



HOLYWELL SCHOOL
A CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL, CRANFIELD

Prospectus *2025 – 2026*



Live life in all its fullness

holywellschool.co.uk

Welcome to Holywell School!

This is an exciting time to join our thriving, supportive and aspirational school community. Following 50+ years as a successful Middle School, we are starting the transition to becoming an even more successful Secondary School. From September 2026, students will have the opportunity to become part of our first Year 9 cohort, staying with us all the way through to Year 11: we are inviting you to be part of our journey and to make your own individual contribution to our expanding and developing learning community.

As a Secondary School, we will have further enhanced facilities and a curriculum which meets the needs and interests of each individual student. We will be a small secondary school where students are known and supported to thrive.

What remains unchanged at Holywell is our determination to live our values, aspiring to be the best we can possibly be and to make a positive difference to our community and beyond.

We are proud to be a Church of England school and to continue the legacy of service, care and high-quality education associated with our Christian values. We are, nevertheless, a diverse school community, welcoming of all faiths and people of no faith – all working together and driven by our core values of respect, kindness and responsibility.

"Pupils at Holywell School attend a school with values rooted in its Christian ethos. They are welcoming and friendly. They take on responsibilities that make their environment and community richer and more rewarding."

(Ofsted 2023)

I am proud and privileged to be the headteacher of this amazing school. I am regularly impressed by our wonderful students whose enthusiasm for learning is only equalled by their care and consideration for each other. They are polite, industrious, aspirational young people who always surprise and delight us with their ideas, creativity and achievements.



“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.” (SIAMS 2024)

The staff are superb professionals who create exciting, challenging and inspiring learning experiences to enable students to achieve high standards. Staff have been working hard to develop subject courses leading to GCSE, whilst maintaining the practical, challenging and student-centred design of each curriculum area. This is all delivered within a framework of clear and high expectations. We are consistent, insistent and persistent in our endeavour to secure outstanding standards of achievement, behaviour, service, care, appearance and courtesy for all.

We also have lots of fun! We are a happy school where everyone has the right to feel safe at all times. We look after our students and support them with whatever life brings.

We deal with disagreements and issues in a solution-focussed, systematic, supportive and peaceful way, treating others as we wish to be treated; we resolve differences fairly and honestly, acknowledging our different perspectives and trying to find an assertive and satisfactory way forward.

Come to Holywell, be a part of our future, and let's create the next chapter of our incredible story together.

Michael G Simpson
Headteacher



A Learning Community

For us at Holywell, the curriculum is the totality of student experiences and, through those experiences, we aim to enable all of our learners to be happy, successful and to be the best they can be.

We are committed to a deep and rich curriculum that enables students:

- to achieve high standards
- to be ready for the next stage in their education
- to be independent, curious learners
- to be ready to take on challenges with an open, positive and caring approach
- to be discerning, thoughtful members of their community
- to serve others
- to be grounded in strong Christian values so that they can make ethical and informed choices and decisions

We believe that the curriculum of the school:

- should be designed to enable our children to enjoy and achieve, to grow and prosper, and to be stimulated by learning
- must look to serve the full breadth of student ability and the variety of interests and skills
- must be coherent and well planned

Most subjects are taught in mixed-ability groups, however, English and Maths are taught in ability sets.

Schemes of Learning cover the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Lessons are between 55 and 60 minutes long.

Students have their weekly lesson allocation as per the table below.

Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 Curriculum

The Key Stage 2 and 3 Curriculum follows National Curriculum requirements and enables all students to experience a broad and balanced curriculum.

		English	Maths	Science	Art	Computing	Drama	DT	Geography	History	MFL	Music	PE	PSHE	RE	Option
Y9	Lessons	4	4	3	1	1		2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1
Y8	Lessons	4	4	3	1	1		2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1
Y7	Lessons	4	4	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	
Y6	Lessons	6	6	2	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	

Groupings

KS2

English and Maths are taught in groups based on ability. We use KS1 data and GL assessments to inform our groupings. All other lessons are taught in mixed-ability groups.

KS3

English and Maths are taught in groups based on ability. We use KS2 data and end-of-year-6 GL assessments to inform our groupings.

Computing, French, History, Geography, PE and RE are taught in Tutor Groups.

Art, Music, PSHE, Technology and Science are taught in smaller 'practical' groups.

In Years 8 and 9 students have an 'Option' lesson in their weekly timetable. Students choose from a wide range of subjects – these options include: Sports Leadership, Eco & Sustainability, Art, Music Technology, Drama, Further Design, Applied Science, Business Studies and German. In Year 9, students will have the opportunity to choose subjects which they may like to continue through as an option subject in Years 10 and 11.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) is part of the timetabled curriculum. This ensures full coverage of the new statutory curriculum for PSHE and Relationships and Health Education (RHE).



“Teachers use expert subject knowledge to help pupils learn. They give clear and exact instructions. Teachers provide well-structured examples to show how to compose responses. As a result, pupils complete learning tasks and progress through the curriculum.”

Ofsted (JULY 2023)

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

Our KS4 Curriculum is designed around Core subjects and Option subjects. It encourages students to choose a good balance of subjects, whilst allowing for personal interest.

Core subjects are:

- English Language (AQA GCSE)
- English Literature (AQA GCSE)
- Mathematics (AQA GCSE)
- Science – Combined Double Award (AQA GCSE)*

There is also core PE and PSHE/RE.

*NB. Triple Science is offered as part of the Options programme

“Staff have high expectations of all pupils. They also offer strategies, support and resources to help those who find learning hard. Enriching activities are a daily feature and broaden pupil horizons...”

(SIAMS 2024)

Option Subjects Include:

- Art and Design – Fine Art (Pearson Edexcel GCSE)
- Business Studies (AQA GCSE)
- Computer Science (OCR GCSE)
- Performing Arts (Pearson Edexcel BTEC)
- Design Technology (AQA GCSE)
- French (Pearson Edexcel GCSE)
- Geography (AQA GCSE)
- German (AQA GCSE)
- History (Pearson Edexcel GCSE)
- Hospitality and Catering (WJEC BTEC)
- Music (WJEC GCSE)
- Physical Education (AQA GCSE)
- Sports Studies (Cambridge National BTEC)
- Religious Studies (AQA GCSE)
- Science Triple Award: Biology, Chemistry, Physics (AQA GCSE)

Students will be able to choose 4 option subjects.

Students must choose at least one subject from:

- Triple Science
- Computer Science
- History
- Geography
- Languages

(NB. They are encouraged to choose two subjects from this list, but this is not compulsory)

Students then have the choice of all other option subjects.

Wider Curriculum Opportunities

The curriculum at Holywell benefits from a wide range of additional activities and events to support students' learning. We consider it important to offer all our students a wide range of activities, linked both to the School Curriculum and extra-curricular wider opportunities. These activities may take place during the school day, after school or at weekends. The three main types of activities are:

- **Curriculum-linked trips, visits and experiences**
- **Extra-curricular wider opportunities**
- **Additional extras**

→ Curriculum-linked trips, visits and experiences

- Examples last year included: Cranfield History Walk (Yr 5 History); LifePath (Yr 5 RE Trip); Wrest Park (Yr 6 Art and English), Harry Potter and the Cursed Child (Yr 6 Theatre trip); Other theatre trips (Christmas Carol for Year 8; Dear Evan Hansen for Drama students and Elf for Music students)
- There are also occasional 'themed' days – e.g. PSHE Day (which includes elements of our Careers Education and Wellbeing provision); Values Day; RE Day. These days allow students to explore a cross-curricular topic for an extended period of time.
- As we move to GCSE, we will expand our provision of trips and visits – some linked directly with the curriculum (eg. Geography field trips), some more specialised and relevant to older students.



→ Extra-curricular wider opportunities

- There are clubs at lunchtime and after school in addition to the frequent sports matches

→ Additional extra

- Bi-annual Ski Trip

To enable us to continue with these essential 'extras' we do have to ask for voluntary contributions from parents. We are pleased to be able to say that we have never had to cancel an activity due to lack of contributions and the staff appreciate the whole-hearted support we always receive from parents. We also appreciate the help of parents who join us on school journeys and those who are able to transport team members to away fixtures. Help can be offered to those parents who are unable to afford an activity linked with the National Curriculum.

"The curriculum and allied enriching activities are key to fulfilling the Holywell vision. Doing one's best is both a personal quest and also a way of serving the common good. Staff identify and teach material that deepens understanding and application of the values. Staff have high expectations of all pupils. They also offer strategies, support and resources to help those who find learning hard."

Enriching activities are a daily feature and broaden pupil horizons. Regular extra-curricular visits are important to pupils as is the way that such activities are open to the widest range of pupils." (SIAMS, January 2024)



KS4 course overviews

Over the next few pages, please find details of the courses we are offering in KS4.

KS4 Course Overviews

Art and Design Fine Art

(Pearson Edexcel GCSE) 601/8069/9

Through Art we will provide our students with an inspiring, exciting and rewarding art education, building an understanding and appreciation for art, craft and design (and their associated skills) as well as enriching students' lives with a sense of wonder and creativity.

GCSE specifications in Art and Design will encourage students to:

- actively engage in the creative process of art, craft and design in order to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds
- develop creative, imaginative and intuitive capabilities when exploring and making images, artefacts and products
- become confident in taking risks and learn from experience when exploring and experimenting with ideas, processes, media, materials and techniques
- develop critical understanding through investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills
- develop and refine ideas and proposals, personal outcomes or solutions with increasing independence
- acquire and develop technical skills through working with a broad range of media, materials, techniques, processes and technologies with purpose and intent
- develop knowledge and understanding of art, craft and design in historical and contemporary contexts, societies and cultures
- develop an awareness of the different roles and individual work practices evident in the production of art, craft and design in the creative and cultural industries
- develop an awareness of the purposes, intentions and functions of art, craft and design in a variety of contexts and as appropriate to students' own work.

What will students learn?

To develop ideas: Students will learn how to develop their own creative ideas through investigating how other artists use formal elements effectively. They will learn how to discuss and analyse an artist's work and will experiment and explore ways in which they could be influenced by other artists' work.

To use materials and techniques: Develop knowledge and understanding of a broad range of art and design skills through trialling different creative techniques such as: painting, drawing, printmaking and mixed media. Students will learn how to review and refine their own work through experimenting with materials and techniques.

To record: Students will learn how to record ideas, observations and insights through drawing and written annotation. They will develop drawing/ painting skills from direct observation and secondary sources.

To produce a final outcome: Students will learn how to present and evaluate a personal and meaningful response to a theme.

How will students be assessed?

Personal Portfolio (coursework) – Theme set by school and completed during lessons. (60% of final grade) 72 marks (18 marks for each of the four Assessment Objectives)

Externally set task (coursework) – Task set externally (40% of final grade). 72 marks (18 marks for each of the four Assessment Objectives)

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

The art curriculum and SOWs refer to and develop knowledge of the following careers in the art world and also route/qualifications needed – Architectural Illustrator, Book Illustrator, Graphic Illustrator, Fine artist (Painter), Printmaker/Screen printer, Fashion Photographer, Food photographer, Portrait Photographer, Animator, Concept Artist, Digital Illustrator, YouTube Video Creator, Mosaic Designer, Potter / Ceramic designer, Stain Glass Window designer, Architect, Interior designer, Typographer, Advertising director/designer, Fashion designer, Graphic Novel Author, Art Critic, Food stylist.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A Level, Cambridge Technical Art & Design level 2 & 3 or BTEC Level 3 Art and Design courses in: Fine Art, Fashion, Textiles, Arts and Crafts, Ceramics, 3D Design, Graphic Design, Photography, Illustration, Web Design, Animation, Advertising, Product Design.

Additional information

This course includes practical and written work. You must have good drawing skills and be willing to learn new media and art techniques. You will need to produce a range of work in response to a given theme and be prepared to work in a range of techniques and styles that may be outside of your comfort zone.

KS4 Course Overviews

Business Studies

(AQA GCSE) 603/0304/9

GCSE Business is a course designed to allow students to develop their knowledge and understanding of business contexts. These include businesses ranging from small enterprises to large multinationals and businesses operating in local, national and global contexts.

Students will explore various areas of business such as Business Ownership, Influences on Business, Marketing, Finance, Business Operations and Human Resources.

GCSE specifications in Business Studies will encourage students to:

- develop as effective and independent students, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds.
- know and understand various areas of a business
- understand what business aims and objectives are, how and why these differ between businesses, and how and why these change as businesses evolve
- know the impact of the economic climate on businesses, including changing levels of consumer income and unemployment

What will students learn?

Students will learn about different types of business, business ownership and the factors that influence business such as location, market and materials. They will also look at business aims and objectives. Students will also be given the opportunity to work on business projects, covering all aspects from initial research to evaluation.

Students will focus on External Influences on Business, Business Operations, Finance, Marketing and Human resources. Whilst students are furthering their knowledge, they will also be developing new skills which they will be expected to use. These include:

- Use business terminology to identify and explain business activity.
- Apply business concepts to familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
- Develop problem solving and decision-making skills relevant to business.
- Investigate, analyse and evaluate business opportunities and issues.

How will students be assessed?

Written exams: 1 hour 45 minutes 90 marks each

Paper 1: 50% of GCSE

Topics assessed are: Business in the real world, Influences on business, Business operations, Human resources

Paper 2: 50% of GCSE

Topics assessed are: Business in the real world, Influences on business, Marketing, Finance

There will be a mixture of multiple-choice questions, short answer questions along with case study/data response stimuli with questions.

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

This subject lays the foundation for a wide range of exciting career paths.

Possible Future Careers Include:

Entrepreneur – Start your own business and turn your ideas into reality. Marketing Executive – Create advertising campaigns and manage social media. Business Manager – Lead teams and help companies grow. Accountant or Financial Analyst – Work with numbers to guide important decisions. Retail or Sales Manager – Run a store or lead a sales team. Human Resources Officer – Support and develop people within a company. Legal and Compliance Roles – Help businesses follow laws and operate fairly. Supply Chain or Operations Manager – Keep things running smoothly behind the scenes.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A Level Business, A level Economics, A level Accounting, A level Law or Politics, Level 3 Business, Level 3 Marketing, Level 3 finance, T level in Management and administration and many apprenticeships in the areas of Business, Finance, Digital Marketing, Retail Management or Customer Service.

Additional information

This course develops problem-solving and critical thinking. The written work develops analytical and evaluative skills which are highly valued in both further education and the workplace.

This subject is right for you if you are:

- Curious about how companies work
- Interested in real-world topics
- Enjoy working with ideas, people or numbers
- Thinking about your own business one day



We *broaden*
student horizons



holywellschool.co.uk

KS4 Course Overviews

Computer Science

(OCR GCSE) 60I/8355/X

The GCSE Computer Science course aims to provide students with a strong foundation in both the theoretical and practical aspects of computing. Our curriculum is designed to inspire curiosity and foster problem-solving skills, preparing students for the fast-evolving digital world. By studying computer science, students will develop a deep understanding of how digital technologies impact modern life and how these systems are designed, implemented, and managed.

Through this course, students will not only become proficient in programming and computer science concepts, but also develop transferable skills like critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. Our goal is for students to leave the course with a deep understanding of computing, ready to tackle future challenges in a tech-driven world, whether that be further education or entering the workforce.

What will students learn?

GCSE Computer Science gives students a deep understanding of how computers work and how to create their own programs and systems. Students will explore both the theory behind technology and gain hands-on coding skills.

Key Topics Covered:

- Computer Systems
- Learn how computers work, including hardware, software, memory, and data storage.
- Networks and Cyber Security
- Understand how networks are set up and how to keep data safe from cyber threats.
- Data Representation
- Discover how computers use binary, images, sound, and characters.
- Algorithms and Programming
- Develop your problem-solving skills and learn how to write and debug code using Python.
- Ethical, Legal & Environmental Issues
- Explore the impact of technology on society, including privacy and the environment.
- Logic and Languages
- Understand how computers make decisions and how different programming languages work.

How will students be assessed?

2 Written exams: 1 hour 45 minutes 90 marks each

Paper 1: 50% of GCSE Computer systems (01)

Paper 2: 50% of GCSE Computational thinking, algorithms and programming (02)

Both papers will include a mix of multiple choice, short-answer and longer-answer questions assessing a student's practical problem solving and computational thinking skills.

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

This subject lays the foundation for a wide range of exciting career paths.

Possible Future Careers Include: Software Developer, Cybersecurity Analyst, Web Developer, Game Developer, Data Analyst, IT Support Technician, Network Engineer, AI/Machine Learning Engineer, Systems Analyst, Database Administrator

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A Level Computer Science, A level Mathematics, A level Physics, A level Business Studies, Level 3 BTEC in IT, T level in Digital Production, Design and Development and many apprenticeships. University courses include:

- Computer Science
- Software Engineering
- Cyber Security
- Artificial Intelligence
- Data Science
- Game Design and Development

Additional information

Students will:

Write real code to solve real problems

Develop their thinking and analytical skills

Get ready for careers in technology, games, software, AI, and more!

KS4 Course Overviews

Performing Arts

(BTEC Pearson Edexcel) 603/7054/3

Performing Arts teaches the student key skills that can be used in all walks in life. Students will have the provisions to develop and grow their teamwork and communication skills as well as learning all of the fundamentals needed to be a confident performer. Students study a wide range of performance styles and scripts as well as how to analyse live performances. Each lesson students are challenged to step out of their comfort zones, be brave and be ambitious. The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Performing Arts (603/7054/3) is for learners who want to acquire sector-specific applied knowledge and skills through vocational contexts by studying professionals' work and processes used, the skills and techniques used in different roles, and how to contribute to the creation of a performance in either a performance or non-performance role as part of their Key Stage 4 learning. The qualification enables learners to develop their sector-specific skills, such as refining work and applying skills for a performance using realistic vocational contexts, and personal skills, such as working with others, working to deadlines, and responding to feedback through a practical and skills-based approach to learning and assessment. The qualification recognises the value of learning skills, knowledge and vocational attributes to complement GCSEs.

Learners will have the opportunity to develop knowledge and technical skills in the following areas:

- development of key skills that prove their aptitude in performing arts, such as reproducing repertoire and responding to stimuli
- processes that underpin effective ways of working in the performing arts, such as development of ideas, rehearsal and performance
- attitudes that are considered most important in the performing arts, including personal management and communication
- knowledge that underpins effective use of skills, processes and attitudes in the sector, such as roles, responsibilities, performance disciplines and styles.

What will students learn?

Component 1: Exploring the Performing Arts

Study different styles, genres and performance techniques in drama, dance or music theatre.

Understand the roles, responsibilities and skills of professionals in the performing arts.

Explore how performance work is created, including influences such as themes, context and purpose.

Learn by watching, discussing and analysing professional work and practitioners.

Component 2: Developing Skills and Techniques in the Performing Arts

Develop practical performance skills through workshops and rehearsals.

Take part in mock auditions, rehearsals and performances to build confidence and technique.

Receive and respond to feedback to improve performance.

Maintain a log or portfolio tracking progress and reflection on skill development.

Component 3: Responding to a Brief (Externally Assessed)

Apply skills and knowledge to create a performance in response to a set brief.

Work as a team to plan, develop and perform an original piece of work.

Document the creative process including ideas, decisions, and evaluation.

Demonstrate understanding of how to communicate meaning to an audience.

How will students be assessed?

The BTEC Tech Award qualifications will be graded and certificated on a seven-grade scale from Level 2 Distinction* to Level 1 Pass. Individual components will be graded on a six-point scale from Level 2 Distinction to Level 1 Pass.

Component 1: 30% internally assessed

Component 2: 30% internally assessed

Component 3: 40% Externally set and assessed by Pearson

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

Theatre Industry: Stage Manager, broadcaster, presenter, producer, director, playwriting

Film making: Videography, scripting

Performing Arts Industry: acting, dancing, music

Transferable Skills: business and leadership roles

The performing arts are a major part of the creative and cultural industries in the UK, which in 2017–2018 were growing at over five times the rate of the wider UK economy, contributing £111.7 billion a year to the economy. There were more than 9,000 enterprises in the performing arts industry in 2018, and in 2019 more than 82,000 people working in a wide range of roles from performers to designers and directors. The skills developed through the study of performing arts are integral to roles across the creative industry, including film and TV, theatre, games and advertising.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (Acting, Dance, or Musical Theatre)

A Levels in: Drama and Theatre Studies; Dance; Music or Music Technology; Media Studies; UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Performing or Production Arts

Apprenticeships in areas such as:

Creative and Digital Media

Technical Theatre

Additional information

Students will

Perform at least one piece in front on an audience

Have opportunities to see different performances live throughout the two years

KS4 Course Overviews

Creative Design and Production

(NFCE technical vocational award)
603/098432

Our Creative Design and Production curriculum aims to inspire and equip learners with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to pursue careers in the creative industries. Through hands-on, project-based learning, students explore key aspects of the design process—research, development, creation, and evaluation—while using a range of tools, materials, and digital technologies. The course promotes problem-solving, innovation, and independent thinking, encouraging learners to respond to real-world design briefs and develop their own creative voice. By understanding industry standards and production practices, students gain valuable insight into professional pathways and expectations. This qualification supports progression to further education, apprenticeships, or employment in areas such as graphic design, product design, fashion, media, and architecture. Our intent is to nurture creative confidence, resilience, and transferable skills that prepare students for the dynamic world of design and production.

What will students learn?

Students taking the NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Creative Design and Production will gain a broad understanding of the creative industries and develop practical skills through engaging, hands-on projects. Specifically, students will learn to:

Understand the Creative Process

- Explore how ideas are generated and developed in design.
- Learn about planning, research, experimentation, and refinement.

Develop Practical Design Skills

- Use a range of materials, tools, and techniques (traditional and digital).
- Produce 2D and/or 3D design outcomes, such as models, drawings, prototypes, or digital media.

Respond to Design Briefs

- Interpret client or project briefs.
- Create original design solutions based on specific themes or requirements.

Apply Industry-Standard Practices

- Understand roles, workflows, and production methods used in the creative sector.
- Apply safe working practices and follow professional standards.

Evaluate and Reflect

- Critically assess their own work and that of others.
- Reflect on feedback and make improvements to design outcomes.

How will students be assessed?

Internal Synoptic Project (60%) – A substantial practical project set by the NCFE completed under exam conditions, students respond to a brief to produce a final outcome. It is marked by teachers and then externally moderated.

External written exam (40%) 1 hour 30 minutes – covers knowledge of the creative industry, production processes, roles, health and safety, materials and tools.

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

Design and creative careers such as product designer, interior designer and furniture designer. This could also support moving into engineering and technical careers, construction and built environment jobs and manufacturing and production for example quality control inspector or 3D printing technician.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

Text This course supports progression to:

A-Level Design and Technology

BTEC Nationals (Engineering, Art & Design, Construction, etc.)

T-Levels (e.g. Design and Development for Engineering, Onsite Construction)

Apprenticeships in engineering, construction, creative design, or technical trades

The UK's creative industries encompass sectors like design, architecture, advertising, film, and fashion. In 2022, these industries contributed approximately £124.6 billion to the UK economy, accounting for 5.7% of the nation's Gross Value Added (GVA). They also employed around 2.4 million people in 2023. Engineering is a cornerstone of the UK economy. The engineering sector contributes up to an estimated £646 billion annually, representing over 30% of the UK's total economic output. It provides high-value, highly productive jobs.

Additional information:

This course is equivalent to a GCSE and grading is as follows: Pass, Merit, Distinction at both Level 1 and Level 2.

It is a course for students who enjoy hands-on learning, being creative and working on design projects.

KS4 Course Overviews

English Language

(AQA) 601/4292/3

At Holywell, our GCSE English Language course develops confident, thoughtful, and articulate communicators. We want every student to be able to understand and respond to the world around them—whether that’s through reading powerful stories, analysing real-world writing, or expressing their own views with clarity and creativity.

Students explore a rich mix of modern and historical texts and learn to write effectively for different audiences and purposes. From fiction to journalism, from persuasive writing to personal viewpoints, they are encouraged to find their voice and communicate with confidence.

Spoken language is also a key part of the course. Students are given the opportunity to prepare and deliver presentations, debate ideas, and practise speaking clearly and persuasively—vital skills for further study and future careers.

Above all, our aim is for students to leave the course not only with strong exam results, but also with the language skills they need to succeed in life—whatever path they choose.

What will students learn?

Students will develop:

The ability to read and critically evaluate a range of 19th, 20th, and 21st-century texts, both fiction and non-fiction.

Analytical skills to explore writers’ methods and their impact on readers.

Proficiency in writing for different audiences and purposes, with a focus on accuracy, style, and effectiveness.

Spoken language skills through presentations, discussions, and role-play activities.

Throughout the course they will learn:

Reading

- How to understand and enjoy different types of texts, from stories to newspaper articles.
- How to spot techniques writers use to create mood, tension or persuade readers.
- How to compare different texts and explain what they are trying to say.

Writing

- How to write clearly and creatively—whether it’s telling a story or giving your opinion.
- How to write for different audiences (like letters, speeches or reviews).
- How to use grammar, punctuation and vocabulary to make your writing powerful and accurate.

Speaking

- How to plan and give a short talk or presentation.
- How to speak clearly and confidently in front of others.
- How to answer questions and take part in discussions.

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1: 1 hour 45 mins. 50% of the GCSE. Analysis of a fiction text and a descriptive or narrative writing task

Paper 2: 1 hour 45 mins. 50% of the GCSE. Analysis of two linked non-fiction texts and writing task presenting a viewpoint.

Non-examined Assessment: Spoken Language.
Teacher-assessed presentation and discussion.

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

Proficiency in English is essential across various sectors:

Media and Publishing: Roles such as journalist, editor, and content creator.

Education: Teaching, academic research, and educational consultancy.

Law and Public Services: Legal professions, civil service, and public administration.

Marketing and Communications: Brand management, advertising, and public relations.

The creative industries, which heavily rely on strong English skills, contributed approximately £124.6 billion to the UK economy in 2022, accounting for 5.7% of the nation’s Gross Value Added (GVA). They also employed around 2.4 million people in 2023.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

Studying GCSE English Language and Literature provides a strong foundation for:

Further Education: A-levels in English Language, English Literature, Media Studies, or related subjects.

Vocational Qualifications: BTECs in Media, Journalism, or Creative Writing.

Apprenticeships: Opportunities in publishing, marketing, communications, and more.

Higher Education: Degrees in English, Law, Journalism, Education, and other humanities disciplines.

Additional information:

Most employers and colleges ask for at least a grade 4 (standard pass) in English Language.

KS4 Course Overviews

English Literature

(AQA) 601/4447/6

At Holywell, our English Literature course invites students to explore some of the greatest texts ever written—works that have shaped language, culture, and ideas across centuries.

Through the study of plays, novels and poetry, students develop a deeper understanding of human experiences, emotions, and values. They read and analyse a wide range of texts, including a Shakespeare play, a 19th-century novel, a modern text, and poetry from across time. In doing so, they learn to explore character, theme, context and language with increasing confidence and insight.

We encourage students to think critically, debate interpretations, and support their ideas with evidence. These are vital skills not only for success in the exam but also for life beyond school—in higher education, in work, and as thoughtful, engaged individuals in society. The course encourages students to think about social issues such as inequality, justice, power, and the human condition and fosters a deeper appreciation of literary and its role in shaping society and personal identity.

Our aim is to inspire a lifelong appreciation for literature while building the analytical and expressive skills that underpin academic success in many subjects and careers.

What will students learn?

Shakespearean Drama

Students will study one of Shakespeare's plays in-depth (e.g., *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*), focusing on themes, characters, language, and structure.

They will explore how Shakespeare's work reflects the social, political, and cultural issues of his time and its relevance today.

19th-Century Novel

Students will analyse a classic novel from the 19th century (e.g. *A Christmas Carol*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *Great Expectations*), learning about its themes, characters, and historical context.

They will explore how these texts challenge ideas of morality, identity, and social justice.

Modern Texts

Students will study a modern text (e.g., *An Inspector Calls*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Lord of the Flies*) to understand its themes, characters, and relevance to contemporary society.

They will examine how modern writers use language and structure to communicate their messages.

Poetry

Students will study a variety of poems from an anthology, covering different themes such as love, war, nature, and identity. They will compare poems, exploring how poets use language, form, and structure to convey emotions and ideas. Students will also engage with unseen poetry, practicing skills to interpret and analyse new texts.

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1: 1 hour 45 mins. 40% of the GCSE.

Shakespeare and the 19th Century Novel

Paper 2: 2 hour 15 mins. 60% of the GCSE. Modern Texts and Poetry.

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

Proficiency in English is essential across various sectors:

Media and Publishing: Roles such as journalist, editor, and content creator.

Education: Teaching, academic research, and educational consultancy.

Law and Public Services: Legal professions, civil service, and public administration.

Marketing and Communications: Brand management, advertising, and public relations.

The creative industries, which heavily rely on strong English skills, contributed approximately £124.6 billion to the UK economy in 2022, accounting for 5.7% of the nation's Gross Value Added (GVA). They also employed around 2.4 million people in 2023.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

Studying GCSE English Language and Literature provides a strong foundation for:

Further Education: A-levels in English Language, English Literature, Media Studies, or related subjects.

Vocational Qualifications: BTECs in Media, Journalism, or Creative Writing.

Apprenticeships: Opportunities in publishing, marketing, communications, and more.

Higher Education: Degrees in English, Law, Journalism, Education, and other humanities disciplines.

Additional information:

Both exam papers involve answering essay-style questions, so students need to be skilled in structuring clear, detailed responses, using evidence from the texts to support their arguments.

KS4 Course Overviews

French

(Pearson Edexcel) 610/2718/2

Our GCSE French course is designed to help students communicate confidently in French and develop a deep understanding of French-speaking cultures.

Through engaging lessons and real-world topics, students will:

- Build language skills: Improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing in French to communicate effectively in everyday situations.
- Explore French culture: Discover the traditions, history, and lifestyles of French-speaking countries.
- Prepare for the future: Proficiency in French opens doors to many careers, including business, travel, and international relations.
- Boost confidence: Gain the confidence to use French in real-life contexts, helping students become global citizens.

Aligned with the Edexcel GCSE specification, our curriculum will:

Develop students' ability to communicate effectively in spoken and written forms across a range of contexts.

Deepen their understanding of the cultures and societies where the target language is spoken.

Foster resilience, problem-solving, and analytical skills through language learning.

Prepare students for the next stages of education or employment in a globally interconnected world.

What will students learn?

Students will develop proficiency in the four key language skills:

Listening: Understanding spoken French in various contexts (e.g., conversations, announcements, and media) and responding to questions.

Speaking: Using French to communicate effectively, express opinions, ask questions, and respond to prompts in both every day and more formal settings.

Reading: Comprehending written French texts, including emails, advertisements, articles, and stories, and answering questions based on them.

Writing: Writing clearly in French, creating texts such as letters, emails, and short essays, and using accurate grammar and vocabulary.

Students will also learn essential grammar structures, including verb tenses (present, past, future), sentence construction, and the correct use of adjectives and nouns. Vocabulary will be built around everyday topics and situations, ensuring that students can confidently express themselves in a variety of contexts.

How will students be assessed?

Listening paper: 35 minutes 25% of the total grade

Reading paper: 50 minutes 25% of the total grade

Listening and Reading are taken together in one exam paper

Speaking assessment: one on one interview with an adult, 25% of the total grade

Writing paper: 1 hour 25% of the total grade

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

- International Business and Trade
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Media and Journalism
- Creative Arts and Entertainment
- Public Relations and Marketing
- Social Services and Community Work
- Translation and Interpretation

Bilingualism is increasingly seen as a valuable skill in the global economy. Proficiency in French allows the UK to strengthen its ties with French-speaking nations and opens up opportunities in a wide range of industries. The language services industry contributes over £1 billion to the UK economy annually. The export sector, including businesses working with French-speaking countries, contributes significantly to the UK's economic output, with France being one of the UK's largest trading partners. Bilingual employees are often paid a premium for their language skills, as they facilitate smoother communication and negotiations in international business.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A level French, other Modern Languages, A levels in Politics, Business, Marketing or International Business, A level Law.

Additional information:

The speaking assessment is recorded and sent to the exam board for marking, students answer questions about themselves, discuss a role-play scenario and give a short presentation on a topic of their choice. The Speaking test is not done in the final exam period but is conducted separately during the course.

KS4 Course Overviews

Geography

(AQA) 601/4774/9

At Holywell, our GCSE Geography course is designed to inspire curiosity about the world around us and equip students with the knowledge and skills to understand and address the challenges facing our planet.

Through a dynamic and engaging curriculum, we aim to:

- **Develop geographical skills:** Students will explore key geographical concepts and develop critical thinking skills to interpret data, maps, and sources. This will empower them to make informed decisions about global issues.
- **Understand global and local environments:** The course explores both physical and human geography, examining diverse landscapes, ecosystems, and human societies. Students will learn about global challenges such as climate change, urbanization, and sustainable development, fostering a sense of responsibility for the world's future.
- **Promote environmental awareness:** We aim to develop students' understanding of environmental issues, encouraging them to consider the impact of human actions on the planet and explore sustainable solutions to global problems.
- **Encourage practical application:** Fieldwork and real-world case studies are embedded in the course, providing students with opportunities to apply geographical knowledge and skills to real-life scenarios.
- **Prepare for future opportunities:** Geography opens doors to a variety of careers, including urban planning, environmental science, international development, and climate change policy. This course also lays a strong foundation for further study in Geography at A-level and beyond.

By the end of the course, students will have a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of people, places, and environments, along with the ability to critically assess and respond to global challenges.

What will students learn?

1. The Physical Environment

Natural Hazards: Studying tectonic processes, volcanoes, earthquakes, and other natural disasters, and their impact on human environments.

The Changing Climate: Understanding climate change, its causes, and its global impacts on ecosystems and human societies.

Ecosystems: Investigating biomes, food webs, and the impact of human activity on ecosystems such as rainforests and deserts.

Coastal Landscapes: Exploring coastal erosion, landforms, and coastal management strategies.

River Landscapes: Studying river processes, landforms, and flooding, including the management of rivers.

2. The Human Environment

Urban Issues and Challenges: Examining the growth of cities, challenges of urbanization, and sustainable urban development.

The Changing Economic World: Understanding global development, inequality, and the challenges and opportunities facing different regions, including the role of global trade.

The Challenge of Resource Management: Investigating how we manage resources such as food, water, and energy, and the impact of this on global sustainability.

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1: 1 hour 30 minutes 35% of the total grade. The Physical Environment

Paper 2: 1 hour 30 minutes, 35% of the total grade. The Human Environment.

Paper 3: 1 hour 15 minutes 30% of the total grade. Geographical Applications – Fieldwork and Issue Evaluation.

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

Studying GCSE Geography opens the door to a variety of careers related to the environment, urban planning, sustainability, and global trade. Potential careers include:

Urban Planner, Environmental Consultant, Climatologist/Meteorologist, Geographer/Cartographer

Environmental Scientist/Conservationist, Sustainable Development Expert, Tourism Manager, Logistics and Transport Manager, Climate Change Policy Advisor.

These careers contribute significantly to the UK economy, particularly in sectors such as construction, environmental services, the green economy, tourism, and logistics, with some industries worth billions annually. Geography-related careers support the UK's goals for sustainability, climate change mitigation, and economic growth.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A level Geography, Environmental Science, Geology, Economics, Sociology, Politics and Biology. Level 3 in Travel and Tourism and Environmental sustainability. T levels in Planning and the Built Environment, Agriculture, or Transport and Logistics.

Additional information:

All students need to conduct fieldwork to gather data on geographical processes and human-environment interactions in the local area.

For paper 3 students study an Issue Evaluation: A decision-making exercise on a geographical issue, where students are asked to assess a given scenario and make informed judgments using geographical knowledge, the issue is shared with schools approximately 6 weeks before the exam.



Achieving High Standards

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KS4 Course Overviews

German

(Pearson Edexcel GCSE) 610/8709/8

Our GCSE German course is designed to help students communicate confidently in German and develop a deep understanding of German-speaking cultures.

Through engaging lessons and real-world topics, students will:

- **Build language skills:** Improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing in German to communicate effectively in everyday situations.
- **Explore German culture:** Discover the traditions, history, and lifestyles of German-speaking countries.
- **Prepare for the future:** Proficiency in German opens doors to many careers, including business, travel, and international relations.
- **Boost confidence:** Gain the confidence to use German in real-life contexts, helping students become global citizens.

Aligned with the Edexcel GCSE specification, our curriculum:

Develop students' ability to communicate effectively in spoken and written forms across a range of contexts.

Deepen their understanding of the cultures and societies where the target language is spoken.

Foster resilience, problem-solving, and analytical skills through language learning.

Prepare students for the next stages of education or employment in a globally interconnected world.

What will students learn?

Students will develop proficiency in the four key language skills:

Listening: Understanding spoken German in various contexts (e.g., conversations, announcements, and media) and responding to questions.

Speaking: Using German to communicate effectively, express opinions, ask questions, and respond to prompts in both every day and more formal settings.

Reading: Comprehending written German texts, including emails, advertisements, articles, and stories, and answering questions based on them.

Writing: Writing clearly in German, creating texts such as letters, emails, and short essays, and using accurate grammar and vocabulary.

Students will also learn essential grammar structures, including verb tenses (present, past, future), sentence construction, and the correct use of adjectives and nouns. Vocabulary will be built around everyday topics and situations, ensuring that students can confidently express themselves in a variety of contexts.

How will students be assessed?

Listening paper: 35 minutes 25% of the total grade

Reading paper: 50 minutes 25% of the total grade

Listening and Reading are taken together in one exam paper

Speaking assessment: one on one interview with an adult, 25% of the total grade

Writing paper: 1 hour 25% of the total grade

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

- International Business and Trade
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Media and Journalism
- Creative Arts and Entertainment
- Public Relations and Marketing
- Social Services and Community Work
- Translation and Interpretation

Bilingualism is increasingly seen as a valuable skill in the global economy. Proficiency in German allows the UK to strengthen its ties with German-speaking countries and opens up opportunities in a wide range of industries. The language services industry contributes over £1 billion to the UK economy annually. The export sector, including businesses working with German-speaking countries, contributes significantly to the UK's economic output, with Germany being one of the UK's significant trading partners. Bilingual employees are often paid a premium for their language skills, as they facilitate smoother communication and negotiations in international business.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A level German, other Modern Languages, A levels in Politics, Business, Marketing or International Business, A level Law.

Additional information:

The speaking assessment is recorded and sent to the exam board for marking, students answer questions about themselves, discuss a role-play scenario and give a short presentation on a topic of their choice. The Speaking test is not done in the final exam period but is conducted separately during the course.

KS4 Course Overviews

History

(Pearson Edexcel) 601/8092/4

History at Holywell aims to provide informative and educational lessons that follow the GCSE specification. Whilst the programmes of study are content-based and predominantly chronological, opportunities have been made for students to engage in independent learning and to partake in more active activities that allow them to reach and express personal opinions. These include debates, mock trials, hot-seating, competitions, card-sort activities and more.

Student involvement in lessons is very important and lessons have paired, group and whole-class discussions and debates built in to try to engage students and encourage them to take an active role in their own learning.

Through a carefully chosen range of British and global historical studies, our curriculum enables students to:

- Develop historical understanding by exploring key events, people, and changes over time – from medieval medicine to modern political conflicts.
- Think critically and analytically, evaluating sources and interpretations to form balanced, evidence-based arguments.
- Understand cause and consequence, change and continuity, and the significance of events and individuals throughout history.
- Make connections between past and present, encouraging students to see how historical themes shape the modern world.

We aim to foster resilient, independent thinkers who are curious about diverse perspectives and capable of forming and communicating well-reasoned judgments. These are essential skills not only for further study but also for active and informed citizenship in a democratic society.

What will students learn?

Thematic Study and Historic Environment

Medicine in Britain, c1250–present

Students learn how medical knowledge and treatments have changed over time, including key events like the Black Death and modern-day healthcare.

The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18

A focused study of the First World War battlefield and how it influenced medical treatment and conditions.

2. British Depth Study

Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88

Topics include Elizabeth I's reign, threats to the crown, and daily life in Tudor England.

3. Period Study

Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941–91

Students investigate the tension between the USA and USSR, including events like the Cuban Missile Crisis and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

4. Modern Depth Study

Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39

Focuses on post-WWI Germany, the rise of Hitler, life under Nazi rule, and the changes in German society.

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1: 1 hour 15 minutes. 30% of the total grade.
Medicine in Britain

Paper 2: 1 hour 45 minutes 40% of the total grade.
Superpowers Relations, the Cold War, Early Elizabethan England

Paper 3: 1 hour 20 minutes. 30% of the total GCSE.
Weimar and Nazi Germany

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

The skills gained in GCSE History are relevant to careers in:

Law
Journalism
Education
Politics
Research
Museums and heritage
Business and public service

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A Level History, Politics, Law, Sociology, Philosophy, English literature. Level 3 BTECs in Public Services, Criminology or Social Sciences. T levels in Legal, Business and Education Sectors.

Additional information:

Question Types Across All Papers
Short answer, structured questions
Source and interpretation analysis
Extended essay questions

This assessment structure ensures students are tested on both knowledge and historical skills, including analysis, evaluation, and argument construction.

KS4 Course Overviews

Hospitality and Catering

(WJEC) 603/7002/1

This course focusses on the hospitality and catering industry which includes all businesses that provide food, beverages, and/or accommodation services, which includes restaurants, hotels, pubs, and bars. It also includes airlines, tourist attractions, hospitals and sports venues; businesses where hospitality and catering is not their primary service but is increasingly important to their success. These are all a huge part of our everyday lives and finding out about the logistics involved behind the scenes of these businesses is a very valuable experience for students to appreciate their complex nature and the impact they have on their lives. Students choose this course to develop their knowledge, understanding and the practical application of skills in a vocational context, providing students with a broad introduction to the Hospitality and Catering sector and, as it is a vocational course, the types of further education, training and employment they may wish to engage in. The ability to plan, prepare and present food is an essential skill within the hospitality and catering industry and this course equips students with theoretical knowledge about the industry as well as enabling them to develop practical skills in planning, preparing, and cooking a variety of dishes. Students will develop their food preparation and cooking skills as well as transferable skills of problem solving, organisation and time management, planning and communication which will benefit them in their future lives regardless of their career choices. In addition, there are the, arguably more important, benefits of experiencing a breadth of cultures and approaches to food and drink to appreciate what is unique about different cuisines and a variety of influences on individual choices. Students will also come to appreciate good eating and nutrition are serious processes and that what they put into their bodies determines what they get out of it.

What will students learn?

Component 1: The Hospitality and Catering Industry (40% of the total GCSE)

The component covers the theoretical aspects of the hospitality and catering industry, including:

The Hospitality and Catering Industry – Types of businesses, customer needs, and services provided.
Health and Safety – Importance of food safety, laws, and regulations.

Menu Planning – Types of menus, nutrition, and dietary requirements.

Food Preparation and Cooking – Methods of cooking, cooking equipment, and preparing food for service.
Question Types: A mix of multiple-choice, short-answer, and extended writing questions.

Component 2: Hospitality and Catering in Action Practical coursework

Content: This component involves students planning, preparing, cooking, and presenting a three-course meal for a specific target group (e.g., a family, elderly people, or young children). Students must:

- Investigate the target group and menu planning.
- Prepare and cook the dishes using appropriate techniques.
- Evaluate the final product based on sensory qualities (taste, appearance, texture) and nutritional aspects.
- Complete a written report documenting their process, including research, planning, and evaluations.

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1: 1 hour 30 minutes. 40% of the total grade.
The Hospitality and Catering Industry

Unit 2: 60% Hospitality and Catering in Action.
Practical Assessment spread over 2 days.

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

The skills learned in this course can open doors to careers in:

Hospitality management (e.g., hotel or restaurant manager)
Catering (e.g., event catering, food services)
Nutrition and dietetics
Food product development
Chef or Pastry Chef
Food stylist or photographer
Health and safety (e.g., food safety inspector)
Event management

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A level Food Technology, Design and Technology, Business Studies, Health and Social Care. Level 3 BTEC in Hospitality, Food Science and Nutrition and Level 2/3 diplomas in Professional Cookery. Culinary Apprenticeships, Hospitality Management Apprenticeships

Additional information:

Students may have opportunities to:
Take part in cooking competitions, such as local or national chef challenges.
Visit restaurants, hotels, or catering businesses to see how the industry works in practice.
Work with local chefs or professionals to learn about career pathways and advanced techniques.
Volunteer or work in catering environments for hands-on experience.

KS4 Course Overviews

Mathematics

(AQA) 601/4608/4

The Mathematics department strives to give students the confidence to acquire and use mathematical skills that will stand them in good stead throughout their lifetime. The department seeks to achieve excellence in the teaching and learning of Mathematics, in order for the students to make significant progress, irrespective of their prior attachment in this interesting and varied subject. As a core subject studied by all students throughout their time at school, we believe Maths is one of the most important and interesting in the curriculum. Wherever you look in the world there is Maths and we aim to equip students with the knowledge, and more importantly, the skills to fully participate in our information driven society.

The curriculum in Maths aims to ensure that students:

- Develop a culture of deep understanding, confidence and competence in Maths producing strong, secure learning and progress.
- Develop fluency in the fundamental skills of Maths through practice in different contexts and in problem solving.
- Reason mathematically by following a line of enquiry, conjecturing relationships and generalisations, and developing an argument, justification or proof using mathematical language.
- Solve problems by applying mathematics to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking down problems into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions.

What will students learn?

Number

Fractions, decimals, and percentages
Powers, roots, standard form
Calculations, rounding, and estimation
Factors, multiples, and primes
Ratio and proportion

Algebra

Expressions, equations, and formulae
Expanding and factorising
Solving linear, quadratic, and simultaneous equations
Sequences and inequalities
Graphs and coordinates

Ratio, Proportion and Rates of Change

Direct and inverse proportion
Speed, density, and pressure
Growth and decay problems
Best buys and real-life ratio problems

Geometry and Measures

Properties of shapes and angles
Perimeter, area, surface area, and volume
Transformations (reflection, rotation, translation, enlargement)
Trigonometry and Pythagoras' Theorem
Vectors and constructions

Statistics and Probability

Representing data: charts and graphs
Averages and range
Probability experiments and calculations
Sampling and statistical diagrams

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1: 1 hour 30 minutes. 33% of the total grade.
Non-calculator paper

Paper 2: 1 hour 30 minutes 33% of the total grade
calculator allowed

Paper 3: 1 hour 30 minutes 33% of the total grade
calculator allowed

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

GCSE Mathematics opens the door to a wide range of careers because it develops vital skills in problem-solving, logical thinking, and data handling. It is a core subject that is required for many further study options and job roles.

Computer analyst, Criminology expert, Civil engineering – structure using shapes Programming, Financial analyst, Product designing/industry, Software engineering, Data analyst, Computer Software developer, System analyst, Mathematical modeller, Space scientist Accountant, Growth analyst, Pilot, Construction Midwifery/Nursing, Architecture, Design/Industry Banking, Teacher.

Maths-based roles, especially in finance, engineering, tech, and data science, contribute billions of pounds to the UK economy annually. The UK's STEM sector alone contributes over £200 billion and continues to grow.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A level Maths, Further Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Economics, Psychology. T levels in Engineering, Digital Production, Health, Construction, and Finance

BTEC Level 3 courses in Applied Science, Engineering, IT, Business, and more
Apprenticeships in areas like accountancy, trades, healthcare, and logistics

Additional information:

Each paper is worth 80 marks.

Students answer a mix of short answer, structured, and multi-step problems. Questions increase in difficulty through each paper.

Students are entered for either the:

Foundation Tier (grades 1–5) or

Higher Tier (grades 4–9)

KS4 Course Overviews

Music GCSE

(WJEC) 601/8131/X

The WJEC GCSE Music course aims to inspire a lifelong passion for music, encouraging students to explore diverse genres, including classical, popular, world music, and film soundtracks. It provides opportunities for creative expression through performance and composition, helping students develop practical musicianship by refining their instrumental or vocal skills. The course also enhances critical thinking and analytical abilities, encouraging students to analyse musical elements such as melody, rhythm, and harmony.

Students will gain both collaborative and independent skills, fostering teamwork and personal responsibility through group performances and solo compositions. The curriculum is designed to equip students for further study in music and related fields, providing a strong foundation for A Level courses or careers in music performance, production, or education. Ultimately, the course nurtures creativity, self-expression, and personal growth, allowing students to develop their unique musical identity while preparing for future academic and professional pathways in music. We work to ensure that our music lessons offer genuine opportunities for all pupils to develop their individual creative voices. Students will be provided with experiences which enhance cultural capital: close familiarity with diverse styles of music helps pupils understand the cultural context of the society in which we live. It also enhances empathy and understanding with people from all over the world.

Stylistic diversity: we believe in the inherent value of all styles of music, from all historical periods, and from all the world's cultures. We aspire to introduce pupils to as many of these as we can whilst they are with us at Holywell.

What will students learn?

Performing

Solo and ensemble performance: Students will perform music both individually and as part of a group, developing their instrumental or vocal skills.

Repertoire: Students will explore a variety of musical genres and styles, such as classical, pop, rock, jazz, and world music.

Composing

Composition skills: Students will compose their own music, either using traditional notation or technology-based music production tools.

Creativity and expression: They will learn how to express ideas and emotions through music, using melody, harmony, rhythm, and dynamics.

Listening and Appraising

Understanding music: Students will listen to and analyse different pieces of music from a variety of genres, including classical, popular, and world music.

Musical elements: They will learn about the key elements of music, including structure, texture, harmony, rhythm, and instrumentation.

Contexts and styles: Students will explore how music is influenced by culture, history, and social context

Areas of Study

Students will study four areas of music in-depth:

Western Classical Tradition (1650–1910) – Focus on key works from the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods.

Popular Music – Exploring genres like pop, rock, and jazz.

World Music – Studying music from different global traditions, such as African, Latin American, and Asian music.

Film Music – Analysing how music is used in film to enhance narrative and emotion.

How will students be assessed?

Component 1: Performance, 30% of qualification.

Students record one solo and one ensemble performance each worth 15%. This is marked and sent to exam board for moderation. The recommended standard is at least grade 3.

Component 2: Composition, 30% of qualification.

Students submit one free composition and submit a composition from a list of set briefs sent out by the exam board. Each composition is worth 15% of the overall mark.

Component 3: Appraising exam, 40% of qualification.

A one hour and 45-minute exam

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

Professional Musician, Music Producer, Music Teacher / Tutor, Music Director, Composer / Songwriter, Sound Engineer, Arranger, DJ / Music Performer, Music Therapist.

The UK music industry contributes billions of pounds annually to the economy, including £5.8 billion from live music alone. Careers in music, from performance to production and management, are vital to this growing sector.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A Level Music – Continuing the study of music in more depth, including composition, performance, and music analysis.

BTEC Level 3 in Music or Music Technology – Practical, hands-on study of the music industry and its various branches.

Music Production and Technology Degrees – Courses that focus on the technical side of music, including sound engineering and digital music creation.

Creative Media and Performing Arts Degrees – Exploring careers in film, theatre, and media production, where music plays a crucial role.

Additional information:

Students would be expected to study and practice music outside of the classroom.

KS4 Course Overviews

Physical Education GCSE

(AQA) 601/8279/9

The AQA GCSE Physical Education (PE) course is designed to inspire students to lead active, healthy lifestyles while developing both their physical and theoretical understanding of sport and exercise. The curriculum promotes physical activity and wellbeing by encouraging students to engage in regular exercise and understand its importance for health and fitness. Through practical sessions, students enhance their skills in a variety of physical activities, fostering a lifelong commitment to being active.

Students also gain a deep understanding of the physiological, psychological, and sociocultural factors that impact physical performance, exploring topics such as anatomy, training methods, diet, and the role of sport in society. The course encourages personal and social development through participation in sports and physical activities, helping students develop key life skills such as teamwork, leadership, communication, and resilience. These skills are transferable to a wide range of future careers and academic pursuits.

Additionally, the course prepares students for further study and careers in sport, physical education, or related fields, opening pathways to roles in coaching, sports management, health and fitness, sports therapy, and more. By participating in competitive activities, students also learn valuable lessons in sportsmanship, handling both success and failure in a healthy way. Ultimately, the AQA GCSE PE course equips students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to lead active, healthy lives and pursue opportunities in sport and related fields.

What will students learn?

Physical Factors Affecting Performance:

Anatomy and Physiology: Understanding how the body works, including the musculoskeletal system, cardiovascular system, and respiratory system, and how these systems contribute to physical performance.

Health, Fitness, and Wellbeing:

Physical Training: Learning about different types of training (e.g., aerobic, anaerobic, flexibility) and how they improve fitness, including designing personal fitness plans.

Sports Psychology:

Mental Preparation for Performance
Goal Setting and Mental Strategies.
Socio-Cultural Issues in Sport:
Ethics in Sport
Sport in Society.

Practical Performance:

Developing Skills in Physical Activities: Students will engage in practical sessions where they will develop and refine their skills in a range of physical activities, such as team sports (e.g., football, basketball) and individual sports (e.g., athletics, swimming).

Analysis of Performance: Learning to evaluate their own performance and the performance of others, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, and using feedback to enhance skills.

How will students be assessed?

Physical Performance Assessment: 30% of the total grade. Students will be assessed on their performance in physical activities, demonstrating the skills, tactics, and strategies they've learned.

Written Exams: 70% of the total grade

Paper 1: 1 hour 15 minutes: Anatomy and physiology, movement analysis, physical training, and the use of data

Paper 2: 1 hour 15 minutes: Sports psychology, socio-cultural influences, health, fitness, well-being, and the use of data.

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

Sports and fitness careers, Health and wellbeing, Sports Science and Research, Outdoor and Adventure careers, Media and Communications.

Many of these careers contribute significantly to the UK's economy, particularly in the growing sectors of health, fitness, and sports tourism. The UK's sports industry alone contributes billions of pounds annually to the economy, providing employment, boosting tourism, and promoting public health initiatives.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A-Level Physical Education or BTEC Sport

Sports Science


Sports Coaching and Management

Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation

Ultimately, the course equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to pursue a wide range of exciting and rewarding careers in sports and health.

Additional information:

Students can use recordings from sports outside of school as part of their physical performance assessment.



Pupils and adults often refer to Holywell as a team, emphasising the tangible *sense of togetherness.* SIAMS 2024

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KS4 Course Overviews

Sports Studies

(Cambridge National) 603/7107/9

The Sport Studies course is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the sports industry, focusing on both practical skills and theoretical knowledge. This course aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary for success in a wide range of careers in sport, fitness, and recreation.

The curriculum promotes an active, healthy lifestyle and encourages students to engage in physical activities that improve their fitness, teamwork, leadership, and communication skills. Through practical assessments, students will develop hands-on experience in sports coaching, fitness training, and event management, while learning the theoretical foundations of sports science, psychology, and nutrition.

Students will explore key areas such as the role of sport in society, the importance of physical health and well-being, and the business aspects of the sports industry. They will gain valuable insights into how sports organizations operate, from grassroots level to professional sport, and understand the importance of governance, ethics, and sustainability in the sector.

By completing the course, students will develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, enhancing their ability to analyse and evaluate sports performance and improve their personal and professional growth. The course also provides a strong foundation for further study in sports-related fields, such as Sports Science, Sports Management, or Coaching, and opens up pathways into a variety of careers in the sports and leisure industry.

Overall, the BTEC Sport Studies course is designed to nurture students' passion for sport, empower them with practical and theoretical knowledge, and prepare them for future success in both further education and sports careers.

What will students learn?

In the Sport Studies course, students will learn a blend of practical skills and theoretical knowledge that prepares them for further study or careers in the sports and fitness industries. Here's a summary of the key areas they will study:

Contemporary Issues in Sport (R184)

Why people take part in sport — and what stops them
How sport promotes values like teamwork, respect, and fair play

The role and impact of big sporting events like the Olympics or World Cup

How governing bodies (like the FA) support sport in the UK

Performance and Leadership in Sport (R185)

Improve your skills and performance in two sports (one team, one individual)

Learn how to plan, lead and review a sports session for others

Develop confidence and leadership through practical coaching

Sports and the Media (R186)

Discover how sport is shown on TV, in newspapers, and online

Explore how media affects how we see sport and athletes

Look at the positive and negative influence of media on sport

How will students be assessed?

Unit R184: 1 hour 15 minutes 40% of the total grade: Contemporary Issues in Sport

Unit R185: 40% of the total grade: Performance and Leadership in Sports Activities

Unit R186: 20% of the total grade Sports and the Media

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

Sports and fitness careers, Health and wellbeing, Sports Science and Research, Outdoor and Adventure careers, Media and Communications.

Many of these careers contribute significantly to the UK's economy, particularly in the growing sectors of health, fitness, and sports tourism. The UK's sports industry alone contributes billions of pounds annually to the economy, providing employment, boosting tourism, and promoting public health initiatives.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A-Level Physical Education or BTEC Sport

Sports Science

Sports Coaching and Management

Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation

Ultimately, the course equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to pursue a wide range of exciting and rewarding careers in sports and health.

Additional information:

All coursework is externally moderated by Cambridge National. Enjoying PE lessons and being willing to participate in practical work and team tasks is important.

GCSE Equivalency:

Level 2 Distinction* = GCSE 8/9 (A*)

Level 2 Pass = GCSE 4/5 (C)

Level 1 Pass = GCSE 1 (F)

KS4 Course Overviews

Religious Studies

(AQA) 601/8400/0

RE lessons are designed to ensure full coverage of the AQA specification. Students learn about the beliefs of both the Christian and Islamic faiths before exploring key ethical issues affecting modern society. There is plenty of opportunity built into the scheme of learning to ensure students have time to reflect on these issues, evaluate different opinions before reaching a personal moral stance. Through the AQA GCSE Religious Studies course, students explore the beliefs, teachings, and practices of two world religions – typically Christianity and Islam – and apply this understanding to contemporary moral and social issues. Our intent is to encourage respectful debate, promote cultural and religious awareness, and help students reflect on their own values and identity. The course challenges students to consider diverse perspectives on topics such as human rights, crime and punishment, relationships, and the existence of God. It equips them with the ability to articulate their views clearly and respectfully, and to understand the role of religion in shaping the modern world.

By the end of the course, students will be well-prepared for further study and for life in a diverse and pluralistic society.

What will students learn?

Religious Beliefs, Teachings, and Practices

Two religions are studied in depth – most commonly Christianity and Islam.

In these units of work students explore the key beliefs about God, life after death, the nature of humanity, and religious authority, the ways in which these beliefs influence the daily lives of believers. Students also learn about worship, prayer, festivals, and the role of religious leaders and places of worship.

Thematic Studies (Moral and Ethical Issues)

Students investigate religious and non-religious responses to major ethical themes such as:

Relationships and Families – including marriage, gender roles, and sexuality.

Religion and Life – covering abortion, euthanasia, the environment, and the origins of life.

Crime and Punishment – including justice, the death penalty, and forgiveness.

Skills Developed:

Critical thinking and ethical reasoning.

The ability to construct balanced arguments.

Cultural and religious literacy.

Respectful debate and the evaluation of differing points of view.

How will students be assessed?

Paper 1: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of the total grade. The study of religions

Paper 2: 1 hour 45 minutes 50% of the total grade. Thematic Studies on the 4 ethical and philosophical themes.

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

The AQA GCSE Religious Studies course develops skills that are valuable across many career paths. While it does not lead directly to one specific profession, it builds strong foundations for careers that require critical thinking, empathy, ethical reasoning, and an understanding of diverse cultures and beliefs.

Possible Careers and Job Areas:

Law – solicitor, barrister, legal advisor

Education – teacher, lecturer, educational consultant

Health and Social Care – social worker, counsellor, care worker, therapist

Politics and Civil Service – policy advisor, human rights officer, diplomat

Charity and Non-Profit Work – international aid worker, advocacy roles

Media and Journalism – reporter, editor, communications officer

Religious Ministry or Chaplaincy – in schools, hospitals, prisons, or the armed forces

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A-Level Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics, Sociology, Psychology, Law, Politics, History.

Level 3 Health and social care, Public Services, Counselling and Mental Health support.

Degrees in: Theology, Philosophy, Law, international Relations, Social Work, Education, Human Rights or Peace Studies.

Additional information:

Students regularly take part in discussions and debates, helping them build confidence in expressing their views and listening to others. It's ideal for developing communication and critical thinking skills.

KS4 Course Overviews

Science Combined Double Award

(AQA) 601/8758/X

At Holywell, our Combined Science curriculum will provide all students with a strong foundation in the three core scientific disciplines: biology, chemistry, and physics. We aim to inspire curiosity about the natural world, develop scientific thinking, and equip learners with the knowledge and skills needed to understand and question the science that impacts their lives and the wider world.

Through practical work, critical thinking, and real-world application, students learn how science works in everyday life—from the human body and ecosystems to chemical reactions and energy transfer. The curriculum is designed to build confidence, promote analytical thinking, and encourage students to ask meaningful questions about how and why things happen.

This course prepares students for further study in science and supports a wide range of future careers, while also promoting key skills in problem-solving, data analysis, and evidence-based reasoning.

What will students learn?

In the AQA Combined Science (AQA Trilogy) course, students will study a broad and balanced mix of biology, chemistry, and physics. This double-award GCSE covers key scientific principles and how they apply to real-world contexts.

Biology

Cell biology and organisation
Infection and response
Bioenergetics (photosynthesis and respiration)
Homeostasis and response
Inheritance, variation, and evolution
Ecology and ecosystems

Chemistry

Atomic structure and the periodic table
Bonding, structure, and properties of matter
Quantitative chemistry
Chemical changes and energy changes
The rate and extent of chemical reactions
Organic chemistry
Chemical analysis and the Earth's resources

Physics

Energy
Electricity
Particle model of matter
Atomic structure (including radioactivity)
Forces and motion
Waves
Magnetism and electromagnetism

How will students be assessed?

There are six papers: two biology, two chemistry and two physics. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas.

Written Exams: 1 hour 15 mins each worth 16.7% of the total grade

Questions: Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer, and open response.

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

Possible Careers This Course Could Lead To:

Health and Medicine: Doctor, Nurse, Paramedic
Physiotherapist, Pharmacist, Radiographer,
Laboratory Technician, Biomedical Scientist.

Environment and Biology: Ecologist, Marine Biologist,
Environmental Scientist, Veterinary Nurse, Zoologist,
Agricultural Scientist.

Engineering and Physics: Mechanical, Electrical,
or Civil Engineer, Aerospace Technician, Nuclear
Physicist, Architect.

Chemistry and Materials: Chemist, Chemical
Engineer, Forensic Scientist, Cosmetic Scientist, Food
Technologist.

Technology and Research: Data Analyst, Robotics
Technician, Research Assistant, Renewable Energy
Consultant, Science Communicator.

Science-related industries—such as healthcare, engineering, and environmental science—contribute hundreds of billions of pounds annually to the UK economy and are among the fastest-growing employment sectors.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A-Level Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Science, Forensic Science, Health and Social Care, Maths.

Level 3: Applied Science, Health and Social Care, Engineering, extended Diploma in Environmental Science.

Degrees in: Medicine, Biomedical Sciences, Veterinary Medicine, Engineering, Chemical Engineering.

Additional information:

Students will achieve 2 GCSEs from this Science course.

Students can take a Foundation or a Higher Tier GCSE in Science.

KS4 Course Overviews

Science Triple

(AQA) Biology 601/8752/9 Chemistry
601/8753/0 Physics 601/8754/2

At Holywell, our Triple Science curriculum will provide all students with a strong foundation in the three core scientific disciplines: biology, chemistry, and physics. We aim to inspire curiosity about the natural world, develop scientific thinking, and equip learners with the knowledge and skills needed to understand and question the science that impacts their lives and the wider world.

Through practical work, critical thinking, and real-world application, students learn how science works in everyday life—from the human body and ecosystems to chemical reactions and energy transfer. The curriculum is designed to build confidence, promote analytical thinking, and encourage students to ask meaningful questions about how and why things happen. This course prepares students for further study in science and supports a wide range of future careers, while also promoting key skills in problem-solving, data analysis, and evidence-based reasoning.

What will students learn?

Each subject is taught in-depth, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the principles and applications of each scientific field.

Biology

Cell Biology: Structure and function of cells, cell division, stem cells.

Organisation: Tissues, organs, and organ systems; digestion, the circulatory system.

Infection and Response.

Bioenergetics: Photosynthesis and respiration.

Homeostasis and Response

Inheritance, Variation, and Evolution: Genetic inheritance, natural selection, and evolution.

Ecology: Ecosystems, environmental issues, food chains, and sustainability.

Chemistry

Atomic Structure and the Periodic Table: Structure of atoms, elements, isotopes, the periodic table.

Bonding, Structure, and Properties of Matter

Quantitative Chemistry: Mole calculations, conservation of mass, and chemical equations.

Chemical Changes: Acids, alkalis, titrations, electrolysis.

Energy Changes in Reactions

Organic Chemistry: Hydrocarbons, alkanes, and alcohols.

Chemical Analysis

The Earth's Resources

Physics

Energy: Energy stores and transfers, efficiency, renewable and non-renewable energy.

Electricity

Particle Model of Matter: States of matter, density, changes of state.

Atomic Structure: The structure of atoms, nuclear reactions, radiation, half-life.

Forces: Speed, velocity, acceleration, Newton's laws, forces and motion.

Waves: Sound, light, electromagnetic waves, wave properties.
Magnetism and Electromagnetism
Space Physics

How will students be assessed?

There are six papers: two biology, two chemistry and two physics. Each of the papers will assess knowledge and understanding from distinct topic areas.

Written Exams: 1 hour 45 mins each worth 16.7% of the total grade

Questions: Multiple choice, structured, closed short answer, and open response.

What careers or jobs could this course lead to?

Possible Careers This Course Could Lead To:

Health and Medicine: Doctor, Nurse, Paramedic Physiotherapist, Pharmacist, Radiographer, Laboratory Technician, Biomedical Scientist.

Environment and Biology: Ecologist, Marine Biologist, Environmental Scientist, Veterinary Nurse, Zoologist, Agricultural Scientist.

Engineering and Physics: Mechanical, Electrical, or Civil Engineer, Aerospace Technician, Nuclear Physicist, Architect.

Chemistry and Materials: Chemist, Chemical Engineer, Forensic Scientist, Cosmetic Scientist, Food Technologist.

Technology and Research: Data Analyst, Robotics Technician, Research Assistant, Renewable Energy Consultant, Science Communicator.

Science-related industries—such as healthcare, engineering, and environmental science—contribute hundreds of billions of pounds annually to the UK economy and are among the fastest-growing employment sectors.

What areas of further study could this lead to?

A-Level Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Science, Forensic Science, Health and Social Care, Maths

Level 3: Applied Science, Health and Social Care, Engineering, extended Diploma in Environmental Science

Degrees in: Medicine, Biomedical Sciences, Veterinary Medicine, Engineering, Chemical Engineering.

Additional information:

Students will achieve 3 GCSEs, one in Biology, one in Chemistry and one in Physics

Students can take a Foundation or a Higher Tier GCSE in Science.

To treat others as we wish to be treated:

Values-Based Education

Our curriculum is underpinned by our Values-based education. The fundamental guiding values for Holywell stem from our character as a Church of England school. We ask everyone who joins our community to commit to these values whether you belong to a Christian faith, whether you have another faith or whether you have no faith. What binds us together is a belief in the Holywell values and a determination to be guided by those values in everything we do.

We have 22 Christian values which underpin all that we do at Holywell, with Kindness, Respect and Responsibility our three core values. The full list is: Kindness, Respect, Responsibility, Love, Peace, Courage, Hope, Community (Fellowship), Compassion, Care (Friendship), Equality, Faith, Forgiveness, Grace, Humility, Justice, Joy, Resilience, Self-Esteem (inc. Self-Worth and Self-Regulation), Service, Thankfulness and Tolerance.

'Values-based Education' moves away from a presumption that we simply 'catch and acquire' our values somewhere in our lives. Instead, Values-based education takes a systematic approach to developing a deep understanding of a core set of values. Over the course of an academic year, 11 values are explored in detail each month. We encourage all members of our school community – including parents and staff – to explore the real meaning of each value and to shine a spotlight on each one in turn through our 'Value of the Month'. The Value of the Month is shared with families through the school newsletter and through the Student Organiser. Families are thereby enabled to continue the discussions and reflections outside of the school day.



Research shows that when a school seriously develops the moral and spiritual aspects of the curriculum (that is, those that positively contribute to the inner world of thoughts, feelings and emotions of the teacher and the student), the school community becomes more reflective and harmonious. The effect on individual students, of developing Values Education, is that students take greater personal responsibility for their learning and behaviour. This has certainly been our experience at Holywell and we are proud to be a Values-based School. As a result of this, the Lead Inspector of our most recent Ofsted inspection noted:

***"Pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other's differences. They understand that everyone is an individual. They know it is unacceptable to be unkind because someone is different. Bullying is not tolerated, and cases are rare. If it does happen, pupils know they have someone to talk to and are confident it will be dealt with."* (Ofsted, July 2023).**

This was also mirrored by our SIAMS inspector in January 2024: ***"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."***

“Pupils and adults flourish as they are helped to live out the vision through the school’s values”

(SIAMS 2024)



Everyone Feels Safe: Support for Students

Student safety and safeguarding is a primary concern at Holywell. Where students feel safe, happy and cared for, they thrive and learn.

As a 'Protective Behaviours' School' we believe that:

"Everyone has the right to feel safe all the time"

and

"We can talk with someone about anything, even if it is small or awful".

"Pupils feel safe. They know there is always an adult to talk to if they are worried about something. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to stay safe, including from any specific local risks." (Ofsted, July 2023)

Holywell is very proud of its provision for student wellbeing and safeguarding. We have two Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) and an assistant DSL. We provide support both for individual students as well as families.



Staff are courageous advocates for ensuring students are safe and will go 'the extra mile' to support families:

"Staff are vigilant in identifying and swiftly reporting pupils who may be at risk. Leaders respond quickly. They are tenacious when working with external agencies to get the support that pupils and their families need." (Ofsted, July 2023)



Year Teams

All students belong to a year-specific Tutor Group. We have Heads of Year who are supported by senior pastoral leaders. There is a team of tutors who support students on a day-to-day basis. The tutors provide the direct pastoral care for their tutees, they are the main home-school link, they lead students in our regular community time discussions and focuses, and they deal with rewards and sanctions.

In general, the Form tutor will, where possible, remain with the tutor group throughout their time at Holywell.

The celebration of student achievement is centrally delivered through the House system. House Points are awarded for good work and effort. All students are placed in a House on entry into the School. The Houses are named after the four patron saints of the British Isles:

- St Andrew
- St David
- St George
- St Patrick

Each House has its own colour which is incorporated in the School badge. When a student has a sister or brother already in the School s/he is normally placed in the same house. Requests can also be made by parents who are ex-students. Parents who are ex-students of Holywell, who would like their child to be in the same house, should make this known when returning the Student Information Sheet, which will be distributed to parents as part of the Welcome Pack at the beginning of the summer term.



Wellbeing and Personal Development

“Wellbeing is understood as a key indicator of ‘fullness of life’. Personal development lessons and tutor time sessions emphasise that everyone should have someone they trust to talk to. An off-timetable day on wellbeing offered useful strategies for pupils to develop resilience in and out of school. A wellbeing committee for staff makes practical suggestions on how to aspire to be the best one can be within sensible boundaries. The staff are positive and resilient.”

(SIAMS 2024)

Special Educational Needs (SEND)

Holywell School provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all students. When planning, teachers set suitable learning challenges and respond to students' diverse learning needs. Some students have barriers to learning that mean that they have special educational needs or disabilities and require particular and additional support from the school.

Our SEND Team consists of our SEND Co-ordinator, an Assistant SEND Co-ordinator and an experienced team of teaching assistants. We have a graduated approach to providing help for students with Special Educational Needs, as recommended by the SEND Code of Practice – with interventions at whole-class, small-group and individual level. Students are kept under review for potential inclusion onto the SEND list or in respect of the level of additional support needed. Students with identified SEND will have a plan giving targets for achievement.

The expertise of outside agencies (such as the Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Hearing Impaired Unit, School Nurse, Social, Emotional and Behaviour Support Service) is sought and used to benefit students with SEND. All of our classrooms are accessible to all students, including students with a physical disability or needing a wheelchair.

A copy of our SEND policy is available on the school website or on request from the school office.



Pupil Premium – Supporting Financially-Disadvantaged Students

The school receives additional funding to provide additional support for students identified as pupil premium (mainly those students who have been in receipt of free school meals or who are financially disadvantaged). We commit large amounts of resources to reducing class sizes in English and Maths throughout the school, especially for the less able. We prioritise access to additional intervention/small group tutoring for these students and keep their progress under particularly careful review. We have also used this funding to enable these students to participate in extra-curricular experiences, to provide help with school uniform and to provide before-school care.



“Leaders have the same high aspirations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as they do for everyone else.”

(Ofsted July 2023)

Living Life in all its Fullness:

Being a Church of England School

"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. 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."

Church of England Schools are part of a long history and tradition of the Church providing education for the children of the parish. As a Church of England School, we are required:

- To preserve and develop our religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level
- To serve our community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice
- To encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and to promote Christian values through the experience we offer to all our students.

We serve our local parishes and we are also part of the Diocese of St Albans. Our ethos, practices and policies are driven and grounded in our Christian values and we are committed to providing a distinctively Christian, community-focussed education. This distinctive educational approach is offered to the community as a gift and, whilst we are proud and unapologetic about our Christian ethos, values and vision, we are welcoming of all faiths and people of no faith.

We ask every member of our community to commit to observing our Christian values and, whilst our approach to collective worship and prayer is invitational, we ask everyone to be respectful of our faith practices. We serve the common good and we aim to be a place of hospitality, grace and love, welcoming and serving all.

"Pupils at Holywell School attend a school with values rooted in its Christian ethos. They are welcoming and friendly. They take on responsibilities that make their environment and community richer and more rewarding." (Ofsted, July 2023)

"The Christian vision inspires a notably cohesive and supportive community based on mutual respect and kindness." (SIAMS, January 2024)

Collective Worship

Collective Worship provides an opportunity for us to meet together in community. Our worship is guided and framed by our Christian values and the Church of England liturgical calendar, however, we are open to and inclusive of all faiths. Whilst our worship includes a Christian act of Collective Worship (which enables us to meet the legal requirement of every school to have a daily act of collective worship), we invite students of other faiths and no faith to join us in a moment of quiet, respectful reflection. "There are many opportunities in collective worship for pupils to engage meaningfully with the vision, the Bible and prayer and reflection." (SIAMS, January 2024)

Where students do not have an assembly, collective worship takes place in tutor groups and we use our school prayer.

The School Prayer

Our school prayer was written by our students and is rooted in our Christian-values led teaching and practice.

Heavenly Father

Thank you for our school.

Fill our classrooms with learning and love,

Fill our hearts with kindness and care.

Lord Jesus

Help us to find peace when we are angry,

Compassion to forgive when we are wronged

And courage to try again when we fail.

Holy Spirit

Guide us in our darkest moments

And lead us towards your Light.

Amen.

“Pupils thrive in religious education (RE) due to its balanced and engaging curriculum and its carefully crafted assessment practice.”

(SIAMS, January 2024)

RE Lessons

RE lessons are a key part of our curriculum provision. The aims of Religious Education in Church schools are:

- To enable students to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that shapes British culture and heritage
- To enable students to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world enabling pupils to express ideas and insights
- To contribute to the development of students' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and world views.

The Scheme of Learning has been written in line with the local SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) which has representative from all faith groups to ensure that the curriculum is both age and faith appropriate. Topics taught are broadly similar to those taught in all schools, irrespective of their religious affiliation. In each year, students cover three units of work: a Christian-based unit of work; a study of a world religion; a thematic unit of work exploring key concepts across a range of faiths. Our curriculum not only prepares students with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed at GCSE, it also gives them the life skills to understand, respect and value one another, irrespective of race, creed or religion.



To be the best we can possibly be:

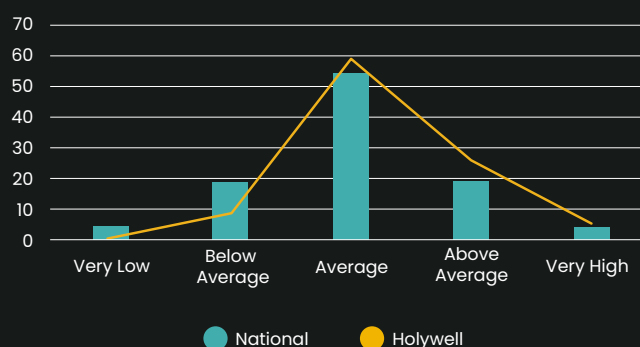
Outcomes – *How well do we do?*

KS3 Outcomes

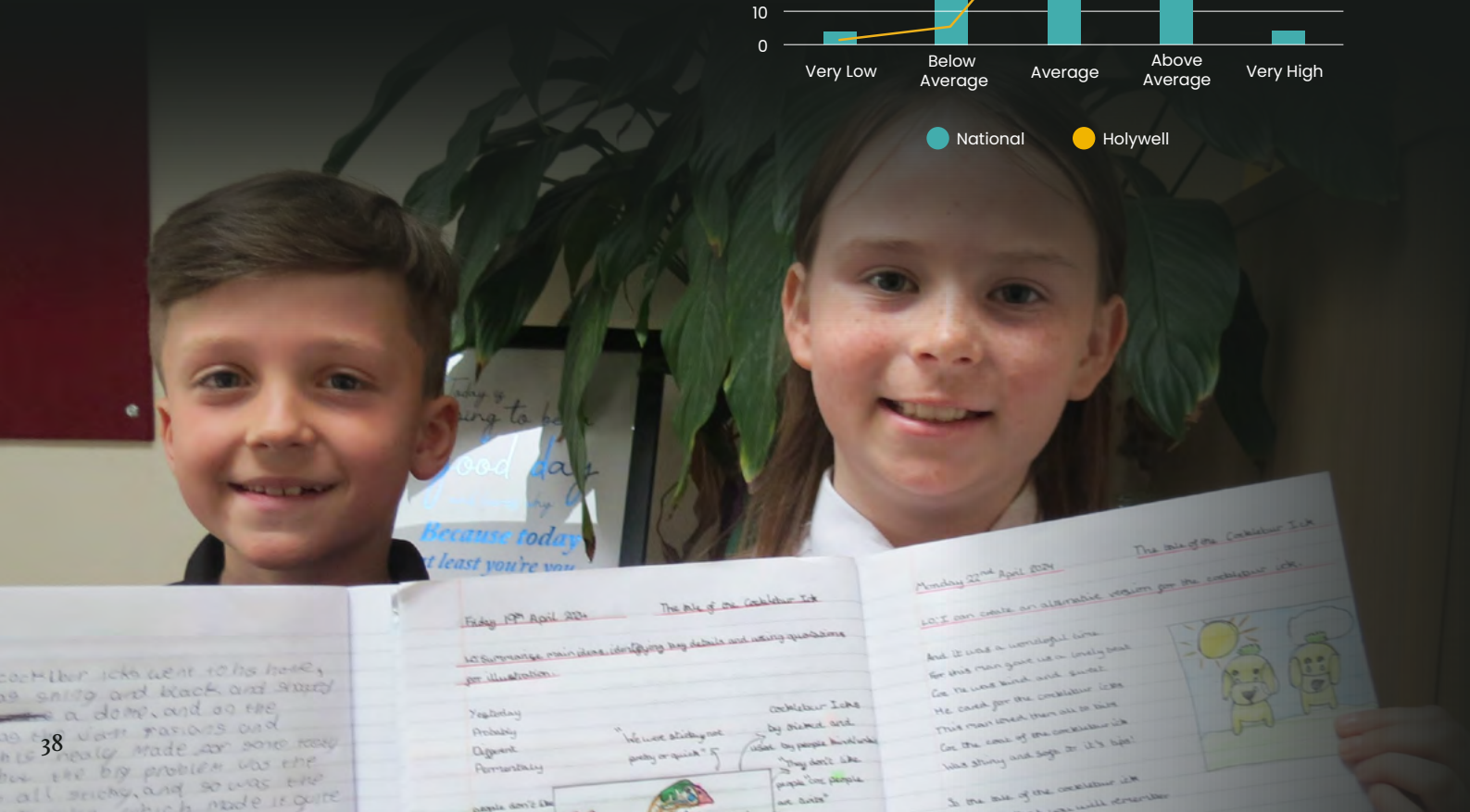
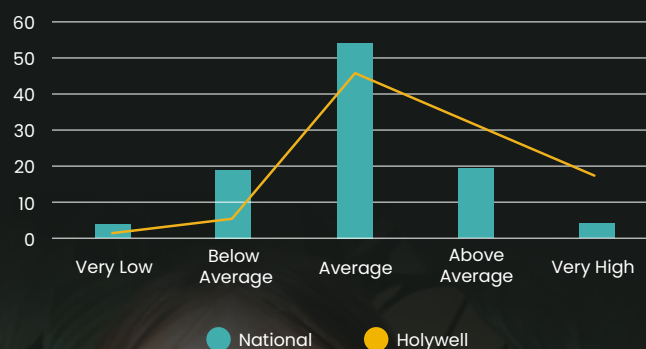
Our KS3 students take nationally benchmarked tests for English and Maths (GL Assessments). We continued to use these assessments throughout the pandemic so that we could track the progress of our students. In spite of the challenges of the last few years, results demonstrate that students have continued to perform in excess of the national averages – which has been typical of our KS3 outcomes over the last few years.



English Attainment 2025



Maths Attainment 2025



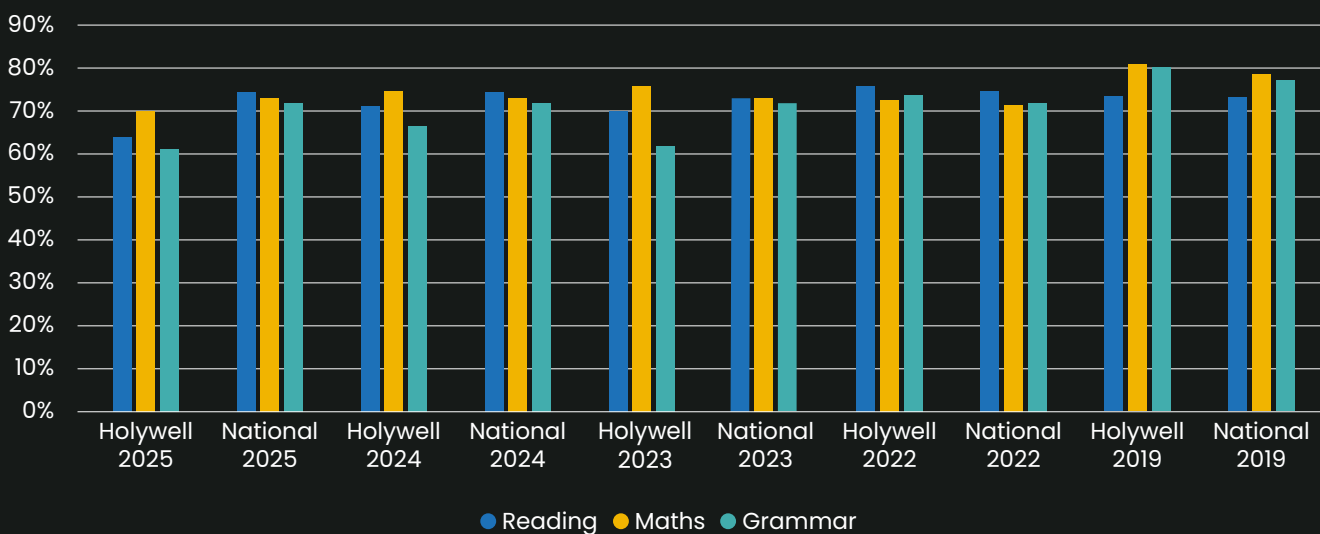
KS2 Outcomes

This graph shows our KS2 results from 2019 to 2025 (NB. There were no SATS in 2020 or 2021).

Outcomes at KS2 have been historically above the national average. We are ambitious for all of our students and build on the work done in their Lower Schools. We have robust plans to further improve outcomes at KS2 – especially in terms of residual historic gaps in learning from Covid-19 times.



KS2 Results



Sport

There is a wide range of Inter-House sporting activities – Netball, Hockey, Soccer, Rugby and Cross-Country run in the Autumn and Winter; Athletics, Rounders and Cricket during the Summer Term and trophies are awarded for these competitions.



House Points

House Points are used to recognise good behaviour, effort and service. Students collect House Points which contribute to the whole House Point total each half term as well as a recognition of personal achievement and effort. There are special House Point Awards for demonstrating the school values, service awards for contributions to school life and Senior Leadership Awards for exceptional work.



Partnership and Communication with Parents

An essential aspect of support for our students is the partnership we have with our parents. If we are to be successful as a school community, we, and our students, need the support of parents. It is essential that students, staff and parents know what is expected of them and work together to secure outstanding outcomes – in terms of learning and behaviour. Our Home-school partnership agreements – written as a series of commitments – describe the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the learning process.

The School Commitment

→ Values:

- We will 'live life in all its fullness'; We will live our values and we will be the best we can be in community. We will also encourage everyone in our community to live 'life in all its fullness'.
- We will value and respect everyone as an individual.
- We will treat all members of our community with dignity and build relationships rooted in mutual respect.
- We will treat others as we would like to be treated.
- We will be kind to one another in word and deed.
- We will keep each other safe: "Everyone has the right to feel safe at all times".
- We will support all members of the community to enjoy, achieve, excel and care.
- We will be inclusive: we will respect our differences and celebrate our diversity
- We will be respectful and polite.
- We will be proud of our school and we will do everything we can to uphold the school's high standards of behaviour and conduct, promoting a positive school ethos and image both in school and in the community.
- We will be caring.

→ Learning:

- We will do everything possible to ensure all students keep the focus on learning and to enable them to be the best they can be.
- We will provide inspiring, challenging learning experiences.
- We will challenge barriers to learning in all forms.
- We will promote a growth mindset.

→ Communication:

- We will be clear about our values, vision and expectations.
- We will acknowledge and celebrate achievements and effort.
- We will deal with issues communicated to us effectively, efficiently and expediently.
- We can (and will) talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small.
- We will use social media responsibly and will not post content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff, students or parents.
- We will communicate any concerns related to behaviour and attendance and support students and parents to address any underlying issues.



The Home Commitment

→ Values:

- I/ We will encourage my child to 'live life in all its fullness': living the school values and being the best we can be in community.
- I/ We will model, promote and support the development of the school values.
- I/We will not abuse members of staff and will treat all members of the school community as I/we wish to be treated.
- I/ We will treat all members of the school community with dignity and build relationships rooted in mutual respect.
- I/We will be kind in word and deed.
- I/We will keep members of the school community safe: "Everyone has the right to feel safe at all times".
- I/We will be inclusive: I/we will respect our differences and celebrate our diversity.
- I/We will be respectful and polite.
- I/We will be proud to be a member/members of the school community and I/we will do everything we can to uphold the school's high standards of behaviour and conduct, promoting a positive school ethos and image both in school and in the community.
- I/We will be caring.
- I/We will support my child to enjoy, achieve, excel and care.

→ Learning:

- I/We will work in collaboration and partnership with the school to ensure that my child can be the best they can possibly be.
- I/We will support my child to keep the focus on learning.
- I/We will take an active interest in the development of my child.
- I/We will read, explore and learn with my child.
- I/We will promote a growth mindset.

→ Communication:

- I/We will communicate effectively, efficiently and regularly using official school procedures: We can (and will) talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small.
- Where I/we have concerns or issues, I/we will communicate these as soon as possible using the school referral system – the first point of contact is the form tutor or class teacher. Where informal concerns have not been resolved, I/we will use the School Complaints Policy and Process.
- I/We will use social media responsibly and will not post content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff, students or parents.

- I/We will let the school know of any other planned absences well in advance (for example, dental or hospital appointments.)
- I/We will take an active part in school consultations, events and parents' evenings.
- I/We will ensure my child attends school regularly, is on time, is correctly dressed and is equipped for work.

The Student Commitment:

→ Values:

- I will 'live life in all its fullness'; I will live our values and be the best I can be in community.
- I will treat others as I wish to be treated.
- I will be kind to others in word and deed.
- I will keep myself and others safe at all times: "Everyone has the right to feel safe at all times".
- I will be inclusive: I will respect people's differences and celebrate other people's diversity.
- I will support all members of the community to enjoy, achieve, excel and care.
- I will be proud of our school and I will do everything I can to uphold the school's high standards of behaviour and conduct, promoting a positive school ethos and image both in school and in the community.
- I will look after the school environment and will move around school in a sensible, calm and polite manner.
- I will be caring.

→ Learning:

- I will keep the focus on learning and behave well.
- I will be ready to learn: have the correct equipment; be correctly dressed; and have a learning attitude.
- I will have a growth mindset.
- I will do my best at all times in the classroom in word and deed.
- I will attend school regularly, be on time and be punctual.

→ Communication:

- I will be respectful and polite.
- I can (and will) talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small. I will use social media responsibly and will not post content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff, students or parents.
- I will ask for help when I need it.
- I will follow adult instructions.
- I will accept responsibility for my own conduct.

Communication:

We can talk with someone about anything, even if it is small or awful.

Communication is an essential part of our partnership with parents and families. We encourage parents/carers to contact a member of the school team immediately if there is anything we may need to know – positive or negative – from out-of-school successes to family issues, from small niggles to major concerns. The first point of reference will be the form tutor or the Head of Year. However, if you are unsure as to who might be able to help, please contact our Office Staff as they are very adept at making sure your enquiry/concern is dealt with appropriately. We communicate with parents in a range of formal and informal ways:

- Letters
- Phone calls
- Face-to-Face meetings
- Text alerts
- Messages on the school website (www.holywellschool.co.uk)
- Newsletters
- Messages on our social media platforms
- Parent consultation evenings
- Subject specific / Year group specific meetings

The half-termly editions of Holywell News keep parents up-to-date with what happens in school; activities, term dates, invitations to events, Parents' Meetings etc. Newsletters are posted on the school website in the last week of each half-term as well as sent home via our online communications platform – 'Reach more parents by WEDUC'.

WEDUC can be downloaded as an app and messages are sent as both emails and notifications. There are regular update letters and we have a social media presence on Facebook (Holywell School Bedfordshire) and 'X' (@HolywellCoE).

Parent/Teacher Consultation Evenings and Reports

Through the year there are a range of important reporting moments to parents, running far ahead of the government requirement to provide a single annual report. We have three main updates on attainment and progress for each year group:

- Tutor Evening: this is a short meeting during the Autumn Term with your child's tutor to give an update as to how they have settled into school. The Year 5 Tutor Evening is at the end of the first half term.
- Subject Teacher Evening: this is an opportunity to meet with some of the subject teachers.
- Full Report: this is a full written report on what students have achieved and what they need to do to make further progress.



Essentials: the School Day

The School Day

8:55 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 10:00	Lesson 1
10:00 – 10:55	Lesson 2
10:55 – 11:15	Morning Break
11:15 – 12:10	Lesson 3
12:10 – 1:05	Lesson 4
1:05 – 2:05	Lunch
2:05 – 2:35	Registration, Worship and Community Time
2.35 – 3:35	Lesson 5
3:35 – 3:40	End of school day

Getting to and from School

On Foot

A zebra crossing is sited near the Cross Keys Pub. Students who have to cross the High Street should cross at this point. All students should respect residents' property on their way to school.

By Bicycle or Scooter

We have a secure bicycle and scooter park at the front of school. Students making use of this facility will be expected to follow the guidelines provided for safe cycling to and from school.

By Bus

Students for whom Holywell is their nearest local school will be provided with transport on one of the school buses contracted by Central Bedfordshire. Details of timing, picking up places and bus passes are issued by the Local Authority.

There are also several commercial routes which are available to students from Wootton, Marston, Kempston, Elstow and Wilstead. Students not eligible for school transport and travelling to and from these destinations will have to pay for their journey.

As a school, we see the school buses as an extension of school. We expect the same high standard of behaviour and safety on the bus as we do in school. Specific concerns or enquiries about the service and incidents at the bus stops and on the buses should be made to the operator concerned and to School Transport.

By Car

For the safety of our students, parents who drive their children to school are asked not to bring their cars on to the School site at the beginning or end of the school day. We have very limited car parking which is taken up fully by staff cars and school buses.

Red Lion Close and the High Street near the School also get very congested at the beginning and end of the day, so please be considerate to our neighbours and to other road users. Walking, scooting or cycling to school is always preferable!



Essentials: Uniform

Parents and staff are rightly proud of the high standards of dress achieved by the students at Holywell. All students are required to wear uniform.

Uniform

Blazer	Black
House Badge*	For blazer
Trousers / Tailored Short Trousers	Plain grey, not cords or denims
Skirt	Plain grey, pleated, below the knee
Jumper/Cardigan	Plain grey, 'V' necked
Shirt	White
School Tie*	Black and gold clip-on
White polo shirt	Summer term only
Socks	White, grey or black (No trainer socks)
Tights	Black soled shoes; no boots, trainers or heels higher than 4cm
Shoes	Any plain style
Coat	Any plain style

Sports

Rugby Shirt*	Black/Gold reversible*
Shorts	Black
Skirt	Black
Sports shirt*	With school logo*
Socks	Knee length black* and short white
Trainers	NB. not basketball boots
Football boots	
Track Suit	Optional – black
Shin Pads	Optional
Towel	

Items marked with * are available from school

Hairstyles

It should be noted that the school does not accept extreme haircuts or colours. Patterns and track-lines should not be cut into hair. Hair should not be cut shorter than a no 2. If you are in any doubt about the validity of a hairstyle, please contact the school before getting the hair-cut.

Jewellery and Make-up

To avoid any dangers or loss or accident to the wearer or other student, expensive items must not be worn. No necklaces or bracelets are permitted unless they are part of your religious faith. One plain ring is allowed. Earrings – plain studs, only one in each earlobe, these must be removed for PE/ Games lessons. Make-up is not allowed.

Mobile Phones

We operate a non-smart phone policy at school. Students are allowed to bring non-smart phones into school and these must be switched off and not used on site at all times. They are purely there for emergency use before and after school. The phones are the responsibility of the student – school takes no responsibility for loss or damage to mobile phones. Unauthorised and inappropriate use of mobile phones will result in the phones being confiscated and kept safe until collected by a parent. The full mobile phone policy is available on the school website or on request.



Facilities at Holywell

Holywell has excellent facilities together with a highly experienced and motivated staff, combining to give students the best possible education.

Specialist Facilities Include:

- Science Laboratories and a new 'multi-use' Science-Technology-Engineering-Art-Maths (STEAM) room
- two Technology Rooms – one equipped for resistant materials and the other for textiles and food
- two ICT suites, laptops, tablet computers and iPads
- Sports Hall (opened December 2018), Gymnasium and a flood-lit all-weather Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)
- Large sports fields
- Music Room and suite of 5 practice rooms for instrumental lessons and break-out work
- Well-equipped Library
- Well-equipped classrooms

As part of our transition to secondary, our facilities will be further developed with the addition of:

- A new teaching block to accommodate new Science laboratories, additional Computer facilities and more general classrooms
- A multi-purpose hall for PE with bleacher seating for collective worship and school performances
- A drama studio
- A SEND area
- Examination administration space
- Remodelled technology and food rooms
- Extended kitchen facilities



Testimonials of Holywell School:

Parental Feedback

"We just wanted to send you a quick email to thank you for your time and support over the last four years. Our daughter and the rest of the Year 8s have had quite an unusual journey. This year especially we have really seen her grow not only academically but also in character and confidence. She has loved her time at Holywell, and we feel very lucky that she has had the opportunity to thrive as much as she has."

(Year 8 parents)

"I just felt I needed to email to say as a parent how impressed and appreciative I am to the support that [my daughter] has received over this past academic year.

She came to Holywell, like many children, nervous but with her own personal challenges and myself and my husband were worried as to how she would cope but, with the support she has received from teachers, she has done so well and we are so proud of her.

... a couple of your staff have gone above and beyond they have given her lots of support and their time and have just listened to her – to the point that she is happy to go to them with her worries, which is a massive step for her. They have even taken the time to answer my emails with, at times endless questions and concerns, and upon answering, they have never made me feel like I'm wasting their time.

I think too often teachers can be criticised however I have nothing but praise for the teachers that she has had this year. Keep going: you guys are doing amazing, making a difference; your hard work is paying off and you are inspiring our children and helping them become the best they can be."

(Year 5 parent)

"Really pleased how much the teachers care."

(Year 5 parent)

"I cannot thank you enough for all you and your team do. Our experience of Holywell has been so very special. The love, care, teaching, encouragement and generosity of compassion our children have been blessed with has meant the world to us. So, a huge thank you! Keep doing what you are doing because you are doing an amazing job!!! And you are making an eternal difference!"

(Year 8 parents)

**Student Council
students were asked
to describe Holywell to
someone who had never
been to our school – this
is what they said:**

Challenging
opportunities
Proud
School
Bringing
good
education
St David
welcoming
caring
good teachers
like a lion
Fierce
St George
St Andrew
Community
Spirit
Christian
led
Prefects
Nice School
Sage

Student Feedback

"Holywell is friendly and full of people (children and adults) who make your day amazing. People don't judge you no matter how unique you are. Can't is not an option." (Yr 6 student). "Holywell is a school where everyone feels safe. Everyone is one big, happy family where everyone is willing to help each other out." (Yr 8 student). "Holywell is very welcoming; everyone feels happy when they're here and safe. Anyone can learn just as well as anyone else.

(Yr 8 student)



Ofsted 2023

Pupils at Holywell School attend a school with values rooted in its Christian ethos. They are welcoming and friendly. They take on responsibilities that make their environment and community richer and more rewarding.

Pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other's differences. They understand that everyone is an individual. They know it is unacceptable to be unkind because someone is different. Bullying is not tolerated, and cases are rare. If it does happen pupils know they have someone to talk to and are confident it will be dealt with.

The majority of pupils behave well and have a positive attitude to their learning. They know that their teachers want them to do well. Pupils respond to these aspirations by staying focused and working hard.

Staff feel valued and respected and are proud to work at the school. Leaders have planned the personal social health and economic programme well. Pupils learn how to maintain healthy lifestyles and relationships. The programme helps them

understand different cultures and lifestyle choices. The careers programme embeds aspiration and prepares pupils for the next phase of education.



SIAMS 2024 (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools)

- 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. 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.
- Leaders, inspired by the vision, ensure that the curriculum is relevant and they find ways for all pupils to have the chance to achieve. Staff have high expectations of all pupils. They also offer strategies, support and resources to help those who find learning hard. Enriching activities are a daily feature and broaden pupil horizons.
- The Christian vision inspires a notably cohesive and supportive community based on mutual respect and kindness.

Reflection 2024-2025:

Build a Bridge

Build a bridge

Find a way

To connect

To close the gap

To cross over

Build a bridge

Make a move

Meet at the start

Meet together

Meet the challenge

Build a bridge

Reach out

Build with kindness, respect
and responsibility

Build with care, compassion
and gratitude

Build with the heart

And, when the distance seems
too wide,

Remember, it takes both sides to
build a bridge.

Use the Holywell values

Use the Holywell style

Use the Holywell way

To build a bridge



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HOLYWELL SCHOOL

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL, CRANFIELD