



A message from the Chair of Governors: 2022-23

On behalf of our governors, staff, parents and students, I'm delighted to welcome you to our school.

As a parent governor, my family has faced the decision you are now considering four times. It is a very difficult decision to make. One made even more challenging because there are several excellent local schools, including ours.

Our request of you is simple. You are an individual. You must pick a school that best fits your personality, skills and beliefs, so you can be happy and settled to develop your full potential. You need to feel we fit your individuality, preferences, and priorities. Throughout your visit, your parents will help you to assess, judge and question whether we are right for you.

We are very proud of our approach, culture, and unique environment we provide. If the fit is strong, we believe we provide the best environment locally for you to learn, build independent social and academic skills, and, most importantly, become the adult you aspire to be.

We consistently achieve excellent academic results and provide strong future opportunities for our students.

We have a strong culture and ethos. We have caring and supportive relationships between members of the school community – especially staff and students- and between students. This is underpinned by the school's values of Equality and Equity, Responsibility, Democracy, Solidarity and Self Help which are brought to life through the curriculum and how the school operates.

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Our commitment to breadth is something we know will be very important to you. We also complement our curriculum with an increasingly wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, catering for a wide selection of passions.

Our modern facilities provide a unique place to have fun learning.

We know through years of experience that if you feel a strong fit with our school, we will provide a standout environment for you to thrive.

Duncan Painter
Chair of Governors

September 2022



The Highfield School

The Highfield School is a non-selective LEA, co-educational 11-18 school. There were 1008 students at the beginning of the Autumn Term 2022; 162 of these were in the Sixth Form. The nominal roll at Year 7 is 180.

School Dates 2022 – 2023

Autumn Term 2022

Friday 2 September – Friday 21 December

Autumn Half Term: Monday 24 October – Friday 28 October

Christmas Break: Thursday 22 December – Friday 6 January

Spring Term 2023

Monday 9 January – Friday 31 March

Spring Half Term: Monday 13 – Friday 17 February

Easter Break: Monday 3 April – Friday 14 April

Summer Term 2023

Monday 17 April – Wednesday 19 July

Summer Half Term: Monday 29 May – Friday 2 June

Bank Holidays

Good Friday 7 April

Easter Monday 10 April

May Bank Holiday 1 May

May Bank Holiday 29 May

Inset Days

Thursday 1 September

Friday 6 January

Friday 24 February

Occasional Day

Thursday 5th January

The School Day

Monday – Friday

Registration: 8:25am – 8:50am

Lesson 1: 8:50am – 9:50am

Lesson 2: 9:50am – 10:50am

Break: 10:50am – 11:10am

Lesson 3: 11:10am – 12:10pm

Lesson 4: 12:10pm – 13:10pm

Lunch: 1:10pm – 1:55pm

Lesson 5: 1:55pm – 2:55pm



A Broad and Balanced Curriculum for all

Our curriculum offer is designed to promote learning that is appropriate to individual students' abilities and interests, and to prepare students for their next steps beyond school.

Key Stage 3

In Year 7, students have a core curriculum of mathematics, English and science. They also study history, geography, religious and personal studies, design and technology, art, music, modern languages, ICT, drama and physical education. These are all taught in mixed ability groups at the start of the year. The mathematics department place the students in groups according to their ability early in the year. We therefore use both setting and mixed ability grouping to best advantage. We use assessment data and progress reports.

At Key Stage 3 students study one of two languages: French or German. Students follow this language throughout the Key Stage and have the option to continue into Years 10 and 11.

In Year 8 and 9 the mathematics department continues to group students into sets according to ability from the start of Year 8, with other subject areas continuing to group students independently. Students in Years 8 and 9 therefore continue to have a curriculum tailored to meet their needs. In religious and personal studies, citizenship education, information and communication technology (ICT), music, art, history, geography, drama and design and technology, students are taught in mixed ability groups throughout Years 7 to 9. The emphasis in the whole of Key Stage 3 is on recognising and supporting individual achievement and progress.

In preparation for Years 10 and 11, students are provided with information about GCSE and Technical Awards. They are given guidance by staff to help them make decisions about the optional subjects to take alongside the compulsory subjects. Parents are invited to an information and consultation evening where they can discuss choices with subject staff.

Computers and other technological equipment are used routinely by students in many of their lessons and they become skilled in word processing, control, computer graphics, databases, spreadsheets, using the Internet and simple programming. In addition, students have access to a fully equipped library which is staffed to support them.

Key Stage 4

As students move into Key Stage 4 they start courses which, in most cases, lead to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or Technical Awards.

Our aim is to offer a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the needs, abilities and interests of all students. This ensures that all choices beyond Year 11 remain open. We provide core skills and opportunities for new educational experiences.

All students:

- follow subjects to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum
- have choice in a range of other GCSE subjects

Most students will pursue at least 8 GCSE courses. Core subjects are English, maths, science, religious and personal studies (non-exam) and physical education (non-exam).

Other subjects are currently chosen from: art, business studies, catering, design and technology, dance, drama, textiles, French, geography, graphic products, sociology, history, media, music, physical education, philosophy and ethics, German, computer science and IT. In some subjects courses are available with a more practical approach which lead to a GCSE or Technical Award.

Religious and personal studies explore a range of beliefs and moral issues. The course is designed to help students understand themselves and their relationships with others. It also includes issues surrounding health, careers education and choices, along with questions about risk and sex education. Parents of students (from any Key Stage) have the right to remove their child from sex education, religious education and collective worship.

Youth Connexions provides a counselling and information service to all students through structured interviews and a rolling rotation programme of mentoring. Careers information and guidance is provided by members of the Youth Connexions team and by school staff.

Key Stage 5 (Sixth Form)

The Key Stage 5 curriculum is a broad balanced curriculum giving students opportunities to develop their interests, knowledge and skills through studying 3 or 4 A Levels. To follow an A Level programme students need to achieve a minimum average GCSE point score of 4. To study maths, English or Science the student needs a 6 in that subject and if pursuing psychology at A Level a 6 in English is required. Sixth Formers follow a two-year A Level course which could lead to university or college entrance, specialist training, apprenticeship or a job.

We are a member of the Consortium of Letchworth Schools with Fearnhill which enables students to follow one of their courses at another school, thus widening their choice of subjects, if their timetable does not fit at their host school.

All students are fully supported academically through regular progress reports, tutor mentoring, subject intervention, programme of self-evaluation and structured target reports where appropriate. To support the students' career exploration there is a balanced programme of support which include: outside agencies providing the knowledge and information on applying for universities, employment and apprenticeships; an enrichment programme which includes support and advice on the UCAS application programme and interview technique; and regular timetabled individual intervention through the application process for each form of career exploration.

All students take part in an enrichment programme which includes preparation for work and higher education and non-curriculum topics which have included resilience, mental health support, exam wellbeing, sexual health, music appreciation and first aid. Year 12 students undertake the Extended Project Qualification in addition to their chosen courses which provides an important valuable qualification to support their application for further education or employment. Other opportunities have included The Duke of Edinburgh Award, World Challenge, a Debating Society, being a subject ambassador, running the school newspaper, working on a range of committees (Diversity & Equality, Community, May Ball, Eco) and supporting younger students with mental health.



Rewarding students' achievements

We believe in rewarding students' achievements in a variety of ways inside and outside the classroom.

Our rewards ladder is based on the school values of Self Help, Self-responsibility, Solidarity, Equality and Equity and Democracy and our code of conduct. House achievement points are issued by all school staff and this includes; good behaviour and effort, positive calls home, headteacher commendations, student of the lesson, student of half term certificates, good attendance and punctuality to lessons and school, supporting the school values, oral contribution in tutor and lessons, regular attendance at school clubs, attendance at the school council and representing the school in inter school matches.

Students collect achievement points onto their school record via our Class Charts app and this is shared by their tutor as part of the Celebration tutor activity that is held each week. The system is cumulative and students are awarded in a variety of ways depending on their total throughout the school year. Students with the highest conduct points will also be invited to our annual awards evening and be eligible for the celebration trips that we hold each year.

Our annual Celebration and Awards Evening is a special event acknowledging that achievement comes in many forms. It recognises student effort in all subjects across the three Key Stages, for academic achievement in each of the year groups and for outstanding progress across the curriculum. Awards include subject awards, Sports Person of the Year, Contribution to the School Community, Outstanding Personal Achievement and many more. The Headteacher Award recognises effort, achievement and outstanding contribution to the school community.

Recognising individual attainment and progress in this way encourages students to achieve high standards of work. It reflects the school's mission to ensure that each student takes opportunities and aspires to excellence.

Learning Development

At Highfield, responsibility for identifying, assessing and making appropriate provision for students with special educational needs lies with the SENCO in accordance with government guidance [SEN Code of Practice, 0–25 years, 2015] as well as national and local policy for special educational needs and disability. The Learning Development team gather information, provide support to identified need and disseminate consistent advice to staff.

Learning Development works alongside the Pastoral team to support students who have Special Educational Needs to settle quickly. The Learning Development team's focus is to assist students with special needs and disabilities towards achieving both learning, independence and their full potential. Interventions may be short or long term and reflect the extent to which additional support is required using an assess, plan, do and review approach. Ultimately, our aim is for our students to be aware of what adjustments support their individual learning style.

We ensure that all teachers and support staff are aware of the needs of the students they teach or work with. We provide some support within the classroom and deliver tailored interventions in the most appropriate location. We work closely with external agencies to secure advice based on best practice and current research. As part of the Graduated Response we liaise regularly with parents, ensuring their views are recognised when reviewing provision and support.

Opportunities for all students

Opportunities for all is a key priority of The Highfield School to ensure that all students achieve their potential. Throughout their time with us staff and departments deliver a range of enrichment activities, provide opportunities for extension tasks and ensure that students are stretched and challenged in all lessons. These activities can range from extra-curricular clubs, visits or special coaching days. There are also a range of student leadership opportunities available within the school designed to further extend these students' skills and experiences.

At The Highfield School we believe a supportive and challenging learning experience should permeate all areas of the curriculum both in and out of lessons. As such we offer 'Challenge' opportunities beyond the classroom across all year groups. These are designed to develop critical thinking skills, begin considering Higher Education pathways and develop the skills needed to achieve the best examination results. In previous academic years this included a samba day, workshops with the University of Hertfordshire and Cambridge University, a masterclass with the University of Oxford, a creativity and marketing project with a local ice-cream business, workshops with Sky Television and a series of workshops and mentoring with a large London media agency.

In addition, we offer the opportunity for all Sixth Form students to complete a Level 3 Extended Project qualification. This strengthens students' skills and sets them apart from others applying for work, university or apprenticeship placements. These timetabled curriculum opportunities enable students to complete an extended project of their own choice, encouraging them to develop their research, critical thinking, writing and project management skills.

We have close connections with the Universities of Cambridge, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire and regularly use these links to offer exciting experiences and open up pathways for future learning and training. This includes visits to the universities, open days, workshops, master classes and visiting speakers. Our summer school recently gave our Year 7 students a taste of Lego robotics which integrates seamlessly with our digital learning programme at The Highfield School.

Our newest initiative is the Challenge Passport. This is designed to encourage and foster independent learning and to allow students to take control of their own intellectual development by following a super-curriculum. This is completed by students in their own time. The commitment to completing the Challenge passport then enables these students to apply their skills to real world contexts.

We are extremely proud of our students' varied achievements, their excellent results and diverse contributions help to make The Highfield School an enriching and dynamic place to learn, excel and connect with the right pathway for their futures.

Pastoral Care

Our aim is to make the move from primary school to secondary school as smooth as possible. We take care to help students adjust to Highfield school life. We take advice from primary teachers who know the children well and take it into consideration when going forward.

The tutor group meets for registration first thing every day. Your child's tutor is your first point of contact for concerns you have about any matter, or information you need to give us. It is part of the tutor's role to help your child settle in, and he or she is happy to answer any questions, however small you might think they are. Your child will be in a tutor group with students of the same year group. Students usually stay with that group until the end of Year 11.



Each tutor group works with the appropriate Head of Year and is attached to one of our six Houses. A tutor programme has been designed for each year group and the focus is on developing the students and equipping them with the skills required for school and life. The Pastoral Care Co-ordinators and the Leader of Pastoral Care support students and tutors in matters of welfare and discipline, helping your child to succeed.

At The Highfield School the safety of all children is of paramount importance. We understand that you send your children to our school with the expectation that we provide a safe and secure environment where they can flourish. We have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and are therefore required to comply with both national and local legislation and guidance if we are worried about a child. These policies and guidance exist and are available on our school website or upon request, to ensure that this expectation becomes reality.

Our Pastoral team are highly skilled to ensure that they are able to work with families & students and offer additional support where required. This may include referral on to external support for issues such as family workers, mental & physical health, financial concerns or parenting courses.

Assessment

Continuous assessment takes place in every subject area from Year 7 onwards and annual examinations take place in most subjects. Where appropriate, students will take part in assessments under the same formal conditions as those required by public examination boards so they are well prepared for their final examinations. As a school we adhere to the principles of Assessment for Learning. This means that teachers use outcomes in assessment to plan the next steps for learning for their classes and students complete work and use feedback on assessments to improve their knowledge and skills going forward. We very much see assessment as a tool for learning as well as an opportunity to celebrate progress made. As well as teacher assessed tasks, our students are taught how to accurately peer and self-assess their work. This helps them to reflect on and deepen their learning, leading to better performance over time.

Parents receive three reports across the year – an Attitude to Learning report is sent home three times a year. An academic Progress report is sent home twice a year. Each report feeds back important aspects of pupil development throughout the year. The focus is on transition and positive learning attitudes in the first half of the year and academic progress towards the middle and end of the year. The reports will also indicate the number of House Points and Behaviour Points that have been earned as well as attendance and late figures. The reports sent home, and the accompanying guidance for parents that the school provides enables impactful conversations at home about progress and approach to learning to occur. At Key Stage 4 and 5 this report also includes a GCSE or A Level working-at grade, a target grade and a predicted grade for each subject.

During the course of the academic year there is a parents' evening for every year group where academic progress and approach to learning is discussed. In addition, parents are encouraged to contact the school to speak with teachers if they have any questions about how their child is progressing.

Digital Learning Programme

Our vision at The Highfield School is to provide all our students with a first class, transformational education that gives them the opportunities, knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in an increasingly competitive, technology-driven world.

Our aims

- To integrate digital learning alongside current teaching and learning approaches to enable students to become confident, independent and self-regulating digital learners.
- To build on our rapid success with accredited and globally recognised teacher training to further enable teachers to become expert facilitators in digital learning, enhancing the learning experience for students to make exceptional progress using a wide-range of educational online tools within the classroom.

At The Highfield School, our blended learning approach has been in place since September 2021. Students here benefit from our current excellent teaching provision enhanced by the exciting facilitation of 1:1 digital devices. Students in all year groups have access to an iPad enabling us to build on traditional pedagogy to create engaging, dynamic and exciting learning for the 21st Century.

We want our students to feel confident, proficient and safe in this rapidly changing world. Access to digital devices is changing how we learn: the answer to that question you have just thought of can be found at the touch of a button; hands-on practical skills can be demonstrated even in home learning; and students can collaborate in their learning wherever they are. The exciting platform of the iPads provide a great vehicle to help our students become digitally literate and responsible global citizens and by having access to their own iPad they have all their educational resources at the tip of their fingers.

Following the introduction of Google Workspace, teachers and students have used a range of features to support, deliver and engage in both face to face and remote learning. Since then we have developed our use of Google Workspace and embedded the use of appropriate technology within lessons. Over the past two years the school has invested significantly in our IT infrastructure, Google Workspace and associated teacher training, to prepare fully for our move to a blended learning scheme – a model which has been widely and successfully adopted over the globe in the most aspirational educational systems. We remain committed to providing access to high quality specialist computer rooms too, including our iMac Suites in which we teach subjects such as Music, Technology, Media and Computer Science.

In the emerging world we find ourselves in – with future ways of working and flexible working patterns – we have a moral imperative to embed technology within our learning environments in order to prepare our young people for the fast paced, technology-rich and mercurial environment that awaits them. By embracing technologies that give the widest possible exposure to diverse platforms we hope to equip our students with the skillset they need to participate in the globalised marketplace, voluntary and charitable sector and educational institutions of the future.



2022 Results Summary

GCSE

In 2022 students at The Highfield School achieved excellent results. The school's provisional Attainment 8 score is 48.3 which means that students at The Highfield School make above national average progress. 65% achieved at least a grade 4 in both their English and Maths GCSEs, with 48% achieving a strong pass in both. 41% of students were entered for the English Baccalaureate, with 75% of those students achieving a pass.

25% of GCSEs were at grade 9 – 7 (A* – A)

61% of GCSEs were at grade 9 – 5

75% of GCSEs were at grade 9 – 4 (A* – C)

The GCSE results are summarised by department as follows:

Department	Grades 9 – 7	Grades 9 – 4
Art	26%	90%
Business	27%	76%
Computer Science	53%	89%
Drama	35%	100%
Design Technology	6%	72%
English	22%	74%
Humanities	24%	65%
Maths	21%	67%
Media	53%	94%
MFL	29%	77%
Music	22%	78%
Physical Education	43%	100%
Science	33%	81%

A level

Students at The Highfield School also achieved strong A level results, with 68% securing a place at university. The average point score in the 'Best Three A levels' measure was 33.0, or a C+. Students taking vocational courses continue to be highly successful, with an average point score for vocational qualifications of 41.67, or a Distinction*.