



Holyhead

engage | educate | enable

Prospectus

Holyhead is an 11 – 19 Academy

Welcome to Holyhead

Thank you for your interest in Holyhead School.

We are an 11-19 Academy at the heart of the local community welcoming students from all cultures, backgrounds and abilities into our disciplined learning environment.

Our mission is to engage and educate the young people in our care, enabling them to become valued participants in our global community.

At Holyhead we endeavour to nurture a love of lifelong learning, promote excellence in all areas of work, appearance, courtesy and behaviour and provide access to outstanding educational experiences for all students. Our key goal is to engender learning without limits. It is our belief that there are no barriers to learning that we cannot overcome when working together.

Holyhead prides itself on being at the centre of a vibrant and aspirational community. We strive to cultivate intellectual curiosity through innovative, student-centred learning activities that utilise powerful information technology at every opportunity.

Holyhead's many outstanding features have been recognised by Ofsted in every inspection since 2001 and the school has posted record breaking results at GCSE and A Level in each of the past nine years.

Holyhead is a very popular Academy and our reputation for innovation and academic success continues to grow. I am confident that the coming years will bring even greater achievement. This prospectus will give you a valuable impression of our school and it is my pleasure to introduce it to you.

Martin Bayliss
Principal





“All students follow an interesting and stimulating curriculum that is carefully tailored to meet their individual academic and personal needs. The curriculum is outstanding”

Ofsted

Holyhead aims to fuel student creativity at all times. Our ethos enables young people to feel that they can build something out of nothing; makes them ambitious to achieve and willing and able to marshal resources to meet their needs.

In Years 7 and 8 all students follow the National Curriculum by studying English, Mathematics, Science, Design Technology, Art, French, Drama, History, Geography, Religious Education, Music, ICT, Physical Education and a programme of Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education.

All students begin Key Stage 4 at the beginning of Year 9. This means that towards the end of Year 8 students are placed in one of three Pathways that we suggest they follow as being most appropriate to meet their needs based upon interest, ability and aptitude. All pathways have a large and varied number of GCSE and Vocational courses for the students to study. Most students will take between 8 - 10 GCSEs or their equivalent.

During Year 9 students study aspects of GCSE or equivalent courses. In some subjects they will take modular tests which build scores which make up the final GCSE grade. At the end of Year 9, students further refine their personalised curriculum by selecting their strongest subjects and those which will be most appropriate for their future career aspirations.

In Years 10 and 11 students study for their final GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. Currently, students sit regular tests in most subject areas throughout the two year course. Final examinations are taken in May and June of Year 11.

The Sixth Form offers an inclusive curriculum with a wide variety of both A Level and BTEC courses which meet the needs of Level 2 and 3 learners. There is an additional Sixth Form Prospectus for those students interested in staying at Holyhead or joining us for the first time at 16.



“Students develop a clear sense of right and wrong and a strong respect for others.”

Ofsted

Holyhead expects high standards of behaviour and self-discipline to enable effective teaching and learning to take place. We seek to maintain a caring learning environment by promoting self-esteem and mutual respect and ensuring fairness for all. We value and encourage positive relationships with parents and carers. We provide a safe haven in which each individual feels valued and can make progress. Disruptive behaviour, bullying and any form of harassment are not tolerated.

In order to uphold these principles, a range of awards and sanctions are clearly defined in our Behaviour Management Policy. We believe that an ethos of encouragement and praise is central to the promotion of good behaviour and academic achievement.

Awards encourage students to recognise that good behaviour is expected and valued. Sanctions are employed to deal with inappropriate behaviour in such a way that students understand why the sanction is being applied. Heads of College, Tutors and Student Support and Welfare Officers help students to develop strategies to manage their behaviour and avoid future sanctions.

Students are expected to treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect; they are encouraged to take pride in themselves and their work and make the most of their time at school. Ensuring these high standards are maintained is one of the keys to our success.





“The school provides an extremely caring and supportive environment where students can flourish as individuals”

Ofsted

To support our determination to promote good behaviour and achievement we rely on our College System and Vertical Tutoring programme. All students and staff are members of one of four Colleges - Edgware, Meriden, Oswestry and Corwen. In addition, our Tutor Groups consist of students from every year group.

The benefits of this system include:

- having smaller tutor groups
- the opportunity for older students to support younger students and so develop a greater maturity and sense of responsibility
- more meaningful academic tracking and target setting
- regular, detailed learning conversations with tutors
- more flexibility in allocating students to groups
- more effective use of tutor time to promote learning

Underpinning all of the above is the development of closer links with parents/carers ensuring that together we can support each child's development both academically, socially and emotionally.



“The school has a well-deserved high reputation in the community”

Ofsted

We firmly believe that regular meetings with the families of our students are crucial to our providing a rounded educational experience for the young people in our care.

Reports on progress are provided at regular intervals throughout a student's school career, via the Academic Profile, by telephone and through praise cards posted home. Academic Profiles are sent home to parents and carers three times each year for Years 7, 8 and 9 with Years 10 and 11 receiving seven Academic Profiles across Key Stage 4. Tutors will contact parents/carers following each Academic Profile and a Face to Face meeting will be held at least once every year. The Learning Conversations that take place at this time are further supported by subject Parents' Evenings in Years 10 and 11. Year 12 and 13 students receive six profiles over their two year course and these are supported by termly meetings with parents/carers. Parents/carers are provided with online access to their child's Academic Profile which charts their progress upon their entry into school until the time they leave. One of the keys to our success is our partnership working with parents and carers and everyone involved with the school is encouraged to contact us immediately should the need arise.





“The school provides a safe and secure environment for its students and has the full confidence of parents”

Ofsted

At Holyhead we understand that moving to secondary school is a big step. Holyhead’s Transition Programme is designed to ensure that all new Holyhead students experience the school environment and forge relationships with as many Holyhead teachers and students as possible, prior to starting in Year 7.

We have long - established links with our partner primary schools and embrace every opportunity to work with future students and answer their questions about life at Holyhead. An increasing number of Departments are working with many of our local primary schools with the aim of preparing children for a new Key Stage and enhancing their experience of Holyhead.

We value every child’s education, and we hope that by helping to lay the foundations for success through our transition work we will create a partnership that will support each child’s academic future and personal well being.



“Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplary”

Ofsted

Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education plays an important part of the student experience at Holyhead. Our programme aims to help children and young people build their personal identities; confidence and self-esteem; make appropriate career choices and understand what influences their decision making. It enables students to recognise, accept and shape their identities; to understand and accommodate difference and change and to manage emotions and to communicate constructively in a variety of settings. Our PSHCE programme supports Holyhead's Assembly and Tutor Time and regularly links with outside agencies and the local community to enhance learning.

In PSHCE at Key Stage 3 all students have discrete lessons and investigate a variety of issues including Diversity, Healthy Lifestyles, Careers, Drug Awareness and Citizenship. Students are assessed at the end of each topic using the National Curriculum Levels and the programme prepares students for a more advanced and accredited programme at Key Stage 4. In Years 10 and 11 all students develop important life skills via the accredited “Preparation for Working Life” programme which also provides essential Information, Advice and Guidance to support future career choices.

Our PSHCE programme also supports students at Sixth Form through courses in Wider Key Skills at Level 3 and the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness. In addition, all students have tutoring and assembly sessions which maintain their involvement with PSHE and Citizenship issues including careers, time management, personal challenges and stress management.





“Students are proud of their school and enjoy the activities it offers”

Ofsted

What do the students say?

“The best thing about Holyhead is good teaching which helps you to learn better and understand a lot. Three words to sum up Holyhead are: helpful, creative and engaging.”

“The thing I like about Holyhead is that more and more students are achieving well each year, getting more A/A grades every year.”*

“Holyhead is a great school because it gives students a great opportunity to express themselves through lessons. You learn a lot when you arrive at school each day and you have fun. There is a lot of support for students from teachers and their own peers.”

“Everyone is friendly and nice, it’s universal and multi cultural, it’s just a happy school, the teachers are here to help anytime we need them and there’s always something interesting for us to do, before, during and after school hours!”



At Holyhead we believe that opportunities to develop skills beyond the classroom are essential in supporting students in their personal development. Holyhead's enrichment programme gives students the opportunity to attend a wide variety of clubs to extend their skills and improve their social or physical development as well as providing access to support for their learning in a number of subjects.

Enrichment activities include:

- Regular Inter-College competitions
- Annual visits to Woodlands Activity Centre
- The Duke Of Edinburgh Award Scheme
- Peripatetic instrumental lessons
- Music links with and trip to the Johann Sebastian Bach School of Music in Vienna
- All-age trips to France and Belgium
- 'The Challenge' programme for Year 11 leavers
- BBC School Report Team
- An annual whole school Drama production
- Music visits to The Conservatoire
- Music projects with the CBSO
- Visits to Aston University and the Science Park
- Day trips to a variety of Universities including Birmingham, Oxford and Cambridge
- Performances by visiting theatre groups, authors and musicians
- Artists in residence working alongside staff and students
- Visits to Safeside activity centre
- Opportunities to engage in activities with national companies such as the BBC, HSBC, Deloitte and Eversheds
- Peer Mentoring Training
- Management and Team Building activities
- Environmental Club
- School Magazine
- Film Club
- Poetry Slam
- A range of extra classes and skills-based workshops at weekends and during the holidays





“The extra-curricular programme is wide and varied enabling students to take part in activities including Sport, Music, Supported Learning and many more”

Ofsted

What do the students say?

“The best thing here is that you always know what’s expected of you so it makes it easier to organise your time so you can meet your targets. That’s really important because it means you don’t worry. Also we have a laugh. We take part in Inter-School Quizzes; Inter-College Football; Sports Day; Young People’s Parliament, Birmingham Young Chamber and we are able to say what we think at Student Council Meetings.”

“Some of the great things about Holyhead are: - the students are like a family away from home; teachers are really supportive; there’s a great working atmosphere; you can be yourself without being intimidated; you can enjoy yourself performing at our Showcase; you can be rewarded at Presentation Evening. I don’t want to leave!”

“Holyhead gave me the chance to take part in The Challenge in Year 11 - we spent a week living in Halls at Birmingham University - it was immense !”

“The Student Council is an important voice on school matters and has succeeded in changing many aspects of school life”

Ofsted

Student Voice is very important at Holyhead. All students are encouraged to take on extra responsibilities and to contribute to the development of the school and its ethos. Opportunities include Form or College Captain, member of Student Council, Senior Student and Sixth Form Prefect.

“My experience of this School has been interesting and fantastic because it has given me a new way of thinking about my education.”

“I think Holyhead School is getting better and better everyday.”

“All the students are friendly and were very welcoming when I started in Year Seven. Also, I really feel like I’m making progress in all of my subjects.”

“Holyhead is a great! Teachers and students are hard working and it’s exciting to be in a school with excellent facilities. The atmosphere of this school is fab. You get to make new friends and lessons are fantastic. You’re always learning here. Year Six students come to Holyhead because it’s a brilliant place to be!”





“Students have good opportunities to voice their views which are valued and acted upon by staff. Students are proud to take responsibility as Student Council and form-group representatives and act as Senior Students”

Ofsted

We recognise that many of our Year 11 students are very responsible young adults who can make a difference to the efficient running of Holyhead. A group of these become Senior Students and can be recognised by their distinctive uniform.

After extensive training, including a residential weekend focusing on team work and leadership development, students are expected to act as role models and support the school in many ways, such as providing a student voice at various policy working groups, assisting staff in their weekly duties and at Parent Evenings or at special events such as Presentation Evening. The Head Girl, Head Boy and their deputies become part of the Student Leadership Team that meets fortnightly with the Principal to discuss all aspects of school improvement.

Any student from the year group can apply to be a Senior Student. As a reflection of how important we think this position is, we operate a comprehensive application and selection process to ensure that only those students who prove they understand the demands and responsibilities of the role are appointed.

“A wide range of strategies are used to make lessons interesting, often involving Information and Communication Technology”

Ofsted

Holyhead remains ahead of the game in ICT provision. The school has wireless access throughout and there are over 700 computers in use in 15 suites, providing a student to PC ratio of less than 2:1!

Our Apple iMac Suites provide our Music, Drama and Media Studies departments with state of the art multimedia resources to support students' learning. Interactive whiteboards are now a common feature across all departments. Many lessons involve students constructing their own digital products such as films, podcasts or websites. New hardware to support learning includes 5 sets of Ipads which allow students to take advantage of the very latest 'App' technology.

A broad and varied diet of professional development is available for all staff, enabling our teaching to remain at the cutting edge. Holyhead is involved in a number of educational pilots and this means that outstanding practice within the school will continue to gain national recognition.

Holyhead also organises and hosts a number of CPD opportunities for staff in other Birmingham schools offering local and cost effective training.

Visitors to the school are always welcome. Please do come and see us to find out more about what we do.





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Milestone Lane, Holyhead Road,
Handsworth, Birmingham B21 0HN

T: 0121 523 1960

F: 0121 523 1969

E: enquiry@holyheadschool.com

www.holyheadschool.com

Registered in England.

Company Registration Number: 07698296

