



Details for Applicants for Posts

Background

Colchester Royal Grammar School, which is directly descended from a 'town-school' or 'great school' that existed in Colchester in 1206, was granted Royal Charters by Henry VIII and Elizabeth I in 1539 and 1585 respectively. Once a voluntary controlled grammar school maintained by Essex Education Authority, the school was a grant-maintained grammar school from September 1993. Under the new regulations in 1998 it opted for Foundation School status and as of January 2012 converted to Academy status. There are four forms of entry and a roll of 955 students, 380 of whom are in the sixth form. A small boarding section houses students from the UK and overseas. The school has undertaken specialist activities for Science since 2004, and for Languages since 2009.

Each year a selective intake of boys aged 11 plus, living within travelling distance, yet coming from a wide area, is admitted on the basis of an assessment procedure organised by the Consortium of Selective Schools in Essex. Relationships with other schools in the area, both primary and secondary, are good, and the school's role as an establishment providing education for able students is fully recognised.

The school has an outstanding tradition and record both in academic achievement and extracurricular activities. Nearly all students stay on into the sixth form, and a number of external candidates also are admitted into the sixth form each year. Girls have been admitted to the sixth form since September 1998. Almost all of upper sixth form leavers go on to higher education, with around 35 students a year to Oxford or Cambridge Universities.

The school has in recent years regularly been amongst the top-performing state schools at A level. Since 1995 the school has regularly been in the top five nationally amongst all state schools in the Government's A level tables, and in recent years CRGS has been on a number of occasions the top state school in the country. In nine out of the past twelve years CRGS was named the top school, state or independent, nationally for A level results in the official DfE performance tables.

In November 2007 the school had an Ofsted inspection and received a glowing report. The standard of teaching, the quality of pastoral care and the variety of extracurricular activities were amongst the many features which were highly commended by the inspectors. The school was one of the few schools in the country to be judged outstanding in every category.

The school appears with credit in various Good School Guides. In one published by the Ebury Press, it is described as having 'courteous and ambitious' pupils and as being 'a go-ahead school with a long tradition of academic strength, giving every opportunity for potential leaders'. The Daily Telegraph Guide describes Colchester Royal Grammar School as a 'first-rate academic school'.

Surrounding Area

Colchester, England's oldest recorded town, is a lively, attractive centre of great historical interest, which has extensive Roman walls, a Norman castle and a broad and expanding industrial base. There is much cultural and sporting activity, a theatre, art galleries, museums, a leisure and sports centre which provides excellent facilities for sport and concerts, a Moot Hall, a Charter Hall (both halls are used for concerts and other events), a county cricket ground, the home of Colchester United Football Club, and numerous good restaurants. Concerts of every kind and art exhibitions abound. The flourishing University of Essex, with which the school has various links, is three miles to the

East. Though Colchester has no cathedral, it does boast a bishop! The annual Oyster Feast is nationally celebrated.

Colchester is fifteen miles from the East Coast, and there are frequent and fast trains to London (Liverpool Street) within fifty minutes, and to Ipswich and Norwich. Shopping facilities are very good, and include a pleasant central shopping precinct. Dedham and Constable Country, river estuaries and attractive ports, villages and the Suffolk Heritage Coast are within easy reach. Proximity to the North Sea ports of Harwich and Felixstowe and the presence in the town of language schools (from which the school receives visitors of many nationalities) make Colchester well poised to play an important part in our country's future relationship with Europe.

The School Premises

The school, which is half a mile from the town centre, stands amongst trees and delightful, mature gardens, which are open to all the pupils. There is a mixture of old and new buildings: a superb school hall, with a large stage, PA and lighting systems, and pipe organ; gymnasium; heated outdoor swimming pool; restaurant; Technology block. There are also a detached music block; a fine, well-stocked library; other specialist rooms; visual aids and reprographic facilities. Most classrooms have interactive whiteboard facilities. A classroom block, accommodating Classics and History, was opened in September 2000 and new Art studios were opened in April 2003. A large extension to our existing science block, built following the school's successful bid to gain Specialist Science status, was opened in September 2006 and contains modern, well-equipped science laboratories and preparation areas. A new multi-purpose facility was opened in 2013 and is an attractive venue for lectures and productions, and a new Chemistry and Computing block was opened in 2016.

Four rooms serve as dedicated computer suites. This gives students local access to a full range of applications and, via a high-speed network, access to laser printers, an A4 colour scanner, the internet and networked software. In addition, there are computers in departmental areas and teaching rooms, with access to both the curricular and administrative networks as well as the internet.

The playing fields, which are about half a mile away, are pleasant and extensive, and include pitches for all our major games, hard and grass tennis courts, and a large pavilion with changing rooms and showers.

Curriculum in Years 7 to 11

A wide range of subjects is taught in Years 7 to 9: English, Mathematics, Science (as separate but co-ordinated sciences in Years 8 and 9), Computing, Latin, French, Geography, History, Religious and Social Studies, Music, Art, Technology, PE and Games. Citizenship is taught through these subjects and the tutorial programme. In Years 8 and 9 students also study German or Ancient Greek. In Years 10 and 11, all students take GCSE courses in English and English Literature, Mathematics and French. Many students also study for Further Mathematics. They also take either GCSEs in all three separate sciences or a GCSE Combined Sciences Award. Students, constrained only by the requirements of the National Curriculum, add to this a number of GCSEs from those subjects available in Years 7-9 and have a further compulsory syllabus consisting of Physical Education (including Games), Personal Development and RE. For the teaching of French and Mathematics at GCSE, students are placed in sets according to ability. There are carefully devised assessment and reporting systems. Extra-curricular opportunities exist to take GCSEs in Spanish or Astronomy.

Tutorial and Teaching Groups

Entrants in Year 7 are placed in one of four forms for the purposes of registration and tutorials. These forms are of mixed ability within the selective framework. In order to ease the transition from primary school, the forms also serve as teaching groups for most lessons. Four forms continue into Year 8 and are then divided into five forms in Year 9, arranged according to pastoral needs. The students move into five forms in Years 10 and 11, with forms re-arranged according to option choices. They remain in the same form over the two years, usually with the same form tutor. These forms act as

teaching groups for tutorial classes and some subjects. The other teaching groups are determined by options.

In the sixth form the students are organised into separate tutor groups for the lower sixth and upper sixth. Teaching groups are determined by options.

A programme, including personal development and vocational and educational elements, is taught under the general direction of a member of staff who co-ordinates the pastoral curriculum.

The Sixth Form

The school has a thriving sixth form. A free choice of A-levels is offered from Art, Biology, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, Computing, Economics, English, French, Further Mathematics, Geography, German, Greek, History, Latin, Mathematics, Music, PE, Physics, Religious Education, Spanish and Technology. The Extended Project Qualification and Politics provide extra qualifications for those keen to take them.

There is a prefect system and sixth formers are encouraged in general to take responsibilities and involve themselves in the life of the school.

There are many sixth form initiatives and activities such as Young Enterprise and participation in local and national competitions relating to science, engineering, business, debating, mock trials, public speaking, music and drama. A 'help in the community' sixth form group has been introduced, with much success.

In recent years, the school has made a particular point of developing its support for students with mental and emotional difficulties. A Sixth Form group (the Mental Health Committee) meets regularly to plan events to raise awareness of mental health issues and the school employs its own psychotherapist who meets students in particular need for an initial assessment and can then offer ongoing counselling sessions during the school day or after school.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are a strength of the school. Music and sport are particularly well catered for, and the school achieves great success in both spheres, as well as eliciting a high level of involvement from students. The school has a variety of orchestras, bands and choirs which perform regularly at concerts in school and the wider community. Many past pupils have distinguished themselves in the musical world.

In an era when team games struggle to survive in maintained schools, rugby, football, hockey and cricket remain an important part of the school's tradition, with extensive fixture lists for all age groups, and fixtures on Saturdays that include several independent schools. A broad range of minor and individual sports is also played.

Annual dramatic productions are staged in a diversified programme. Lunch-time or after-school clubs include basketball, chess, Christian focus, computing, debating, fencing, foreign films, history, Italian, Spanish, and table tennis. The school is enthusiastic in its support of charities and regularly raises impressive amounts for several causes.

The school has achieved success in several national schools competitions in recent years: winning The Times Spelling Bee, the National French Spelling Bee, the Schools Challenge Quiz, the BPW Public Speaking Competition, Geography World-Wise Quiz competition, The Top of the Bench Chemistry contest and the schools croquet championship (an old boy, Robert Fulford, is a former world croquet champion); and reaching the finals of the following: the English Speaking Union schools speaking competition, The Times chess championship, the schools bridge championship, the schools cricket six-a-side tournament, the schools Capital Choices competition, the Letts GCSE Challenge and the National Chamber Music for Schools competition. Former students have gone onto top-flight sporting success in, for example, the Varsity Boat Race and international sailing.

There is much involvement by staff and students in school visits and trips, at home and abroad, such as skiing trips, theatre visits, exchanges, trips to France, Germany, Greece and Italy, and Geography and Biology field courses.

Other Developments and Information

The school is at an exciting stage. It aims to provide an all-round education second to none. An on-going programme of building and improvement has produced excellent facilities for drama, Music, Art, and Technology. The school's specialist focus for Maths, Science and Languages will improve the provision for those subjects without changing the school's desire to be seen as a specialist school for all subjects. Including part-timers there are sixty-six members of teaching staff, of whom twenty-three are women.

Since 2003, the school has been part of the Colchester Teacher Training Consortium and aims to provide a supportive and stimulating environment for teaching trainees. Induction for new staff and continuing professional development are overseen by the Deputy Head. An effective system of performance management recognises the achievements of staff and promotes their continuing development.

Information is exchanged at a short weekly staff information meeting. Full staff meetings and meetings for the staff committee, heads of department, heads of year, and year teams are held in accordance with a planned programme. The school has used the Government's workforce remodelling initiative to ensure that teachers are as free as possible to concentrate on the core aspects of their work: planning stimulating lessons, assessing pupils' work and giving them the academic and pastoral support needed for them to be successful learners and fulfilled individuals.

A parents' association, named the Colchester Royal Grammar School Association, is active in fund-raising and putting on social events. It has purchased many facilities for the students, such as a laser cutter, grand piano, sound system for the school hall, payphone, lockers, audio-visual equipment, table tennis tables, resuscitation dummies and a kiln for the art block. It also supported the school in its bid for specialist status and helped finance the purchase of a minibus. The Old Colcestrian Society is well supported and the school continues to strengthen its links with recent leavers.

Emphasis on the Individual

The individual is regarded as the centre of all the school's activities, and the school aims for the highest standards of courtesy, conduct, industry, academic attainment and appearance, with an ideal of relaxed and mutually respectful relationships amongst all members of the school community. Individual initiative is both demonstrated and encouraged by an enthusiastic and dedicated staff who give much to the students and ask much of them.

Emphasis in pastoral care is placed on form tutors and heads of year, who have the considerable responsibility of fostering the academic and personal development of pupils in their charge. Links and communication between parents and staff are greatly encouraged.

The Work Environment

The ability and attitude of the pupils, the quality of the buildings and grounds, and the overall ethos of the school combine to make Colchester Royal Grammar School a stimulating and rewarding environment in which to work and develop.

J R Russell
Headmaster

Jan 2019