

FAQs for HGSS Open Event October 2020

Our Open Event is aimed at Year 6 children and their families, but many Year 5 families like to watch this event as well.

Exam Results:

- **KS5 results are Outstandings: 97% at A Level A* – C (national 88%) and 77% of students achieved A*-B (national 66%).**
- **GCSE scores are also very strong - 74% Grade 4 + inc Eng + Ma. 20% of all grades were 7+**
- **87% grade 4-9 pass rate in English and 80% grade 4-9 pass rate in Maths**
- Progress is extremely good. For both GCSEs and A-Levels. – This year there is no Progress 8 score for GCSE. For Summer 2019 the Progress 8 score was +0.4 which is very strong.
- All our Sixth Form students achieved places at either University or on Apprenticeships, including: Cambridge, Manchester, Exeter, St Andrews, Loughborough and Warwick to name a few. Just under 30% of our Sixth Form students went to Russell group Universities.
- HGSS is very popular and oversubscribed for last 3 years, even with an increase in admission number from 150 to 210.

Our STRENGTHS:

- ✓ **Ofsted report (May 2016) – Good** – commented on strong leadership, quality of teaching, and strong behaviour.
- ✓ Quality of relationships: Students are happy and visitors comment on our great atmosphere. Secondary school with strong pastoral care. Good links with local primaries.
- ✓ Very strong breadth of curriculum: Art, Photography, MFL, Music, Performing Arts, PE, IT, Comp Science, RS all available at KS4.
- ✓ Very strong extra-curricular provision: Duke of Edinburgh Awards, World Challenge, PE, Music, IT, Trips etc.
- ✓ Fully staffed with specialist teachers.
- ✓ Very strong SEN/D support available.
- ✓ Link with Sir William Ramsay enables us to offer a broadened KS5 curriculum offer. Sixth Form is a strength of the school.
- ✓ Provision for High Prior Attaining students is a strength with grade '9s' being achieved across almost all subjects at GCSE.
- ✓ As part of our expansion we have already been in receipt of 3 new classrooms, 1 new Science lab, 1 new Food technology room, 4 new tennis courts and an Air Dome.
- ✓ One of a few schools who has a dedicated Careers Officer to support students with careers.
- ✓ LinkedIn Alumni group for Sixth Form students.
- ✓ Envious curriculum: includes enrichment on Wednesday afternoons for Sixth Form; Oracy; IT skills; PENN resilience program; timetabled PSHCE lessons; AM reading groups and morning lectures for students.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

- **HOMEWORK** – this is published on 'Satchel' (rebranded from 'Show My Homework') and parents receive notifications from the app. Year 7 start with just English and Maths homework for the first two weeks. Support is available in the Learning Resource Centre after school.
- **SETTING-** used effectively in a range of subjects to best support students of all abilities, including English, Maths and Science from Year 7.
- **HIGH PRIOR ATTAINING STUDENTS** access activities, such as: Model UN Conference; more challenging work in class; UK Maths Challenge; UCAS support; Brilliant Club, etc.
- **BEHAVIOUR** – we achieve high standards because we have high expectations. Parents support our firm lines, and we have whole school systems for helping students behave well. We are firm and fair.

- GETTING A PLACE - HGSS has been oversubscribed for the last three years. Key is to make HGSS first choice. There is nothing to be gained by only putting one school down. We maintain a waiting list for places if you are unsuccessful initially.

Questions:

- **Academic back up support and pastoral care?**

See 'Pastoral support' video on

<https://www.hgss.co.uk/page/?title=Welcome+to+our+Virtual+Open+Event&pid=1279>

Students have access to Tutors every day, Heads of Year, non-teaching Pastoral Managers, a Counsellor and Careers advisor. Students also follow a Penn Resilience Programme in Year 7 and Year 9 to develop their resilience to situations. Academically students can ask questions of their classroom teachers and get support in Tutor time and PSHCE with learning skills. There is an oracy programme to develop speaking skills and independent study sessions in Years 10 and 11 to support students.

- **Where do students go onto after Holmer Green Senior School?**

Examples of Universities that students went to in September 2020, include: Cambridge, Manchester, Exeter, St Andrews, Loughborough and Warwick. Just under 30% of our Sixth Form students went to Russell group Universities. See page 17 of our school brochure

<https://www.hgss.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=409&type=pdf>

- **What are the admissions criteria?**

See page 14 of our brochure <https://www.hgss.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=409&type=pdf>

- **What extra curriculum activities and trips are available?**

Students have access to wide range of sporting activities after school, Science club, Chess club, Duke of Edinburgh Bronze to Gold, World Challenge, Ski Trip, Ypres and many other educational visits. See 'Enrichment' video at <https://www.hgss.co.uk/page/?title=Welcome+to+our+Virtual+Open+Event&pid=1279>

- **What Covid precautions have you taken?**

We have put in place a wide range of precautions, including: limiting visitors on-site, sanitizing on the way in and out of all classrooms, separate lunch facilities for each Key Stage, masks in communal areas and between lessons, online learning platform for those self-isolating, 1:1 Device Scheme, etc. See the 'Further Opening Risk Assessment' for full details at <https://www.hgss.co.uk/page/?title=Corona+Virus&pid=1083>

- **What remote IT lesson provisions are there, re. further lockdown or pupils in isolation?**

We have a full plan available for each of the 4 Tiers of education, depending on Covid19 numbers. In a lockdown students would be in school for face-to-face learning every other week and then have online learning on alternate weeks. This online learning would include 'Teams' lessons, voiced powerpoints, pre-recorded videos, Tutor time and so on.

- **Do you have a cashless canteen top up card or finger payments?**

Normally we have a finger payment system, with parents topping up online. Currently students have a PIN number to avoid frequent contact of the finger reader.

- **Do you have strict discipline and anti bullying policies?**

Our students come in to school to learn and our aim is to provide an environment conducive to that. Normally we have a line-up in the morning to ensure all student is properly equipped and set up for the day. We have a sanction and reward system to encourage positive behaviour and we have a clear motto, 'Work Hard, Be Kind'.

- ***What's the school ethos?***

We have a clear motto, 'Work Hard, Be Kind'. Our values are: Excellence, Creativity, Work Hard, Be Kind. Our mission is, "To develop confident young people, who are equally valued, as they strive to be the best they can be academically, personally and as citizens, ensuring that they are well prepared for a fast-paced, changing world."

- ***What are your class sizes/ teacher ratios?***

Our class sizes at Key Stage 3 are typically 30, but these are smaller depending on the ability/needs of a particular class. At Key Stage 4, the GCSE option classes vary in size depending on the number of students choosing that subject. Sizes vary from 10 to 30. At Key Stage 5, the average class size is 9.

- ***Are Learning Support Assistants available?***

We have a large team of Learning Support Assistants available to support students who have additional learning needs. We also have a homework club, before and after school library facility (LRC), spelling, reading, maths and social group classes to support learners.

- ***How is school different from others in area?***

We have a curriculum that matches the needs of our learners, meets needs that are not just academic, e.g. oracy programme, enterprise programme, resilience programme, IT and study skills programme, etc. We run the full suite of Duke of Edinburgh awards. We are restless in our pursuit of excellence. We are an outward facing school, keen to engage with other schools nationwide to improve our offer to students. We are financially secure and have a programme to invest in facilities.

- ***How do you monitor and improve academic performance?***

We have assessment points throughout the year where current and predicted grades are given to students as well as an attitude to learning score. These are monitored and students awarded badges/letters for excellence/progress, or additional support is put in place.

- ***Are classes streamed by ability?***

In Maths, English and Science, each year group is split into two bands and within those bands classes are set by ability. There is movement between the sets depending on how a student is performing, but we try to limit these movements.

- ***What support is available for financially challenged, medical disability families/SENs etc?***

Support is available through Pupil Premium for example. If a family would like their child(ren) to have access to a particular trip/activity, but there is a financial issue, then we ask parents to contact us so that we can support. Sixth Form students have access to a bursary payment, dependent on need.

- ***What support is there for more able children?***

Lessons are pitched to the top of the class and scaffolded downwards to enable all to access. There is a high degree of challenge in classes. Students have access to the full range of academic subjects. We encourage all students to study the humanities and languages.

- ***How do you help new children settle in?***

We have a camping weekend to support students getting to know each other in Year 7. We have a transition day in the summer and additional days for those with educational needs. Year 7 start the new academic year on the first day, as the only year group in to allow them to orientate themselves. There is a treasure hunt to help them navigate around the site. Homework is restricted to just Maths and English in the first two weeks. Tutor time in the first term is dedicated in ensuring students have all the passwords/usernames they need to access online facilities. We run a 1:1 Device Scheme. We have a strong Pastoral Team. We visit all primary schools as part of the transition programme to speak to your child's Year 6 teacher.

- ***How are language classes assigned and do you have choice of language?***

Students are split into two bands. Within each band there are a number of Spanish sets and a number of French sets. Students are placed in these sets and therefore languages depending on the timetable. We have a strong languages team, so students enjoy either language. We can accommodate a small number of changes from one language to another, for example, if a student speaks a language at home, but this does have a knock-on-effect on the other classes they are in.

- ***Science options- double/ triple sciences***

All students are taught the three Sciences at Key stage 3. In Years 9 and 10 all students study the three Sciences. In Year 11 students are chosen to do the additional Triple Science modules if they attained well in their Year 10 Summer Mocks, otherwise all others stick to the Double Science.