



I hope this update finds everyone well.

The main event in school this week has been the completion of (almost!) all of the GCSE and A level examinations. There are one or two examinations next week but for the vast majority of the students, the examinations that we have all been working towards for the past two years are now over. Speaking as a parent of a daughter who is in Year 11, I know all too well the pressures and challenges that students have faced over the past two years and just want to say a huge well done to all our Year 11 and Year 13 students who have risen above all the challenges they have faced and tried their hardest in these examinations. They can now all look forward to a happy and enjoyable summer and I hope their efforts are well rewarded in August when they collect their results.

Our Year 11s who have chosen to return for 6th form will be welcomed back to us in the week of Monday 11th July for their 6th Form Induction Days and we will look forward to seeing them (in their new suits!) then.

Year 10 have been completing their end of Year examinations this week and Year 12 have theirs next week. Spare a thought for our fantastic team of exam invigilators, led by Ms Fox, who are responsible for every student sitting the right paper on the right day at the right time in the right place, and then making sure that all the papers are then sent off in the correct manner for marking. This summer they would have handled well over 10000 exam papers – a monumental task – which they have done with their usual skill and care and I am most grateful to them.

With the examinations complete, we now turn our attention to the last 4 weeks of the academic year which are going to be very busy. In the next few weeks we have our Year 7 parents meeting, our Year 6 and Year 12 Induction Days, an evening for Year 5 students to come and see the school, as well as a range of trips and other activities in school. Some of our students will be representing us at Trust-wide student conferences (one on leadership and one on environmental matters), Year 8s will have a 'Thinking Skills' Day, Year 7 will have a community project and, whilst we are not doing a traditional Sports Day this year, many of our younger students will be competing in sports competitions for their Houses. Pre-COVID, we would usually have hosted our 'Founders Day' in July to celebrate and remember the rich history of the school. However with so much uncertainty a few months ago with COVID, and what may or may not have been possible, we decided not to attempt to organise this for this year (It was a real blow to organise our Christmas concert only to have to cancel it because of COVID and we did not want to repeat this with Founders Day). However we are determined to bring this back in summer 2023 and will provide more information on this in the new academic year.

Finally at this time of year we are busy planning for the next academic year. I am pleased to say that we are already fully staffed for next year and are busy making a range of plans to improve the school ready for September. In September, if all goes to plan, we will have a new performance venue in what is currently our school hall, a new drama studio, more student toilets and a vast array of small improvements (new carpets, blinds, furniture etc) which will make the learning environment even better next year. I will be pleased to update you on this in September.

Key Dates 2022 -

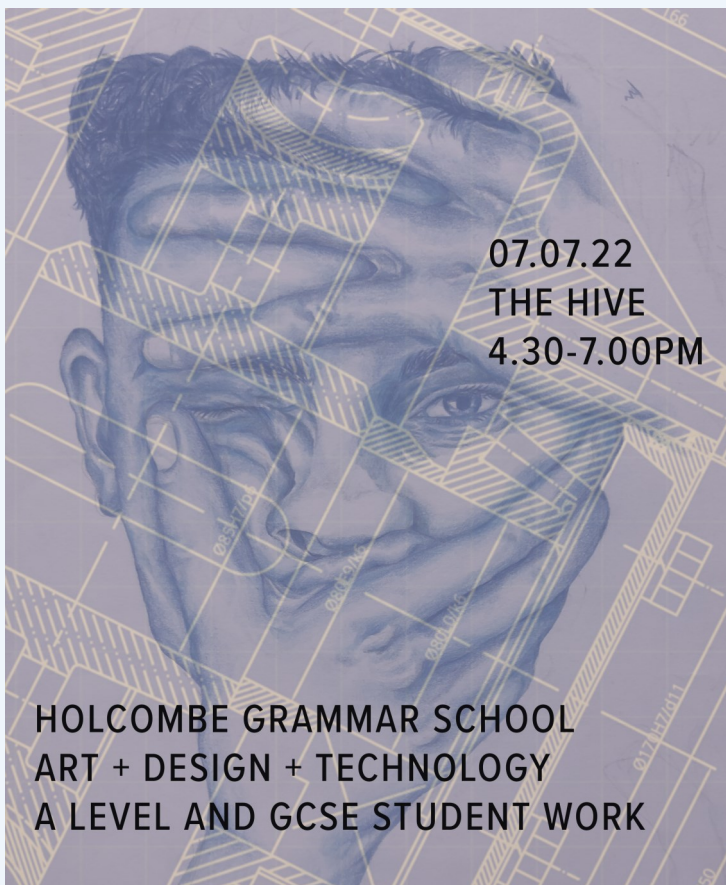
- Week Commencing 27th June - Year 12 Prelims
- Week Commencing 27th June - Year 11/13 Exams Finish
- Thursday 30th June - Year 7 Parents Evening
- Week Commencing 11th July - Year 12 Work Experience
- Thursday 21st July - Last Day of Term 6, School will Finish at 12:30pm (coaches and buses have been notified)
- Tuesday 6th September - First Day Back

As we consider our future plans, we very much want to hear your voice as parents. Earlier this week we emailed out a survey which we would really like as many of you to complete as possible. Here is the [link](#). Approximately 300 parents have already done so, thank you, but if you have not managed to do so up to now, please can you find 10 minutes to do this before the deadline which is Monday 27th June. I assure you every comment will be read and considered as we plan the further development of our school.

I will provide a further update in two weeks.

Mr L. Preston - Principal

Art & Design GCSE and A Level Exhibition



An example of Year 13 work:



Appointments

If you do have to book appointments for your child during school hours, could you please email the school office (office@holcombegrammar.org.uk) along with confirmation of the appointment. Your child will need to sign out at the office before leaving the premises, could you then please call the office to let them know that someone is outside to collect.



Hay fever

As we are entering the summer and hay fever season. Could we please remind you that if your child does suffer from hay fever, they do need to take precautions before they arrive at school. These precautions could include antihistamines and nasal sprays. The office and student services are not authorised to give these medications.



Uniform

All uniform and PE kits must be named, this is to allow Student Services to return any items that have been lost.

Lost Property

Student Services currently have a large amount of lost property. Any items that have been named have been returned to the student. If your child has lost anything please could you ask them to let their form tutor know with a description. Student Services will then be able to arrange for your child to have a look in lost property.

Any lost property that has not been collected before the end of term will be donated to charity.

Water

With the weather getting warmer, please ensure that you send your child to school with a filled water bottle each day.



Thinking at Holcombe

The focus this edition is *the effective use of Knowledge Banks*.

Our students are provided with Knowledge Banks for their subjects, detailing the key information and facts for each subject they study, by term in years 7-9, and sometimes by topic, in years 10-13.

Knowledge Banks are used in many ways to support student learning – applications include:

- They can be a fact sheet to refer to when answering more complicated long-answer questions
- They can be a source of information to turn into revision resources – such as Thinking Maps or flash cards, with students adding more detail, examples and case studies
- They can be used to self-test, peer-quiz or even for parents to question to support memory and recall
- They provide a scaffold in lessons to support students forming answers to cold-calling questions
- Learning all, or part, of the Knowledge Banks may be set as a Home Learning task with the facts tested in retrieval starters or summative assessments

Knowledge Banks are generally aesthetically pleasing, engaging and provide the essential knowledge to be taken on by a student in a given term or course unit. Learning the content alone is not a guarantee for mastery of a subject – but without the knowledge, mastery would not be possible.

Have you looked at the Knowledge Banks your child has for this or previous terms?

Knowledge Banks in action - THE BIG QUIZ

Years 7-10 were tasked with learning twelve Knowledge Banks linked to the topic 'The World Around Us'. Knowledge Banks from History, Geography and Science were shared on teams for students to apply their meta-memory skills and learn the content, practising their revision skills – whilst developing their general knowledge. In the second week of term 6, all four years undertook, simultaneously, The Big Quiz in their morning registration.

The winners from each form, who will be crowned next week, will each receive a prize and will progress to the next round, to identify the top 3 Holcombe memory-masterminds later this term. These Big Quizzers will then represent Holcombe in a trust-wide competition in term one of the next academic year.

Watch this space for more details of the form group winners in the next blog – and then our top three, who will be celebrated later this term.

B4 Bioenergetics – Photosynthesis

Key words	Key diagram – Structure of leaf	Key knowledge
<p>photosynthesis A reaction in plants that uses light energy from the sun to produce glucose.</p> <p>endothermic A reaction that takes in energy from its surroundings</p> <p>stomata Holes in the bottom of the leaf, important for gas exchange and water loss</p> <p>chlorophyll Green pigment inside chloroplasts where photosynthesis takes place</p>	<p>Photosynthesis takes place in the / Chloroplasts – mainly in the palisade cells in the leaf.</p>	<p>Carbon dioxide + Water → Glucose and Oxygen $6\text{CO}_2 + 6\text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6 + 6\text{O}_2$</p> <p>Limiting factors of photosynthesis include: Amount of water, concentration of Carbon dioxide, light intensity, temperature, number of chloroplasts/ amount of chlorophyll.</p> <p>Glucose can be stored as starch or used to make cellulose in plant cell wall. Glucose can also be converted into amino acids to help the plant grow (for protein) or into fats as a long-term energy store.</p>
Required practical – Effect of light intensity on rate of Photosynthesis		Key process – Effect of temperature of rate of Photosynthesis
<p>IV – The distance between the pondweed and the lamp (the closer the lamp, the brighter the light intensity) DV – the number of Oxygen bubbles in one minute Controls – temperature, vol of water, Carbon dioxide levels, type of plant...</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> </div>		<p>A- Enzymes responsible for making glucose etc. have less energy so the rate of reaction is less. B- Enzymes have an optimum temperature that they work at, where the rate of a reaction is fastest. C- If the temperature is too hot, the enzyme's active site will denature.</p>

Above is an example of a Biology Knowledge Bank

Family Action

Family Action is a charity committed to building stronger families and brighter lives. They provide innovative and effective services and support to many of the UK's most vulnerable people, helping individuals and communities address the challenges they face through practical, emotional and financial support.

'Small Steps' is a new service providing support and advice for families whose children are either pre or post diagnosis of Autism and/or ADHD.

For any further advice or questions, you can contact Family Action on 01634 913219 or medwaysmallsteps@family-action.org.uk