

ASPIRE & ACHIEVE TOGETHER





# Welcome

Dear parents, carers and students,



Welcome to the Holcombe Grammar School Prospectus. In the coming pages we hope you will gain a sense of why we believe Holcombe

Grammar School is such a unique learning community.

At Holcombe, our aim is to develop our students into successful, well rounded, confident young people who are equipped with the academic and life skills necessary to thrive in the modern world.

Students at Holcombe are given the academic and intellectual tools to help them structure their thinking and learning effectively thus enabling them to engage successfully in their academic studies. In addition to this we believe in developing our students' understanding of how their brain works and how to deliberately use their brain in the most effective fashion for both academic and personal success.

Every individual at Holcombe is encouraged to achieve their personal best and there is an emphasis on celebrating student progress as well as outright attainment. Whilst many students go on to achieve places at Oxford, Cambridge and other Russell Group universities, we celebrate the achievements of all students. The vast majority of our students go on to respected universities at the end of the Sixth Form; the few who choose not to go to university are supported into apprenticeships at prestigious organisations such as the BBC. We are also proud of our excellent reputation for supporting students with Additional Educational Needs.

We offer a very successful and diverse range of sports using the excellent facilities at Holcombe Park as well as our newly refurbished sports hall and new state of the art gym. Football is outstandingly successful at the school

with our teams regularly winning their leagues and reaching Kent Cup finals.

All of this is delivered in a caring, supportive environment underpinned by the School's house system, which ensures that every student has a sense of community and belonging whilst providing continuity of care for every student.

Ms J Diaz, Principal



# Aspire

At Holcombe we aspire for all our students to achieve their personal best.

Many of our students achieve the very best academic grades and entry to one of the world's top universities.

Our most able students have an excellent track record of achieving outstanding academic grades before going on to some of the country's most prestigious universities with several students each year going on to study at Oxford, Cambridge, Warwick, Leeds, LSE, Bath and other highly respected institutions.

For other students their personal best will mean achieving good and very good grades before entering a top 30 university or an apprenticeship with one of the country's leading companies.

Every student is supported and challenged to make the best of their natural academic talents and leave Holcombe on a pathway to personal success.

*"Teachers routinely plan lessons that are designed to promote reflection and enquiry."*

Ofsted

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# Aspire

*“We have grown hugely in confidence in our time here.”*

Louise

School is a springboard to success.

We at Holcombe are very clear that a student’s time with us is a stepping stone on the way to the next part of their life journey and our role is to ensure that they are properly equipped to be successful in that next step.

Therefore, whilst achieving a student’s academic potential is an important part of our school’s mission we also aspire to develop the whole student so that they are ready not only to get the job of their dreams but also to succeed in it once they begin.

Students are supported and challenged to develop the habits that will help them to be successful in life and we consciously identify and nurture habits of leadership, working interdependently, public speaking, independent thought, organisation and perseverance.

Therefore, students at Holcombe develop all the skills and life tools they require to be successful when they leave school.

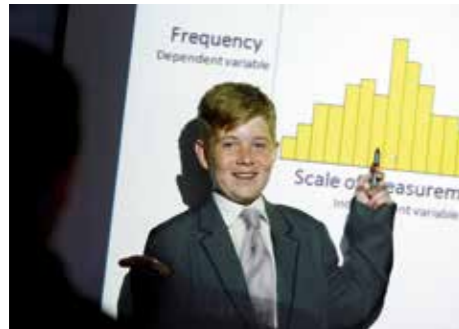
*“I have been able to develop all the skills I need to successfully go on to university and my career in medicine.”*

Jamie

# Achieve

*“The teachers here are great.”*

Samuel



In order to support our students in achieving their aspirations we believe in developing our students' ability to think and learn effectively.

At Holcombe we have adopted the Thinking School's approach to teaching and learning. Research from organisations such as the Sutton Trust has repeatedly demonstrated that students who understand how their brains work and, therefore, use their brain more effectively achieve better academic and personal outcomes than those who do not.

We like to call it the Thinkers' Toolkit. Students are taught a variety of thinking approaches and techniques that they can use to support them in whatever activity they are engaged in. These tools include: Thinking Maps, De Bono's Thinking Hats and Art Costa's Habits of Mind, which we have adapted into the Holcombe Habits.

We are also developing the use of memory tools such as: spaced learning and testing, mnemonics, acrostics and memory bumps such as rhythm and rhyme. This common approach to teaching and learning across a student's lessons also means that the school is developing a common language of learning between subjects, teachers and students.

In this way students always have a thinking or memory tool to use to help them overcome whatever task they need to complete and so makes them much more able to succeed in completing any intellectual challenge they face either at school or later in life.







# Achieve

Whatever the student's talents or abilities the school strives to grow the whole person.

This is why we believe in giving young people responsibilities and opportunities to pursue their passions throughout their time in the school. The outcome of this is the large number of societies and activities the school has, which are often self-starting, student led and grown to meet the needs of the school community at any given time.

These opportunities are rich and diverse, for example, sixth form mentors work with and support younger students; the student library team runs the dedicated fiction library; and each football team takes responsibility for coaching the team in the Year group below. In this way students develop their passions and achieve their personal ambitions, developing the key "soft skills" of leadership, teamwork and independent action that are critical to the long term success of our students.

In addition to these many activities we also nurture, support and encourage every individual's talents. We have international sportsmen in sports as diverse as trampolining and 10 pin bowling, and national club sportsmen with professional contracts from clubs such as London Broncos Rugby League; and we are a feeder to clubs such as Maidstone United for footballers looking to take their first steps into the professional game.

Whatever your ambition, at Holcombe we will support you in achieving your goals.



*“Everyone is friends here.”*

Jordan



# Together

The sense of community at Holcombe is palpable and is almost woven into the very fabric of the building.

It is very important that the community comes together in common activities and events that will live with students forever.

To develop this sense of community every student is able to participate in a core of school trips that form the basis of their shared experiences and sense of belonging, which will be long remembered well after their academic lessons have faded. In Year 7 the students start the year with a camping trip and visit to a theme park, which helps the year group build a sense of community and common experience. In the summer of Year 7 the students undertake a Maritime Project based at Chatham Dockyards. In Year 8 the whole year group goes away for a week's camping and activities. In Year 9 or 10 every student has the opportunity to go on either a History or Geography residential trip to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the topics they are studying.

These core trips are further supported by many other opportunities for students to broaden their horizons, for example the school has unique ties with Japan and has enjoyed the opportunity to participate in a trip to Japan every year for the last decade. In addition, our annual Founders' Day is an event that brings staff, students and parents together to celebrate the whole school community and the year gone by.

At Holcombe we have deliberately created a core of activities and experiences that all students in a year group will share to help them bond as a group and develop lifelong friendships and memories.







# Together

As well as the joint experiences that students have as a year group we are passionate about building a vibrant community where students across the age ranges support each other. We do this through the school's House system.

Each House has students from every year group and each form in a year group represents a specific House. This further develops the identity of the House and the community associated with it. The Houses participate in competitions across the school including – House points earned for academic work; sporting competitions, House quizzes and Charity Day activities.

The House that wins the most House points in the previous term receives additional rewards.

The Houses are run by the students and guided by teaching and support staff. Each child has a Head of Year, supported by a strong and dedicated pastoral team, who will look after their pastoral needs throughout their time at Holcombe. In this way we are able to provide excellent continuity of care and support for each student and there is a single point of contact and support for your child throughout their time in the school.



*“[Students] particularly value the rewards system and the Friday night club.”*

Ofsted



# Rewards

At Holcombe we believe it is essential that students receive regular reward and recognition.

By rewarding students for having done the right thing we reinforce good habits, thereby developing the habits and skills that will make them successful throughout their life.

To reinforce these desired habits and skills we use a comprehensive reward system for students. Every student has a Reward Card. Teachers are encouraged to give students a House point on the student's Reward Card whenever they see the student exhibiting the behaviours we are trying to reinforce. As students accumulate House Points they gain rewards.

Further to these rewards for House Points students also gain prizes every half term in recognition of outstanding performance and outstanding progress or effort in academic subjects made during the previous half term.

In this way student success and demonstration of appropriate work habits are constantly positively reinforced so that the successful behaviours become habit and a part of a student's normal routine.

*“I love this school.”*

Kydan







# Success

The Sixth Form at Holcombe has successfully supported students in their final transition into the “real world” for many years.

Sixth Form students begin their time with us with a “Future Days” programme. This is a dedicated time during which each sixth former considers their goals for when they leave Year 13 and what they need to do during the Sixth Form to achieve their aspirations. This means that from the very outset of their time in the Sixth Form students understand that this is the final preparation for the next step in the life journey and are consciously thinking about what they are trying to achieve at the end of their time in the Sixth Form.

At this point students accelerate the responsibilities they take in the school: the School Captains’ Team takes responsibility for the organisation of such events as Founder’s Day; House prefects

take on the running of their Houses; and academic prefects run the school’s Exceed Programme, which provides student support to students who find a subject challenging.

With the new gym and our three newly refurbished science laboratories, we have been able to further enhance the provision and support for our sixth formers.

The Sixth Form Centre is built around the same model as a university library with a cafe available for students as well as quiet work areas and computer facilities. Thus students experience and develop the work habits necessary to be successful when they move on to university or the world of work.





Holcombe, Maidstone Road, Chatham ME4 6JB

01634 830083

[office@holcombegrammar.org.uk](mailto:office@holcombegrammar.org.uk)

[www.holcombegrammar.org.uk](http://www.holcombegrammar.org.uk)

