

# HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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

Update Letter – 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021

## Hope is believing that no matter how dark things get, there is always a light.

How can we show 'HOPE' at Holywell?

- Believe, never give up and find someone who can help -
  - Dream BIG, think BIG, learn BIG -
  - Say 'I can't do this YET' -
- Be the hope and the light for others -

*"Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we declare,  
for God can be trusted to keep his promise" Hebrews 10:23*



As the term draws to a close, it is good to reflect on what we have achieved and dealt with since September. **Students and staff have worked incredibly hard to achieve high standards of work in all their subject areas – in spite of Covid-19**, a new Covid variant, flu bugs, continued restrictions, hand-sanitising, year group separation, vaccinations, lateral-flow tests and face masks making a re-appearance, students have created boxes, key fobs, jigsaw puzzles in DT, pizzas, flatbreads, scones and other delightful offerings in food; they have excelled in football, rugby and netball; they have created outdoor adventure puzzles around the school; they have written amazing stories, recounts and fact files in English, History and RE (everything from writing as Scrooge and a monkey from Kensuke's Kingdom, to writing as miners in the industrial revolution and followers of Jesus); they have experimented in Science (including being molecules of solids, liquids and gases); they have spoken and sung in French; they have created wonderful music in Music (on instruments from the traditional guitars and keyboards to Boom whackers); they have painted, drawn and sculpted in Art (everything from cuddly toys to gargoyles, from nature-inspired installations to artist-inspired fashion designs); they have reflected on friendships and being peaceful-problem solvers in PSHE; they have created their own games and designs in ICT using a range of programmes; and they have calculated and solved problems in Maths (they have also become great fans of 'Blooket' - a new take on trivia and review games!).



Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Van Der Merwe – Deputy Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead: Miss A Stewart  
Assistant Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead / SENDCo: Mrs J Davies – Senior Leader: Mr James Ulph

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What has kept us going through all of the last term has been our school vision to 'live life in all its fullness' by living our values and being the best we can be in community. At the start of the year, I challenged everyone to 'find a way' like holy water finds a way to overcome obstacles. This month, we have been 'hopeful' and we have been trying to be 'the light in the darkness', helping each other to shine and to find a way forward. **Our HOPE not only rests in our Christian beliefs, but also in our students.** Our Year 8 House Captains and Values Ambassadors have been supporting us as we have conducted tours of the school for prospective students and parents. They have indeed shown that our hope is in safe hands as they have confidently and openly answered questions, whilst been genuinely supportive, caring and interested in the new students. We have also been treated to some amazing feedback and descriptions of learning as we have dropped into lessons. We have heard from Year 5 students who, although initially daunted by their new environment, are now both confident and thriving, loving the challenges provided by their talented specialist teachers. Students have been polite and welcoming throughout the school and I'm incredibly proud of all our young people. On a recent tour, one of our Year 5 students gave a perfect description of a really complex Science experiment, totally unprompted and full of knowledge and enthusiasm. The visiting student and parents were amazed and said they would be very happy if their son could do the same at the end of the first term!

**Rev Isaac from St Peter and St Paul's has written this lovely reflection on HOPE** for staff ... which I think is well-worth sharing with everyone:

*Hope is central to the Christian faith. In the Apostle Paul's first letter to the Church in Corinth he names hope alongside love and faith as one of three key Christian virtues. But how do we distinguish hope from wishful thinking? After all, as an Arsenal fan, I am ever hopeful that this season might be different - but then, come the end of every season, my hopes are dashed and revealed to be nothing more than wishful thinking! But Christian hope is far more than wishful thinking. The bible speaks of hope as being a virtue that doesn't float out there in the sky somewhere, but that is grounded in, and rests upon the reality of history. In fact, the writers of the bible are happy to be pretty stark about what hope is, and what it isn't. A little bit later in that same letter to the Corinthian Church, the Apostle Paul writes about the resurrection of Jesus: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied." Paul rests all his hope on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. His hope stands or falls on this. For him there is no back-up - he doesn't hedge his bets. But consider what a difference this hope makes. This was a man who once devoted his life to persecuting Christians, and then through this hope became the most influential Christian of all time. This kind of resurrection hope is so powerful because it refuses to believe that the darkest or the hardest moments we face have to be the end of the story.*

Being hopeful and having that faith and belief in a resurrection hope, has not always been easy. There have definitely been some real challenges for some students and staff this term. We have all had to have the courage to stand up for what is right and to support everyone in our community when there have been disagreements, rudeness, aggression and frustration. We always strive to have peaceful solutions to challenges, looking for assertive responses rather than aggressive or passive interactions. There are always two sides to every story and, sometimes, it is a challenge to recognise and see someone else's perspective. We stand firm on our Christian principles and will always promote kind and solution-focussed resolutions. **We ask that everyone in our community – students, staff, parents – treats everyone with respect and care ... RESPECT** will be our focussed value for January and we will be exploring how we can all live that value in every interaction we have with each other.

We are also very well supported by **our Governing Board**. This term, they have also been exploring our school vision and looking to see how they can contribute to this – not only by challenging and checking to see that we are delivering on that vision, but also bring the expertise they bring from their different work backgrounds and different skill sets. On the governing board, as well as some governors with educational experience, we have governors who have experience of everything from ICT to clinical psychology, from charity and facilities management to our parish representatives. We have parent governors and staff governors. At the heart of our governing board is our brilliant Clerk to the Board of Governors – Angelina Smith.



Having started as an enthusiastic parent and after seven fantastic years of service to Holywell, Angelina is moving on to a new job with the fire service. **We looking for a new Clerk to the Governing Board** ... if you have good administrative skills and some time to take on this role, we'd be delighted to hear from you – you can make contact through the school email address ([school@holywellschool.co.uk](mailto:school@holywellschool.co.uk)) or have a look at the details on the school website. I'd like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Angelina for the outstanding support and service she has given to Holywell – we will miss her greatly.



Another area of support comes from our **PTFA**. Victoria does a superb job as Chair of the PTFA, organising events. We are always looking for more parents and staff to support with both the events and the organising. It has been impossible to do some of the usual PTFA events such as school discos ... and we even had to put our annual sponsored walk around Marston Thrift 'on hold' (... more about that later)! Last week did see the return of one PTFA event – Christmas wreath-making. This workshop was led by the Cottage Farm Nurseries <https://www.cottagefarmnurseries.co.uk/> and was great fun! Our Friday Christmas Jumper Day (also in support of the PTFA) and our

Christmas Lunch were also great fun. It was lovely to see students enjoying bad Christmas cracker jokes and enjoying each other's company.

Other PTFA events this term include the following: **Christmas Gift Shop**. Children can purchase gifts for under £5. There will be a range of gifts in all price brackets. These will all be wrapped ready to take away on the day. The shop will be open at lunchtime on Monday 13th, Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th of December.



PTFA ask that you send your child with a carrier bag as it helps keep the gifts safe. Cash only for the gift shop.

**Christmas Raffle**. Tickets will be sent home with students. All details will be on the tickets. £100 cash prize and lots more to be won. If anyone would like to help at any of the above events, or become a member of the PTFA, please contact the group, on [ptfa@holywellschool.co.uk](mailto:ptfa@holywellschool.co.uk).



We finally caught up with some of our **Values awards** this term and we were delighted to present awards for our values of 'Community' and 'Kindness'. The winners were:

Value	KS2	KS3	Staff
Community	Grace in Year 5	Lily in Year 8	Mrs Bassett
Kindness	Hollie in Year 5	Gethin in Year 7	The Office Team

Lily in Year 8 had the idea of a **Mental Health Day** as a way to support everyone in our Holywell Community. Others in Mrs Smullen's form thought this was a fantastic idea and really latched onto it! They suggested workshops about managing anxiety, stress, relaxation techniques, baking, mindful activities, sporting activities and sporting values activities. The form thought that often behaviour/friendship issues were linked to stress and anxiety. The form viewed this as rather like Values Day, but having options that students could choose for the day/carousel around the umbrella of Mental Health. We thought this was such a brilliant idea that we are actioning this for February when it is Children's Mental Health Week – it will also include our Marston Thrift Walk which we will do in Covid-friendly Year groups. We have also been fortunate to receive some **funding from GXO** who have an 'over the top' shop whereby they can utilise any money generated and nominate a chosen charity which includes schools. We were nominated by a parent who has two children at school (including one in 8BS) and we are very grateful for the support – it will enable us to buy in some outside expertise for at least one of our workshops for all students.



There was also a celebration lunch for our **Eco-Club** following their hard work this term – and also to celebrate the end of their crisp-packet collection campaign. As a school we have collected

over 10kg of crisp packets! These can now be recycled. Holywell even makes some money from this. The money we raise will fund our Eco club (and future prizes). The overall winning form is: 5DS – 2,669g – prize to be decided by 5DS and Mrs Saunders

The winners for the other year groups were:

6AJ – 1,527g            7MBS – 305g            8ABA – 585g

We will continue to collect crisp packets and our new challenge is students vs staff.

Our **huge thanks to some members of staff who are leaving us at the end of term** for new challenges. Our best wishes go to Miss Blissett, Mr Chauhan and Mrs Routh. Mrs Hyman will also be changing role after Christmas and will be supporting students with their English. We will miss you all and we thank you for all your hard work and service to Holywell. We will be welcoming some new staff in January – Mrs Scott joins us in English, Mr Wade joins us in Maths and Mr Crighton in Science.

... **and finally**, we are hoping for a peaceful and productive final week – please stay safe, keep taking the lateral-flow tests and watch out for a full newsletter towards the end of the week.

Best wishes

Mike Simpson  
Headteacher