof outer garment may be worn to school, provided it is navy blue or black.
- Plain black scarf

Stockists for our uniform are **School Time** in Chatham and **Rainham Sports Shop**. Many of the garments can be obtained from chain stores.

For Physical Education girls will need the following:

- Plain red polo shirt
- White ankle socks
- White trainers
- A towel
- Black shorts
- Red sweatshirt/black tracksuit bottoms

Please mark everything with sewn on labels. These name tags should be clearly visible on the outside of clothing. Even underwear gets lost so please mark it.

If an outer garment is worn it should be navy-blue or black coat (not denim, suede or leather). Cardigans are not school uniform. Hooded sweatshirts ("hoodies") are not an acceptable alternative to either pullovers or outer garments in place of a coat. School bags need to be large enough to carry a number of A4 size folders and textbooks. They must not be deemed a handbag and should not be a drawstring bag unless used for PE kit.

Jewellery:

The only items of jewellery to be worn in school are plain gold or silver studs (one in each ear lobe) and a watch. These items must be removed for PE and games. No body piercings are allowed.

Make-up and nail varnish is not permitted in school. Full uniform must be worn to and from school as well as in school.

SCHOOL UNIFORM: Boys

The uniform for boys is as follows:

- Black blazer with school badge and house flash
- Dark grey/black trousers
- White shirt
- School tie
- Black or dark grey school socks
- Black leather upper shoes (not boots, trainers or sandals)
- Black V-necked pullover with red trim
- A weather proof outer garment may be worn to school, provided it is navy blue or black
- Plain black scarf

Stockists for our uniform are **School Time** in Chatham and **Rainham Sports Shop**. Many of the garments can be obtained from chain stores.

For Physical Education boys will need the following:

- Plain black shorts (outdoors)
- Plain white shorts (indoors)
- Predominantly white trainers
- White short socks
- Football socks - plain red
- Rugby shirt, red, with white collar
- Football boots
- Plain white tee shirt or polo shirt
- A towel
- Shin pads
- Track suit (optional). If one is worn, we ask that it is predominantly navy blue, black or grey.

Please mark everything with sewn on labels. These name tags should be clearly visible on the outside of clothing. Even underwear gets lost so please mark it.

If an outer garment is worn it should be navy-blue or black coat (not denim, suede or leather). Cardigans are not school uniform. Hooded sweatshirts ("hoodies") are not an acceptable alternative to either pullovers or outer garments in place of a coat. School bags need to be large enough to carry a number of A4 size folders and textbooks. They must not be deemed a handbag and should not be a drawstring bag unless used for PE kit.

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Make-up and nail varnish is not permitted in school. Full uniform must be worn to and from school as well as in school.

RMGS GCSE Options Choices Form

Name:- _____

Form:- _____

Compulsory Subjects:

English	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Science	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mathematics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			PE, RE and PSHE (Non-examination)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
French	<input type="checkbox"/>	OR	German	<input type="checkbox"/>	OR	Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>	OR	History	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Optional Subjects (choose 2 of these):

Please indicate your preferences in order, by writing 1st or 2nd in the boxes to the right of the subjects you have chosen. Please indicate an additional reserve choice with an R, in case we should have difficulty allocating you to your preferred subjects.

French	<input type="checkbox"/>		OR	German	<input type="checkbox"/>		OR	Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>		OR	Economics	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>								
History	<input type="checkbox"/>								
ICT (Creative iMedia)	<input type="checkbox"/>		OR	Computing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Art	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Drama	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Music	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Religious Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Design and Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>		OR	Food and Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Applications for Astronomy, Dance or after-school Drama courses will be by a separate process later in the year.

THIS COMPLETED FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO MR MOORE BY THURSDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2017