



Holmer Green Senior School

WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL

We recommend you access all our up to date information on our website:

www.hgss.co.uk

If you are unable to do this,
this booklet will help you

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Dear Visitor

A very warm welcome to Holmer Green Senior School. We are an Ofsted graded "Good" school and for a non-selective, comprehensive school in a selective county we pride ourselves on excellence and the impact we have on shaping character.

We now use Open Mornings and short recordings on our website instead of an Open Evening as parental feedback suggested it gave a more realistic insight into how the school operates and conveyed a tangible feel for our 'Work Hard, Be Kind, Have Passion' culture. As part of the Open Morning tours you will get to see our new facilities including: sports hall, fitness suite, dining hall, classroom block, study area and pastoral facilities.

There is a Headteacher's presentation for you to view on our website. The main stars of the school, our students, give a flavour of their experiences whilst at Holmer Green Senior School commenting on the transition process since starting in Year 7. Our Head Students give an insight into Sixth Form life, what it has been like over seven years and why they opted to study here.

You will be able to explore the school and the areas that you are most interested in by watching the various links to each subject area. You can also explore our pastoral system and SEN support to give you an idea of how we support the development of the whole child.

Our mission is to support students to become the best possible versions of themselves in everyway. This is underpinned by our motto: 'Work Hard, Be Kind, Have Passion'. By pushing students to be curious about what they are learning and working hard at it we know passion is born. This perfect mix of hard work, passion and striving for excellence means our students often surprise themselves and realise that the limits they once thought existed, were just self-imposed.

I hope the online recordings and our Open Mornings convey an insight into our ethos and the quality of the relationships that exist between members of our community. You will see many excellent Departments all of whom epitomise our core values of: "Work Hard, Be Kind, Have Passion, Excellence and Curiosity".

If you have any unanswered questions please do contact us via the school email address: office@hgss.co.uk

We look forward to welcoming you at one of our Open Mornings.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'E. Hillyard'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping underline.

Ed Hillyard
Headteacher



Holmer Green Senior School Achieves Microsoft Showcase School Status for 2022-2023

Holmer Green Senior School has been awarded the prestigious Microsoft Showcase School Status. This achievement reflects our commitment to excellence in education, innovation, and technological advancement.

This award is a testament to the hard work of our staff, who have tirelessly worked to integrate Microsoft technologies into the classroom, enhancing the learning experience for our students.

As a Microsoft Showcase School, Holmer Green Senior School joins a global network of educational institutions that are leading the way in leveraging technology for educational excellence. This community provides a unique opportunity for collaboration and sharing of best practices with schools from around the world. It allows us to learn from others and contribute to the global conversation on education. We are proud to announce that many of our staff are 'Microsoft Educators' and have received the certification to join the elite global community.

One of the key benefits of becoming a Microsoft Showcase School is the way it augments our students' learning and educational experience. By integrating Microsoft's cutting-edge tools and resources into our curriculum, we empower our students with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the digital age. They have access to a range of tools such as Microsoft Teams, Office 365, and Minecraft: Education Edition, which not only enhance their learning but also foster creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. The use of technologies such as 'dictate' and 'immersive reader' have revolutionised the approach to SEN (special Educational Needs) teaching within the school and are of great benefit to students with EAL (English as an Additional Language).

Through immersive experiences and real-world applications of technology, our students are better prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. They can collaborate seamlessly with peers and educators, both locally and globally, breaking down geographical boundaries and gaining a broader perspective on global issues. Holmer Green now incorporates 21st Century skills-based group projects within the curriculum throughout KS3 and 4.

Furthermore, our status as a Microsoft Showcase School opens a world of opportunities for our students. They can participate in global projects and connect with students from other showcase schools, broadening their horizons and building valuable international relationships. This exposure to diverse perspectives and cultures enriches their educational journey and prepares them for a globalized world.

The Microsoft Showcase School Status also signifies our commitment to innovation in education. We continuously explore new ways to integrate technology into the classroom, adapting to the evolving needs of our students and the demands of the modern workforce. Our goal is to equip our students with the skills and mindset they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

This achievement reaffirms our dedication to providing a world-class education and our commitment to staying at the forefront of educational innovation.

Introducing Year 7

We understand that moving to secondary school may seem daunting to both students and parents, but at Holmer Green Senior School we work hard to put minds at rest and encourage everyone to see the move as an exciting opportunity.

We try to make the change from primary to secondary school as easy as possible. We find this often means students eagerly look forward to the actual move.

We see parents as part of the school community too, and are very keen to break down any communication or confidence barriers that might exist. During a student's first year at the school there will be a number of opportunities for parents to meet staff and we hope that you will take advantage of these.

Admission Arrangements

The school's Admissions Policy is published on our website (hgss.co.uk) including special arrangements for students with disabilities. All new buildings have disability access and plans to upgrade existing buildings are in line with the Buckinghamshire disability plans.

The Admissions Policy states that places are offered according to the following criteria, in order of priority:

Where eligible applications for admission exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below to decide which student/s to admit:

1. A 'looked after child' or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements, or special guardianship order⁹⁰ including those who appear [to the admission authority] to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
 2. Children of staff members employed at HGSS. For inclusion in this category, the staff member must be permanently based at HGSS for more than 50% of their normal working hours each week during term time, and have been:
 - Employed for at least two years at the time of application; and/or
 - Recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage, as confirmed by their HR Manager.
 3. Students living in the catchment area of the school. Please see the Catchment Area Map on the following link:
https://www.hgss.co.uk/_site/data/files/admissions/2AAEB714093496A371C1A8B05E68AA27.pdf
- If you wish to verify your exact catchment area because the map is not detailed enough then please check the distance as determined by the Buckinghamshire Council catchment tool <https://services.buckscc.gov.uk/school-admissions/nearest>
4. Siblings of students on the school roll of HGSS at the time of application and entry to the school.
 5. All other children who do not fit into the categories above.



The School Day

8.50am	Registration / Pastoral Period / Assembly
9.15am	Period 1
10.15am	Period 2
11.15am	Break
11.45am	Period 3
12.45pm	Period 4
1.45pm	Lunch
2.25pm	Period 5
3.25pm	End of School Day

HGSS Term Dates 2024 - 2025

Term	Open on morning of	Close at end of afternoon of
Autumn	Thursday 5 September 2024 (Year 7 and 12 only)	Friday 18 October 2024
	Friday 6 September 2024 (all Year Groups full day)	
	Tuesday 5 November 2024	Friday 20 December 2024
Spring	Tuesday 7 January 2025	Friday 14 February 2025
	Tuesday 25 February 2025	Friday 4 April 2025
Summer	Tuesday 23 April 2025	Friday 23 May 2025
	Tuesday 3 June 2025	Wednesday 23 July 2025

School will be closed on Bank Holiday Monday 5 May 2025

Training Days 2024/5

3, 4 and 5 September 2024	4 November 2024
6 January 2025	24 February 2025
22 April 2025	2 June 2025

Transition Days

1 and 2 July 2025

Most students either buy hot or cold food from the catering facilities on offer at school or bring sandwiches.

Uniform

Our uniform code is key to Holmer Green Senior School's sense of pride and purpose. We expect our students to wear and be proud of the school uniform and believe that high uniform standards lead to high standards of conduct and a better attitude towards learning. By taking pride in their appearance, students express their commitment to the school and our way of working together to achieve future success.

Examination Results

Below are a few of our headline measures for Summer 2023:

77% of Year 11 students achieved grades 9-4 including English and Maths.

68% of Year 11 students achieved 5+ GCSE grades 9-4 including English and Maths.

28% of year 11 grades were 9-7

In the 6th Form, 80% of A Level grades were A*-C and 25% of grades were A*-A.

PASTORAL CARE

	Kerri Stone Assistant Headteacher	
Behaviour	Safeguarding	Attendance and Punctuality

Pastoral Team

All students at HGSS are part of a tutor group so have access to our pastoral team every day. We pride ourselves on knowing our students well and along with the assistance the tutor will give, there is a robust structure for support embedded in the school.

The Hub is the centre of the organisation of Pastoral Care. All students and parents have access to the Hub. As well as pastoral support, we also look at how we can encourage ever improving behaviour through an experienced and dedicated team.

We have access to a number of external agencies to support whatever is going on in a young person's life.

Our **current** Pastoral Team consists of:

Head of Year 11	Mrs J Rayner
Head of Year 10	Ms S Dass
Head of Year 9	Mr S Khalid
Head of Year 8	Miss K Stratton
Head of Year 7	Miss A Fiaz
Safeguarding Managers	Miss C Hemming, Mr J Smith and Miss A Fiaz
Reintegration Manager	Mrs S Goodgame



Attendance and Punctuality

At HGSS we have high expectations of all our students and expect them to strive for excellent attendance and punctuality. We believe this is central to raising standards and ensuring that every child at our school achieves their potential.

Holidays in term time are not accepted as they have a detrimental impact on the child's learning and there are 13 weeks of non-school time per year in which to arrange holidays.

The role of the Attendance and Punctuality team is to:

- Monitor attendance and reduce absence
- Act early in order to address patterns of absence
- Monitor students' attendance to lessons

With this knowledge, we work with parents, Heads of Years and Pastoral Managers to ensure that all students maximise their attendance and hence fully benefit from their education.

Our team consists of:

- Mrs J Bolton (Attendance Officer)
- Mrs J Beeden (Medical Officer)
- Mrs K Stone (Assistant Headteacher)



ART & DESIGN AND TEXTILES

Head of Department:

Mrs A Hearne, Director of Creative Arts

Year 7 and 8 Art and Design

Students learn the essentials - drawing, painting, mixed media, annotation, analysis. They use materials such as pencils, paint, paper, fabric, mixed media and much more! Work is presented and annotated in a sketchpad. Some group work is produced. Students are encouraged to experiment with new materials and to extend their understanding at home.

Year 9 Specialism Subjects (students choose from Art and Design)

Students will learn how to use a range of materials such as paint, pencils, 3D, clay, collage, textiles and many more. Innovative ideas and concepts are encouraged. Students will also learn about a range of creative practitioners, both historical and contemporary. Students will be encouraged to "think outside the box" and to express opinions about artwork. Analysing the work of artists is also an integral part of learning in Art and Design.

Textiles — students will investigate a range of materials such as felt, silk-painting, printing, embossing, printing, and many more. They will look at mainly contemporary textile practitioners and fashion designers. Students will create commercial and non commercial textiles outcomes. They will also analyse the work of textile artists as part of their learning. Students will also have an opportunity to learn creative stage make up techniques.

3D - students will learn to plan, design and make creative sculptural pieces using materials such as plaster, wood, cardboard, clay and mixed media. They will look at historical and contemporary practitioners, and analyse their work. Students will work on a variety of scales, and with a range of techniques. Students will use a sketchpad to document their ideas and working drawings.

Students then opt for **Art and Design** at GCSE. They use the skills learned in the subject they chose in Year 9, and can work these skills into their GCSE course for maximum results. If they want to change specialism at GCSE, that is possible.

If there are many students who want to opt for example Textiles, it may run as a separate course, according to numbers to numbers

The **Creative Arts** subjects (Visual Arts, Drama, Music) work together in collaboration for events such as school plays, productions and other events. Many students joining HGSS have previously not identified themselves as creative. The departments will introduce all students to as many different experiences as possible so that everyone has the opportunity to achieve, have fun, work hard and be successful!



BUSINESS STUDIES



Head of Department:

Mrs N Alani

Studied in *Key Stage 3 as a rotation subject*, 4 and 5 only as an option choice.

At HGSS the Business Studies Department aims to equip students not only with the skills and confidence to explore how different business situations affect decision-making, but also an awareness of the skills they will use later in the workplace. They develop their understanding of concepts, objectives and terminology, and the impact of contemporary issues on business operations.

Students gather an understanding of Business studies in Year 7 and 8 as part of a rotation, where they study the fundamentals of branding and the importance it holds for businesses as well as an introduction to the basics of finance for businesses. This gives them a concept what GCSE and A-level Business entails.

In KS4 students study both how and why businesses exist and the impact of events in the market and economy. They gain an awareness of functional systems and processes such as operations management, HR, finance and sales and marketing. Operations include production processes, quality of goods and services, customer service, and working with suppliers. Finance covers its role, sources, costs, profit and loss, cash and cash flow. As students move from KS4 to KS5 they develop a more strategic understanding of decision-making and the expert thinkers that have influenced models and theories, as well as the ability to evaluate a company's health financially through the use of key accounting ratios and information.

Analysis of case studies allows students to consider how a business responds to external influences, such as ethical, legal and environmental considerations, the economic climate and globalisation, and the interdependent nature of business, as they learn to pull together information from various sources in order to weigh up the relevance of different factors and stakeholders' interests.

Business Studies is a subject which equips students with lifelong transferable skills from essay writing, which develops their literacy, to key financial data analysis with different numeracy aspects.

We provide many different opportunities at HGSS for students — including the opportunity to set up their own business, taking part in enterprise challenges.

"Business opportunities are like buses, there's always another one coming."

Richard Branson





COMPUTING/IT

Head of Department: Mrs N Alani

In Computing we equip students to use computational thinking and creativity to understand and change the world.

The core of computing is Computer Science, in which students are taught the principles of information and computation, how digital systems work and how to put this knowledge to use through programming. Building on this knowledge and understanding, students are equipped to use information technology to create programs, systems and a range of content.

Computing also ensures that students become digitally literate—able to use, and express themselves and develop their ideas through, information and communication technology—at a level suitable for the future workplace and as active participants in a digital world.

Throughout KS3 and KS4 all students will study Computing to ensure that all students:

- can understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computer science, including abstraction, logic, algorithms and data representation
- can analyse problems in computational terms, and have repeated practical experience of writing computer programs in order to solve such problems
- can evaluate and apply information technology, including new or unfamiliar technologies, analytically to solve problems
- are responsible, competent, confident and creative users of information and communication technology

“ Coding is today’s language of creativity. All our children deserve a chance to become creators instead consumers of computer science.”

Maria Klawe



DESIGN TECHNOLOGY



Head of Department:

Mrs V Nicholls

In **Design and Technology** Year 7 and 8 students will study a range of material areas in a carousel system, spending half the year in each area. The material areas covered are Hospitality and Catering and Design and Technology. In each area, students will undertake practical tasks and make a range of products.

They will learn about the different materials, tools, equipment and processes used as well as designing and making products. They will be taught the importance of safety in these specialist rooms as well as time management and group working skills.

It is essential that students are equipped with pen, pencils, ruler and coloured pencils for all technology lessons; they will be expected to bring in the ingredients needed for Hospitality and Catering lesson. They will be given plenty of notice about what is needed for each lesson.

Year 7

Hospitality and Catering

Students will study the practical skills to enable them to safely use a range of kitchen equipment, including the oven, independently. They will make a variety of dishes.

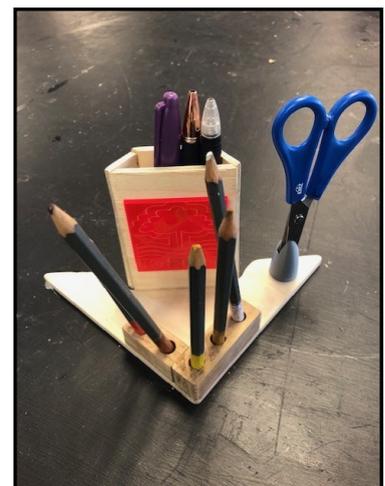
They will acquire the skills of planning and making, reflection and evaluation. They will gain knowledge of fruit and vegetables, food safety and hygiene, the safe storage of food, use of small equipment, the Eatwell Guide and the 8 tips for healthy eating, and the sensory and functional attributes of foods and ingredients.

Students will be required to provide ingredients each week from a list provided.

Design and Technology

Students will learn how to work safely in a workshop and use a range of hand tools and machinery as well as CAD CAM. In Year 7 they will design & develop a Desk Tidy to support pupils to organise their equipment when working at home. This will then be made into a final practical outcome using a range of traditional practical skills as well as laser cutting & 3D printing.

All design & written work will be completed or saved into their E book which is shared with them on the One Drive.



ECONOMICS



Head of Department:

Mrs N Alani

Economics is studied at KS5 as an option choice.

Economics is a widely respected subject at A level which develops students' ability to work precisely with written, numerical and visual data. Students gain an appreciation of theoretical models and learn to work precisely to apply knowledge to a range of scenarios in both the micro and macro economy. They learn to understand the world around them and factors that will influence their lives for years to come.

Students study microeconomics, including the theory of demand and supply and how prices are set. They will gain an understanding of costs and pricing work to influence a firm's objectives and determine profitability. Students enjoy learning about different market structures and why there is more competition in some markets than others. They learn about the macroeconomic aims and policies of governments and how society's resources can best be used to bring about an equitable distribution for all.

Economics students must consider real-world events to analyse whether a market is failing and what can be done about it. They gain an understanding of the labour market in the UK and whether society is equitable and fair in its distribution of wealth. While economics is traditionally centred in rationality and data-driven decision-making, increasingly popular is the study of behavioural economics which looks at why humans behave as they do, and not always rationally.

The analysis of case studies prepares students for the real world and equips them with life-long skills of analysis and data interpretation as well as the ability to write logically and with reasoned arguments.



Head of Department:

Mrs S Towers

Key Stage 3:



At HGSS we plan a three year Key Stage 3. All of our KS3 classes have a weekly lesson in the LRC which focuses on reading for pleasure. Students have the opportunity to study a broad range of texts at KS3 including two Shakespeare plays, 'Peter Pan', 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' and a collection of Diverse short stories. We have planned an exciting curriculum that includes voices from around the world as well as studying some of the greats of English Literature.

GCSE English Language and Literature

At HGSS, we study the Edexcel specification for English Language and Literature. All of our students sit both GCSEs. GCSE English is both highly engaging and also demanding. We hope to foster a lifelong love of reading as well as creating confident and articulate speakers, readers and writers.

English Language

- Paper 1: 19th Century Fiction and Imaginative Writing—we focus on a range of 19th Century extracts for the reading section. We use a very diverse range of British and American texts for creative writing inspiration and engagement. Our Year 9 students do a project based unit teaching these skills, focusing on the Horror genre.
- Paper 2: Non-Fiction Reading and Transactional Writing—we design our schemes of work with thoughtful and engaging 20th and 21st Century text choices and plenty of opportunities for our students to write creatively and functionally. In addition to unseen texts, Year 9 study a unit called Survival which uses a range of non-fiction texts.

English Literature

- Paper 1—*Romeo and Juliet* and *An Inspector Calls*.
- Paper 2—*Jekyll and Hyde* OR *A Christmas Carol*. An anthology of Conflict Poetry and Unseen Poetry. We use a huge range of engaging poems in order to teach unseen poetry skills.

We have a large uptake of students on our A-Level course as well and we teach Edexcel A-Level English Literature.

**SHAKESPEARE'S
GLOBE**



Enrichment:

Alongside the courses, we provide opportunities for students to enrich their learning in English through trips and visits, public speaking and a number of competitions throughout their five years at HGSS. An absolute highlight for us is our annual trip to the Battlefields in Ypres. This year our students are looking forward to trips to Shakespeare's Globe, The Wycombe Swan, and a conference for A-level students in



GEOGRAPHY



Head of Department:

Miss C Lewin

Geography is a fantastic subject whereby students at Holmer Green get to study a vast array of topics that encompass the world around them. It is the bridge between the Arts and the Sciences and captures the interests and imaginations of students of all interests and abilities.

End Game:

- To appreciate and understand the interrelations between the human and physical environments.
- To appreciate how personal decisions impact the global context.
- To construct a portfolio of geographical skills and to think like a geographer.

What will I study in Geography at HGSS in KS3?

Year 7

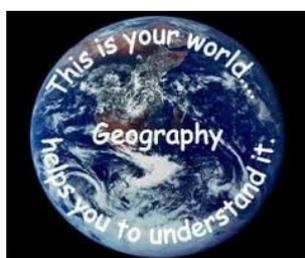
- What is a Geographer?
- Is the earth running out of natural resources?
- What is an economy?
- What is weather and climate
- What is it like to live in an extreme environment?
- Fieldwork investigation

Year 8

- Why are rivers important?
- What is development?
- How are populations changing?
- What happens where the land meets the sea?
- How is Asia being transformed?

Year 9

- Earthquakes and volcanoes
- What are the challenges and opportunities facing Africa?
- How does ice change the world?
- Why is the Middle East an important world region?
- Climate change and the Earth's future



Head of Department:

Miss B Labonte

History lessons at HGSS are a blend of written, evaluative and discussion-based learning.

We encourage students to engage in structured debate and discussion in lessons, to foster the capacity of students to articulate and justify their views. This emphasis on developing student oracy allows students to emerge as confident and articulate historians. History allows us to make sense of the world around us and our place within it. Given History's importance, the History Department aims to develop students into global citizens who have an awareness of history's impact on and relevance to the twenty-first century world. Students are encouraged to make real world applications of their studies to the twenty-first century world. For example, at Year 8, our 'Female Suffrage' unit culminates in a campaign to improve female rights in another country around the world.

In brief, History lessons at HGSS are exciting, motivating, challenging and purposeful.

The Holmer Green History curriculum is a spiral curriculum that builds on skills and content from KS3-KS5. Lessons are not repetitive but instead promote the retention of historical skills and increases the complexity of the topic or theme with each revisit.

Key Stage 3: At Key Stage 3, students gain a clear chronological narrative of the history of Britain in Year 7 'Our Island Story', before undertaking a wider global study of 'Human Rights and Protest' in Year 8. In Year 9 students are challenged to evaluate history's impact on and relevance to the modern world as they explore 'Contemporary Challenges' over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Key Stage 4: At Key Stage 4 we have just launched our new Edexcel GCSE curriculum in September 2023. Over the course of a two-year GCSE, students will study three papers.

Students begin their GCSE in Year 10 by studying Paper 3: Weimar and Nazi Germany. In the spring and summer term of Year 10 students will study Paper 2: B3: Henry VIII and his ministers, 1509–40 and P4: Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91.

In Year 11 students study Paper 1: Option 11: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present and the British sector of the Western Front 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches as well as a dedicated programme of revision.

Key Stage 5:

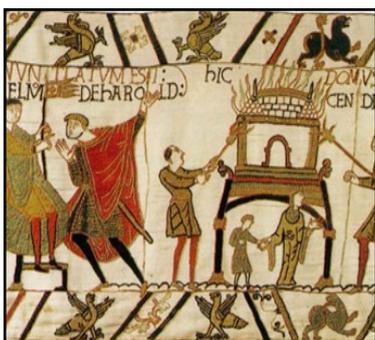
At Key Stage 5 A-level Historians study the OCR A-level specification. In Year 12 students' study Y106 The Early Tudors 1485 - 1558 (Paper 1) and Y319 Civil Rights in the USA 1865–1992 (Paper 3)

In Year 13 students' study Y223 The Cold War in Europe 1941–1995 (Paper 2) and complete their individual Non-Examined Assessment, coursework essay.

Extracurricular:

Our weekly History Society will launch to all years in September 2023. Students will take part in a variety of activities like researching historical passion projects, taking part in debates, and fun activities like cooking ration recipes.

In the Holmer Green History Department we encourage students to read, watch and listen around their subject. See our 'History Department's Ones to Read and Watch' as an example. Students are encouraged to submit a book, film, or podcast review to their History Teacher and will receive 3 achievement points for excellence.



Head of Department:

Mr Javier Ortega

We believe mathematics should be enjoyed at all levels and that students make progress by experiencing a wide range of mathematical activities.

Our schemes of work are designed to cater for our students' full range of abilities with differentiated material for the more able students and support for those who are less confident.

Furthermore, all students are taught in sets according to ability.

Year 7, 8 and 9

Our core curriculum follows the National Strategy and we have an extensive range of resources to supplement our excellent class textbooks, Pearson's Edexcel KS3 Maths progress. Wherever possible practical activities, investigations, games and ICT will be used to enhance students' learning and make the study of mathematics a dynamic and meaningful experience.

Year 10 and 11

The excellent end of KS4 results reflect our aim to improve the performance of every child. Students in years 10 and 11 follow the Edexcel mathematics syllabus at Higher or Foundation Level. This covers the key areas of Number, Algebra, Geometry and Data Handling.

In 2021, 82% of Year 11 students achieved level 9–4 (pass and above).

In 2022, 79% of Year 11 students achieved level 9–4 (pass and above).

In 2023, 81% of Year 11 students achieved level 9–4 (pass and above).

An online system "Dr Frost" is used to provide homework and encourage our students to work independently.

Sixth Form

Holmer Green Senior School offers the courses of A-Level Maths (Pure, Statistics and Mechanics); and Maths in context.

In 2021, 79% of our A Level students achieved A*-B grades and 100% achieved A–C grades.

In 2022, 75% of our A Level students achieved A*-B grades and 100% achieved A–D grades.

In 2023, 79% of our A Level students achieved A*-B grades and 90% achieved A–C grades.

We encourage our students to get the following calculators that are well known for their reliability and the amount of useful functions that they contain, that will surely help the students to achieve the best results in exams.



Casio FX-83GT CW
(GCSE)



Casio FX-991 CW
(GCSE and A Level)



Casio FX CG50
(A Level)

Head of Department: Mrs Kirsty de Groot

Provision

Students are randomly allocated either French or Spanish as their target language to study throughout Years 7 and 8.

This system is used so students become more skilled in one language, studying it for two hours per week. They are then encouraged to continue studying it at GCSE level.

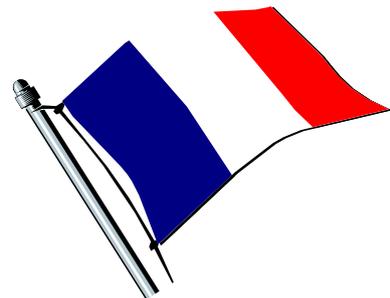
The main courses used for French and Spanish at KS3 level are based on the NCELP resources and program of study which leads well into the new GCSE for first teaching in 2024 as well as the current one that is being assessed. This course focuses on three main strands: phonics, vocabulary and grammar as well as looking at authentic texts and cultural events.

All language courses are supported and supplemented by authentic material, magazines, videos, song, games, quizzes and other teacher-generated interactive resources and activities.

Teaching

The aim of the Modern Languages department is to provide a stimulating and challenging environment where students learn to communicate effectively and confidently in the foreign language. Cultural context and awareness is an integral and essential part of the language learning process. Students who opt to study their chosen language at GCSE will have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to France or Spain.

The foreign or 'target' language is the main language of the classroom. This ensures maximum exposure to the language and the opportunity to participate in 'real' situations. Homework is set regularly and is an essential part of the course. Students are given a list of websites from which they can work independently to reinforce and extend their linguistic knowledge. All work from Year 7 upwards is done digitally, using the Microsoft suite of IT resources and students work predominantly on their laptops or tablets on OneNote.



MUSIC



Head of Department: Mr A Gillespie

The music curriculum aims to involve all students in enjoyable music making. Music is assessed on 6 different elements. Performance, ICT, Composing, Knowledge, Listening and Evaluating

- Performance:** All students learn basic skills on the electronic keyboard, guitar and various percussion instruments. Students perform their own compositions and works by other composers.
- ICT:** All students will learn about music software and how to create music using the computers. We use Logic X (an industry standard software)
- Composition:** This element of the course includes improvisation and the composing of song lyrics and instrumental pieces. We have some excellent composers at the school, it is an important part of music at HGSS
- Knowledge:** All students will learn about different types of music from around the world, as well as basic music theory to develop their knowledge of music.
- Listening:** Students are encouraged to develop an understanding and sensitivity to music and appreciate its aesthetic qualities. A wide range of music is studied – classical, world and popular styles amongst others.
- Evaluation:** Students are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' compositions and performances.

Students in Years 7 and 8 receive one lesson of music every week. In Year 10 and 11 Music is an optional subject which can be taken to GCSE level. We offer A-level Music at Key Stage 5.

Extra Curricular Activities

The Music Department has 6 experienced peripatetic teachers who provide individual tuition for piano, woodwind, keyboard, violin, classical guitar, electric guitar, bass guitar, brass, drums and voice. Students who would like instrumental tuition are able to have such lessons at Holmer Green Senior School. Beginners are also welcome.

The school has a range of extra-curricular groups that give students who play an instrument the invaluable experience of developing their musicianship by playing in an ensemble. There is also the opportunity for students to form their own groups using the facilities of the Department.

The Music Department is involved in a number of performances each year.

We are excited to announce that we now have our own recording studio kitted out with industry standard software and hardware.





PERFORMING ARTS

Head of Department:

Mr A Creffield

Drama is used in KS3 to develop vital skills such as leadership, team work, creativity and confidence. This is through performance and an introduction to design aspects of Drama.

Students in Year 7 enjoy half a term of establishing leadership and team work skills through reinvention of Fairy-tales. They learn basic drama techniques that will help them progress throughout the year. They then develop their analysis and evaluative skills whilst studying *Frankenstein* by Nick Deer where they prepare a scripted performance from it. At the end of the year students follow the story of Darkwood Manor where they learn how to create atmosphere that evokes emotions in their audience.

Students in Year 8 build on their confidence and communication skills through Commedia Del' Arte. Discussion around contemporary issues such as discrimination and peer pressure takes place when studying *Face* by Ben Zephaniah. Students finish the year by developing their creativity and building on cultural experience when learning how to reinvent Shakespeare for a modern audience.

Students have the opportunity to take GCSE Drama in KS4 and A Level Theatre Studies in KS5 as well as getting involved in productions and extra-curricular activities including Shakespeare, musicals and showcase evenings.



PHOTOGRAPHY



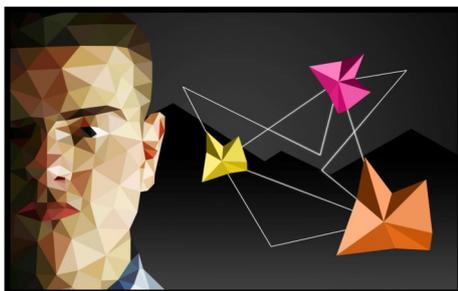
Head of Department:

Mrs V Walden

Studied in Key Stage 4 and 5 only as an option choice.

In Photography you will learn how to take successful photographs through exploring a number of key elements. You will also learn how to read images and how to construct your own opinion when looking at the work of others. Another key aspect of the course is the manipulation of imagery through physical edits and by learning how to develop images using Adobe Photoshop. Some of what you will learn is listed below:-

- Compositional techniques
- The importance of depth of field
- Various lighting techniques
- How to generate ideas
- Mixed Media Photography
- How to analyse effectively
- An understanding of Adobe Photoshop





PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Head of Department:

Mr R Ellis

In Physical Education students in Years 7 and 8 will study the basic skills and tactics in a variety of the following activities:

Rugby	Netball	Football	Tennis
Dance	Badminton	Basketball	Rounders
Cricket	Athletics	Gymnastics	Volleyball
Hockey	Fitness	Zumba	Table Tennis
Pilates	Handball	Lacrosse	

In Years 9, 10 and 11 students will develop the above activities into strategic play in conditioned and full game situations. All students will have 2 one hour core PE lessons every week.

GCSE Physical Education is on offer for Year 10 and 11 students, BTEC Sport is on offer for Years 12 and 13. Year 9 Students have the opportunity to select PE as a Subject Specialism. The Sports Leaders Award is also available for those students wanting to improve coaching skills.

The Department lays great emphasis upon behaviour and appearance. All students are expected to wear the correct PE kit. Self-discipline is encouraged in order that all may learn safely and with enjoyment.

All students are encouraged to take part in extra-curricular clubs and teams, during lunch time, before school and after school. The more talented students will be fed into local clubs, district, regional and national standards of competition. We enter teams at both District and County level in a wide range of sports.

2022/2023 Sporting Successes:

Chiltern District League Winners:

Year 7, 9 and 10 Football
Year 9 and 10 Netball runners up

Bucks Football County Cup:

Year 7, 9 and 10 quarter-finalists

District Athletics:

5th placed school in the Chiltern District

Dance Team 3rd place in regional finals



Head of Department:

Mr A Zacharek

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH, CITIZENSHIP, CAREERS and ECONOMIC Education

PSHCE education gives pupils the knowledge, skills, and attributes they need to keep themselves healthy and safe and to prepare them for life and work in modern Britain.

PSHE education contributes to schools' statutory duties outlined in the Education Act 2002 and the Academies Act 2010 to provide a balanced and broadly-based curriculum and is essential to Ofsted judgements in relation to personal development, behaviour, welfare and safeguarding. Since September 2020, the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) (secondary) aspects of PSHE education are compulsory in all schools.

PSHE education can contribute to a range of positive outcomes for children and young people: keeping them healthy and safe, both online and offline, improving their academic performance, preparing them for the workplace and building the character and resilience they will need to thrive in a changing world.

All pupils in Years 7-9 will be taught on a half-term rotation basis and Years 10-11 at one hour a week for the whole year, covering the following key themes:

- Health and well-being
- Relationships
- Living in the Wider World

PSHCE education covers core knowledge relating to issues such as online and offline safety, relationships, health and careers, taught in a way which is appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils. The subject is tied together by the development of the key skills and attributes which pupils need to thrive both in their childhood and throughout their adult lives. These key skills and attributes – such as self-management, empathy, critical thinking, communication, resilience, teamwork and negotiation – are crucial to pupils' life chances.



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Head of Department: Miss J Kirkpatrick

Picture a person standing in the middle of a vast forest....
Alone....
He shouts at the top of his voice....
Does anyone hear him?

This question has puzzled all those who do not have a strong religious faith but what is religion all about?

- What are the main religions?
- What can we learn about these religions?
- What can we learn from these religions?
- How can this knowledge affect the world in every day situations?

Learning about religious studies can help you to understand the answers to the questions above and a whole list more you may have. You may not have studied religious studies as a subject on its own before so what can you expect when you arrive?

Year 7

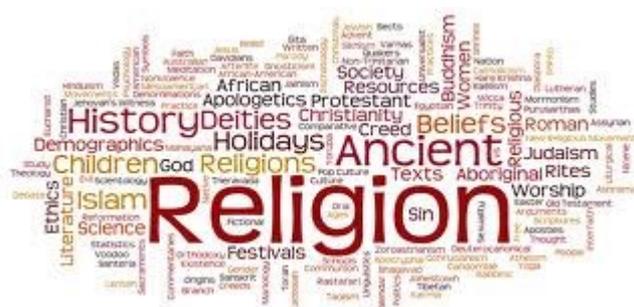
What is Religious Studies? Becoming a Religious Studies expert. Who was Jesus? Abrahamic Faiths, The Afterlife and Does all life have Value?

Year 8

Love of Wisdom, Concept of God, Moral Decisions, Religion and the Environment and Influence of Society.

Religious studies will teach you to be respectful and thoughtful of opinions, both your own and those of others. It will give you the chance to think and learn about other religions and it will give you a chance to learn about yourself too! We don't just learn about religion in RS as we are 'studying' the views of people as not everyone follows a faith. It also helps your literacy skills and your ability to evaluate and justify opinions in a safe environment.

All students study GCSE Religious Studies.



SCIENCE



Head of Department:

Ms A Kang

In Science students will gather knowledge about the world around them and gain the skills they need to become **the scientists of the future!**

Students will...

- Develop a sense of awe and wonder of our world and beyond.
- Understand and engage in current scientific affairs and have an enquiring mind.
- Develop ideas using scientific methods and processes.
- Apply scientific knowledge to everyday situations.

Biology

Organisms: Find out what all living things are made of, look at your cells under a microscope and how our body breaks down food to release the energy and nutrients we need to grow.

Ecosystems: Find out about feeding relationships and competition between species, how plants reproduce, how respiration releases the energy we need, and how plants support ecosystems through photosynthesis.

Genes: Find out about why organisms show variation, learn about adolescence and reproduction in humans, how present day organisms have evolved and how we can prevent further extinction and protect biodiversity.

Chemistry

Matter: Find out why substances have different properties in different states, learn about the elements that make up everything and the patterns in their physical and chemical properties.

Chemical Reactions: Find out what happens to atoms in chemical reactions, how chemical reactions transfer energy and how we can use this to make new substances to use.

Earth: Find out what the Earth is made of and its structure, how the movement of the Earth and moon changes our night sky, how we extract valuable metals from the Earth and what we can do to stop vital resources running out.

Physics

Forces: Find out all about how forces interact with objects, how we can measure these interactions and how this causes objects to behave.

Electromagnets: Find out about how electricity travels, how magnets and electromagnets work and how we can use these in everyday devices.

Energy: Find out how much energy is in food and fuels, how we make electricity and how energy is transferred from one store to another.

Waves: Find out about how we detect light and sound, how light and sound interact with different materials and how we use waves in everyday life.

At HGSS Science is filled with fun and experiments to give students a real insight into how the world around them works. They will witness reactions and processes first hand to develop the knowledge and understanding so they can draw a conclusion to explain what they have seen.





SIXTH FORM

Assistant Headteacher (Sixth Form): Mrs R Golding

I am extremely proud to be Assistant Headteacher in charge of our Sixth Form and I am convinced that it will be a great year for the students and the school.

Last year, our Year 13 students achieved 63.2% A* to B grades and 85.4% A*—C grades (10% above National Average). 65.2% of our Level 3 BTEC entries were a Distinction*/Distinction, results that they can be really proud of.

The Sixth Form is a key part of Holmer Green Senior School, offering our students and those from other schools the opportunity to study a wide range of courses to prepare for the future, be that in education, employment or training. We welcome new students to the Sixth Form as they enrich the experience for all.

We pay particular attention to each individual student to promote their personal, social and educational development for achievement at the highest possible level. For students who require a little extra support, our tutorial system ensures that an academic tutor is always on hand to talk to, along with our Head of Year 12, Mr. McMaster and our Head of Year 13, Mr Stockton, our Sixth Form Support Officer, Mrs Martin, and our Sixth Form Learning Mentor, Mrs Panayiotou who are always available to provide additional advice, guidance and learning support.

It is our aim to prepare students for higher education, lifelong learning and their future careers. Educational qualifications, however, are not the only consideration when making career choices. Personal qualities are also very important and we offer our students wide ranging opportunities to develop many of the skills they will need for their future. Our students access a range of activities which will fully support their transition to life after HGSS and an Enrichment programme which includes sports, fitness, well-being, creativity, music, cooking healthy meals on a budget, first aid qualifications, and team-building events for their enjoyment.

Last year, our students were accepted on courses as diverse as Medicine, Law, Product Design, Civil Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Psychology and English, Film and Television studies, Architecture, Fine Art, Mechatronics and Cognitive and Clinical Neuroscience and Aeronautics and Astronautics. We sent students to study in America with Scholarships, and all of our UCAS applicants were awarded places at their top choice universities. Other students chose to continue their education and training through apprenticeships at companies such as Stantec and Heathrow Airport or successfully gained employment.

LEARNING SUPPORT



SENCO:

Mrs L Harris

The aim of the Learning Support Department is to enable students who have additional needs, to access the mainstream curriculum and prepare for adulthood.

The Learning Support Department is based in our inclusion corridor with our pastoral team. It contains teaching spaces, a work room, a regulation room and a garden students in the ARP can access at break and lunchtime.

Holmer Green Senior School has an ARP (Additionally Resourced Provision) for Speech, Language and Communication. This means that we have 24 places for students with an EHCP where Speech & Language has been identified as a significant need and barrier to learning. The ARP serves the whole of Buckinghamshire and works with pupils to develop their language, vocabulary and social skills. Places are allocated by Buckinghamshire Council SEN Team.

We work closely with our primary feeder schools to ensure that information is shared regarding the students' needs. This process starts in the summer term prior to entry into Year 7. All information collated by the Pastoral Manager, the Head of Year 7 and the SENDCo, is used to form a confidential SEN document, which is shared with teaching and support staff. We also gather additional data from assessments or working within the Pastoral team to adjust support where necessary. Teaching staff can also raise their concerns to the Learning Support Staff at any time.

The Learning Support Department uses a range of assessment tools to identify areas of need and monitor progress at various points across the pupils' time with us. The information gathered from these assessments can form part of their exam access arrangements or additional support in class.

Students identified by the school and placed on an SEN support plan are monitored termly. The students, along with their key worker, set targets which are recorded and communicated to parents via a termly student support plan.

The support the department offers varies depending on the needs of the child. Some pupils may benefit from small group interventions, support in class or additional support in our afterschool Homework club. Other pupils may need communication support from interventions or access to technology. The learning support department work closely alongside outside agencies such as CAMHS, school nurses, in school councillors and Specialist Teaching Service.



PENN RESILIENCE PROGRAMME

Lead Teacher: Mr K McMaster

What is PRP?

The Penn Resilience Programme (sometimes referred to as the UK Resilience Programme) is a sequence of lessons that is designed to help students to cope with some of the stresses and pressures of adolescence and adult life. It is somewhat similar to the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy approach of dealing with depression and anxiety, however PRP is used to prepare students rather than to respond to pre-existing issues.

PRP was designed by researchers at Pennsylvania State University and has been taught by several schools in the USA and the UK. We teach the Bounce forward version of PRP at HGSS.

What do the lessons teach?

Essential resilience skills and competencies that are useful in and out of school. Students learn about the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviour. These are referred to using the ABC model. This is used to assist students in understanding that there are **A**ctivating events, **B**eliefs and thoughts about those events and that these lead to the **C**onsequences or feelings that cause behaviours.

Students develop an understanding about different habits of thinking and how some thinking is helpful and how some thinking can be less helpful. Resilience skills will enable them to think flexibly and accurately as a route to problem solving, overcoming the difficulties they face and making the most of opportunities.

PRP is taught over a course of 18 core lessons in Year 7, and 12 follow-up lessons in Year 9. The 18 core lessons cover: the ABC model, thinking styles, alternative thoughts, putting things into perspective, assertiveness, negotiation, coping strategies, problem solving, procrastination, visualised relaxation, mindfulness and decision making. Regular review of skills and concepts is needed to embed these skills.

Why are these skills taught as part of the curriculum at HGSS?

These skills are taught in order to support and develop students to be able to cope well in school and be equipped to deal with life beyond school. The PRP teaches specific, tangible skills and strategies that can become the skills for life – a set of personal tools that underpin the way students will engage and approach their time in school and in life. Young people need to learn how to respond and overcome setbacks as a core part of their education.

Research suggests that when students are offered the opportunity to develop emotional resilience they are better equipped to succeed in school as they are less likely to get anxious and more likely to understand how to overcome difficulty. Here at HGSS we aim to offer a dynamic learning experience, matching outstanding care and support for every child with the very highest levels of challenge and expectations of success. By offering PRP we aim to ensure that students' care and support is available for our students from the very beginning of their time at HGSS by providing them with the skills that they need to be able to approach challenges and opportunities with a resilient and positive outlook.



LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE

Librarian:

Ms J Bamforth

The LRC is open every day for students to choose books, and to do homework and research. We are open before and after school, as well as at break and lunch for general access:

Monday to Thursday 8.30am – 4.30pm

Friday 8.30am – 4.00pm

A librarian and a team of student librarians from across the year groups are here to help students to get the most out of our extensive library.

Resources

We have over 7,000 books to choose from, including the latest in popular KS3 fiction and a wide range of non-fiction titles. Students can borrow up to 2 books at a time, and more if they wish, once they are in the habit of returning books regularly. This year, we are also introducing audio and e-books using a system called 'ePlatform'. With this software the students will be able to listen to their favourite books and use technology to access and enjoy reading at home.

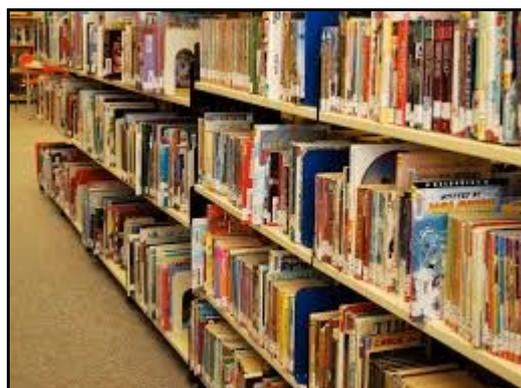
Students can reserve books that they want to read, and if titles are not available, make suggestions for new books to be purchased for the library.

There are 40 networked computers available to use in the library. We are fortunate to have a separate silent study room as well as our large open plan space with the computer suite and study seating for 40 students.

Reading

In Years 7, 8 and 9, English classes visit the library once a week, where they will read independently and have the opportunity to choose new books. Small group and 1:1 reading interventions also take place for any students who have been identified as needing additional support.

A key element of these library lessons is the provision of an online vocabulary and grammar platform called Bedrock. Students use the online facility to assess their prior knowledge and skills, then undergo targeted lessons appropriate to their ability. Each unit ends with a post-test which assesses their progress. This is a platform that we also use for homework to boost these vital language skills.



EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS AND TRIPS

Duke of Edinburgh Awards

We run an ambitious programme of Duke of Edinburgh Awards at Holmer Green Senior School. Your child will have the opportunity to take part in:

Bronze Award - Year 9

Silver Award - Year 10

Gold Award - Year 12

Each Award involves a programme of independent achievement for students to include a Skills section, a Physical section, a Volunteering section and an Expedition. For the Gold Award the students also undertake a 5 day residential programme. All the awards are designed to build confidence, resilience and independence with the Gold Award being particularly highly thought of by prospective employers and institutions of Higher Education and Universities. Students achieving the Gold are presented their Award at St James Palace by a member of the Royal Family. Last year approximately 6,000 young people in the whole of the United Kingdom achieved the Gold Award so this really is a fantastic opportunity.

TRIPS RUN BY HGSS:

- Year 7 Bushcraft
- Ski Trip
- Theatre and Cinema trips for English and Drama
- Opera and Concert trips for Music
- Geography Coursework Trips in the UK and abroad
- History and Politics Trips to Berlin, Ypres and the United States of America
- Music residential Trip
- UCAS Exhibition Trip for Sixth Form students
- Residential Trips to Spain/France for Modern Foreign Languages





Thank you for taking the time to read this information

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to email us on office@holmer.org.uk

