



RGS  
NEWCASTLE

# ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL NEWCASTLE

Our Strategic Direction





## Rooted in history, delivering impact, pursuing excellence

The Royal Grammar School in Newcastle is a remarkable place with a 500 year long tradition of welcoming people from all backgrounds. From history's Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, to more recent Nobel Prize molecular biologist, Sir Gregory Winter, the RGS has educated thousands of young people who have gone on to make their mark on the world.

At the heart of all we do is our leading, co-educational day school for 1,300 students aged 7 to 18. It is an exciting place to learn, that is forward thinking and inclusive.

We are immensely proud of the academic achievements of our community and it is testament to our students' commitment and teachers' dedication that we are ranked as one of the highest performing schools in the country. Yet we pride ourselves on the equal prioritisation of academic excellence, the high level of our pastoral support and the breadth of our co-curricular programme.

**We believe that academic results should be the consequence, not the purpose, of an outstanding and well-rounded education.**

We believe that happy children learn best and, through involvement in a wide range of sports, performing arts and other co-curricular activities, we prepare students for a healthy and fulfilling life. We nurture intellectual curiosity and creative thinking, whilst encouraging students to challenge themselves in everything they undertake. We are a diverse community and we work to ensure that our young people leave school as kind, interesting, independent-minded individuals who are willing to take on responsibility and motivated to contribute to society.

**RGS is not just a school, it is a community, a family, a way of life.**

Our sense of social responsibility is embedded in our 500 year foundations; today's charitable objects and vision for the North East, fuel our ambition to help increase opportunity and raise attainment more widely across the region. We believe in the infinite potential of our region and occupy a distinct role in the rich local educational eco system.

Covering everything that we do are the invisible fingerprints of our ethos; to value a **sense of belonging**, foster a **belief in each other**, inspire a **love for learning** and encourage an **ambition to succeed**.

We have an exciting future ahead, though not without its challenges. This strategy document derives from wide-ranging discussions with staff, students, parents and governors over a number of years. This plan is a statement of intent rather than a prescriptive list of actions and outcomes which can be found within the school's development plan. This document identifies areas of priority and articulates the principles that lie behind our purpose. It sets a direction that allows us to be proactive in responding to both opportunities and challenges, following decision-making principles defined by the governors.

This plan is also an invitation to engage with this latest chapter of our history so that we can draw on many differing perspectives, united by a shared belief that the RGS can make a meaningful contribution to the education of young people in Newcastle and the broader North East of England.

We approach the next decade and beyond with an open mind, ready to be challenged as well as inspired.



**Geoffrey Stanford**  
**Headmaster**





Queen Elizabeth I grants a Royal Charter, naming us 'the Royal Grammar School Newcastle';



Old Novo Lord William Armstrong discovers hydroelectricity



Old Novo Sir Arthur Munro Sutherland funds the school's organ and war memorial



Old Novo Louis Taylor establishes RGS Bursaries



RGS establishes RGS Partnerships, eventually reaching 10,000 children each year



Quincentenary

1525

1601

1700s

1800s

1907

1923

1939

1997

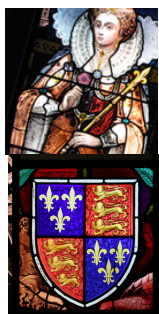
2002

2020

2023

2025

Thomas Horsley, mayor of Newcastle, pledges funding for the Newcastle Grammar School in his Will



Fee assisted pupil Lord Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood leaves RGS, subsequently leads victory at the Battle of Trafalgar



RGS moves to Eskdale Terrace, Jesmond, opened by The Duke of Northumberland



RGS commandeered as the North East Regional War Room, students evacuated to Penrith



Chair of Governors John Fenwick leads the school to co-education



RGS awarded Independent School of the Year for the whole of the UK





We promote excellence and are committed to improving opportunity and raising attainment across the North East.

By inspiring and nurturing hearts and minds, we can give those around us the freedom to create and shape their own future.

We believe in inspiring young people and equipping them to make a positive contribution to society.



# OUR VISION

Where we are headed

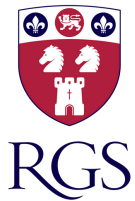
**The RGS is a charity  
for the advancement  
of education of  
children and young  
persons in the North  
East of England**











# OUR ETHOS

How we do things

Sense of belonging

Belief in each other

Love for learning

Ambition to succeed

**Like fingerprints, our ethos and values cover everything we do:**

Sense of belonging - A future that is built on our sense of history and belonging in the city but is fuelled by an ambition to succeed and evolve.

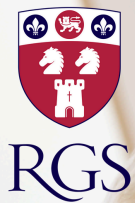
Love for Learning - A place where freedom of expression, ideas and beliefs can be shared, exchanged and grow openly in our happy environment.

Belief in each other - An environment where we look out for each other and treat everyone with care and respect, within and beyond our community.

Ambition to succeed - A spirit to challenge, inspire and stretch the minds of everyone here so we feel free to explore, free to think, free to try, free to dream of possibilities and free to be ourselves.









# OUR STRATEGIC INTENT

What we prioritise in our decision-making



## **Financial viability and stewardship**

Maintain sound ethical and responsive financial management to meet our strategic intent on a sustainable long-term basis.





# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

## Happy, healthy and engaged students

### AIM

Ensure every child develops self-esteem, resilience and a sense of belong, nurtured through the best possible experience of school.

### WHY WE DO IT

Happy and secure children learn best and are most engaged when they feel they belong.

We want to prepare students to lead healthy, rewarding and fulfilling lives.

### WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Help students to individually and collectively thrive, developing confidence through successes and embracing the learnings and resilience found in failure.

Encourage students to identify their own values and develop a sense of purpose, ideally as proud, contributing citizens of a positive society.

### HOW WE DO IT

Promote a kind and inclusive environment where individuality is celebrated and where life-long friendships and networks are forged.

Provide a highly pastoral environment for our students, through structures including the year group, form, house, and tutor systems, with additional support available from our health centre and counsellors.

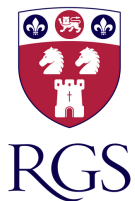
Ensure students develop the social, emotional and intellectual skills they need to make informed decisions and manage their wellbeing, through a thoughtful and responsive PSHE programme.

Consult and act upon the voice of students, both collectively through the school council and wellbeing surveys, as well as through individual relationships with actively listening staff.

Promote a leadership framework whereby all students have the opportunity to learn about, practise and reflect on their experience of leading and working together.

Foster strong relationships with parents to provide consistency of care for their children.

Support health and wellbeing of all members of our community as integral to the school's plans and actions.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

## Inspiring and committed staff

### AIM

Foster an ambition to succeed through recruiting and retaining excellent people, who inspire and motivate our students to realise their potential.

### WHY WE DO IT

Children are packed with potential and deserve outstanding teachers and operational staff who strive to facilitate the very best environment in which to learn.

In serving the best interests of our students, it is essential to have a talented, motivated, and happy staff who act as positive role models.

### WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

A dynamic and cohesive staff body who:

- Serve our students by delivering a forward-looking, purposeful and positive learning and teaching environment.
- Embody the school's vision and ethos.
- Are happy in their work and well supported by leadership at all levels.
- Embrace opportunities for sharing best practice and continuing professional development.

### HOW WE DO IT

Attract capable and committed staff and governors who go above and beyond to inspire our students, both inside and outside the classroom.

Encourage employment applications from diverse backgrounds and demonstrate that the RGS is a place where a wide range of people succeed.

Promote a positive culture of lifelong learning with a commitment to regular appraisal and continuing professional development, which ensures staff and governors can excel in their respective roles.

Provide a working environment which puts a premium on respect, kindness, integrity and recognition of all individuals' contribution to the shared endeavour.

Recognise and reward commitment to the full range of academic, pastoral and co-curricular contribution, celebrating both individual and collective success.

Support skills and wellbeing, ensuring all staff and governors are equipped to manage the challenges of their role.





# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

## A diverse and inclusive community

### AIM

Promote belief in each other throughout a diverse, inclusive and committed network of pupils, parents, staff and Old Novocastrians.

### WHY WE DO IT

Diversity of all types adds to the rich experience of everyone in the RGS community. We explicitly value protected characteristics, as well as neurodiversity and social diversity.

Success is nurtured in an environment where anyone and everyone feels they comfortably belong.

### WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Ensure that every member of the RGS community shares a sense of belonging.

Deliver demonstrable social impact both for individuals within the school and in the wider community.

Embrace diversity and enhance the profile of the North East as a region, attracting the very best to come and live, work and innovate here.

### HOW WE DO IT

Champion equality, all forms of diversity, and inclusion across the governing body, staff and students.

Promote and evaluate our culture of tolerance, informed by open discussion and breadth of thinking, where people can form trusting relationships.

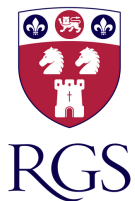
Support SEND and neurodiversity by developing the strength of our learning support provision.

Celebrate our history and vision as a focus for bringing the RGS community together.

Create opportunities for students and staff to engage in community activities that contribute to society.

Grow our bursary and partnership work, increasing access to opportunities for deserving young people and supporting teachers throughout the region.

Foster partnerships with primary and secondary schools in the region, in collaboration with universities and other organisations which promote the development of young people.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

## Breadth of educational experience

### AIM

Embed a lifelong curiosity and love for learning, through a broad range of academic and co-curricular opportunities and challenge.

### WHY WE DO IT

We recognise the importance of a holistic - as well as high quality - education, in preparing our students for life beyond the RGS.

### WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Ensure that every pupil develops the knowledge, skills and confidence to realise their potential.

Deliver in the region the highest standards of education, alongside the broadest scope of experience, and to be recognised amongst the best schools in the country.

Through promoting excellence, aim to raise attainment and create opportunities for young people across the North East.

### HOW WE DO IT

Offer a challenging curriculum and a broad co-curricular programme that supports the academic and personal development of our students.

Prioritise human interaction, while utilising technology, educational research and data where this can inform and support better outcomes for students.

Focus on the delivery of high-quality teaching, evaluating what and how we are teaching, as well as what and how students are learning.

Encourage both 'breadth of participation' and 'elite performance' across both academic and co-curricular endeavour.

Promote best practice in the use of digital and education technology, including assessing any appropriate and effective use of artificial intelligence.

Expose students to a wide variety of opinions and experiences, including a broad range of educational visits, taking into account affordability and educational benefit.

Encourage all students to engage in service activities, and experience the reward of giving to others.

Prepare our students for future careers according to their individual aspirations, supporting their applications for university, degree apprenticeships and other vocational routes.





## AIM

Maintain sound ethical and responsive financial management to meet our strategic intent on a sustainable long-term basis.

## WHY WE DO IT

Everything we do today is possible because of the hard work and investment of those who went before us. As guardians of a school that is approaching 500 years, we are committed to sustaining the school in strong financial shape and good physical condition for the future.

Our students benefit from a high quality learning and teaching environment. We also recognise the importance of safeguarding for the next generation the same opportunity of an RGS education.

## WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Ensure that the RGS continues to thrive as the premier school and a force for good in the region.

Develop the facilities to maintain existing standards and keep pace with future ambitions.

Build both commercial and philanthropic revenue streams.

Respond to the challenges of the external environment, whilst remaining true to our purpose and values.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

## Financial viability and stewardship

### HOW WE DO IT

Keep fees as accessible as possible to enable maximum inclusivity without compromising standards.

Continue to attract a wide range of students who benefit from an RGS education.

Plan capital projects to ensure the maintenance and renewal of our facilities.

Implement strategies to improve sustainability whilst maintaining financial viability.

Invest in fundraising for our bursary, partnership and capital work, ensuring that our purpose in doing so is widely understood.

The purpose of any 'growth' in the RGS should be clear:

- how would it contribute to the school's social purpose?
- how would it additionally contribute to the educational experience of all students?
- how would it improve financial viability?
- how would it serve the best interests of the North East Region?

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

What's next?

The RGS has a long history but we will not flourish in the future by looking only to the past. We owe it to those who went before to ensure that the school remains as vital, respected and relevant an institution in the world today.

This strategy identifies our aims and ambitions but recognises that the process of delivering successful change is complex.

If we are successful, then the RGS will hold true to the ethos of the school and build on the success of previous centuries.

At the same time we will have transformed the school through assimilating the best of the digital world and AI, through engagement with our partners and through having secured a sustainable financial and physical future to match our ambition.





# OPERATIONAL REALITY

## Links to the School Development Plan

This overarching Strategy document sets the direction of RGS's travel, the School Development Plan holds the detail which operationalises our ambition. A separate document, the School Development Plan details short, medium and long term activity across 8 different areas, each led by members of the Senior Leadership Team:

**1. Curriculum,  
teaching &  
learning**

**2. Pastoral  
care &  
wellbeing**

**3. Co-curricular  
provision**

**4. Pupil  
experience**

**5. Staff  
recruitment,  
retention &  
development**

**6. Wider  
community  
impact**

**7. External  
relations**

**8. Finance &  
operations**







**RGS**  
NEWCASTLE



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