

RICKMANSWORTH SCHOOL

MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

We have a strong team of well qualified staff using a wide range of resources and pupils achieve very good results at all three Key Stages.

In Year 7 pupils are placed into maths sets within half-year populations as a result of their performance in Key stage 2 exams and tests that the school administer. Pupils work from a range of materials, principally using the MyMaths scheme – a series of textbooks, extension, remediation and homework materials and assessments. It is designed to consolidate and extend work covered at junior school as well as stretch the brighter pupils.

In Years 8 and 9 pupils are placed into maths sets within their half-year populations as a result of their prior performance. Pupils continue working on our Scheme for Learning which makes use of a variety of different textbooks and in-house produced resources and assessments.

Work continues on the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum towards the end of year SATs exams. Although we are no longer obliged to sit external exams at this point, we use the same format as part of our internal assessment process. There are two written papers, one with and one without a calculator, as well as a mental mathematics test. There is a continued emphasis throughout all year groups on mental arithmetic including learning number facts and definitions and strategies for mental calculation.

Maths lessons throughout Key Stage 3 incorporate the fundamental aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy. Mental and oral starters are regularly used and each room in the department has access to an interactive whiteboard or data projector and many Key Stage three lessons are taught using interactive software. Teaching techniques are varied to ensure interesting lessons and well-motivated pupils. We are currently establishing greater links with our local primary schools to smooth the transition from Year 6 into 7.

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are working towards the EDEXCEL GCSE in Mathematics. Pupils continue to be set in half-year populations and as pupils develop, the appropriateness of their maths set is regularly re-assessed. In Key Stage 4 we have a two tier GCSE structure. In year 11, pupils in the higher attaining sets (typically sets 1 to 6) take the Higher tier (grades 9 to 4), other sets take the Foundation tier exam (grades 5 to 1). There are three exams at the end of Year 11, two with and one without a calculator. There is no longer a coursework element in mathematics. Some of our more able students are given the opportunity of sitting the Additional Mathematics FSMQ award and finish with a double qualification. This enables them to begin their A level Maths with a flying start! Results at GCSE are excellent and, in recent years, no pupil has failed to gain a grade at GCSE mathematics. Last summer 89% of our Year 11 pupils achieved grade 4 or above, as opposed to 61% nationally.

In the Sixth Form mathematics is a popular choice with around 120 students studying it in its various forms. We offer OCR A level Mathematics and A level Further Mathematics. All A level mathematicians study Pure Mathematics, and Applied Mathematics while Further Mathematics students study modules that may be chosen from Statistics, Decision Maths and Mechanics. The results at A level in mathematics are also consistently good, with 60% of last summer’s students gaining a grade A\* to B.