



**The Elms Academy**  
The best in everyone™  
Part of United Learning

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**The Grammar Stream at  
The Elms Academy**

*'The very best in everyone'*

# Principal's introduction



Each September, a new cohort of student joins us, with a range of talents, passions, experiences and needs. We have always sought to ensure that every student is supported and challenged to reach their full potential. We do this in a variety of ways. One such way is through the creation of a Grammar Stream.

The Grammar Stream will provide accelerated learning and greater challenge, as well as a wide range of extracurricular opportunities, for our most able students, putting them on the path to the world's best universities.

We believe that, at The Elms Academy, we are well placed to offer a Grammar Stream: for the last three years, our Year 11 students have made progress well above the national average and many have achieved the top grade, 9, in a range of subjects. Our Ofsted report shows that we are a Good and improving school, with a commitment to rigour and excellence in teaching and learning. In addition, we believe that a Grammar Stream

within a mixed, comprehensive school setting provides a unique and desirable experience for students: movement into and out of the Grammar Stream each year means that the experience can be a reality for all - including for those students who have not reached their academic peak by the time of traditional grammar school entrance tests in Year 6. Unlike local selective schools, our pupils are from a variety of backgrounds and are mixed gender, meaning that Grammar Stream pupils will learn how to socialise and communicate effectively with others.

You will find more information on our Grammar Stream offer below. We hope you are as excited about it as we are. Of course, should you have any questions, you are welcome to contact us or a member of our team.

**Amy Welch**  
Principal

**Leon Wilson**  
Executive Principal



## What is a Grammar Stream?

A Grammar Stream is a group of 28-32 highly academically able students. They will be taught a more challenging and in-depth curriculum from Year 7 onwards, as well as having access to a programme of extracurricular opportunities that will put them on the path to the world's best universities.

## Why are we creating a Grammar Stream?

The Elms Academy is, and always will be, proud to be a comprehensive school. However, we recognise that many of our students join us having performed at the highest level in primary school and require an additional level of challenge to reach their potential.

The rationale for the Grammar Stream is to ensure that our most academically capable students have the opportunity to compete at the highest level at A-level, at university and in the job market, alongside their grammar school and privately educated peers.

Whilst they are at The Elms Academy, the foci for Grammar Stream students will be:

- To gain a set of GCSEs at grades 7-9.
- To develop an understanding of the range of academic and career opportunities that lie ahead.
- To raise their aspirations to perform at the highest level in their chosen field.
- To explore a range of extracurricular opportunities that will help them to develop their own passions and become responsible young citizens, who care for their communities and who are committed to bettering them.



## What will be different about the Grammar Stream curriculum?

A key aspect of the Grammar Stream curriculum is that students will study two languages from Year 7 onwards: Spanish, as well as either French or Mandarin. We believe that the ability to communicate with others around the world will be vital for success in a twenty-first century world. In addition, a focus on languages will help to build a greater cultural understanding and will maximise students' opportunities to work and study abroad in the future.

Except for languages, Grammar Stream students in Key Stage 3 will study the same subject mix as their peers. However, the Grammar Stream curriculum will be more in-depth, and teachers will push students to read widely and critically, in

order to broaden their understanding. There will be additional homework expectations over and above students in the mainstream school.

Our aim is that our Grammar Stream students are prepared for academic excellence in Key Stage 4, including taking both languages for GCSE and sitting the sciences as three separate GCSEs ("Triple Science"), rather than the standard Combined qualification." In addition, students will have the opportunity to study for an additional Level 2 Statistics qualification and to complete the AQA Higher Project, in which students write up an extended piece of research on a topic of their choosing.

# What other opportunities will students in the Grammar Stream have?

In order to be successful in their university applications and beyond, Grammar Stream students will need to have passions outside of their academic work. To help them develop these areas of interest, we provide students with bespoke extracurricular opportunities that bring new experiences and help to develop them into leaders within the local community.

All Grammar Stream students will be encouraged to learn a musical instrument, supported by 1-1 and small group tuition. An instrument loan/bursary scheme will be available to support with access to instruments.



In addition, Grammar Stream students will have access to the following opportunities during their school career:

- Monday clubs — during their school career, students will have access to a huge range of clubs, including Sports (football, rugby, gymnastics, trampolining, fencing and more), Arts (choir, drama, songwriting, poetry and more) and Community (social justice, coding, school newspaper and more).
- University visits both in and out of London.
- Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award — in which students develop a skill, complete charity work and go on an overnight expedition.
- Speak Out Challenge and Debate Mate, in which students receive public speaking training and participate in debates.
- Opportunities to take a leading role in Shakespearean productions, as well as other theatrical experiences.
- The Brilliant Club, in which students work with PhD students to complete a dissertation on a subject of their choosing.
- Mentoring by older students, who can offer help and advice on homework and wider school life.



## How is this different to Grammar School?

We believe that offering a Grammar Stream within a comprehensive school setting provides the best of both worlds, or 'selectivity with flexibility'. Whilst the traditional grammar school system can lead to students being 'pigeonholed' at the age of 11, our Grammar Stream will allow us to cater to changes in students' circumstances. For example, students who are not ready for the Grammar Stream when they arrive at The Elms Academy in Year 7, but who begin to flourish during their time with us will have the opportunity to join the Grammar Stream later on in their time here.



In fact, we believe that the existence of the Grammar Stream will raise aspirations for all pupils. Other schools with a Grammar Stream report that students are highly motivated to join this prestigious pathway, and that they work hard to do so, raising attainment across the board. Of course, should a student struggle with the academic challenge of the Grammar Stream, they can easily move to another non-Grammar Stream class within the school, without being cut off from friends and familiar surroundings. Finally, unlike other local selective schools, our Grammar Stream provides an opportunity for high-performing boys and girls to be educated together, with students from a range of backgrounds. We believe that this will help students to become better communicators and happier citizens.



## How will students be admitted to the Grammar Stream?

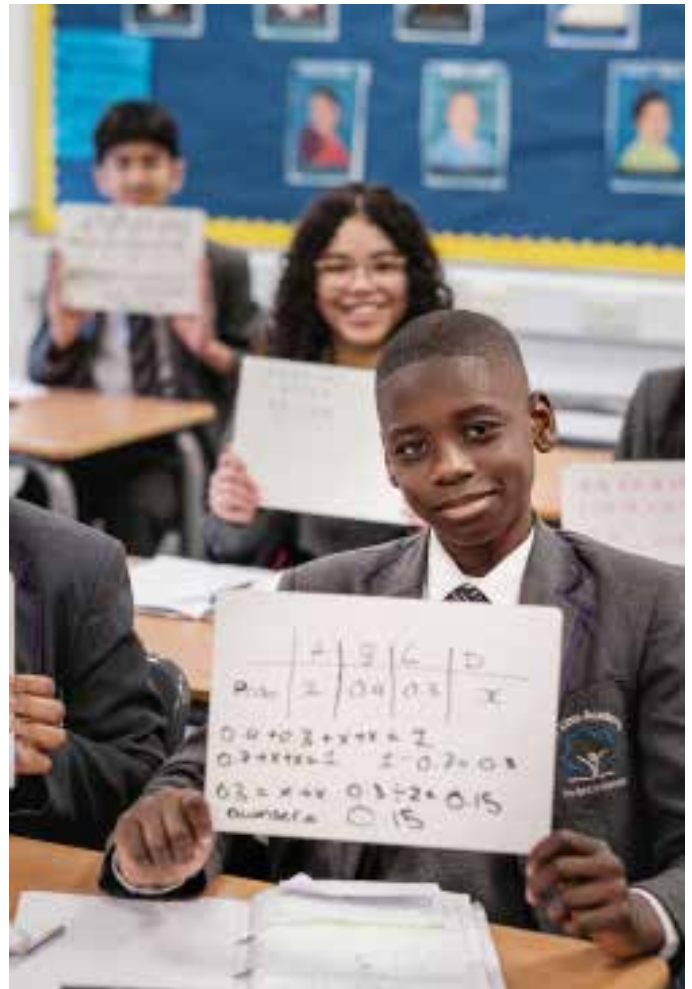
As part of the induction programme, students who have accepted a place at The Elms Academy will complete a set of — cognitive ability tests, known as MidYis. A Grammar Stream place will be offered to the highest-scoring 32 students. All students who accept a place will be asked to sign a contract that commits them to their place and to the afterschool activities that we expect Grammar Stream students to take part in. The MidYis tests assess \_ students' abilities in verbal and non-verbal reasoning, numerical tasks, proofreading, and vocabulary. There is no need for students to prepare for the tests in any way. The tests are done at a computer and are marked automatically.

## How will students move into and out of the Grammar Stream?

Grammar Stream places will be reviewed after the second school assessment point, which takes place in June each year. Grammar Stream students will be assessed alongside the rest of the year group and a rank order will be produced for the year group. Students' position in the rank order will be used to decide whether they should retain their place, be offered a place, or be asked to leave the Grammar Stream. At all times, the maximum number of students in the Grammar Stream will be 32.

# Who will oversee the Grammar Stream?

The Grammar Stream will be overseen by Rebecca White, Assistant Principal at The Elms Academy. Ms White will monitor students' academic progress throughout the year and will liaise with teachers 'to ensure that the Grammar Stream curriculum is challenging and stimulating. The Head of Year 7 will continue to have responsibility for the welfare and safeguarding of all students in Year 7, including those in the Grammar Stream.



**We look forward to welcoming you into our school to tour the school and meet our wonderful Grammar Stream students.**

We are excited to offer this group a new level of challenge and to watch them develop their own unique passions as they participate in our extracurricular programme. We hope your child will be excited to join us, too!



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