



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: T J Swain, M A

26 June 2017

Dear Parents,

In ICT next year all Year 8 students will be working towards an IGCSE in ICT. The only difference between an IGCSE (International GCSE) and a GCSE is that students from other countries can take the qualification. This is a challenging course taken mostly by candidates across the world at the end of Year 11. The qualification involves a Theory Examination (2 hours) and two Practical Examinations (each 2 ½ hours). We have been offering this qualification at Key Stage 3 for 4 years now and offer it because we believe it prepares students well for all the practical software skills they will need in their future study and future careers. In addition, it helps them understand the workload, independent learning skills and resilience required for the examinations in Year 10 and 11.

It should be noted that because we have 3 lessons a fortnight (4 in Year 9) it is not possible for us to cover all the theory in class time. Preparation for this is done as fortnightly homework, followed up with a test on these topics every two weeks. Supporting and encouraging your son in ensuring this work is always completed on time will help him stay on track.

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: 978-0-10-835783-4]

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.

Please note there are reference copies of the above books available in the library and that if the school is in receipt of pupil premium funding for your son, we will be providing a copy of the books.

Further information about the qualification is on the exam boards website: www.cie.org.uk. When you reach the homepage a search for the course code 0417 will bring up all the information about the ICT IGCSE.

Finally, I often get asked what the difference is between ICT and Computer Science. Primarily, ICT covers software skills and Computer Science is about programming and understanding how and why computers work. There is some cross over between the courses, but not a lot. We offer Computer Science as an option subject at Key Stage 4 and 5. We take some time out of the IGCSE syllabus to do some coding (mainly in a programming language called Python) with the students at Key Stage 3 to help them appreciate the difference between the qualifications and gain an understanding about this area of Computer Science.

I hope you have a restful summer holiday.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Frances Round
Head of ICT and Computer Science

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