



Holywell News



Issue No: 172
February 2024

Mr Simpson's Headlines



At Holywell, our vision is that everyone in our community chooses to

“Live Life in all its Fullness”
(John 10:10).

Inspired by the teaching of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, we choose ... to live our values,
... being the best we can be
... in community.

“The Christian vision of Holywell School is a living reality for both pupils and adults. This is due to its effective outworking through values, aspiration and community.” (SIAMS 2024)

I have been very privileged to lead this wonderful school over the last seven years. We have worked hard together to develop a Christian vision for the school which is accessible to all, inclusive in its nature, and rooted firmly and unapologetically in the values and teachings of Jesus. We still believe that it is a ‘work-in-progress’ to having everyone in our community live our values on a day-to-day basis and to having everyone being the best they can be at all times. It was, therefore, lovely to have an external view of where we are when we had our SIAMS Inspection at the end of January. I was particularly proud that our SIAMS Inspector commented: *“The impact of the vision is felt throughout the school, particularly in warm relationships and unity of purpose. Pupils and adults flourish as they are helped to live out the vision through the school’s values. There is a culture of aspiration, of being the best one can be, in all aspects of personal and communal life. Pupils and adults often refer to Holywell as a team, emphasising the tangible sense of togetherness.”*

We will continue to strive to make our vision a reality for everyone in our community here at Holywell and we will continue to serve you all in our community ... especially as we transition to becoming a secondary school. This transition, as you will be aware, will hopefully start in September 2026. Due to the change of date, we will need to re-run our consultation – watch out for further information. What will remain the same as we grow and develop as a school, are our ethos and values.

In addition to our SIAMS inspection, we have continued to provide students with challenging and creative learning tasks, memorable experiences and a wide range of



opportunities: everything from some brilliant work in DT, a victorious Year 5 football team and our superb school band – “Nine Lives”.



You can read about some of the other exciting events from the half-term and about some more to come in the rest of the newsletter. We are particularly excited about our Mental Health and Wellbeing Day on the first Friday back after half-term. We're hoping for some good weather to enable us to do our Thrift Sponsored Walk and a whole range of other activities designed to help students learn about how to manage their mental health and wellbeing. We have been exploring this already in PSHE and students have been trying out things to help them sleep well (such as turning off devices an hour before bedtime, reading and breathing exercises).

We have started our annual 'Lenten 40 Acts' challenge. For Christians, Lent is a 40-day season (not counting Sundays) which commemorates and represents Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, where he fasted and where Satan tempted him. Lent asks believers to set aside a time each year for similar activities of reflection, prayer and,

traditionally, giving things up (fasting). In more recent times, another way of marking the 40 days is to have 40 days of action – good deeds of kindness and appreciation. This is what we have challenged everyone at Holywell to do and students have all been issued with a 40 Acts Challenge sheet. We have challenged each form class to create a ‘Giving Jar’ in which they can collect money together – all monies raised during our 40 Acts challenge will be donated to our partner school in Tanzania (Msijute Primary School). Some challenges are simply to carry out an act of kindness - today’s challenge (16th February) was to show some appreciation to someone in our school community ... hopefully, students will do this at home too! Our challenges for the half term break are as follows:

 Lent 2024 				
1 COMMUNITY Create a ‘Giving Jar’ and collect for charity - Try to put something in every day ... every little helps! W 14 th February	2 COMMUNITY Who is in your community? Write the name of each group to which you belong ‘in community’ eg. Family, School, Team, Church, Friendship Group, etc. Th 15 th February	3 COMMUNITY: OUR SCHOOL Email or message at least 3 people in your school community with words of appreciation (eg. a teacher, a friend, someone in your tutor group) F 16 th February	4 COMMUNITY: OUR FAMILY Family Support! Help out at home – walk the dog, do the washing up, tidy your room – just be helpful! S 17 th February	5 HALF TERM: COMMUNITY Half the world lives on £1.40 per day – can you? See if everyone in school can put £1.40 into your giving jar. M 19 th February
6 COMMUNITY: OUR HOME Do something to help out at home – do the dishes, clean the car, tidy your bedroom T 20 th February	7 JOURNEYING Think about your journey through life so far – what are your significant moments? What are you grateful for? W 21 st February	8 JOURNEYING Go for a walk with your family or with friends and notice the trees, the birds, the buildings. Th 22 nd February	9 JOURNEYING Labyrinth: A labyrinth is a walking meditation. Try this one: https://aspacetobe.co.uk/2020/09/22/labyrinth-meditation-2/ F 23 rd February	10 JOURNEYING Journeys are about exploring new places, finding new things to do or risking safely on purpose. Be brave by trying something you find hard. S 24 th February



Thursday’s challenge to go for a walk seems such a simple thing to do – it is also something great for our wellbeing – especially if it involves watching a sunrise or a sunset – like this beautiful sunrise which Ms Mollis captured whilst walking the dog on Marston Thrift. We have been exploring these ‘Awe and Wonder’ moments in our worship this week. Research has shown that cultivating a sense of awe and wonder in our lives is good for us. Seeking the

feeling of awe can improve memory, boost creativity and relieve anxious thoughts. Various studies have shown that, when people are exposed to awe-inspiring environments, they behave in a more helpful and caring way towards others. Seeking out awe and wonder can help with our mental well-being too. Awe forces us to broaden our perspective and turn our attention away from negative thoughts that can circle in our minds. Somehow, the negative chatter that can creep up on us becomes quieter when we can connect with that ‘wow’ feeling of awe and wonder.



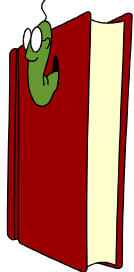
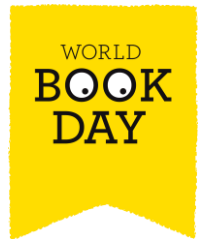
Whatever you choose to do over this half-term break, have a safe and restful week. Thank you all for your continued support.

With all best wishes
MG Simpson
 Mike Simpson

World Book Day 2024

World Book Day is on Thursday 7 March. Students will be receiving a £1.00 World Book Day voucher, that can be used in exchange for one of the World Book Day books, or £1.00 off a book valued at £2.99 or more.

For more information they can visit worldbookday.com



Book Fair

We will be holding a **Travelling Book Fair** at Holywell from **6 - 13 March**

There will be a wide range of books suitable for all students with an opportunity to view them during the week. The Book Fair will also be open to all children at lunchtimes. The usual reservation and order arrangements will apply.

Students will be able to use their £1 World Book Day voucher on any book worth £2.99 or more.

Comic Relief – Red Nose Day – 15 March 2024

We look forward to another day in school when our students have a great deal of fun whilst thinking seriously about helping others who are very much less fortunate than ourselves.

We have ordered a limited supply of this year's red noses and they will be on sale in the Library at lunchtimes.



Music Department News

Young Voices 2024



On the 29th January 18 students from the KS2 Choir took part in the 2024 young voices concert at the O2 arena in London.

Students from both year 5 and 6 worked extremely hard to learn songs (and dance moves) from a challenging programme of music, including songs from Matilda, Moana and a gospel medley, alongside the additional challenge of singing in Korean during the folk song 'Arirang'.

Performing in a choir of approximately 9,000 students from across the country, at a venue like the O2 is an experience that will not be forgotten. Our students were a credit to our school and we are very proud of them. A special thank you to Miss Stewart, Mr Tabert and Mrs Stephenson for their support in making this possible.

Battle of the Bands

This week our KS3 rock band are taking part in a Battle of Bands contest being held at Redbourne Upper School. They have been working extremely hard during rehearsals and are sounding incredible! The band will be performing the Bryan Adam's classic 'Summer of 69'. We wish them the very best of luck and look forward to informing you of the outcome of the contest in our next music department update.

Band Members: Clara T (guitar & backing vocals), Holly J (lead vocals), William T (drums), Josiah P (keyboard), Summer S (bass guitar), Kaiden C (keyboard), Elliot W (guitar)

Upcoming Events

- **Spring Concert Auditions** - TBC
- **Easter Church Service** – Thursday 28th March 2024
- **Spring Concert** – Tuesday 26th March 2024



Eco Schools

Our Year 8 Option are well on their way to completing the application for Eco Schools. This year the group is focusing on Water, Energy and Health Living.



We have Water, Energy and Recycling Monitors to help save energy where possible by closing doors, turning off lights and reporting water leaks or damaged taps straight away. The group has looked at plant-based meals and provided feedback to the school's caterers.

Eco Club

We are trying to establish recycling in school as this came up as 'very poor' on the Eco schools Environmental Audit. Our recycling monitors are set to check that recycling bins are not contaminated. The main focus in Eco Club this year is to achieve the 'Schools against Plastics' Award. **To achieve this, they need your help.**

Our children want to reduce the amount of plastic in snacks and lunch boxes. Currently none of this rubbish is recycled and ends up in the main waste, or worse, as litter in the playground.

Eco Club students have created a video for all classes to watch which gives some examples of how we can reduce the amount of single use plastics we bring into school. **They would like you to really get behind them by thinking about alternative ways of wrapping food, using reusable lunch boxes, and encouraging healthier snacks like fruit. They would also like to encourage children to take their litter home so that it can be recycled through the household waste system.**

Next term there will be some prizes for the best plastic free lunch and snack ideas spotted by our club members!



Sadly these are common sights after break and lunch times and we share our playgrounds with a wonderful range of wildlife from the adjacent Nature Reserve.



Examples of 'single use plastic' free lunch boxes.

Year 8 Trip - January 2024 A Christmas Carol at the Old Vic Theatre

In January, some of Year 8 went on a trip to The Old Vic in London. We went to see A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens. It was a really good



trip, because when we were on the coach, we got to see lots of London landmarks, such as the London Eye and the River Thames.

When we got inside, the atmosphere was magical. The lights were really pretty and it was very Christmassy. Once we were in our seats we heard a small trio of musicians playing a classical Christmas tune. They handed out mince pies and clementines to everyone. When the play started everyone went quiet and it just felt so calm and perfect. I really enjoyed A Christmas Carol and I think that the actors did it really well. This was one of my favourite trips that I have been on and I would love to go on a similar trip again.

By Poppy, 8SS

I really enjoyed going on this trip because of how it gave us a look at a different view on the story and showed us another way Dickens' writing could be interpreted. I also liked how they involved the audience at the end.

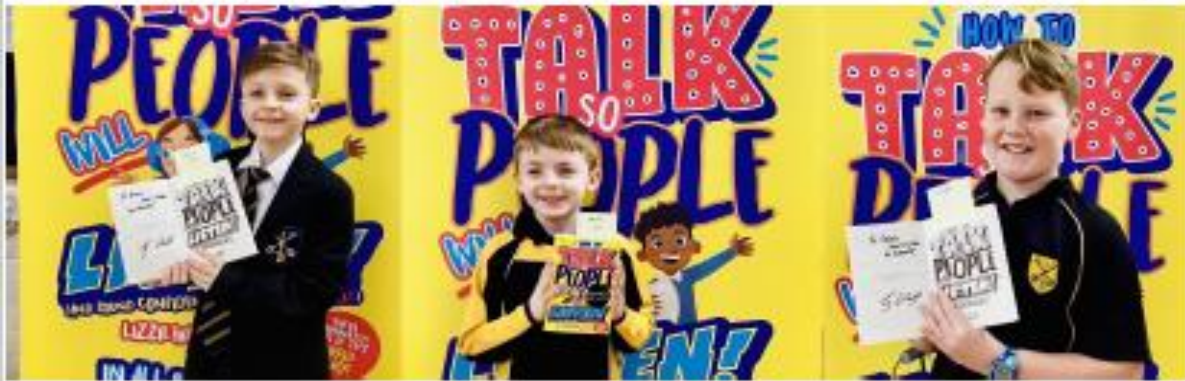
By Saoirse, 8CS



English Department News

KS2 AUTHOR VISIT

Lizzie Waterworth



KS2 had so much fun listening to tips on how to be confident! Lizzie Waterworth, who is the voice actor of Horrid Henry, held engaging and interactive sessions about how we shouldn't let 'what if' knock us down! The students got a chance to ask her questions and listen to some of the other voices she does! They were mesmerised! Thank you, Lizzie, for coming in and we hope to have more Authors holding these events to inspire our Holywell students!"



"Lizzie taught me some tips on how to be more confident which I will use!"
Oscar - Year 6



"I thought it was so cool to meet the person who is Horrid Henry!"
Jacob - Year 5



"I got to ask Lizzie tips on how to become a famous author as that is what I want to be when I grow up! She was helpful!"
Lacey - Year 5



Year 5 Maths – ‘Racing to School’ Trips

I enjoyed the Huntingdon Race Course Maths trip. We got to see lots of things using Maths like weighing ourselves like the jockeys do. We were given our own books and got to watch the horses race, even seeing the horses up close in the parade ring (we measured the perimeter of this before). When the horses were racing there was an ambulance in case the horse or the jockey had a heart attack or someone got hurt. Thanks for a great Maths filled day
by **Katie, 5EM.**



News from the PE Department

Y6 Netball Report

The girls have really worked hard this year on the netball team. We always had 20+ children turn up for club, and their positioning and confidence has grown throughout. They were able to field a team, and turn up, with smiles on their faces making great play. Even though the girls had to battle with some of the other schools, they never lost faith and kept going until the very end. I am looking forward to them playing more games in the future, and love how they want to play netball on the playground now. There has been some fantastic attacking by Neve and Amelia, and the defence has been strong by Cammy and Poppy. Congratulations girls on a good season!
Coach McCann

Y5 Netball Report

The Year 5 netball team have had a fantastic start to their first season representing the school. Having won 2/4 fixtures, with one game left to play for 3rd or 4th in the league has been a fantastic achievement. Having won our first match playing with 6 players, shows just how dedicated our year 5 squad have been,

never giving up! Thank you to all team members for attending training and for always showing great teamwork and determination during our matches, regardless of the final result! It has been lovely to welcome lots of new faces to netball club at lunchtime and having watched so many students blossom and develop into the fantastic sports people they have become has been a delight! It would be lovely to see more and more new faces join next term! Well done to those students who have represented the school, you should be so proud of yourselves! **Miss Martin**

Y5 Boys Football

The Year 5 football team have started the season extremely well, winning 6 from 7 games, putting Holywell in 2nd place with 1 game remaining against. Hopefully this will mean that they have qualified for county finals. The boys have played great team football with moments of magic throughout the games, whilst being extremely hard to breakdown in defence. All players have worked extremely hard during training sessions and continue to represent Holywell and our school's values throughout all fixtures.



Mr Inskip



Swimming Success

A Massive 'Well done' goes to George in Year 5, who swam as part of Flitwick dolphins at the County championships over two weekends and achieved 1 bronze, 3 silver medals! This means he is now County champion in 50m backstroke! Wow!

The PE Department would like to thank students, parents and carers for their continued support throughout the half-term.

Charity News



We held a non-uniform day on Friday 9th February to support CHUMS charity in their 'Shine Bright, Wear Bright' campaign and raised the sum of **£476.13**.

Non-uniform days are a simple way to raise money and to make a HUGE difference. Well done, Holywell!



MFL News

It was a busy half-term in the MFL department providing a variety of extra-curricular opportunities to all our students.

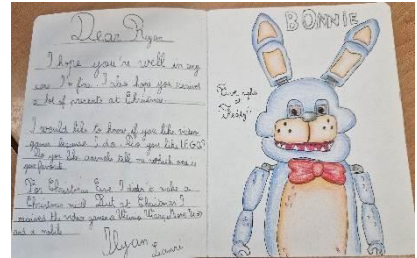
French Exchange

Students in Years 6 and 7 were excited to receive a second letter from their French pen pals in Chaumont. They sent a reply letter and are now looking forward to meeting their exchange partners on a video call in March.



German Exchange

Students in Year 5 wrote a second letter to their pen pals in Hanover and are now awaiting a reply.



Update on the Oxford German Olympiad

Some of our Year 5 and Year 6 students are anxiously awaiting the results of the Oxford German Olympiad competition. Entries will be judged in March, so they should soon find out whether they have been successful. More details about the competition can be found in this link: <https://www.ogn.ox.ac.uk/content/oxford-german-olympiad-2024>.

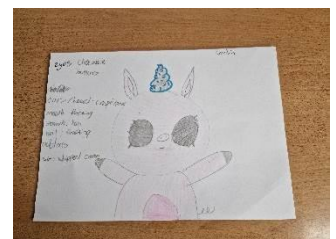
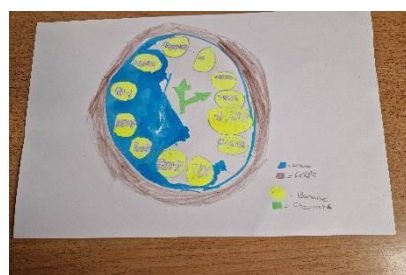
Celebrate Speaking by British Council

Students were encouraged to take part in the festival of languages organised by the British Council. The festival is about sharing a love of language and celebrating the diversity of people in the UK who speak a language other than English. Some of our students took part and presented a short poem, sketch, dialogue and solo performance in their favourite language. The British Council along with their partners will now choose their favourite performance. The winner will be invited to attend a live virtual celebration event in March 2024, hosted by the British Council with a VIP guest.



French Tradition *La Chandeleur*

In our weekly MFL club we celebrated *La Chandeleur*. This tradition is celebrated in France on 2nd February each year by making and eating crêpes. It is traditional to make crêpes with a coin or piece of gold hidden inside, and whoever finds the coin or gold in their crêpe is said to have good luck for the rest of the year. Some people also throw a crêpe in the air with a coin in their hand before catching it with a frying pan, as a symbol of good luck for the future. Our students had a lot of fun designing their own pancakes to celebrate the day. Here are some of their creations.





If your child is away from School

A telephone call or WEDUC message is required on the first day of absence, before 8.30 am.

The Office Staff prepare the official registers and need to know the reason for **all** absences. It is therefore important that they are made aware of absences and they will inform your child's Form Teacher.



Emergency Contact Details



Please remember to inform the school office of any changes to your contact details. This includes **change of your home address, telephone numbers** (even temporary changes) **and doctors' details.**

This is very important, as it enables us to reach you in case of emergency. Thank you.

Essential Equipment

We are now stocking essential stationery items in the School Office.

Students may purchase a **pencil case** which contains the following items: **Handwriting pen, pencil, green, red and blue pens, dry-wipe pen and a 15cm ruler for £2.50** (see photo).

Stationery items are also available to buy individually. (Empty pencil case £1, other items 10p – 50p each).



No Aerosols Please



Please remember that aerosols / sprays (deodorants, hairsprays, etc.) are **NOT ALLOWED TO BE USED IN SCHOOL.** We have students and staff with severe allergies to the gases and spraying such aerosols can cause severe allergic / medical reactions. Please be considerate. Thank you.

Attendance and Holidays in Term Time



Parents / Carers should be aware that under current government guidelines **we can NOT give permission for any holiday in term time.** Holidays will be classed as **unauthorised absence** for your child.

There may, however, be events that a student takes part in out of school which require him / her to miss a school day – we will continue to consider that sort of request. However, it is clear that the government and external authorities will want a very persuasive argument for us to be allowed to record any absence as a permitted time out of school. **No leave will be authorised during the first two weeks of the school year or during exam periods.**

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence are required to fill in a **Leave of Absence Application Form at least 4 weeks in advance** of the proposed absence and before making any travel arrangements (available from the school office and to download from the school website). We always take a reasonable, supportive approach to requests (especially with regard to fines) however, there are an increasing number of families taking ‘the odd day’ here and there ... this is having a HUGE impact on learning.

Did you know.....?

- There are 175 non-school days a year, 175 days to spend on family time, holidays and visits.
- Being 5 minutes late every day means 3 lost days a year of your child’s education.
- Arriving after the register closes, without a valid reason, is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Getting your child to school really matters.

If your child’s attendance during the school year is	Your child would have lost approximately.....	Your child would have missed approximately....
95%	9 days	50 lessons
90%	19 days	100 lessons
85%	29 days	150 lessons
80%	38 days	200 lessons
75%	48 days	250 lessons
70%	57 days	300 lessons
65%	67 days	350 lessons

Absence = Lost Learning

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



SPRING TERM 2024

Half Term – Monday 19th February to Friday 23rd February
End of Term – Thursday 28th March

SUMMER TERM 2024

Closure Day – Monday 15th April
Term Begins – Tuesday 16th April
May Day – Monday 6th May
Half Term – Monday 27th May to Friday 31st May
End of Term – Friday 19th July

Please note that dates may differ from other schools

SUMMER TERM TEST DATES 2024



Year 6 Students
Key Stage 2 SATs
Monday 13th May - Thursday 17th May 2024

PLEASE DO NOT BOOK HOLIDAYS AT THIS TIME



**A REMINDER THAT STUDENTS
RETURN TO SCHOOL ON:
MONDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2024**

