



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: T J Swain, M A

10 February 2017

Dear Parents,

All Year 9 students have just taken a set of ICT mock examinations in preparation for a Cambridge IGCSE examination this summer (Equivalent to UK GCSE but it is available internationally). This is a challenging qualification taken mostly by candidates across the world at the end of Year 11. The qualification involves a Theory Examination and two Practical Examinations. The students have been preparing for the Practical Examinations in lessons and, for the most part, preparation for the theory examination has been through homework tasks followed by theory tests in class.

The exam dates are as follows:

Practical Paper 2: 25th April 2017 (2 ½ hours)

Practical Paper 3: 27th April 2017 (2 ½ hours)

Theory Paper: 17th May 2017 (2 hours)

It will not be compulsory, or appropriate, for all students to take this qualification this summer. They must not feel it is a failure if they decide not to take the examinations. It would also not put them at a disadvantage for the future. Many schools, including Grammar schools, do not now offer an ICT qualification and instead only offer Computer Science. It should be noted that deciding not to take the ICT IGCSE does not mean they cannot choose to study Computer Science next year. The two qualifications are very different. Computer Science is about how and why computers work along with programming and ICT is about being proficient using computers to do tasks using applications such as spreadsheets and word processors.

We want candidates who take the qualification to get a grade that reflects their abilities and that they will be proud of when it sits alongside their grades from the end of Year 11. There is still a lot of extra work to do over and above what they can get done in class time in order to be ready for the examinations this summer.

To give an idea of the time commitment involved over and above class work:

- ✓ students will continue to get a fortnightly theory homework that should be taking them at least 1 ½ hours.
- ✓ Students should be completing a practice practical paper every fortnight (2 ½ hours).

Continued overleaf:-

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There are two practice/development sessions after school on Mondays and Thursdays from 4-5pm with Mrs Round where they can work on this and the computer rooms are open most lunch times and before school. Support is also available from Mr Canning after half-term, on Wednesdays 4-5pm, these revision sessions will focus on demonstration and discussion of the practical skills required in his 'software workshop'. We understand that some students may not be able to commit additional time in order to be ready because of other extra-curricular commitments they already have. It is important to consider whether or not opting to take this qualification will overburden a student and represent additional, unnecessary pressure. Attached you will find a report on your son's performance in the recent mock examinations to help you decide if it is advisable for your son to take the qualification. It must be emphasised that even if your son has scored very highly in the mock examinations, these examinations did not cover all topics for the course. Unless the additional time is put in to prepare they will not be as successful in the actual examinations.

Your son may find the following books beneficial in helping him prepare for the qualification but they are not essential for success:

Complete ICT for Cambridge IGCSE Revision Guide. By Stephen Doyle [ISBN: 978-0-19-835783-4]

This book just covers the theory element.

Cambridge IGCSE ICT Second Edition. By Graham Brown. et al. [ISBN: 978-1-471-80721-3]
This book covers the whole course in detail and its authors are the chief examiners for the course.

We need to know a final list of candidates by the **15th February 2017**. Please fill in the reply slip below and ask your son to hand it into their ICT teacher as soon as possible. Please note that this must be carefully considered as once the entries have been made the exam board offer no refund for cancelled entries.

Yours sincerley,

Mr N. Canning & Mrs F. Round

Please complete and return the reply slip to school no later than **15th February 2017**

I **do** wish my son to be entered for the ICT examinations Summer 2017.

I **do not** wish my son to be entered for the ICT examinations Summer 2017.

Pupil name:_____

Pupil form:_____

Parent signature:_____ Date:_____