



Holmer Green Senior School

Work Hard, Be Kind

Governors' Annual Report to Parents
2019 – 2020

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Message from The Chair of Governors

As Chairman of Governors for Holmer Green Senior School I am very pleased to be able to write this message for the Annual Report to Parents.

I would like to start by thanking everyone involved with the school in the current difficult times. All the pupils who are continuing their studies under unusual circumstances, all their parents who have been helping home school them and encouraging them. All the staff at the school who, along with keeping the school open for pupils still needing to attend, have also been setting work for all their pupils studying at home as well as keeping in contact with them.

As things slowly start to get back to normal, a lot of work has been done by school staff to ensure that pupils, albeit in reduced numbers, are safe within the school building.



I would like to congratulate all the pupils for their hard work throughout the year. The continuing success of the school means that we are oversubscribed when it comes to year 6 students choosing the secondary school that they wish to attend.

This, and the increase in student numbers locally due to new homes being built in the area, led to the school agreeing to an expansion plan to increase the numbers that the school can accommodate. The plans for this expansion have now been approved and work should start in the summer. This is an exciting time for the school and as well as getting a new sports hall and other facilities, the expansion will mean that the school will be able to offer a wider range of subjects especially at A level.

The Governing Body works closely with the Headteacher and his staff to ensure that the academic achievements of the school continue and that pupils continue to get a safe and kind environment to develop themselves during their years with us.

If you have any questions for me or for any other Governor, you can contact us via the school (clerktogovernors@holmer.org.uk)

Tony Green
Chairman of Governors

Message from The Headteacher

What an unusual year we have had!



The year has been one of two halves, pre and post Coronavirus. In the first half of the year we had a wide range of trips that took place and external school reviews to ensure we are continuing to improve. The second half of the year has been very much putting into place home learning, maintaining pastoral support and starting to get back to a degree of normality.

Our students attended a great range of events from Talk the Talk experiences, to National Careers week, to Oracy trade fairs, to Robot Wars, to Young Chef of the Year, to Duke of Edinburgh (43 students achieving Bronze, 18 achieving Silver, 9 achieving Gold), to The Magic Flute at the Royal Opera House, to Girls STEM careers with GE Healthcare and participation in the UK Maths Challenge securing one gold, two silver and ten bronze awards.

The above mixed with a range of trips, both locally nationally and internationally, including, a visit to the Buckinghamshire Book Award, a trip to see Wicked in the West End, a History trip to Berlin and a ski trip to Italy, all contributed to the development of our students. We see Holmer Green Senior School students being on a seven year journey with us up to year 13. By the end of their time here, our students will have great academic progress, but equally as importantly, will have developed their character, self-confidence and sense of direction.

Our school's motto is 'work hard, be kind' and so many of our students have exhibited this through their day in and day out hard work in class, with over 500 students across all year groups being awarded subject pins in recognition of this. Many students have given up their own time to support all the school's events in various guises, from quiz evenings to Parents' Evenings, to Christmas fayre's, and we have had many students supporting other students in the first and primary schools as sports leaders for example. It is these acts of kindness which make being part of Holmer Green Senior School special, whilst also providing key opportunities for personal development.

Our achievements as a school are the result of great teamwork between our students, parents/carers, staff and Governors. This collegiate responsibility and hard work drives Holmer Green Senior School from strength to strength. Our new facilities have proved valuable this year. We continue to look forward to our expansion project as well as the developments in our curriculum as we refine what we do here to get the best out of each of our students.

I look forward to the next academic year and all it brings!

Be Kind,

Ed Hillyard
Headteacher

Sub-Committee Chair Summaries

Learning and Curriculum Committee

There are two main areas of focus for the Learning and Curriculum Committee: ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum is offered at HGSS, and monitoring and evaluating progress and attainment. The curriculum needs to comply with legislation but also meet the needs and interest of students. This year for example has been the first where the number of GCSE options each student takes was reduced by one to allow additional time to improve the PSHCE offer. When the students return to full time school after the lockdown, this subject will prove to be even more impactful.

We examine the latest progress and attainment data at each meeting as part of our role to ensure standards are being raised. Whilst overall results at HGSS have been improving in recent years, we spend some time looking at the results by subject and by sub-groups of pupils to ensure all groups are making progress. Where sub-groups are found to be underachieving or making slower progress we drill down further to identify the reasons for this and monitor what the school are doing to meet the needs of these groups.

Our meetings have continued remotely since lockdown albeit with a different focus to usual. We have examined the rationale and process used for allocating Year 11 and 13 grades, investigated the remote learning offered by the school and looked at plans for closing any learning gaps when the students return to school.

People and Personnel Committee

As everyone has been adjusting to the differing circumstances brought on by Covid-19 the People and Personnel Committee has continued to have regular meetings remotely with a focus on safeguarding, staff and student health and mental well-being, ensuring a robust risk assessment for further opening and planning for the future. In addition we scrutinise whole-school behaviour patterns, both positive and negative as well as attendance and punctuality to support the school in continually improving these areas.

We have reviewed feedback from the annual staff, pupil and parent/carers surveys and working parties have been set up to follow up on the action plans.

We continue to support the school with its plans for staff CPD which have continued through the current circumstances.

We also received reports on staffing which has enabled us to monitor the impact of any staffing difficulties and recruitment on pupil outcomes.

Finance, Health & Safety and Premises Committee

One of the three core functions for School Governors is "overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent." It is largely the Finance Committee which fulfils this role along with overseeing

premises maintenance and expansion, health and safety and risk management. It typically meets 5 times per year.

The school has ambitious plans to continuously improve all major aspects of its performance and thus the outcomes for its pupils. These plans are encapsulated in the strategic 5-year Development Plan and the annual School Improvement Plans. As a consequence of the increased number of pupils in the school, and an improvement in the government funding formula, we have seen an improvement in our projected school grant income for the new school year, and the Governors and school leaders are striving to ensure that these additional funds are expended effectively, both on additional and new facilities and equipment, and in enhanced staffing, especially bearing in mind the hiatus to the school's operations and student well-being and education through the Covid-19 crisis. Meanwhile the school continues to be financially secure, with its expenditure well controlled.

In terms of the Committee's role in overseeing the school's expenditure, the focus this year has been on significantly upgrading our financial systems and reporting, as the school expands, to increase the degree to which the Committee has regular, timely, accurate and meaningful information to enable it to understand and challenge the financial and operational performance, and value for money obtained, to the best of its ability.

Accurate accounting and prevention of fraud is a key area in any Finance Department. As well as challenging the outcomes via our regular detailed review of the management accounts, we commission the auditors to carry out additional systems work in lieu of us having our own internal audit department and also receive reports from the auditors on their statutory systems and accounts reviews. We closely monitor any adverse findings and ensure appropriate improvements are carried out. Whereas this work has been interrupted by the Covid-19 restrictions, we are working on ways to further enhance the process of internal scrutiny carried out under the guidance of this Committee.

We are in the middle of a hugely exciting chapter in the school's history as we expand to 7-form entry and substantially develop the school's site in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council, and also follow independent initiatives. The Finance Committee is closely involved with the monitoring and implementation of these initiatives.

In terms of health and safety and risk management, clearly there have been many new challenges as the school has adapted to the Covid-19 requirements, but due to the unprecedented nature of these changes the Head Teacher has worked in co-ordination with the Full Governing Body, rather than this Committee, in these aspects. A key issue will be not only that the school is managing the phased return to classrooms satisfactorily, but also that it is well-prepared for any subsequent out-breaks.

Parent Association

Our Parents' Association has had a very busy year prior to Lock-down and continues to work hard raising funds for our school and creating events for the community despite being a small, but very merry band! New members are very, very welcome! Last year they supported our Fire Alarm Upgrade which was a large-scale project paid for by funds from a successful bid to the Department for Education. The project cost just under £400,000 and the PTA were able to offer funds of £10,000 which gave our bid a much greater chance of being successful so in this way relatively modest sums of money have allowed the school to access a large pot of funding so your continued support is absolutely vital to the school. The Parents' Association are now raising funds to enhance the facilities to be offered as part of the Expansion Plan.

In terms of events the PTA ran a very successful annual Quiz Night in October and their main fund-raiser of the school year was the Christmas Fayre. If you couldn't make it this year, please come along next year as there are already lots of exciting events planned.

Unfortunately, all events planned from March through to the end of the Summer Term have had to be cancelled due to Lock-down, but as soon as we are able, we will be arranging exciting events for parents and students alike. Lucky Numbers has continued throughout so thank you to everyone who has supported this initiative for the full year. If you would like to join the PTA, or find out more about them then please contact claregrimm@gmail

School Life 2019-2020 Calendar of Events

There were a significant number of school trips and events during the academic year. The Governors would like to thank all those staff who gave up their time in support of our students.

September 2019		
	Year 9	Talk the Talk
	Year 7 Parents	Meet the Headteacher and PA
	Year 7	Experience and Team Building Day
	Year 7	Meet and Greet Disco
	Charity	Jeans for Genes MUFTI Day
	Year 9	Oracy Project – Trade Fair
	English	6th Form Cinema trip
October 2019		
	Business	National Enterprise Challenge Day
	Geography	Year 11 Field Trip - Olympic Park
	Duke of Edinburgh	Bronze and Silver Awards Evening
	Year 7 and 8	Cinema Trip – Billionaire Boy
	Year 9	County Lines Drama Production
	Year 7 and 8	Cinema Trip – Midsummer Night’s Dream
	Art	Art & Design Day
	History	Residential trip to Berlin
November 2019		
	Food Technology	Rotary Club Young Chef Competition
	Design Technology	DT Challenge Trip
	Year 13	Poetry Walk
	Music	Year 12 Trip to Royal Opera House
	Music	Year 12 Trip to Royal Albert Hall
	Year 12	Safe Drive Stay Alive
	Drama	Year 9-11 Woman in Black Theatre Trip
	Whole School	Christmas Fayre
December 2019		
	Science	Girls GET SET
	Music	Christmas Concert
	Business	Year 12 National Skills Challenge
	Music	Christmas Carol Singing (for Rob's ARTT)
	Business	KS4 Enterprise Trading
	PSHCE	OAPsTea Party
January 2020		
	Food Technology	Year 13 visit to Care Home
	Textiles	Year 12 Fashion & Textiles Trip
	Food Technology	Rotary Club Young Chef Finals
	Music	Theatre Trip to Wicked
February 2012		

	Maths	UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge
	English	Buckinghamshire Book Awards - Piper's Corner
	Whole School	Ski Trip to Saalbach, Austria
	English	Year 8/9 Trip to Globe Theatre - Macbeth
March 2020		
	Year 12	Trip to Somerville College, Oxford Uni
	Product Design	Year 13 3D Modelling at Bucks Uni
	PE	GCSE Rock Climbing - Amersham
	Science	Girls GET SET
	All students	Film Night
THE MANY EVENTS PLANNED FROM 23 MARCH 2020 WERE CANCELLED OR POSTPONED DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC		

Enrichment Activities and Trips

Robot Wars Competition

At the end of the summer term 5 students competed at Robot Wars at Sir William Borlase's School. All the pupils, had entered the previous year, so they had repaired and improved their robots to enable them to re-enter this year.



The competition has grown again this year and 17 robots were competing. Each knock out round had 3 – 4 robots in. Every match was incredibly exciting and quite nerve-racking to watch, especially when robots drove dangerously close to the open pit. Robots had to be rapidly repaired after each fight ready for the next round. Both our school teams did well, unfortunately 'Illuminous Hog' got caught up in the side of the arena in his second fight and 'Brian' was knocked out at the quarter finals.

To build a robot that meets the requirements of the competition was an achievement in itself. All participants should be incredibly proud. The builder of Storm 2, the current Robot Wars world champion and the company that sponsors this competition are going to supply us with kits and training to build robots this year. So we will be building bigger and better robots to enter again next summer.

Interview with an author



The Testaments by Margaret Atwood

We were thrilled to get tickets to a screening of Margaret Atwood talking about her new novel 'The Testaments' and sequel to 'The Handmaid's Tale'. We took a group of English Literature A-Level students to watch the interview with Margaret Atwood.

The live screening also included readings from the novel by Ann Dowd, who plays Aunt Lydia in the television series and Lily James. The students were absolutely inspired by Atwood and learnt an incredible amount about the context of both novels to inform their study of 'The Handmaid's Tale' this term.

Sixth Form Enrichment Activities



A good start!

This term we kicked off Enrichment activities in the Sixth Form with Y12 immersing themselves in important Study Skills training, and Y13 participating in an Elite Army skills session. A team of Army soldiers came in to put our Y13s through a series of challenging group tasks both mental and physical, all designed to champion skills in Leadership, Communication and Team Building. Throughout the year we will continue to offer extra-curricular

sessions designed to help prepare them for life after school and equip them with the skills they need as they approach the world of work and further education.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

A Midsummer Night's Dream is one Shakespeare's classic comedies, and one that HGSS students study near the end of Year 7. So, on 17 October, nearly 50 Year 8 and 7 students attended the cinema to view a live broadcast of the National Theatre performing the play. With popcorn in hand, students watched a dazzling live theatre production.

In a twist on the regular play, instead of the fairy king Oberon uses a love potion to make Titania fall in love with a man with a donkey's head, it is instead Titania that tricks Oberon. Her trusty sidekick, Puck, was a crazed, energetic acrobat swinging on silks throughout the performance, making the students giggle with his antics. Gwendolyn Christie was magnificent as the fairy Queen, swinging above the stage as she played with the mortals below. Above all, students loved Bottom, the hapless actor who grows a pair of donkey ears and is pursued by the love-struck Oberon.



With modern additions to Shakespeare's play, students were buzzing about the acrobatics of the fairies, the catchy music and songs, the beds floating through the air, and the bizarre silliness of the events of the play. A magical evening was had by all!

Sports Round Up - Autumn 1

Our sports teams have been playing well this term in their various fixtures.

Football

We have had a very busy half term with 17 matches completed by the start of the half term break. In the County Cup the Year 10 team is through to the Quarter Final- congratulations! The other teams either progressed well or are still to play over the coming weeks.

In the Football league the Year 7 team don't begin their fixtures until their league starts in March but the Year 8 team have had a great start with 100% success so far and notably a win of 5 – 0 over Amersham earlier this month. Particular commendations go to Kia Thomas and Harry White for their great goals.

The Year 9 team have had a great start to the league with 2 wins from 2 and especially a 4 – 1 win over Misbourne. The player of the match was Aaron Frewin for his scoring, possession and overall performance.

The Year 10 team have had a mixed start to the league. Their best result so far was the 4 – 1 win over John Colet earlier this month in the County Cup and particular congratulations go to Taylor Massey for scoring 7 goals in 5 school fixtures! That's at least one goal in every match this season so far.

The Year 11 team have also had a mixture of wins and losses this season so far. Felix Fox deserves a special mention for working hard as the Captain both on and off the pitch. Well done.

Netball

In Netball many of the teams have been promoted to tougher leagues this season after a hugely successful time last year. The Year 7 team has been expanded to 2 teams this season and will start their fixtures after half term now they have had time to gel as a team. Well done girls for your commitment to the sport.

The Year 8 team has had a win and a loss so far but have more fixtures and hopefully more successes to come. Well done to Sophie Taverner for receiving the player of the match awards and to Emma Jones for being chosen to play up for Year 9 and doing a fantastic job.

The Year 9 team has only had one tough fixture against Dr Challoner's so far so are working hard for more success this week and after half term. Congratulations to Amy Vojkovic who was chosen as the player of that match.

The Year 10 and 11 teams have done really well and are undefeated so far! Congratulations to Captain Lucy Holloway for doing a fantastic job and also achieving player of the match twice. Further congratulations to Ellie Gallagher for being selected as the Year 10 player of the match and to Maddie Copping for working so hard as the Year 10 Captain.

Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh Presentations

We were delighted to award 43 Year 10 students with their Bronze Award and also 18 Year 11 students with their Silver Award at the Presentation Evening on 7 October 2019.



Kate Aldersley from Duke of Edinburgh came to present the awards and reminded the students how proud they should be with their achievements and of all the new skills they had learned. She also noted the hours of voluntary work that the students had carried out to support their community.

We have 9 Year 13 students completing their Gold Awards this year so hopefully they will be attending their presentation at Buckingham Palace next May.

A very big thank you for Miss Stratton for giving up some many hours including weekends to support these programmes and also to Mr McMaster and Miss Read for assisting this year.

GCSE Berlin History Trip - October Half-Term

After arriving in Berlin, we met our coach and travelled to our hotel to drop off our luggage before being introduced to our tour guide, David Rich, and heading out on a walking tour of Berlin for the afternoon. The weather was exceptionally kind to us, and we visited numerous sites on our tour including the Brandenburg Tor, Hitler's bunker, and Bebelplatz as well as the Reichstag.



The most prominent place of the day was The Memorial of The Murdered Jews of Europe, and we walked through the chilling towers of stone which engulf you from all sides. The visit to the museum under the memorial was another experience on its own; it would take three years to read out all the stories of those victims of the Holocaust.

We spent the next day in and around the Jewish Quarter of Berlin. Here, we visited the Otto von Weidt workshop, which was equally as informative about the resistance against oppression posed by regular Germans. It is interesting to see the conditions in which Jewish people were being hidden throughout the city during the Nazi regime, as here the rooms have been perfectly preserved. The streets which surround the workshop are filled with colourful graffiti to shine colour onto this dark period in history.

The following day we had an early start to make our way to the site of Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Areas of the site have been preserved and turned into memorials, although much of the site has been dismantled. Now a desolate wasteland, no longer place of suffering, but rather one of remembrance for the hundreds of thousands of people whom were murdered or worked to death. From here, we travelled on to the Berlin Olympic Stadium, site of Nazi rallies and the 1936 Olympic Games. Berlin is itself a memorial to the perseverance of the human spirit.

Wherever we went, be it cafes, museums, churches, shopping centres, we received compliments about the impeccable behaviour of our students. They did us proud with their maturity and attitude throughout. In the words of our guide, 'every student was polite, well-mannered, kind and considerate towards each other and the wider public, and fully engaged in their learning.' Memories were made which will last a life time.

Billionaire Boy

David Walliams is not only a celebrated comedian, he's an intensely popular author of children's books. From *Gangster Granny* to *World's Worst Children* to *Ice Monster*, Walliams' books are in high demand from our school library. On 23 October, sixty lucky Year 7 students were able to see one of his most popular books, *Billionaire Boy*, come to life as a play.

Joe Spud, a 12-year-old boy, is the richest boy in the world. His father is the inventor of Bum Fresh, a new type of loo roll that is incredibly popular. With so much money, Joe can buy anything he wants – except a friend.

The play was hilarious, moving from poop jokes to silly musical numbers about horrible teachers. Even with all the deep silliness of Joe trying to navigate nobody finding out he's the 'Bog Boy' at his new school, there were some truly touching moments when he defends his newfound friend Bob from bullies, and tries to help his dad realise money isn't everything. It was a delightful musical that had Year 7 giggling throughout. Many students commented how much they enjoyed the play – getting ice cream at intermission didn't hurt either!



Year 12 - Royal Albert Hall Music Trip

Year 12 students enjoyed a trip to the Royal Albert Hall on 21 November. They Watched the Classical Spectacular.

Students described the trip as the best they have ever been on. Seeing a live orchestra, in some cases for the first time, was an amazing experience for them.

The Magic Flute at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden



On Monday 18 November, the A level musicians went to The Royal Opera House in Covent Garden to see Mozart's The Magic Flute.

We are studying two of the pieces from The Magic Flute and this was a really valuable experience for the students to hear the music in all its glory. For some student this was the first time they had seen an opera. It is hoped that this will be the first of many trips to the opera.

Chemistry Club!

The 2019 school year has seen a return of Chemistry Club! The group was set up by Miss Rouse and our wonderful science technicians last year for Year 7 and 8 students with the aim of engaging and inspiring pupils with chemistry. Along the way we also aim to develop students' confidence and practical abilities when working in a science lab.

Every week we do an experiment which the students typically do not cover in class so there is no repetition. Some experiments don't quite fit into the curriculum or are shortened versions of GCSE practicals. Our technicians give a demonstration each week for the students to watch and ask questions about.



We started this year with some easier start-up experiments, such as designing bath bombs, testing indicators and making slime (which created a lot of messy enjoyment!)

The students are making quick progress and demonstrating excellent skills and safety awareness, so we have now moved onto some more technical chemistry. In the last few weeks the students have tried chemical titrations, investigated electricity made by different chemicals and created Blue Bottles demonstrating chemical equilibrium.

There are plenty more exciting experiments planned for 2020! All are welcome at Chemistry Club!

Visit to the West End to see Wicked



Students from HGSS took to the West End to see the production of Wicked. The GCSE students study one of the songs from the musical as part of their course. It was a great chance to see the piece in context of the story. The students had an excellent evening and the performance was wonderful.

Ski Trip 2020 - Saalbach, Austria

February half-term saw 46 students in Years 8 - 11 journeying to Austria for a fabulous week's skiing.

This year there were over 20 complete beginners who learned this new skill incredibly quickly progressing to the top of the mountain by Day 3. The beginner plus and intermediate groups also made excellent progress across the week enjoying the huge array of ski runs and jump parks. We are immensely proud of all their achievements and delighted to see so many mastering this new skill which will stay with them for life.



Expansion Plan



We are delighted that Planning Permission for our expansion plan was granted on 11 June allowing the project to start this Autumn. This is being developed in conjunction with Buckinghamshire Council for delivery in September 2021 to allow the school to accommodate seven forms of entry. The new facilities will provide:

- A brand new and larger Sports Hall including new changing rooms, toilets and classroom facilities. This, together with the new Tennis Courts which have already been delivered, will vastly improve the PE facilities at the school.
- A new Fitness Suite, which we intend to make available out of school hours to the local community, Sixth Formers and Staff.
- A Dance Studio will be created on the top floor of the Drama Block establishing a fantastic Performing Arts facility which will allow us to greatly expand opportunities for this department .
- A brand new block for Maths and English will offer greatly improved facilities for both these departments.
- Three new Science labs will also be created in addition to the lab created last summer giving our school a fantastic suite of 9 Science Labs.
- Humanities will be extended to 10 classrooms and Business and IT will benefit from 4 classrooms all located together in their departments.

- Music will benefit from a new Music Suite which will include 3 dedicated practice rooms within the department and a new recording studio facility.
- New much larger Dining Room and Kitchen which will offer a seated area for all students at Lunch. A new large social quad adjacent to the Dining Room will allow students easy access between these two areas offering a greatly enhanced environment for our students during these social times.
- Pastoral and SEN will move to a new location together which will deliver a more co-ordinated approach to supporting student's needs.
- New larger additional Sixth Form Study Room and the Sixth Form will also have use of the school's current Dining Room as a dedicated dining space for Sixth Form only.

By increasing the size of the school HGSS will benefit from improved financial security and considerable economies of scale to allow greater flexibility of staffing and student services.

The Sixth Form – Growing from Strength to Strength

The Sixth Form has had another exciting year. We started the academic year on a high in summer when we came top for the second year running of Sixth Forms in Buckinghamshire for student progress for A Levels and Academic qualifications, and in the top 5% nationally, with students gaining on average of a third of a grade better per qualification, than they would nationally. ALPS scores have been consistently high over time. Over the last 3 years we have achieved the following ALPs scores (graded 1-9 with 1 indicating the most progress):

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Alps – QI Grade	2	1	2

Throughout the year, we have continued to strive to support each and every student to reach their full potential, but our Sixth Form is about more than academic success.

The sixth form has consistently and extensively promoted learners' personal development, going beyond the expected, so that learners' have had access to a wide and rich set of experiences that teach learners the importance of contributing actively to society. This has been achieved through the participation of activities that strengthen the sixth form's offer while building the character of the individual. Extra-curricular activities offered include Gold DofE, World Challenge, the MIND Mentor Programme, Sports Leaders, Environmental and Community projects, and the Anthony Nolan Stem cell donor volunteering.

Students have also engaged in a wide range of super-curricular opportunities such as The Brilliant Club Scholars programme, the UKMT Senior Maths Challenge, the Rotary Club Technology competition, The National Skills Challenge, Peter Jones Tycoon schools and a further range of enrichment activities from sporting and fitness, to wellbeing with Pilates and Yoga, to life skills with cooking on a budget,

vegetarian and vegan cooking, conversational Spanish, Self Defence, the TQUK Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work, to creative, entrepreneurial and environmental activities.

We encourage our students to be role models to the lower school students and to lead by example. In this capacity, Year 12 students continue to undertake one hour of Community Service a week by supporting teachers in lessons with the lower school, which also helps them develop and demonstrate maturity and responsibility. Their work is very much valued by teaching staff and students alike. On a wider scale, our Sports-leaders have played a fundamental part in organising and running the Sports Partnership activities to enable students from feeder schools to experience a broader range of sporting activities. Our Sixth Form Student Management team meets on a regular basis, and this year have organised a number of charity fundraisers, a Christmas Quiz, Teambuilding activities and a Dodge-ball tournament to encourage integration between the years.

The introduction of the Wednesday afternoon enrichment session has also allowed us to expand our Study Skills and Careers provision.

In Autumn 1, Year 12 experienced a range of sessions known as "The Sixth Form Tool-kit" which were designed to prepare students for Sixth Form life and work. Year 13 experienced a range of seminars known as "The Real-Life Tool-kit" which were designed to prepare them for their lives after Sixth Form. Mrs Rogers our Careers advisor organised a wide range of outside speakers and professionals from business, who shared their experience of the job market, and spoke about applying for jobs and Apprenticeships, Interview practice and self-awareness, CV building and Psychometric tests.

Unfortunately, due to Lock-down, our Work Experience programme had to be cancelled this year. We aim for all our Sixth Form students to carry out a high-quality work experience which is purposeful, substantial and offers challenge which is relevant to the young person's study programme and career aspirations. When Lock-down was announced we had to cancel Work Experience placements, including placements in a design consultancy, accountants, NHS shadowing, RAF, Ercol furniture and Thames Valley Police amongst many others.

We have been really proud of the destinations of many of our students this year. Even before Lockdown, our students had received many unconditional offers. More students than ever are aiming high and applying to Russell Group Universities and competitive courses and are hoping to progress their studies at academic institutions including Edinburgh, Bristol, Manchester, St Andrews and Warwick. For the first time ever, a student from Holmer Green Sixth Form has received an offer from Cambridge University to read English; this is a significant milestone for the school. I firmly believe that our students are in such a strong position because of the exceptional support that they receive from Miss Harrison, Second in Sixth form and UCAS co-ordinator and our experienced team of Sixth Form tutors.

In January, we welcomed Challenge Partners to conduct the school's first external review. Unusually the school was awarded an area of Excellence for its first review and the Leadership of Sixth Form received this Award and was acknowledged as a strength of the school. The review recognised that "Sixth-form students demonstrated consistently very positive attitudes and commitment to their

education. They have consistently high levels of respect for others.” In addition, “The Leadership demonstrates a clear desire to get the very best out of all students. As a result of this excellent leadership, there is a culture of achievement, engagement and independent learning across sixth form subjects. There are high expectations for all students, and support is given to help the students to achieve them.”

High Prior Attaining (HPA) Students

Our more able students have been involved in several extracurricular activities this year in order to improve academic attainment and boost essential life skills.

As in previous years the Science Department has had students take part in the ‘Girls Get Set’ program. This is a STEM event run by GE Healthcare that encourages female students to consider future careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. This program runs for one group of pupils from year 8 to year 10 and as our previous group are now in year 11 we have selected a new group of year 8 HPA pupils this year. The trip involves listening to lectures by professionals, developing practical skills & interview technique and designing and delivering products. There are usually three sessions of this programme each year, due to school closures our pupils have only attended two of these sessions, but have gained a lot from this, including a new understanding of STEM careers and a drive to do well in their lessons.

Science have run a successful after school 'chemistry club' which is attended by year 7 and year 8 pupils with some students now in year 10 helping the younger pupils. In order to expand upon this and target HPA pupils we started a 'STEM club'. The pupils work towards a CREST award, but due to the school closure this project did not come to fruition this year.

The Maths Department enter their HPA students from all year groups (7 to 13) into a UK wide competition run by United Kingdom Mathematics Trust. Over 600,000 students take part from 4,000 schools. Many students have been successful and obtained Gold, Silver and Bronze awards. This year, no fewer than 13 of our A' Level Maths students were awarded certificates for this prestigious event and we expect a record-breaking number of our students to go on to read mathematics at university.

The English Department offers a wide variety of opportunities in English for students to challenge themselves, particularly for HPA. Below is a flavour of these.

Students from year 9 have undertaken a Talk the Talk Oracy day working on debating skills and interview technique.

A group of students took part in the Buckinghamshire Book Awards at Piper's Corner School with Mrs Ross. This involved reading a set of novels and deciding on their own winner as a team and presenting their ideas at Piper's Corner.

At GCSE the English department have introduced two new challenging texts in year 9 - The Sign of Four and Touching the Void to ensure we are teaching a

broader range of texts. HPA students also read Jekyll and Hyde which is more demanding and also feeds into the A-level text choices.

All departments provide a bank of challenging and unusual questions to students throughout the year, in order to stretch our high prior attainers. English are using the mastery programme to support their HPA.

Lesson observations of several staff from Maths, English, Humanities and ICT & Business departments has taken place. Lesson feedback has been given to all staff members observed. The objective being to provide continual professional development of the teaching of HPA students.

Pupil Premium Students

At Holmer Green Senior School we recognise that the progress and attainment of our students who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding is a key benchmark of our success. Our primary strategy is to ensure high quality first wave teaching for all students eligible for Pupil Premium funding. Students who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding are a diverse and non-homogenous group of students, and therefore have different needs. We have a strategy of bespoke interventions to ensure all our disadvantaged students flourish.

As well as providing opportunities for development within the classroom we also ensure that all our students have high aspirations for their future. All students in Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 have received individual careers interviews to support them with this. This year 29 students from Years 8, 10 and 12 were enrolled in The Brilliant Club. This allowed them to visit two universities, Kings College London and Royal Holloway, to experience what a day at university was like. Students then took part in weekly seminars with a university lecturer to learn about either the developments in sports science or ethnomusicology. This culminated in students writing a 3000 word essay and presenting their ideas at a graduation ceremony at Kings College. One student who took part reflected "I have learnt a lot of new skills during The Brilliant Club which will help me at school. The visits made me want to go to University in the future."



Reading programs throughout Year 7 and 8 have allowed students the opportunity to improve their literacy skills as well as giving them the opportunity to read with others. Each student was given a reading buddy from Year 12 who read with them once a week. A Year 7 student involved in the scheme said "I feel a lot more confident now. It's nice to have someone to read with." The maths department

have also run a catch-up club for those that did not meet the base line for SATs at the end of KS2.

To support students with their independent study, sessions on 'how to revise' and 'how to structure your time' have been run within school using ideas based in cognitive science. The school have also supported students with their exam

resilience, running workshops and yoga sessions to help students with their stress. GCSE students found all these sessions particularly useful and felt they benefited from the extra levels of support provided by the school.

We have subsidised a myriad of trips for students this year, by encouraging students to participate in these, they get an opportunity to increase their cultural capital that they may not have had before.

All these opportunities will hopefully result in our disadvantaged pupils making strong progress in all year groups.

In order to assist pupils during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have delivered laptops to all disadvantaged students who did not have access to a computer at home. As well as this, all year 10 students have been given study guides and workbooks for English and Maths, in order that they do not fall behind their peers. All disadvantaged students have been contacted to check on their welfare and we have arranged deliveries for those in need. Some vulnerable students have chosen to come into school in order to access the resources and support that school has provided on a daily basis.

Safeguarding

In March 2019 we had an external review of safeguarding and have been working on the action plan throughout 2019 and 2020 to enhance our safeguarding procedures further.

A safeguarding question has been put on the staff weekly bulletin and the answer discussed or presented in Monday morning staff briefing. This has helped to embed the safeguarding culture of the school with all staff and raise awareness of current and local issues.

Our Pastoral Managers are efficient in their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding, now attending the majority of core group meetings and conferences for our students. This has ensured that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is on school site and available to deal with safeguarding concerns as they are raised. During school closure these meetings have continued via telephone conferencing.

A school 'safeguarding' mobile phone has been purchased and the number shared with our vulnerable students and outside agencies so that the DSL is always available. This has been extremely useful during school closure and used by parents and students to contact school and ask for support.

The use of CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring system) continues to be an invaluable tool having a huge impact on the number of staff reporting/recording their concerns and the speed at which the right staff are alerted. It has assisted with record keeping and documentation for safeguarding meetings and has enabled staff to continue to report their concerns while working from home.

In addition to the annual safeguarding training delivered to all staff, this year all staff have received training on Attachment Disorders and staff have completed online training packages on Harmful Sexualised Behaviours, FGM, CSE and Forced

Marriage, as well as ensuring that Prevent training is up to date. Thames Valley Police delivered parent training on County Lines which was well supported by our local community.

We have maintained a regular assembly input with regard to safeguarding, with half termly PSHCE led assemblies, and outside speakers from an online counselling service Kooth, who presented during Mental Health Awareness week and Thames Valley Police who delivered presentations on county lines and criminal exploitation. Staff and students have also delivered assemblies on anti-bullying, mobile/internet safety, consent, British Values, pride, The Rule of Law and democracy.

SEN

Holmer Green Senior School's ASD ARP (Additionally Resourced Provision) continues to grow, led by two experienced LSAs (Learning Support Assistants). An indoor and outdoor space enables our more vulnerable students to have a safe place to go at break and lunchtime, and gives them the opportunity to interact with like-minded students away from the main body of the school. This has increased in popularity and extended into an English classroom.

Mr Whitby has now completed his SENCO qualification in his role as Deputy SENCO – this has allowed us to increase the expertise in the Department. Mr Whitby continues to manage the assessments required for examination access arrangements ensuring all get the provision they are entitled to.

Mrs Hawkins, SENCO completed a course to enable her to assess and diagnose students for dyslexia to support the fantastic work of our Dyslexia Specialist Teacher. This Specialist Teacher has completed her level 3 training teaching students with dyslexia, further increasing the capacity of this provision within the Department. She has delivered whole staff training on supporting students with Dyslexia and literacy difficulties.

Four LSAs completed Mental Health First Aid training at the end of last year, since this is recognised as an area of increasing need.

We support over 40 students with EHCPs and a similar number identified as having an additional need and who are placed on our SEN register.

Our SEN students are supported by an experienced and dedicated team of LSAs who in addition to supporting in class, run one-to-one and small group interventions for maths, literacy, social communication, Lego Therapy, and Occupational Therapy; they provide a range of examination concessions to ensure that students have the support they need to access assessments.

Pastoral Support

We aim to promote students' sense of self-regulation, self-worth and to ensure that students have a meaningful say in their school. Relationships between staff and students are positive. Students feel safe and cared for according to the annual Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) survey. Students have the opportunity

to develop an effective student voice through each Year Council, consisting of two representatives from each tutor group, and the Student Council, consisting of two representatives from each Year Council.

Students are closely supported by their Tutors, Heads of Year, Pastoral Leader and Senior Leaders in charge of behaviour, safeguarding and welfare. They have access to these staff in the HUB, which has recently been refurbished. Bullying, discrimination and derogatory language are not tolerated and are dealt with swiftly through the pastoral team who are highly effective in dealing with such matters. Students feel confident to report such issues. No students from the last academic year have repeated their bullying or any racist behaviour this year, suggesting that our interventions are consistent and effective.

Students have access to four Pastoral Managers, allocated to year groups, who support students with their welfare. The Pastoral Team work closely with a number of other outside agencies in order to support our students, these include the school nursing team, Family Resilience, Terrance Higgins Trust and Young Carers. The school benefits from a school counsellor who works closely with specific students. Students support each other well. An example of this is the Sixth form MIND mentor scheme where students are trained to support other students experiencing difficulties with their mental health, or the gardening group, who work on the Quad each lunch time. The Stand Up, Speak Up anti-bullying team meet weekly to discuss raising the profile of standing up for things that are wrong and organising community initiatives to boost confidence and raise a positive profile of students across Holmer Green.

Behaviour

The School has a very clear Behaviour Policy. This year we have introduced a number of routines that underpin Learning and Teaching and ensure clarity for all. Students have a clear entry and exit policy which all staff are expected to follow. We have introduced each year group to our line up system designed to maximise the amount of learning time, to remove issues such as: incorrect uniform; lack of equipment; punctuality and general preparedness for each day.

The reporting systems have been altered so that there is a clear structure. This system ensures that students can be tracked and monitored from our school information management system. Positive and negative behaviour points are monitored each week. Students now move from tutor reports, to Head of Year report, to SLT reports and back down again. We have initiated other documents that underpin the reporting systems which provide support for students in difficulty.

There are clear systems and guidelines in the Inclusion Room. The school has an inclusion room manager, who ensures that time is productive and positive. Detentions are consistent through subject areas. Red detentions are run by the Senior Leader for Behaviour and the Pastoral Leader.

We plan to improve the way we track behaviour points both positive and negative, on SIMS, so that we can better support students on their learning journey and

recognise even more students for their hard work and contributions. The school is passionate about the use of positive language and behaviour. Staff have had training on the use of language and its impact. Students have positive behaviour modelled by staff. The use of attitude to learning report cards, has given students the opportunity to be supported by their HOY in improving in certain subjects. The introduction of the ATL mean score has allowed students to begin taking ownership of their behaviour and thus tracking any improvement or decline.

Comments from the Challenge Partners (Jan 2020) report included;

- *Character education is taught well, with the four core values of be kind, work hard, excellence and creativity, preparing students well for their next stages. Year 7 students are taught the Penn Resilience Programme. This builds upon their resilience, independence and determination.*
- *Students understand and follow the clear behaviour policy and systems, leading to minimal disruption in lessons. Leaders have worked hard to improve attendance and punctuality, in line with their higher expectations. As a result of this determined approach, students are on time to school, and attendance has improved*

Attendance

To ensure that all students at HGSS achieve their full potential, during their time at our school, we put attendance central to raising standards. Absence from school leaves our children vulnerable to falling behind.

This academic year, our attendance to date is 95.8% (National Average 94.5%). Although short of our target of 96%, this would place us in the top seven Buckinghamshire schools when compared to all secondary schools (2018 attendance figures).

The attendance team, pastoral, form tutors and external agencies work hard to ensure that excellent attendance is promoted, reduce absence and ensure that every child at HGSS has access to full-time education to which they are entitled. We monitor student absence and act early to address potential issues. Regular home-school contacts, conversations/ support to students and referrals to outside agencies all help to support our students to strive for excellent attendance.

HGSS overall persistence absence (those students that have less than 90% attendance) is 9% (National Average 13.9%); we have made significant gains from the previous year on this category. This category is of great importance as those students who achieve 90% or less attendance will achieve 3 GCSE grades less than the average student. A student with a 95% attendance average over five years will have to catch up on 250 hours worth of lost lesson time. Similarly, a student with a 90% attendance average will have to catch up on 500 hours of lost learning time (about half an academic year).

Our Disadvantage absence is 6.42% (NA 8.1%) and SEND student's absence is 6% (NA 8%) all significantly better than national average.

Punctuality to school and lessons is an ongoing focus as we help our students understand the importance of being reliable, dependable, and reinforce good

future employment habits. We have seen a reduction in the number of students late to school, so that on average fewer than 10 students per day are late. We aim for this to be lower still, as we recognise the impact this has on that student's behaviour and learning for the rest of the day as they try to catch up.

Where punctuality is a problem to lessons for some individual students, we use punctuality reports, detain students at lunch time and ask departments to use sanctions.

If your child is absent or having a medical appointment, we ask you to telephone the Attendance Office direct on 01494 719901 or email the school on attendance@holmer.org.uk

Student Leadership

We are committed to making sure students have a wide range of opportunities to develop as leaders, have a voice within their school and contribute to our community. We have had a student attend our Learning and Curriculum Governing Body meetings, to represent the student body and see the Governance of the school first hand. The Student Council has met every half term and discussed a wide range of issues, including: the school's expansion plan; feeding back about PSHCE provision; and provided valuable feedback for the canteen food and reduction in the number of school bells in particular. We have recently appointed a very strong set of student prefects and I thank the outgoing Year 11s for the contribution to the school in this role. Students have made a significant contribution to the school with our Open Evening, Open Morning, Environment Committee, creating the incredible Music Festival, and through leading a wide range of assemblies. Year 12 students have led peer reading sessions for younger students to develop reading skills and confidence.

Our nineteen Year 12 Sports Leaders passed their course and completed a significant number of volunteering hours to give back to the school's community. They are all extremely confident and have been an asset to the school throughout the year leading the junior festivals each week, which sees up to 15 first, junior and primary schools using the school's sports facilities to develop an active life style. Students will receive their certificates and accreditation in September.

We have ambitious plans to put student voice and leadership at the heart of the school's work next year. We are going to strengthen the Year and School councils giving them an even greater voice in the school. We have had several students complete the Diana Award Anti-Bullying Training, allowing them to act as peer mediators for resolving conflict and bullying within the school. Finally, building on the success of the Educate Celebrate event last year, students are creating a LGBTQ+ group, to ultimately achieve Stonewall accreditation for their work in this area.

Year 7 Review

Below are some messages for Year 6 students from our students who are now in Year 7.

Dear Year 6 friend

I'm Ben and I'm in Year 7 at HGSS. You will soon be in Year 7 here and I will be in Year 8.

I started my Holmer Green journey in September 2019. I was nervous because it was a new school and it was big! I also didn't know anyone else at all so I was scared that I would not make friends, but I have made many friends....and yes, I did need a map to start with, but I soon found my way around the school. Everyone at the school is very friendly so I settled in really quickly too!

There are definitely more lessons than Primary School but they are mostly fun. I really like PE and have enjoyed the after-school football! Drama, Art and Design Technology are also very creative.

Year 7 has gone very quickly and I have really enjoyed it!

I look forward to you joining us at HGSS and I hope you enjoy your time here.

Ben 7.4

Dear Year 6,

I'm sure some of you might be feeling a little nervous about coming here. A year ago, I was worried that I would get in trouble for getting lost and that I would get a detention. However, when I first came here, I didn't immediately have to go to my classes with no knowledge of where they were. Instead, we had a group treasure hunt where we had to explore the school. Hopefully, you will be able to do this as well. It really helped me to find out where my classes were.

Enjoy your time at HGSS! I wish the best of luck to you all!

If I was going to tell a year six of how to do well and have fun in year seven I would say work hard and do your homework the day you get it and have a good attitude so you don't get on the bad side of the teachers. It might be a bit overwhelming homework wise but do you get used to it over time. Respect the teachers and they will respect you. If you try hard enough you will find it is not as hard as you think and try to be organised and use your locker for your PE kit so you don't have to carry round all your books at the same time.

Owen

'Dear Year 6,

You are soon moving into year 7! Please do not worry as HGSS is a great school. We have lots of fun and exciting lessons for you to take part of. If you like to dance or play football, there are lots of after school clubs as well. You will probably be thinking about how you are going to find your way around the school and be worried about getting lost. Like me, you will be able to know your way around in no time! If you have any questions or worries, there are lots of friendly pupils and teachers to help and you can go to the hub at any time. Enjoy your time at HGSS!'

Hi there!

I am going to tell you the ways to survive beginning secondary school!

I am a year 7 student! When I was starting secondary I was nervous just like you probably are. However, when you are officially a year 7 student you feel slightly more grown-up.

HGSS (Holmer Green Senior School) is a great environment to be in. I didn't know what challenging work meant until I came. Whatever set you're in even if you're in the top you always get met with work to get your mind buzzing.

Don't worry though as school isn't all about work. You will find new friends in your first couple of weeks. P.E is fun too. You have 2 lessons which are likely to be on 2 different days. You learn different sports such as football, hockey, cricket and more. If you want to play a specific sport we also have after school clubs: more football, badminton and more too.

The teachers are also like any other teacher. You can choose whether I mean in a good way or not depending on what you think about them! You do get detentions but can avoid them but don't worry if you get one as most people in the school have had at least 1 already.

If your transport to school is changing stay calm. I had to change my transport from a car to take a bus. If you aren't taking a car I take it you're probably doing the same. I didn't enjoy the change for a while, but I made friends with people who regularly took the same transport as me and felt more and more used to it. You may not like it for a while but you will get used to it as fellow year 7s also get the bus while the year flies by.

For the first week, every year seven stuffs their bag but once you know what to bring on what day you might want to bring fewer things like books and PE kit so you don't get a backache when you're carrying your bag all day around the school.

You won't know where you are going at all for the first few weeks but I got past this by going to lessons with people you know are going to be in the same lesson as you, asking an adult. I did both these things while getting used to the building. For the first term if you are late you get marked in on time because the teachers know you don't know your way around.

We have hot dinners! Your parents will put money in your account and if you want hot dinners you can scan your fingerprint and purchase your lunch. For the first few weeks, you will bring a packed lunch.

Many changes are going to take place and there is nothing else to do, but to get used to it. It may even take facing your fears?

If you are still hanging around until the end (which you obviously are) you have no reason to be scared and... GOOD LUCK! 🍀🍀🍀

From a year seven student called Eesa Ali

Literacy

Holmer Green Senior School places major emphasis on literacy. All Year 7, 8 and 9 English classes participate in a weekly LRC lesson. This is delivered alongside the Accelerated Reader program where pupils are expected to read for an hour a week and record this within their reading record books.

This year we piloted a Morning Reading Group with Year 7 to promote a love of reading. Books were chosen with reading for enjoyment in mind, and the success of the program is leading to the expansion of the reading groups to include multiple year groups.

Also, as part of literacy, year 9 students complete Bedrock Learning, an online program aimed at increasing pupils' Tier 2 vocabulary. This is completed as part of the English homework twice a week. As of next year, this program will be expanded for all Year 7, 8, and 9 students.

Morning interventions are in place for select groups of Year 7, 8, and 9 students who have significantly low reading ages. The intention of the interventions is to help boost vocabulary and decoding skills to help students access their classwork and books easier.

We take part in many writing and poetry competitions, including the BBC Radio 2 500 words competition and the multiple Young Writers competitions throughout the year. In addition, there are internal competitions revolving around reading and writing. We also celebrate World Book Day, National Writing Day, and National Poetry Day with writing and reading activities, and visited Piper's Corner Literary Festival in 2021.

Finally, we planned a writing event with several local schools for Year 2 and 5 students to work with Year 7 students from HGSS on writing their own non-fiction reports and articles while solving a mystery. Unfortunately, this needed to be cancelled, but it is in progress to hopefully have the event next year.

Careers

At HGSS we are fortunate to have a dedicated careers advisor. A strategic plan to July 2021 has been drawn up, looking at each of the Gatsby benchmarks (a national framework of 8 guidelines that define excellent careers provision) and how and when these will be achieved.

To date, all year 11 and 13 students have received an individual careers appointment, looking at their next steps, with assistance in application forms where needed. Careers week saw assemblies based around different careers, including: PR consultancy, NHS careers and Engineering. Also, departments invited in guest speakers related to their subjects, these included: construction, business and the services. We are currently tracking all year 11 and 13 students with regards to their next destinations.

In terms of Gatsby benchmarks, we are currently meeting three at 100%: linking learning to the curriculum, encounters with employers and employees and personal guidance. We are working hard to meet the other benchmarks in entirety; which have been affected by COVID19, but hope to be able to meet these as specified in the strategic plan.

PSHCE

PSHCE has been embedded into the curriculum for years 7-9 this academic year and is delivered as a one hour per week lesson. Moving forward to 2020-21, year 10 will also receive one lesson a week based on PSHCE. Year 11 will continue to be taught PSHCE during tutor time.

The PSHCE lead has been working closely with Holmer Green Junior School to ensure the curriculum for PSHCE is thorough and a continuation on from KS2. The curriculum for year 10 is being developed, as is the one for year 11, that is to be delivered in tutor time. The PSHCE lead has also been working closely with the Careers lead to ensure careers is embedded into the PSHCE curriculum, as is required in order to meet the Gatsby benchmarks.

Boys

Holmer Green Senior School sees reducing the gender gap between boys and girls as an absolute priority. There has been a long-standing gender gap at GCSE for those attaining five-plus A* to C grades (now 4-9): since 1988, on this threshold measure, a significant gender gap in favour of girls has emerged. This gap has grown over time and, in individual school settings, fluctuates. The national picture for 2015/16 revealed that boys underperformed compared to girls in every key stage 4 attainment measure – Attainment 8, English element, Mathematics element, and EBacc element. Whilst we do have a gender gap at Holmer Green Senior School, boys significantly achieve higher than the national average, 2018 progress 8 score for boys nationally was -0.25 , whilst at Holmer Green Senior School boys achieved a progress 8 of $+0.15$. This is still not good enough and it is our aim to ensure boys achieve equally as well as girls.

This year we set up a mentoring system for some of our more vulnerable boys, with them meeting their mentor on a fortnightly basis to discuss any issues and barriers to learning. We also, ensured that all boys attended an impartial careers meeting, with the careers advice looking at the next 'best steps' for them.

A peer mentoring system has been set up, in which sixth form students are paired with younger boys to meet with them on a regular basis to discuss; homework, lessons, revision and barriers to learning that they can help them with. Our sixth form students receive full training from MIND, including safeguarding in order that they can deliver the best possible system.

Finally, we set up a 'Wild Training' program for some of our year 11 boys in order to look after both their physical and mental wellbeing. The boys attended sessions

run by a qualified coach and taught them the values of physical health, diet and mental health. These sessions have now continued with other year groups, with members of staff being trained on how to deliver them.

A residential trip to 'Jamie's Farm' was attended by some of our vulnerable, disengaged, or unmotivated students in order to focus on their mental well-being and sense of belonging.

Weekly updates and CPD, during Monday morning staff briefing and INSET days has been delivered throughout the academic year, focusing on teaching and attitudes towards boys.

Teaching and Learning

For the first time, the school has significantly increased the number of INSET days its staff receive. This year has seen the delivery of eight INSET days, ensuring that after each school holiday staff are afforded the opportunity to enhance their practise and deliver quality first teaching to all students. Each INSET session has been tied in to Barak Rosenshine's seminal 'Principles of Instruction' (2010) in order to provide teaching staff a vehicle in which to play their part in providing a culture of excellence in learning, teaching and assessment.

Our first for INSET days/sessions have been themed according to Rosenshine's Principles:

AUT1 – Sequencing and modelling

AUT2 - Questioning

SPR1 - Retrieval Practice

SPR2 - Stages of Practise

Each INSET session included a training input led by Senior Leaders, with subject teams using this as a starting point with which to plan a half-termly response in a subject specific context. At the end of each INSET sequence, a whole staff review of developments occurred at which point staff from every subject area shared their learning journey in response to the initial input. This was conducted in presentation, carousel and video format, with the positive impact of each session on student outcomes being clearly visible. All training materials and findings of subject specific investigations are still available to refer to on the school network.

Planned INSET sessions for SUM1 and SUM2 were significantly altered due to school closures linked to Covid-19. Sessions planned to address some of the findings of a Challenge Partners review in January (see below) were adapted in order to provide staff the training they required in order to deliver meaningful remote learning opportunities for the students at HGSS.

As a result, a wide range of colleagues utilised their experience and skill to run live training sessions for staff on the use of OneNote, Teacher Dashboard, Show My Homework, embedding audio, pre-recorded videos, supporting students online and using Teams to provide live lessons to Year 12 students. These training sessions were delivered across one week in early June, with recordings and being made in order to support staff unable to attend the live event.

As previously mentioned, in late-January the school welcomed a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team from the Challenge Partners group. Led by a current Ofsted Inspector, the four-person team made up of Senior Leaders from across the country, conducted a series of lesson observations and discussions with both staff and students alike in order to evaluate:

- Leadership at all levels
- Quality of provision and outcomes, including those for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs

The final evaluation made by the team outlined that these areas were 'effective', with the leadership of the Sixth Form being accredited as an area of excellence – a significant achievement for a school hosting its first QAR visit.

Areas of strength across the school including the school's aspirational ethos, character education (the PRP programme), the impact of staff training on challenge in the classroom, the impact of a clear behaviour policy on disruption in lessons, the positive impact the MER process has on tracking disadvantaged students, staff knowledge of individual SEND needs and the quality of the transition for SEND students were highlighted by the QAR team. Developments in the intent of subject curriculum, feedback to learners and questioning were put forward to the school by the QAR team too.

The QAR report, alongside continued improvements in student outcomes, regular low-threat lesson observations conducted as part of the school's MER protocol, student voice provided through the PASS survey and feedback from trainees and staff from a local teaching school all evidences that the quality of teaching and learning at Holmer Green Senior School is highly effective and improving further each year.

Finance

School's funding continues to be challenging for all schools but with prudent financial planning HGSS has remained financially sound. We currently have reserves of over £500,000 so are well placed to cope with any unforeseen financial demands. Staffing is a strength and a priority at HGSS with over 80% of the school's budget being spent on staffing each year. As well as a highly experienced teaching staff the school benefits from an extremely dedicated and qualified support staff body who work hand in hand with the teaching staff to deliver the best possible experience for all our students. The school's success is a result of the whole-staff, team approach and their relentless drive to improve.

We aim to continuously develop the facilities each year accessing funds wherever possible from the Department for Education through a bidding process. Last year we accessed nearly £400,000 to upgrade the school's Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting system. We are currently waiting to hear about bids from the Department for Education for the next year to replace the school boilers and to re-roof the front section of the school.

We continued our annual, rolling programme of refurbishing the student's toilets by redeveloping the Drama Block which have greatly enhanced the facilities in this department ahead of the expansion plan which will create a Dance Studio on the Upper floor.

Governor Days

Governors continue to contribute significantly to the school, helping set its overall strategic direction, ensuring our funding is effectively spent and being a critical friend. To support our Governing Body, we have held two Governor day's this academic year focusing on areas of our school improvement plan, including: the development of cultural capital including enrichment programmes, the development of a culture of positive learning behaviour, embedding a culture of excellence in learning, teaching and assessment and closing gaps between groups of learners such as disadvantaged, SEND and boys.

These days are beneficial for the school as they provide an external perspective and for governors it enables them to challenge the school's processes further, or see the outcomes of improvement work. Governors are all volunteers and it is appreciated the amount of time they give up to perform their vital roles.

As a result of these governor days they have been able to see in person successes of the induction programmes for new starters in Year 7 and Year 12, as well as new staff to the school; the calm, orderly and purposeful start to the day that our morning line-up creates; the impact our reading groups have had on the reading fluency and comprehension skills of our Year 8 cohort; the skill with which colleagues from the English department have collaboratively planned and delivered the 'English Mastery' curriculum to Year 7 students; the progress made by the school in meeting the Gatsby benchmarks for careers education and provision for all students; and the wider community benefits of hosting an Oracy project for Year 9 students.

The impact of this work has been: the robust evaluation of an online learning provision deployed across the Science department to ensure both value for money and positive impacts on attainment and progress; the expansion of the 'reading groups' strategy to across all Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 tutor groups, support for our in-house careers advisor in order to further accelerate our progress towards meeting all of the Gatsby benchmarks and the support of a trial appraisal process for twelve members of teaching staff that moves away from the traditional model used in most schools.

If you are interested in becoming a governor then please speak to one of our current governors, or email (clerktogovernors@holmer.org.uk) as we are always on the look-out for new governors, especially those that have particular skills to offer.