



**RGS** ESTD  
1562  
HIGH WYCOMBE

# **Moving into Year 9**

## **2024/25**

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## Introduction

As a student goes through RGS, they follow three stages of educational studies:

- Years 7, 8 and 9 complete our Key stage 3 courses. Many GCSE subjects now also begin preparation in Year 9.
- Years 10 and 11 are Key Stage 4 courses and lead to GCSE examination level.
- Finally, there is the two-year A level course in the Sixth Form.

Your child is now moving into Year 9 and we thought it helpful to give you some general information about the next year. Please do contact us if you have any queries.

## Forms, Form Tutors and Head of Year

In Year 9, students will remain in their House Form groups with the same Form Tutor (where possible). Mr McDonald-Smith will continue to be your child's Head of Year for Year 9.

## Parents' Meetings

There will be a Virtual Year 9 Parents' Meeting on Wednesday 11 December 2024 and a Year 9 Options Meeting on Thursday 23 January 2025.

## Action Your Potential

The RGS has partnered with Action Your Potential (AYP), for a second year. The AYP team inspires, informs, educates, and enthuses students, parents and carers as well as school staff in learning all about our incredible brains. Using innovative and easy-to-follow metacognitive strategies, Action Your Potential will support our whole school community to change our brain, change our minds and change our worlds. They help people to live in their brains with greater awareness, deploying daily strategies to improve their experience.

AYP use the latest neuroscience in workshops (for students, parents, and staff), 1:1 and small group coaching and videos on their #NeuroNinja Learning Hub to help everyone across the RGS community to learn about their brain. AYP will work with each of our year groups throughout the year as well as presenting to parents and carers and staff. The goal is to help

students learn 14 #NeuroNinja skills divided into 4 strands of personal development:

1. Learning that wellbeing is a skill
2. Unleashing learning
3. Mind management
4. Managing relationships and behaviour

## Character

At RGS, we envision an exceptional education that extends far beyond academics. Our vision, "To provide an exceptional all-round education," is guided by our core values: respect, integrity, and aspiration. We believe character education is fundamental to achieving this.

We are passionate about ensuring our students leave RGS with not only strong academic profiles and a thirst for knowledge, but with the essential qualities to flourish in all aspects of life – in short, with "good character."

In year 9, students will work through our character framework with regular time for reflection. It can be summarised by the following key questions that we revisit throughout a students' time at RGS: What type of person do I want to be? Do I enable others to feel a sense of belonging? Am I living a good right life? Am I reaching my full potential?

### Character Development



## Curriculum

In Year 9 students will continue with a similar curriculum to Year 8 and will usually be taught in slightly smaller groups. Some subjects may begin to set students in Year 9 e.g. Mathematics. Chromebooks will continue to be used in lessons to enhance learning and we will be reminding Year 9 students of the User Agreement and our expectations of using Chromebooks. The following is a brief summary of what students will cover in each subject in Year 9.

## Art

In Year 9 students study the following:

**The human form:** The students explore how artists represent the human form in art, focusing on drawing within portraiture. They are informed and inspired by critical analysis and drawing techniques through a range of processes including printmaking.

**Stop Frame Animation:** This collaborative project is aimed at introducing students to a sample of existing roles within the Creative Industry. Students work together to produce a series of sustained outcomes that explore a range of media, from 2D to 3D materials inspired by contemporary animators. Proportion, set design, prop design and editing will all play vital roles to create their own stop frame animation.

## Biology

In Year 9 students will begin their GCSE studies (Edexcel specification). Students will build upon the biological principles established in Years 7 and 8 by considering cell structure, enzymes, microscopy, cell division and the nervous system. Lessons will also have an emphasis on investigational skills in order to prepare students for experimental aspects of the Biology GCSE.

The first few topics include:

B1 - Fundamental Biological Concepts (cells, enzymes and transport mechanisms)

B2 - Cellular Control (Mitosis, Growth, The Brain and the Eye)

B3 - Genetics (DNA and mutations)

## Chemistry

The fundamentals of Year 7 and 8 Chemistry are further developed as Year 9 finishes Key Stage 3 and is the first year of the three-year GCSE course ([Exam Board Edexcel](#)). The following topics will be studied:

- Atomic structure
- The Periodic Table
- Groups 1, 7 and 0: alkali metals, halogens, noble gases
- Earth and atmospheric science
- Obtaining and using metals
- Acids (including different methods for preparing salts)
- Writing chemical formulae and balancing equations
- Methods of separating and purifying substances.

## Classical Civilisation

In Year 9, pupils look at various ancient cultures; these can change from year to year, and the focus is always Greece and/or Rome. A usual route through the course begins with a study of one of the great literary tales of Greece, Homer's *Iliad*, which tells the story of the Trojan War with its enormous casualties. This leads nicely on to either a study of the Spartans, and Greek warrior culture from the south of Greece or to a study of the Roman army in action. The pupils may also study Pompeii to understand what life was like for the Romans. Thus pupils study both literature (and thus the beliefs and culture of the Greeks) and history during Year 9. There is plenty of opportunity for pupils to be creative and innovative in this course, as well as to be challenged by some deep philosophical ideas. Discussion plays a key role in the teaching of Classical Civilisation and pupils should be prepared to take part in the lessons.

## Computing

This course lays the foundation for preparing students who wish to pursue the subject to GCSE and at a more advanced level. They are exposed to skills involving the use of more complex data structures using arrays and more sophisticated techniques including the use of sequence, selection and iteration. Students will learn in part to write functions and develop custom blocks in BYOB as well as skills in text-based languages such as Visual Basic for Applications,

Python and Java Script. They also have the chance to develop mobile including thinkable.

## Design and Technology

### Mobile phone Stand

Over the course of two 9-week modules, students follow the iterative design process. While learning about influential design movements from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, they will develop and manufacture a phone stand based on a design movement of their choice. They revisit the CAD-program Onshape in order to develop their design as well as a range of 2-D and 3-D sketching techniques. During the second module, where they manufacture their prototype, they work with a range of materials including Scots pine, and acrylic, while learning further manufacturing processes such as comb joints and chemical welding.

### Cultural Clock

Over the course of a 9-week module, students design, develop and manufacture a clock based around the culture of a country of their choice. This module gives students the chance to further develop manufacturing skills such as using heat to drape form acrylic, cold forming and pop riveting aluminium as well as accurately measuring, marking out and cutting component parts prior to assembly. There is a strong emphasis on quality control during the manufacturing stages of this module, focussing on precision and accuracy. Design work is similarly of a high standard in preparation for DT at GCSE level.

## English

Students continue to study English through reading literature and practising their writing skills, and their major focus gradually shifts towards the intellectual requirements of GCSE. They will exercise key written skills needed at GCSE that many students in Year 10 and 11 struggle with: critically evaluating, showing perceptive understanding of writers' methods, and unseen poetry analysis.

Throughout the year, formative assessments will offer the students feedback on how to improve. The end of year exam is based on the study of Shakespeare's *A Merchant of Venice* and the paper's format emulates that of a GCSE paper with a set passage and essay question. In order to reflect the rigorous demands of GCSE examination, the exam will be closed text and students will be required to

memorise key quotations; this is excellent practice for the years ahead (GCSE and A Level).

The Year 9 curriculum in English also allows opportunities to develop students' speaking and listening skills; they are expected to make regular contributions to paired, group and whole class discussions. Year 9 explores thematic ideas such as the presentation of women, patriarchal rule and relationships, as well as exploring the Gothic through the study of Jane Eyre in the first term and extracts from a range of selected texts at the end of the year. Again, the study of these themes establishes key knowledge the students will need in their GCSE years.

Reading periods during Year 9 no longer take place, and Accelerated Reader quizzes are not used. We would still be grateful for your support in encouraging your child to read independently every day – it should be part of their daily routine. The library offers a wide range of young adult fiction and students in Year 9 are still expected to check out books on a regular basis. There are also a number of reading clubs taking place, following competitions like The Carnegie Medal, encouraging keen readers to explore a wider variety of fiction. There is an excellent reading list on the library student area of SharePoint, which may be helpful to you in supporting your child to read; please note that any form of reading is encouraged and progress can also be made on one's reading through different modes such as newspapers, blogs, short stories and audiobooks.

## French

In Year 9 we continue to build on the grammar covered in Years 7 and 8 and introduce two new tenses, the imperfect and the future. Students also revise the present tense and the perfect tense in detail. All four language skills are covered in Year 9. In year 9 students are already working in many instances at GCSE level and written tasks focus on using a range of tenses and expressing opinions in detail to reflect the demands of the upcoming GCSE course. We will look at a variety of aspects of life in the French-speaking world and its history. The topics covered take us around the French-speaking world, with a trip to Paris, education and work, which includes elements of life in West Africa, and finally visiting Quebec, which is a lot of fun.



## German

In Year 9, students continue to practise the four main skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening in equal measure. The topics covered include German speaking cities, travel and holidays, daily routine, festivals and celebrations, media, sport and healthy living. All of these topics allow students to gain further cultural insights into the German speaking world. We continue to place great emphasis on teaching our pupils to communicate in German, to give opinions and justify their answers. We recap the grammar and word order rules covered in Year 8, and then build in the perfect tense to talk about the past, as well as modal verbs. Looking ahead to Year 10, the activities practised are reflected in those required at GCSE, across all four skills. Lessons and homework tasks make use of a variety of interactive activities to enhance the students' language learning and their motivation for and engagement in German.

## Geography

We continue developing our geographical skills by exploring Human and Physical Geography this year. We use iPads and current news to look into a variety of topics, covering locations from around the world.

Firstly, we investigate the wonderful world of **Cold Environments**. This is a fantastic topic which focuses on glaciation and the ways in which glaciers have made an indelible mark on the UK's landscape and landscapes from across the World. We explore the science behind how they work and relate this to the human environment.

Next, we travel to the other end of the scale where we explore **Hot Environments**. This includes the hot deserts in the world and how they have formed in different locations. We look at the animals and the people who live there, and how they have adapted to the harsh conditions. When looking into the people who are living in desert landscapes, we mainly explore Dubai and some of the controversial impacts associated with its expansion. We explore real information and learn how news can be biased and learn how as geographers we need to be critical of information in the media.

Next, we look at combining these previous topics and look at the impact on **Global Climate Change**. We criticise the economic world and look at the wider

impact on our planet. We also provide and evaluate solutions to the issues in our world currently.

From the majestic Himalayas to fertile plains and vibrant cities, **the Indian Subcontinent** offers a captivating blend of human and physical landscapes. We'll also explore the impact of tourism and how cities can balance top-down development with local needs to build a better future for its citizens.

Finally, we explore the classic topic of **Tectonics**. We discuss the causes, impacts and management of earthquakes and volcanoes. We create models, and really fall in love with Geography, by looking at current affairs and what is happening in our world recently.

## History

In Year 9 our students begin the year by becoming historical detectives and trying to solve the mystery of 'who shot JFK?'. This unit will also develop the crucial skill of sorting fact from opinion. The curriculum then refocuses on Britain 1750-1900. During this key period, Britain underwent an industrial revolution and established a world-wide Empire. The debates and controversies surrounding both developments will be thoroughly explored. The industrial revolution sadly paved the way for industrial war and so aspects of World War One and World War Two will be studied. The year will finish by looking at post-war Caribbean migration into Notting Hill.

## Latin

In Year 9 students will continue with the new Suburani course They will expand their knowledge of key Latin grammar by learning more verb tenses, participles, reported speech, purpose and result clauses, reported commands and questions. A knowledge of approximately 600 Latin words is expected. The primary aim is an ability to comprehend and translate pages of Latin of increasing complexity and to enjoy getting to grips with translation and interpretation. The textbooks take them on a journey through some of the key times of turbulent Rome, such as the Great Fire in the reign of Nero, as well as examining life in Pompeii and Rome. Alongside the Latin language, pupils will study various background topics in English, learning what life was like for the Ancient Romans.

## Mathematics

Topics include:

- Number: reciprocals, reverse percentages, upper and lower bounds, HCF, LCM, prime factors, standard form, solving real-life problems, approximation, compound units, negative & fractional indices and surds.
- Algebra: linear equations with fractions, simultaneous equations, linear/quadratic and geometric sequences, straight lines, quadratic and cubic graphs, factorise and solve quadratics, solving equations graphically and algebraic fractions, rearranging formulae.
- Shape, Space and Measure: Pythagoras' theorem, properties of polygons, tessellations, surface area and volume, scale drawings and bearings.
- Handling Data: statistical representation and measures, scatter diagrams, averages of grouped data, cumulative frequency curves, estimating the mean from grouped data.

The Collins Maths Frameworking (Book 3.3) textbook is available on-line using Collins Connect. The Summer Term in Year 9 is used to introduce some GCSE topics in starting Key Stage 4. The GCSE textbook has review questions, and these are useful for revision for the end of year tests. Students are directed to on-line resources for homework tasks throughout the year, and as they prepare for the all-important End of Key Stage and End of Year tests.

## Music

In Year 9, students have two modules (out of four), and build on the skills and knowledge delivered in Years 7 and 8. In Year 9, there is an overarching focus on the 20th Century and the musical genres that shaped the music of today. Students start off by studying Blues and Jazz. Through performing, students learn about the rich history of the genre, start to tackle GCSE style listening questions and look at how Jazz influenced musical theatre and modern day popular music.

We then move onto film music where there is a focus on composing using specialist techniques such as Leitmotifs. Finally, students finish the year with a "Band Project" in groups, using Musical Futures pedagogy, where students learn layers and rehearse collaboratively to eventually perform a live arrangement of a chosen popular song, making full use of the practice room corridor to conduct

group rehearsals, in preparation for the Ensemble Performance element at GCSE Music level (Eduqas specification).

## Physical Education & Games

We have an ambitious, stimulating and challenging vision to deliver a high quality and inclusive programme. We create an environment that supports and nurtures all students to develop a high sense of self-worth and the character to contribute positively to society. We want our students to have developed the motivation, confidence and competence to thrive through a healthy and physically active lifestyle.

All great journeys start with the *'End in Mind'*. This means that we establish a clear vision with our students on where they want to get to with Physical Education and Games and we set about supporting them to achieve that vision by teaching the desired skills and knowledge from the very start of the RGSHW journey. We adopt a variety of activities to provide a broad and balanced experience that is tailored to the individual needs of each student as well as aspects of the GCSE Physical Education course, within a safe, inspiring and inclusive environment. This allows all students to regularly learn the *'End in Mind'* skills and knowledge and maximise their development and enjoyment within Physical Education, Games and future Sport Science courses delivered in KS4 and KS5. Our Athletic Development Coaches provide further support throughout this process as additional members of staff in lessons.

<b><i>'End in Mind' – Skills and Knowledge</i></b>				
<b><i>A skill is a complex performance – drawing on what is known</i></b>				
<b>The RGSHW Way</b>	<b>Health and Well being</b>	<b>Athletic Development</b>	<b>Beat the Game</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Resilient	Sleep	Energy System	Individually	Strike
Grounded	Nutrition	Foundational Movement	Collaboratively	Throw
Selfless	Mindset	Creative movement	Rules	Receive
Honest	Safety	Power Production	Tactical principles	Kick
Work Ethic	Exercise	Speed of Movement	Additional roles	Carry

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Examples and Adapted Versions</b>
Invasion games	Handball, Aussie Rules, Basketball, Rugby, Hockey
Net & Wall Games	Badminton, Volleyball, Tennis, Table Tennis, Squash
Target Games	Dodgeball and Derivatives
Athletic Development	Energy Systems, Foundational Movement, Creative Movement, Power Production, Speed of Movement
Gymnastics	Holds, Rolls, Rotations, Routines
Athletics	Track and Field – Traditional and Creative Methods
Strike and Field	Softball, Rounders, Cricket
Outdoor Adventure	Capture the Flag, Orienteering, Team Challenges
Swimming	Stroke Development, Water Safety, Water Polo

## PSHCE

The students in Year 9 will cover three areas of PSHCE. These are Relationships and Sex Education, Health and Well-being, and The Wider World. The sessions will include the following content:

- Careers – Future choices
- Internet safety and social media
- Emotional well-being and mental health
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness
- Keeping yourself safe, risk management
- Relationship and Sex Education

# Physics

This year is the start of the Physics GCSE scheme of work, so topics covered in Year 9 will be assessed in the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11.

## Topic 1: Electrical Circuits

- Current as flow of charge.
- Voltage as energy content of charge.
- What is resistance?
- Calculating resistance using Ohm's Law.
- Measuring resistance using ammeters and voltmeters.

## Topic 2: Waves and Sound

- Transverse and longitudinal waves.
- Types of waves and their description.
- Frequency, wavelength, speed and amplitude.
- How sound is made, transmitted and detected.
- The structure of the ear.
- Uses of ultrasound.
- Infrasound and Seismic waves.

## Topic 3: Energy and Power

- Energy stores and transfers.
- Calculating work done, kinetic energy and potential energy.
- Calculating efficiency.
- Power as rate of transfer of energy.
- Renewable and non-renewable energy resources.
- Advantage and disadvantages of ways of generating electricity.

## Topic 4: Optics

- Law of reflection, specular and diffuse reflections.
- Refraction caused by light changing speed at a boundary.
- Total internal reflection.

- Power of converging and diverging lenses.
- Use of ray drawings to find the image.
- Images produced by converging and diverging lens

### **Topic 5: Moments and Gears**

- Calculating and using moments
- Principle of moments
- Types of levers
- How gears work

### **Topic 6: Space**

- Powers of ten, astronomical distances in terms of light years.
- The Universe and relative sizes.
- Evidence of the heliocentric model versus the geocentric model.
- Planets, asteroids and comets.

## **Religious Studies**

In Year 9, students study religious, ethical, and philosophical issues from a variety of spectrums. Topics include the problem of existence, God's existence and develop their moral education in regards to our school's virtue/character ethos in a religious and non-religious sphere. In this year, GCSE topics are brought down to a Key Stage 3 level and we look to develop students analytically and evaluate skills.

Students will also be introduced to GCSE style questions in preparation for the GCSE. By the end of the year, students partake in an applied philosophical project in which they write up a thesis and present a presentation to their peers. In this vein, students should become comfortable with the demands of the future Religious Studies course.

## **Spanish**

In Year 9, students practise the four main skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening in equal measure. The topics covered include foods, holidays, Latin

America, films, fashion and daily routine. We place great emphasis on teaching the pupils to communicate in the language, to give opinions and justify their answers. The present tense is revised and students are introduced to the past and future tenses. Even at this early stage, all writing, reading and listening activities are designed to prepare them for GCSE. Furthermore, we encourage students to use IT to enhance their use of the language. We also put a strong emphasis on authentic materials and cultural opportunities such as Spanish food taster sessions, authentic literature translations and film study of *Voces Inocentes*. All students have the opportunity to take part in several national competitions such as the Anthea Bell Prize and the Stephen Spender Poetry Competition run by Oxford University.

## Co-Curricular Education

Character Education forms an integral part of life at RGSHW and our Co-Curricular provision is designed to support students in learning to understand the importance of teamwork, resilience, community and leadership as well as the value of your physical and emotional well-being.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an integral part of the RGS. For many that journey starts with their enrolment in the Bronze Award at the start of Year 9. As a school we strongly believe that learning outside of the classroom provides an educational environment for students that allows them to have the opportunity to express individual talent and explore new approaches to challenges. On average we see around 135 students each year enrol for the Bronze Award.

We want to ensure that all students can access and take part in academic activities outside of the normal timetabled day, through our numerous clubs and societies as well as being inspired to take part in a considerable number of offsite opportunities and trips should they choose.

Educational and Development trips, Clubs and Co-Curricular activities are displayed on our school website. All Co-Curricular information is also sent home as a collective document at the start of the year to assist planning. The RGS is an exceptional school, in large part due to the effort that is made to offer a wide variety of trips, clubs and co-curricular activities, and we strongly encourage you to participate in these as much as you can. If you have any questions, please contact Mr Clatworthy [dec@rgshw.com](mailto:dec@rgshw.com).



## Pastoral Care

Your child will be supported by a very well-established Pastoral Team. This includes their Form Tutor, Head of Year, Mr Durning, Matron and Mrs Herath. We are always very happy to hear from you, and should you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Finally, we hope this information has been helpful to you and we wish you and your child a very relaxing and enjoyable summer. School resumes for Year 9 students on Thursday 5 September at 8.40am.

**Mr A McDonald-Smith**

**Head of Year 8/9**

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**(2024/2025)**