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Issue 094

Dear Parents/Carers

Thank you yet again for doing such a good job in helping your children to keep going in these difficult times. I particularly feel for our Year 11 and Year 13 students who are having to persevere in spite of the uncertainty about how they are going to be assessed this year. We hope to hear what is happening by the week beginning 22 February at the latest, but obviously we have no control over when the announcement from the Department for Education will come.

Thank you too (over 600 of you) for taking part in our survey about online learning. Mostly the results were very reassuring, but we will take on board the many helpful comments and continue to refine and develop our practice.

I hope that during the half-term break, although we will continue to be very limited as to what activities we can pursue, we can all at least enjoy a break in our routines and find some creative and pleasurable things to do.

I wish you all the best as always.

Yours faithfully

Mr Moore
Headteacher

SAD NEWS

We were very sorry to hear that Mr Hari Jagaram (D&T Technician at RMGS) passed away on 18/1/2021 after a period of illness. Those of you who knew Mr Jagaram will know that he always took great pride in his work over his 17 years in the department, and we fondly remember his cooking - distributing onion bhajis and samosas as regular treats for his colleagues. I have passed on all our condolences to his family.

Please be aware that our school counsellor is available to talk to students or staff members about bereavement.

Mr Moore

'THE VOICE UK'

Congratulations to James O (Head student) for getting through to the next round of 'The Voice UK'. When asked how he was lucky to be involved, he replied, 'I was approached at the start of lockdown 1 to be on The Voice and I was quite hesitant at first as it was never something I really thought about before. However, I wanted to take the opportunity to inspire people and effectively show people that they can do it too. I wanted to pay tribute to Martin Luther King Jr in my song so I incorporated some of the words from his famous "I have a dream" speech and turned it into a rap. The experience has been electric and I am so excited to be working with Will.I.Am!'

We wish James all the best in 'The Battles' which will be on our screen soon. Here is the link to his story on Kentonline <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/medway/news/i-told-a-story-everyone-needed-to-hear-240505/>

Mr Moore

YEAR 13 PHYSICS STUDENTS - BPhO ROUND 1

Congratulations to the seven Year 13 Physics students who took part in this year's physics Olympiad (BPhO Round 1). This year 1,606 students from 270 schools participated from the UK and from a few schools overseas (and a further 2,000 students in China). This entailed marking 3,700 scripts (with some duplications for moderation) and the work carried on through Christmas. This paper is to challenge a range of student knowledge, preparation and ability, allowing access for good students, whilst also aiming at stretching and challenging the top young physicists in the country in a national competition. Every question requires a different perspective to get the measure of it. This fluency in recognising topics and linking ideas is, in part, what develops the physicist's confidence and mastery. It takes time and perseverance to master this challenge and a lower mark is no reflection on a student's ability in physics, whilst perhaps providing the spur to improve their skills in this area, both in terms of understanding the problem and presenting their work in a readable layout. These really are about particular skills, which must be developed over time.

The students may be disappointed with a mere commendation, not having made it into the medals. They should not be so. It reflects positively on a candidate who has been willing to take part in a competition that has such demanding questions. Over time, they will come across these difficult ideas and applications and begin to see their way through. This is the first step in developing valuable problem-solving skills that enable an understanding of the broad landscape of a fantastic subject. J Paton – Bronze I, F Vosper, S Khan and J Simon – Bronze II, J Odeniran, S Lewis and O Thorpe – Commendation.

Mr Wilkinson

SOUTH EAST REGIONAL FINAL OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRANSLATION BEE 2019-2020 FOR SPANISH

Congratulations to Mary E (Year 10) who won the South East Regional Final of the Foreign Language Translation Bee 2019-2020 for Spanish. She has worked so hard for this for about 18 months now, and despite lockdown and everything else she has managed to stay on track with her learning and was able to translate around 27 sentences into Spanish in 60 seconds - compared to around 18 which usually is enough to get a place in the National Final. Incredible!

She now goes through to the National Final (which will also be done digitally) against all the other regions and the four other finalists from the South East.

Her words when she started the competition were 'I'm going to win it this time' (she did amazingly in French the year before) and we have every belief that she could, we have never seen anyone perform to such high standards, from any of the schools that take part. Thank you to Mrs Chainey who has continued to work really hard supporting the students.

Ms Gooding

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

A big thank you to Mr O'Neill, F Ebling and A Cabella for their wonderful work who have developed 'The Mark' as a virtual magazine that has been dragged into the 21st century. They have changed the name from the gendered 'The Marksman' to the much more contemporary 'The Mark'. What's more, it has become a celebration of visual medium such as artwork and photography as well as written content. The link is here:
<https://sway.office.com/6irB3YWDAQVSfoHK?ref=Link>

Congratulations also to F Ebling who has gained a place in Oxford to read English Literature which we are over the moon with. Again, the 6th form teachers have supported her through this process and it is pleasing that she has got in: she is very deserving of a place.

Mr McDowell

POWERBOAT AND RIB MAGAZINE

Congratulations to Lucy C (Year 11) who wrote an interesting and informative article which is featured in the January/February edition of the PBR magazine.

PBR 166 Jan/Feb carries more pages and content than any other boating magazine sold on the UK news-stands. The magazine wrote, 'We want to inspire and educate as many people as possible as to the wonderful pastime of boating, especially in these challenging times and your article is perfect for this'.

Mrs Horstrup

IQM (INCLUSION QUALITY MARK)

We are pleased to inform you that we have been awarded the IQM Inclusive School Award with Centre of Excellence Status for the next three years. IQM provides an evaluative framework which supports organisational self-assessment. With a strong theoretical and research base, the IQM Award provides a validation of current practice and a detailed report summarising the findings.

The link for the news story is below:

<https://iqmaward.com/news/rainham-mark-achieves-centre-of-excellence-status/>

I would like to thank staff and students who have worked hard and contributed to the success in obtaining this important award.

Below is an extract from the report from the external assessor:

‘Pupils and Sixth Form students come first and staff go to great lengths to offer whatever support they need to succeed. Unusually, for a Grammar School pastoral care of pupils is a priority. The school wants pupils to enjoy learning and enjoy being in school. They have a liberal holistic approach to schooling and want to ensure that the wellbeing and mental health of pupils considered alongside the curriculum and pedagogy.

Diversity matters, the school is doing all it can to recruit a diverse population. Furthermore, they want the pupils to understand that diversity in all its guises is positive. The school does not back away for tackling difficult discussions and actually encourages them. Pupils of all ages feel empowered to lead and question. Pupil Voice is extraordinary in that it permeates every aspect of the school.

Staff throughout the school feel valued and know that whatever their position in the school their contribution makes a difference. Teachers say they feel trusted and their professionalism is recognised and celebrated. Staff at all levels, support each other and in turn they support the pupils. Parents are also valued and feel they are partners in their children’s education. They know they are listened to and are respected. The school has much to be proud of.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark’s Inclusive School Award. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded IQM’s Inclusive School Award and be reassessed in 3 years’ time.’

Mr Moore

6TH FORM STUDENTS GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

Congratulations to the two 6th form students for the following achievements:

Madeleine C represented the school at the national competition ARTiculation, in which she discussed the powerful painting by Sarah Jane Moon called Dr Ronx, a depiction of an NHS worker.

Madeleine did something that would be intimidating for most, if not all, of us. She spoke in front of a panel of judges and her peers about a piece of artwork she felt passionately about. Although she did not get the chance to move forward into the finals, she was commended for her speech and her delivery.

Aliya G has stepped into the shoes of former student Charlie G somewhat and has a fantastic podcast called LOUD. In the words of Aliya, “First published in October 2020, LOUD is a platform where people of my generation can have our voices heard. I got the idea after noticing an area of frustration for many young people, who have a lot to say and contribute, but are often considered too young to have a voice.”

Aliya’s podcast was sent to the BBC and they “loved it”. She was interviewed on BBC Kent. Her interview can be found here – she is the first interview: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p094c0t7>

As well as keeping up with her school work and podcasting, Aliya (with her mother) has also raised £400 for Macmillan cancer by completing the 5k for 10 days challenge.

The full write up of the achievements of both young women is on the school website: <https://www.rainhammark.com/news/?pid=3&nid=3&storyid=435>

Mr McDowell

NEW STAFF

We welcome the following new member of staff who joins the Trust after half term: Miss Melanie Greener - Clerk to RMET and its associated schools

Mr Moore

CAREERS UPDATE

Week beginning 8 February is National Apprenticeships Week with many large companies highlighting the importance of apprenticeships and raising awareness.

The growing RMGS alumni have been helpful in sharing any existing apprenticeship and virtual work experience opportunities and events that are being sent onto the relevant year groups. Some are also providing short video clips of their careers and roles that will be helpful towards our more virtual careers events. Others have provided write ups of their career journeys that can be viewed on the Alumni page of the School Website.

I would like to thank Year 11 students who have got back to me with their intended destinations. I am continuing to offer advice and guidance to students, in particular those who do not intend to remain at RMGS or go to university as a first choice.

As always I am happy to look over C.Vs, applications and cover letters. Please contact me initially by email on sjobbins@rmgs.org.uk should you want any employability support or have queries about your future plans.

I hope you have a restful half term.

Miss Jobbins
Careers and Employability Advisor

KEY DATES FOR 2020-2021

Term 3	Start: Last day of term: February Break:	Monday 4 January 2021 Friday 12 February 2021 Monday 15 February - Friday 19 February 2021 incl.
Term 4	Start: Last day of term: Spring Break:	Monday 22 February 2021 Thursday 1 April 2021 Monday 2 April 2021 – Friday 16 April 2021 inclusive (Good Friday 2 April 2021 & Easter Monday 5 April 2021)
Term 5	Start: May Day Holiday: Last day of term: May Break:	Monday 19 April 2021 Monday 3 May 2021 Friday 28 May 2021 Monday 31 May – Friday 4 June 2021 inclusive
Term 6	Start: Last day of term:	Monday 7 June 2021 (Week 0) Wednesday 21 July 2021
Parents' Evenings All parent consultation sessions will be conducted via video calls through Edulink. The video system controls the appointments and will cut off after an allocated time so please do make use of the "Notes" section when you book if there is anything specific you wish to discuss. Parents/carers can make appointments from 2 weeks before the event up to 8pm the night before. If you cannot see the Parents' Evening circle on your home screen, click 'More' and it will appear. Contact moodle@rmgs.org.uk for Edulink queries	Year 7 Year 8 Year 10 Year 12	21 and 22 April (A, B, F & L), 27 and 28 April 2021 (N, P, R & S) 15 and 16 March (A, B, F & L), 24 and 25 March 2021 (N, P, R & S) 17 and 18 May 2021 7 and 8 July 2021* *Please note change of dates.
Examinations	Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 Year 12 PEQ Year 13 PEQ	7 June to 11 June 2021 7 June to 15 June 2021 w/c 15 March - Provisional