

# HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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

## Update Letter 08-09-2022

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

### Welcome back



Welcome to a new academic year at Holywell and to the first Update Letter of the year. We have had a great start to term and it has been a real delight to have students back on site. Our new students have settled in well, our returning students are refreshed and full of energy and there is a lovely, supportive, purposeful atmosphere in the school.

As part of our home-school communication, there will be frequent update letters like this one. They are sent at key times of the year and also when we have something to share – it was a practice that we started during the pandemic but families have found the letters to be both helpful and informative. Now that public health restrictions have been lifted, we will also be exploring other ways to enhance our home-school provision and we look

forward to welcoming families back into school.

There are also regular half-termly newsletters which give a flavour of everything that has been going on in subject areas and in our extra-curricular provision. All of these communications are now electronic and we use our online platform – WEDUC – to send these out to families. Please read them carefully and we'd be grateful if they could be shared with students too as they often contain key information.



### VISION

“Live life in all its fullness”

The Good Shepherd

John 10, 10

We choose ...

... to live our values

... being the best we can be

... in community



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A Church of England School providing a values-based education  
Enjoy ... Achieve ... Excel ... Care

### Vision and focus for the term

At Holywell, our school vision is to ‘Live Life in all its Fullness’. This comes from the Bible story of Jesus as The Good Shepherd (John 10:10). As the Good Shepherd, Jesus promises that if we choose to follow Him, we will find safety and will have life in great abundance. Whilst not all of our ‘sheep’ are Christians, we ask that everyone who chooses to be a part of our community at Holywell tries to live and uphold our Christian values in their day-to-day life, that they strive to be the best they can be (academically, socially and personally), and that they do this ‘in community’ – ie. with due regard to ensuring

that personal actions and choices have positive impacts on others. We are delighted and humbled that you have chosen Holywell as your Middle School and we look forward to working towards realising our vision over the next few years. Our School Improvement Plan is focussed around the three key aspects of our vision:



Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Van Der Merwe – Deputy Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs J Davies

Assistant Headteacher: Mr J Ulph – Senior Leader: Mrs M Purves – SENDCo: Miss A Stepney

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- Live our values
- Be the Best we can be
- In Community.

Our challenge at the start of this year is also to be daring! As we return to post-Covid 'normality', we now need to be brave, take risks, revisit and reclaim our hopes and aspirations and aim high. Having been engrossed by the Commonwealth Games at the start of the Summer break, it was inspiring to see so many successes as a result of people being brave, coming back from defeat and dealing with huge challenges (have a look at Alice Tai's story which I shared with students during our Welcome Worship on Monday).

I have challenged everyone to be daring and to try something new and different during the year – always making sure that 'dares' are 'safe' and do not put anyone at risk. This might be something you would like to take on as a family ... if you have any stories to share, please encourage students to talk to their form tutor, their heads of year and I always love to hear what students have been up to too!

We also discussed 'God's dare' which is: "If we give properly, He will bless abundantly" ... which echoes and reflects our school vision. We are hoping that the 'Holywell Way' of kindness, action, high standards, support and respect permeates everything we do so that every member of our community can thrive and succeed.

## Dare

Dare to dream  
Dare to believe  
Dare to be  
You

Aim high  
Dig deep  
Dare to be  
You

Never give up  
Power through  
Dare to be  
You



Choose the Holywell Way  
Let the Holywell Spirit guide your path  
Dare to be  
You

Wonderful, learning, unique You.




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### Value of the Month



## HOLYWELL SCHOOL

CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL CRANFIELD



### Value of the Month: Responsibility

September 2022



"Rise up! For this matter is your responsibility and we will be with you; be courageous and act." Ezra 10:4





God's dare: If we will give properly, He will bless abundantly.

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Every month we highlight one of our school values. We explore what this means in practice and, this year, staff will be looking to reward students who demonstrate this particular value. Our first Value of the Month is 'Responsibility'. We have started to explore with students what this means – with a particular emphasis on 'taking responsibility for our actions'. We hope that all of our students are kind to each other and everyone in our community has a responsibility to ensure what they do impacts positively on others. Being realistic, we know that this isn't the case all of the time – already this term, there have been a few instances of fallings-out, unkindness, poor

behaviour on the bus – we will be working with students to give them as many tools as possible to make better, more responsible choices and to really have a positive impact on others.

Rev. Isaac Pain from St Peter and St Paul's Church in Cranfield also does a reflection each month which explores the Christian aspect of the value. The reflections are mainly to support staff in school when working with the students but they are also relevant to families. Here is this month's reflection:

*What role should the value of Responsibility play within the Christian faith? In one surprising sense there is no place for it, for, of course, the central claim of the Christian Gospel is that in his love God has taken responsibility for us. The message of the New Testament is that when Jesus went to the*

cross he was dying our death for us. At the cross Jesus stepped forward, put his hand up, and claimed responsibility for all that is wrong with the world. Or as the Saint Paul puts it in his second letter to the Corinthians: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

*But flowing out from this fundamental understanding of responsibility, comes a model for us to follow and emulate. Just as God in his great love took responsibility for our mistakes and failures, we are now called to take responsibility for ourselves and others. And we will find that receiving forgiveness, peace, and love are easier places for us to begin to take responsibility – whether that be responsibility for past mistakes, or stepping forwards into new roles of responsibility.*

We are further supported at Holywell from our other parish - Rev Ackroyd from St Mary's Church in Wootton is also a regular visitor to school. We are hoping that our students will also take up some of the opportunities offered to them in both churches ... Rock Solid – the youth club at Cranfield church is starting up again – there will be an extra-special welcome for new Year 5 students.

### **School Uniform**

As part of our school vision, our focus is very definitely on all students 'being the best they can be'. As well as learning, this does link to standards of behaviour and dress too. Students are looking really smart and we appreciate the effort (and expense) families have gone to in ensuring students are correctly dressed. During the pandemic and when students returned to school, we were very lenient and flexible about our uniform and some 'variations' did start to creep in, even though our policy did not change. In response to this, we did make some specific changes to the uniform policy in the Summer Term and this was communicated both in April last year and, more explicitly in the last Newsletter. The main changes were that the uniform was made generic for everyone, trousers were to be tailored, skirts were to be pleated (NB. The colour has not changed ... it has always been grey for these items) and shoes were to be shoes! Whilst the majority of students are in correct uniform, we have had a significant number of students (especially in Years 7 and 8) who have not yet 'registered' the changes. This was communicated to both students and families earlier in the week. Where students are not in correct uniform, we'd be grateful if families could rectify this for the start of next week. If there are any issues, please contact us – we are very happy to support in sourcing suitable uniform.



### **Schools for the Future**

Ever since joining Holywell in 2017, there have been discussions about changes to the 3-tier system. Schools in Cranfield, Wootton and Marston Moretaine (including Holywell) have always worked collaboratively and successfully as a family of schools within the 3-tier system. As a Middle School, we are passionate about this structure and the opportunities it provides for students in Years 5-8. Over the last few years, Central Bedfordshire Council has started consulting with families

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and schools about moving towards a 2-tier (Primary-Secondary) model. The consultation process for the Cranfield area is due to begin later in the Autumn Term– obviously, this is something which we will do in collaboration with our family of schools in Wootton and Marston Moretaine. There is much to discuss and work out in terms of viability, time-scale and whether this is actually a change which families would like to see moving forward. If there were a move to a 2-tier structure, this would see Holywell develop into a Central Bedfordshire, Church of England Secondary School. More details will be provided later this term.

### **Achievement and Assessment**

As students move through the school, we track their progress in a number of ways. We use a variety of different methods to assess achievement: formal exam/test-style assessments; in-class tasks; observations; project work (inc. practical projects) with reviews during the project; and end-of-unit reviews. For English and Maths, we also use some nationally-benchmarked and externally-marked tests – these are provided by 'GL assessment' and many schools use these low-stakes in-class tests to check progress across year groups. Year 5 will be completing an initial test next week in their English and Maths lessons – there is nothing for them to prepare or to worry about – they are simply a gauge for us to support students in their learning journey at Holywell. There will be a similar test at the end of the year to see how much progress they have made.

### **Year 8 Options**

At Holywell, we have a secondary-based curriculum in which students have specialist teaching for all subjects. Year 5 are quickly adapting to this different way of working and are already very comfortable moving from class to class. As part of the Year 8 curriculum, we offer a 1-lesson option subject. Students choose from a range of 'alternative' subjects offered by staff – some which extend core curriculum subjects, others are additional to the usual offer and some take learning in a different direction altogether. On Friday, Year 8 students will have the opportunity to hear about the courses on offer this year and will make a provisional choice. This year choices include everything from an Eco-Option to Sports Leadership and from Music Technology to Spanish.



### **Sponsored Walk**

On the 7<sup>th</sup> October, we see the return of our annual sponsored walk. Last year we included this as part of our Mental Health and Wellbeing Day as we were still anxious about large group activities in the autumn. It is a fantastic opportunity for students to spend some time walking through the beautiful Marston Thrift, while raising money for school through the PTFA. Full details will follow, however, essentially, the walk goes down bridleways to the south of the

school, dropping down the hill to the Thrift and then back up the hill to return. It takes about an hour and there are rest times built in. Students walk in year groups and we ask students to get sponsorship from family and friends outside of school to complete the walk. Sponsorship can be for completion of the walk, or for completing the walk within a specified time. Watch out for full details next week.



I am looking forward to a fantastic year full of learning, full of responsible action, full of daring deeds – all leading to everyone 'living life in all its fullness'.

Best wishes

*Mike Simpson*

Headteacher