Gravesend Grammar School

People who stand out from the crowd
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Gravesend Grammar School has a thriving and successful Sixth Form. We are incredibly proud of the academic achievements of our students and the people they become by the time they leave us. Our aim is to support all our students so that they are able to leave us knowing they have been as successful as they can be, both academically and personally. We strive to provide students with opportunities and experiences, within School and beyond, to equip them with the skills needed to move on to the next stage of their lives and future careers, helping them to challenge themselves and become people who stand out from the crowd.

Geoff Wybar
Headteacher

Meet the Team:
Left to Right: Duncan Pallant – Assistant Head of KS5; Sarah Tremain – Head of KS5; Patricia MacMahon – Student Support KS5
Curriculum

We offer over twenty A Level subjects. Students will choose three or four subjects from option blocks, each is studied for nine periods over two weeks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Economics</th>
<th>ICT</th>
<th>Physics*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology*</td>
<td>English Literature*</td>
<td>Maths Statistics*</td>
<td>Product Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>French*</td>
<td>Maths Mechanics*</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry*</td>
<td>Geography*</td>
<td>Maths Combined*</td>
<td>Spanish*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical Civilisation</td>
<td>Government &amp; Politics</td>
<td>Further Maths*</td>
<td>Theatre Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing</td>
<td>History*</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>EPQ (in Year 13)</td>
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</tbody>
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* Subjects considered to be ‘Facilitating Subjects’ by the Russell Group of universities.

Our Success: Results

We are incredibly proud of the results our A Level students achieve. We have successfully continued to improve the proportions of top A Level grades during a time of national reductions. 2014 saw some of our best results, placing us with the top performing Grammar Schools in Kent¹. We aim to continue this trend in the future, even when the A Level reforms will make it harder to achieve the highest grades.

Our students take their studies seriously and enjoy learning. Specialist subject teachers are able to support students in achieving the highest grades in their subjects. Our A Level teachers work with students from their starting point. We help students to exceed their expected progress: whether that is an A grade and they achieve an A* or a D grade and they achieve a B or a C.

¹ The Sunday Times Parent Power, 2014
Commitment and Partnership

Attendance
We take attendance very seriously: attending lessons is vital to success. Students are expected to attend all subject lessons, tutor periods, assemblies and any additional support sessions as directed by their subject teachers. If a student misses a lesson the time is made up on a Friday after school. We work with parents, informing them on a monthly basis if there are missed lessons and any unexplained absences. Parents are also able to view attendance online, via the MCAS (My Child at School) web service.

Pastoral Support
All students belong to a tutor group. Our specialist Sixth Form tutors play a crucial role guiding and advising the students throughout their studies and acting as a link between School and home. Tutors monitor students’ academic progress and effort, intervening and supporting students to achieve their potential where necessary.

We have a dedicated Student Support Officer who is available for students to meet with and discuss any worries and concerns. Support from outside agencies, if needed, can be accessed to help students through the rigours of A Level study.

Academic Support
Academic support is available in subject areas over and above timetabled lessons. Just some of the support available to our Sixth Formers includes:

- Lunchtime support clinics.
- After school support clinics.
- Individual tutorials and small group seminars with ‘subject mentors’, usually post graduate former students who are considering a career in teaching.
- Revision sessions after school and during the school holidays prior to the exams.

Communication with Parents

Reporting and Progress
We provide students and parents with predicted attainment and effort grades on a termly basis. Twice a year students receive a written report from all their subject teachers, the emphasis of which is to provide subject specific targets for improvement. Teachers are regularly in contact with parents if there are any areas of concern before or between grade cards.

After each grade card, as a Sixth Form team, we look at the attainment and effort grades of all students. For those who are performing well we send letters of congratulation, encouraging further hard work and effort. For students who are underperforming we have a range of strategies to bring about improvement in their progress. We write to parents to let them know what we will do to intervene, usually involving a programme of subject specific support and monitored private study periods. We monitor the progress and effort of these students closely to ensure they are increasing their efforts and making greater progress towards their target grades.
Developing Independence

Independent Individuals
The Sixth Form is a transition between school and life beyond. We allow students the independence to manage their time as they would in the ‘real world’. We require students to be in School only for lessons, tutorials and any prearranged seminars or support sessions. This provides students with the opportunity to arrange appointments as they would in the world beyond school. Many students make the most of this opportunity by organising work experience or voluntary service placements on a longer term basis.

Students are, of course, welcome to use the dedicated Sixth Form study areas for quiet work and the Sanderson Café for more collaborative work that requires group or paired discussion.

Supported Independent Study
To prepare students for life beyond school we believe that they need to develop the wider skills of self-motivation, time management and organisation. We have developed an independent learning programme, in each curriculum area, that we call ‘Roots and Wings’, the aims of which are:

• To provide structured tasks and activities with resources and links provided. This helps students to understand the basics of the topic.
• To provide stretch and challenge to encourage greater aspiration. Ideas and resources for wider reading and research opportunities are suggested, crucial for the highest levels of success at A Level.
• An end assessment task that allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the topic covered.
Next Steps – University and beyond

Destinations
The majority of our students leave the Sixth Form to attend university. Between 75% and 85% of students will begin their undergraduate studies after leaving our Sixth Form, some of whom take a gap year first and make a deferred entry into University the following year.

Student and Parental Support for UCAS
During Year 12, students are encouraged to begin researching potential universities and courses. To assist students and their parents in these important decisions we have a programme of events and support in place to help with the navigation of the Higher Education choices. Some of the support available includes:
- Specialist support and regular meetings for courses in Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science.
- Regular support sessions for Oxbridge entrants.
- Higher Education evening for students and parents with valuable information about the initial decisions on course choice and university types.
- A follow up Higher Education evening with workshop sessions, for particular subject choices and UCAS application advice, for both students and parents.
- Visits to a Higher Education Fair to meet with 100+ universities.
- A day of support from University admissions tutors, helping students to start preparing their Personal Statements.
- Focus group sessions, led by our Careers staff, with invited specialists, for areas of particular interest.

For example, Engineering, Law, Medicine, History and English.
- Advertising and making information available for university led ‘taster sessions’ and Sixth Form study programmes in various disciplines.
- Interview guidance and support, with practice interviews with specialists in the subjects applied for.
- Dedicated tutor time, and on-going support throughout the drafting process of personal statements.
- A handbook with useful information, links and guidance for parents to help them to support their sons and daughters through the application process.

Year 13 leaver destinations 2012-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University course</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study at college</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with training opportunity</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap Year then university</td>
<td>8%</td>
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</table>

The overwhelming majority of our students are successful in gaining a place in their first choice of university course. The proportion of students reaching Russell Group universities has seen an upward trend in recent years. We aim to encourage all our students to aspire to the best courses and universities for their chosen avenues of study. With the increasing trend in the highest grades, a third of our students progress to the best universities.
Standing Out from the Crowd

Time in the Sixth Form is about being able to look back over two years and know that you have done your very best.

Success in A Levels is vitally important. However, making sure that they are more than just a set of exam results is also of great importance. In an increasingly competitive world we aim to ensure our students have a rich and diverse experience while they are in the Sixth Form. We make this clear to all our students; we provide the opportunities, we encourage them and we expect them to make the most of the opportunities available to ensure that they are unique and interesting in a variety of ways.
Many of our students undertake voluntary work outside of school. We encourage and support this; we invite guests to speak about their projects and encourage interested students to participate. For example, students regularly plan and run after school clubs and holiday programmes for younger students, and many take part in the National Citizenship Programme.

Large numbers of our Sixth Formers are trained by specialist teachers to help primary school children with their reading, visiting a number of local primary schools on a weekly basis.

Leading Others and Taking on Responsibilities
We can rely on our Sixth Formers to take a lead in the organisation of the School and our younger students. Students are given responsibility as subject and form prefects for the lower years.

Our Head Student team are often the public face of the School. They play an active role in organising other Sixth Formers to run and manage events for parents and activities for students. Our Head Student team are also invited to participate in Governors’ meetings, where their contributions are invaluable.

Our Sixth Formers regularly take on mentoring roles within the School to support younger students who are struggling, whether in a curriculum area or to support them with social or emotional difficulties. Many students help out with the sporting activities for the younger students, coaching and assisting PE staff in the clubs and matches.
Menu

Within the curriculum

Enrichment opportunities are diverse and numerous:

- Geography field trips
- Biology field trips
- PE study trip
- Theatre trips with Drama and English
- Art Galleries and field days to enhance Art portfolios
- Visits to the Houses of Parliament and visits from local political parties for Politics students
- Local businesses such as Coca-Cola, Kimberly-Clark, BAE Systems, and even the Action Man plastic production plant
- Psychology visit to London Zoo to study a range of physiology and treatments

Left: New York
Centre: Iceland
Right: Bundestag, Berlin
People who stand out from the crowd

Enrichment Opportunities

Once a week students participate in a wide range of sporting activities covering the whole spectrum. They can also choose alternative options – in addition to sporting activities – for example cookery, first aid, drama and music, in a termly rotation. Our Sixth Formers can train and compete in regular fixtures in rugby, football, hockey and cricket.
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