

HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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*A Church of England School
providing a Values Based Education*

Update Letter 22-10-2020

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

Reflection and thanks

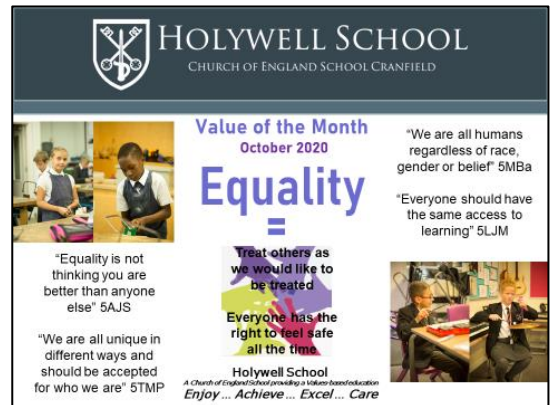
As I start writing this update letter on a damp, Thursday morning and, having had an opportunity to reflect on the half term with our two supportive and interested Ofsted inspectors on Tuesday, I am incredibly proud of the way in which the whole Holywell community has responded to this strangest of times. When we started back in September with the anxiety of whether all our planning would work, I could never have believed that the students and staff would adapt so quickly to the 'new normal'. There have been challenges along the way and, as Mr Eames often says, "We improvise, adapt and overcome". The support and understanding from the vast majority of students, parents, carers, staff and our wider network of colleagues and agencies has been overwhelming. The unexpected kind words of thanks in emails and conversations have also been greatly appreciated. We need to constantly stay alert to the dangers of the coronavirus and its transmission ... and things will return to normal ... at some point. In the meantime, we will keep everything under constant review, basing everything we do on the safety of our students and staff.

Values ambassadors



Since the last update letter, we have had some further Year 8 leadership appointments and I am delighted to introduce three of our new Values ambassadors: Rebecca, Will and Isla. Not only are our Values ambassadors great role-models who demonstrate our values in action, but they also help us and the other students to understand what our values look like, sound like and

feel like in practice. This month our value is equality. For Isla, equality is about treating everyone equally – even if they are annoying; for Will, it means treating everyone the same regardless of their race or nationality; and for Rebecca, it is about never discriminating against anyone.



KS3 Challenge

Miss Norman set KS3 a form class challenge, which started on the 5th October and was completed today! The aim was to encourage teamwork and to reward positive behaviour. The form captains had a daily challenge sheet which was completed at the end of each lesson.



Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Van Der Merwe – Acting Deputy Headteacher: Mrs H Donnellan

Acting Assistant Headteacher / DSL: Mrs J Davies

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Students received points for punctuality, equipment, uniform, good behaviour and values (demonstrating any of our school values). The daily scores for each class were displayed on a scoresheet in Miss Norman's room and today, the winners were revealed. 7BS and 8CS were the winning forms. Their prize was pizza, dodgeball and table tennis!

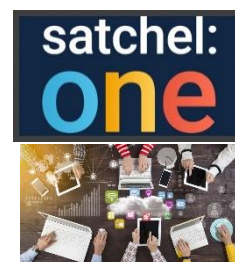


SATs evening!

Usually at this time of year, we have an information evening for Year 6 parents about SATs. At the moment, SATs are still planned for Monday 10 May to Thursday 13 May 2021. So, after half term, we will let parents have details of how to access a virtual version of our information evening, which you will be able to access when it is convenient for you. There will be a designated email address for specific questions or issues. Students and parents should in no way feel stressed or pressured by the prospect of these tests – students will be well-supported by staff from where they are in their learning.

Remote learning

We have now published our Remote Learning and Contingency Planning arrangements on the school website (in the Coronavirus section). The arrangements have been revised and revised and revised in line with government advice and guidance. In essence, we have planned for three scenarios: (1) All students in school and a few students having to self-isolate; (2) A rota in which 2 year groups are at home and 2 groups in school; (3) School closure. Full details are in the document ... we hope we will never have to implement scenarios 2 and 3!



Relationships and health education

After half term, all students will be completing a unit of work on Relationships and Health Education in PSHE. This is now a statutory requirement and we had planned to start delivering the new curriculum content in the summer term. As students were not in school, we did not think this was suitable for home learning, so we will be covering this work after half term. The areas being covered are on the school website and all our materials are age-appropriate. If you would like more details, the materials can be accessed via this link: [If you have any queries, please contact Mrs Gough via the school office.](#)

Staffing update

Miss Cullen has now completed her maternity-leave contract with us (covering for Mrs Craffey). We would like to thank her for her contribution to the English team and we wish her every success for the future.

Tutor evenings

Over the last two weeks, we have trialled telephone-based tutor evenings for Year 5 and, apart from a telecoms issue, which prevented us completing the last few calls, these were very successful. We will arrange tutor evenings for Years 6-8 in the second half of term – so watch out for details of arrangements. As ever, if there are any issues with specific subjects or learning, please contact the class teacher directly via the office.

One day at a time

In everything we do, we are always supported by the Diocese and particularly Canon David Moreton who is the Diocese Director of Education.



Here are his recent wise words:

“As we conclude the half term, I can hear people starting to articulate the question ‘How am I going to get to the end of the school year, the end of the term, the end of the half term?’ There is a palpable sense of mental and physical tiredness that accompanies working and leading within an environment that is ever changing.

In Exodus 16 the Israelites literally did not know where their next meal was coming from. God provided first quail and then manna: *“16v14: When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. 15: When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, ‘What is it?’ For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. 16: This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Everyone is to gather as much as they need.’”*

God provided enough for everyone’s needs for that day. Not the whole week or the month or the year, just the day ... and he did so for 40 years. This is such an encouragement. Even when all the boundaries seem to have been removed, even when there is no clarity or direction, even when we feel we cannot summon the energy for the day, God provides for our needs - just the right amount for this day and then each subsequent day. He provides what each of us needs, one day at a time.”

It is now the end of the day and the clouds have cleared, the sun is starting to set and there is peace and calm all around. We have navigated our way through another day of joys and challenges – the rain stopped so we could have break and lunchtime outside, disagreements have been resolved, classes have been full of learning and tired children and staff have returned home ready for a restful evening before our final day of half term tomorrow.

Whatever your faith, the idea of taking things ‘one day at a time’ and knowing that someone will be there to help and support is very important in such challenging times. We seek to have peaceful solutions and to try to understand each other’s point of view. We are all doing the best we can to support our students through these difficult times, providing for their needs and helping them navigate this difficult terrain. We ask for your continued understanding, courtesy and trust. The important thing is to always ask and to communicate when help is needed. Our students in school have a wealth of adults with whom they can talk and we will always provide support – remember – ‘We can talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small.’

Harvest appeal and non-uniform day – Friday, 23rd October

Tomorrow – Friday, 23rd October – is the first of our charity non-uniform days. This one is in support of the Bishop of St Alban’s Harvest Appeal centred around helping communities in Nepal to set up bee-keeping businesses. If you can contribute £1.00, that would be amazing. We are having a bee-themed day – black and yellow – however, this is optional! You certainly don’t need to go out and buy yellow and black clothes ... and if students have PE, they can wear their own joggers and tops if they like or their Holywell PE kit.

Stay safe

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a restful and healthy half term. It may not be possible to take the usual half-break but please stay vigilant to the dangers of the virus and virus transmission, keep safe and we look forward to seeing students back after half-term.



Best wishes

MG Simpson

Headteacher