



THE CURRICULUM

Curriculum Subjects for Years 7 to 9

Within key stage three, pupils study a wide range of subjects, including the complete range of National Curriculum subjects. The core programme followed in Years 7 to 9 includes English, Mathematics, Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics), Information & Communications Technology (ICT), History, Geography, Modern Languages (from French, German and Spanish), Art & Design, Design & Technology, Drama, Food & Nutrition, Music, Physical Education (PE) and Religious Education (RE).

There is also a Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) curriculum delivered by teams using focus days, study sessions and special activities as necessary to supplement the wider curriculum. On the professional judgement of their teachers, some pupils may take part of a GCSE course during key stage three.

Examination Courses in Years 10 and 11

In these examination years, the following GCSE courses are currently studied, including the core of compulsory subjects:

English (Language and Literature), Mathematics, Science (Biology, Chemistry & Physics) taken to GCSE as core and additional or three separate Science subjects, ICT (Diploma in Digital Applications), at a Modern Language (from French, German or Spanish), and either Geography or History. Further preferences for GCSE examinations are made from a wider selection (Art & Design, Business Studies, Design & Technology, Drama, a second Modern Language, Music, a second Humanities subject, PE, RE and Sociology).

Please note that this subject list may vary from year to year according to the needs of students.

Other courses are also offered to provide a balanced curriculum: PE; PSHE education, Careers Education and RE. Pupils are also given the opportunity to sit the short-course GCSE examination for RE.

Sixth Form Courses

A wide range of subjects is available for Advanced Subsidiary (A/S) and Advanced (A) Level examinations and choice of subjects is arranged so as to allow sensibly grouped, but flexible options. The choices at GCE A/S and/or A-level this year include:

Fine Art; Biology; Business Studies; Certificate of Financial Services; Chemistry; Classical Civilisation; Computing; Critical Thinking; Design Technology; Drama & Theatre Studies; Economics; English Literature; Film Studies; French; Geography; German; Government & Politics; Health & Social Care; History; Information Technology; Law; Leisure & Tourism; various combinations of Pure & Applied Mathematics; Music; Performing Arts; Photography; Physics; Psychology; Religious Studies; Science in Society; Sociology; Spanish; Sports Studies.

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The school also offers additional enrichment opportunities, including the certificated Extended Project and an 'elective' programme of study aimed at enhancing those learning skills needed for higher education, whilst gaining a further qualification.

All students follow a course of PSHE education in focus days and by means of special events, which develops themes encountered in previous years and includes a comprehensive careers programme.

Sex and Relationship Education

This important area of the curriculum is delivered throughout students' time at Highsted, mainly taught through the PSHE education programme and to a limited extent, across the other areas of the curriculum. The topic of human reproduction is covered in Science. The PSHE education programme covers aspects in context of the population explosion, social responsibility, moral and responsible relationships between adults and methods of contraception. Further information about the nature and content of the course is available to parents on request, and parents who may wish to do so are welcome to discuss this area of the curriculum with the headteacher. There is a legal provision for parents to withdraw pupils from the sex education programme. Parents are informed in writing of the school's policy when their daughter is admitted to the school.

Careers Education

A structured programme of independent careers education and guidance, geared to the needs of grammar school pupils, is provided at Highsted. The aim is to enable pupils to achieve their full career potential by: raising awareness of individuals' abilities and skills; broadening knowledge of opportunities in Further/Higher Education, training and employment; developing the skills necessary to make informed decisions. The programme is delivered through timetabled PSHE education sessions, tutorials, lunchtime clinics and individual interviews by the school's specialist careers staff, form tutors and visiting speakers. Work experience plays an important part in increasing pupils' understanding of the world of employment and is compulsory in Year 11. A well-resourced careers library is open to all pupils, offering a wide selection of general guides, specific careers information books and a computer with Internet access and a range of relevant software.

Drama

All pupils in Years 7 – 9 take Drama as part of their regular curriculum but it is also very much part of activities throughout the school. There is one major school production each year, with opportunities for pupils to participate in smaller productions organised by members of the sixth form and house teams. Pupils also take part in drama workshops and demonstrations to extend their knowledge and interest in this area.



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Music

The school specialises in all aspects of performing and composing. The many talented musicians play together each week in the main orchestra, the wind band or various ensembles, or sing with peers in a variety of vocal groupings or in the main school choir. Very often, students take part in more than one of these. The department is currently reviewing the range of activities available to encourage maximum participation.

Standards of performance are extremely high and the school gives regular, highly acclaimed school and community concerts. Peripatetic music teachers visit the school to give individual instrumental and singing tuition under the Kent Music School scheme, and privately. Close collaboration between the Music and Drama Departments takes place for all school productions.

Sports and Physical Education

Students join a proud tradition of participation and success in sporting activities. All students can take part in individual and team sports within the curriculum and during after-school activities. Students from Highsted have gained both County and National honours in such sports as swimming, golf, athletics, netball, rugby, cricket, dance and judo. As the students progress through the school, the range of activities widens to include many activities taken by specialist coaches.

Religious Education

Highsted Grammar School is not affiliated to any religious denomination. Religious Education is taught by law and therefore is a compulsory part of the curriculum and follows the outlines of content as identified in the Kent Local Authority scheme. Each day starts with a time for reflection in either house, year or school groupings. Assemblies will contain both moral and religious content aimed at enhancing the individual's responsibility and relationship to the community.

There is also a legal provision for parents who may wish to withdraw, upon written request to the headteacher, pupils from religious worship and/or Religious Education on grounds of conscience or principles. Every effort is made to minimise any attention being focused on any pupil so withdrawn. The very few pupils who are withdrawn from RE usually undertake personal study in the library.

Additional/Special Educational Needs

It is the policy of Highsted Grammar School to meet the needs of each pupil and it is recognised that some pupils have additional or special educational needs. Therefore, the commitment is made to identify and assess pupils with as early and efficiently as possible in order to address the pupil's needs, which may take a wide variety of forms. To this end, close liaison takes place with our feeder primary schools and with any school from whom we receive a pupil during the academic year.



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The policy ensures that the pupil has the greatest possible access to the whole curriculum. The Additional Educational Needs Co-ordinator and other staff work in partnership with parents and take into account the views of the pupil. Pupils' needs are regularly reviewed and discussed, in consultation with parents and staff. Monitoring and record keeping are overseen by a Deputy Headteacher. Parents are welcomed into school to discuss any concerns/queries that they may have.

Detailed information about Highsted Grammar School's special educational needs policy and processes is available from the school. Parents who wish to discuss these issues can phone the additional educational needs co-ordinator at the school, or the Director of Studies for the key stage in question.

Homework Requirements

Homework is compulsory at Highsted and we ask for the support of all parents in helping to create the time and situation for the girls to complete this during the weekdays. All pupils will be given a homework timetable during Term 1 so that both pupils and parents can plan ahead for the year. Individual student planners, aimed separately at the Lower, Middle and Senior School, contain extensive study skills information, including how to make efficient use of time. Parents are asked to sign this weekly, as part of their monitoring at home that homework has been completed on time and to an appropriate standard.

The School adopts a gentle policy for starting homework, with a gradual introduction across all subjects. What pupils are given to do at home should not be a strain and parents are encouraged to let staff know if it appears to be so, in order for tutors to sort out any problems.

Time needed to complete assignments will vary according to ability, speed of working and interest of the pupil concerned. For an 'average Highsted pupil', homework in Year 7 should take 20-30 minutes per subject in September. This will start at between two and three subjects each evening and increase to three or four throughout key stage three. Time spent on homework is gradually increased as students move through the school.