

Highfields School

For students starting
Highfields School



We Are Highfields



Contents

Welcome to Highfields School	2
Purpose, values and aims of Highfields School.....	3
We are Highfields.....	4
School contact details.....	5
The school day	6
Key Staff 2020-21	7
Highfields School Governing Board 2020-21	7
2020-21 term dates.....	8
2021-22 term dates.....	8
Transition to secondary school	9
Feeder Primary Schools	9
Pastoral care	10
Home / School Agreement.....	10
Attendance and punctuality.....	11
School expectations, rewards & consequences.....	11
Mobile phone policy.....	12
Student assessment data	12
Safeguarding policy.....	12
Homework.....	12
Students with special educational needs & disabilities	13
Teaching and learning	15
Key Stage 3 curriculum (years 7, 8 and 9).....	17
Key Stage 4 curriculum (years 10 and 11).....	17
Highfields Sixth Form	18
Key Stage 5 curriculum (sixth form).....	18
Results and resilience	18
Curriculum Subjects	20
Extra-curricular opportunities	32
Performing arts opportunities.....	33
Sport at Highfields	34
Careers information, advice and guidance	37
Religious education	38
Sex education.....	38
Summer 2020 exam success	39
School performance indicators	40
Rates of authorised and unauthorised absences.....	40
Destinations for year 11 leavers 2019	40
Admissions	41
Further information	42



Welcome to Highfields School

Choosing the right secondary school for your child is a very important decision and we appreciate you giving our school your consideration. We hope that the information in our guide and our website gives you a flavour of all we have to offer.

We are very proud of our school and the achievements of our students. We believe that a partnership between home and school is fundamental to maximising potential and we will work with you to ensure that your child has the very best education we can provide. Our ethos is inclusive which means we believe that ALL children are capable of excellence. A good example of this is our musical theatre productions where involvement is made available to all without absolutely no compromise on the standards required.

Academic attainment at Highfields School is high. We help every student to make progress and are delighted with the outcomes they achieve. However, we offer much more than examination success. Within our caring environment students can access a wide range of opportunities beyond the academic curriculum allowing them to become confident, responsible individuals who have respect for themselves and others. We are passionate about sport and are renowned for our performing arts but there is something for everyone at Highfields School and we will encourage your child to become fully involved in school life.

Should you choose Highfields School for your child we promise to be uncompromising in our ambition to ensure that your child is given the care, support, challenge and encouragement they need to be the very best they can and to thrive in a changing world.

We wish you every success in choosing the best school for your child.





We are Highfields

They say that you never really know anyone until you see them in a crisis. The pandemic revealed a Highfields School community previously unknown to me...

On the morning of Thursday 19 March we had Y11 assembly. I led the event supported by our head of Y11 and trusted deputy head Peter Cole. In the assembly I revealed to the shell-shocked students who, only a few weeks before, had completed their mock exams, that this was their last day in school for the foreseeable future. Y11 was over. GCSE examinations had been cancelled. Now was the time to say goodbye to teachers, support staff and friends who they had expected to be around until at least late June.

Every time I relive this event I have to fight back tears because the children looked so utterly bewildered and helpless. Over the next hour or so they signed each other's shirts and hugged their friends for what would be the last time in months. Then we arranged that they made their journey home to isolate, stay safe and protect the NHS. And then they were gone and the school was shrouded in an eerie silence.

On the following Monday I got up at 4.30am after another terrible night's sleep. All I could think of was the impact on all families, but especially our most vulnerable, of being asked to home-school for the foreseeable future. I thought, perhaps, it might be a good idea to remind families that the school was still there for them and so I made a short video and uploaded it to YouTube. I answered a few emails and tried to eat some breakfast. When I next checked the video it had had over a thousand views. A governor emailed me a photograph of himself, his wife and his four kids watching the video over their Weetabix with a message simply saying 'thank you'.

Spurred on by parental encouragement, I began to post a new video each day. I asked families to share their children's achievements and over the next week families began to contribute examples of work, images of their children exercising, walking, cooking, learning a musical instrument, singing and film making. By the time the lockdown ended, families, staff, our deputy head and I had created over 60 video 'assemblies' featuring hundreds and hundreds of our children's achievements. Several Highfields students made the local news for their contributions to local care programmes or their charitable efforts. One family suggested that we set up a fund for Highfields parents and carers whose finances had been affected by lockdown. A few days later we had together raised thousands of pounds with which we were able to pay internet bills so that children could stay connected to our online lessons. We sent out over 80 laptops and hundreds of food packs and hampers, all with one objective in mind: to keep our children safe, healthy and learning.

On the one hand the assemblies celebrated the work of our most able students, some of whom are heading for Oxford and Cambridge. With equal emphasis they also celebrated the contribution of younger learners on the foothills of their learning 'journey'. When it became obvious that our transition arrangements for students joining us in September from primary school would be affected our senior leader in charge joined us in presenting features reaching out to our Y6 students. Within days those Y6 families joined the Highfields learning 'party' and began to supply examples of their children's transition activities.



When the protests over George Floyd erupted in the US and UK, the Highfields community shared their responses via these assemblies. I had always known that Highfields was an academically successful school. Now I was to learn first-hand that this academic rigour sits squarely alongside a wish from Highfields families for their children to be taught to reflect on events far removed from the Peak District in their journey from childhood to responsible adulthood. At this point the

Highfields community expanded to take in views from students at local secondary and primary schools as well as schools as far removed as St Mary's, Richmond, Virginia.

In an effort to keep our students engaged and interested, families provided humour and banter to complement the challenging work set daily by our chronically overworked staff (email traffic suggested that many of them had become nocturnal in an effort to home school their own children whilst providing work and feedback for their students).

When lockdown and the school year drew to a close in July we produced our final assembly in which we tried to register our gratitude to all those who had kept learning alive in such a dark time. Should you wish to see how a school 'family' can work together to overcome a crisis you could do worse than check out this video (search Highfields Assembly July 17 on YouTube).

I have never been prouder to be a (small) part of Highfields School community and I cannot wait to see where our journey will take us.

We are Highfields.

A Marsh
Headteacher



We Are Highfields



School contact details

Address:	Highfields School Lower site (years 7-8) Starkholmes Road Matlock Derbyshire DE4 3DD	Highfields School Upper site (years 9-13) Upper Lumsdale Matlock Derbyshire DE4 5NA
Tel:	01629 584020 (Starkholmes)	01629 581888 (Lumsdale)
E-mail:	info@highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk (general email) admissions@highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk (admissions email)	
Web site:	www.highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk	

You are welcome to visit our school. However, especially in light of the current Covid-19 restrictions, we ask that you telephone before visiting us so that the most appropriate member of staff can meet you and we can ensure a minimum number of people are in the building at any one time.



The school day

Morning session:	Warning bell	8.35am
	Registration	8.40am-9.00am
	Period 1	9.00am-9.50am
	Period 2	9.50am-10.40am
	Break	10.40am-11.05am
	Warning bell	11.00am
	Period 3	11.05am-11.55am
	Period 4	11.55am-12.45pm
	Lunch:	12.45pm-1.50pm
	Afternoon session:	Warning bell
Period 5		1.50pm-2.40pm
Period 6		2.40pm-3.30pm

Highfields School does not allow any student in years 7-11 off site during break or lunch times as per the school's safeguarding arrangements.



Key Staff 2020-21

Headteacher:	Mr A Marsh	
Deputy Headteacher:	Mr P R Cole	
Assistant Headteachers:	Mr D O'Reilly Mrs C Rifkin Mr M Hodkin	
Associate Assistant Headteachers:	Mr K Rodgers - Years 7 and 8 (based at Starkholmes) Miss N Gresswell - Years 9, 10 & 11 (based at Lumsdale) Mrs C Morgan – Curriculum and timetabling	
Heads of Year:	Year 7	Mrs A Hollinrake / Mrs L Redhead
	Year 8	Mr J Redhead (for school year 2020-21)
	Year 9	Mr A Bishton (for school year 2020-21)
	Year 10	Mrs A Ruston (for school year 2020-21)
	Year 11	Miss J Hughes (for school year 2020-21)
	Sixth form	Mr M Flett
Year Managers:	Year 7	Mrs Green
	Year 8	Mr Tidmarsh (for school year 2020-21)
	Year 9	Mrs Weightman Edge (for school year 2020-21)
	Year 10	Miss Esposito (for school year 2020-21)
	Year 11	Mr Allsobrook (for school year 2020-21)
	Sixth form	Mrs R Sargeant (for school year 2020-21)

Highfields School Governing Board 2020-21

Highfields School is fortunate in the kinds of people who have volunteered to become governors, each bringing a variety of skills and experience to support the school. The composition of the governing board for 2020-21 is split as follows. Each governor serves a term of office of four years.

Miss Angeline Ellson	Chair of Governors / Co-opted governor
Mr Paul Steeples	Vice Chair of Governors / Co-opted governor
Mr Rob Atkinson	Co-opted governor
Mrs Allison Beesley	Co-opted governor
Mr Edward Coxhead	Co-opted governor
Miss Lizzy Dence	Staff governor
Mrs Amanda Goodall	Co-opted governor
Miss Emma Hill	Co-opted governor
Mr Dennis Holmes	Parent governor
Mr Andrew Marsh	Headteacher governor
Mr David Matthews	Parent governor
Mrs Antonia O'Donoghue	Co-opted governor

Full details of Highfields Governing Board can be accessed on the school website:
<http://www.highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk/governors.html>



2020-21 term dates

		School Opens	School Closes
Autumn:	Term 1	1 September 2020*	23 October 2020
	Term 2	2 November 2020	17 December 2020*
Spring:	Term 3	4 January 2021	12 February 2021
	Term 4	22 February 2021 11 April 2021	
Summer:	Term 5	19 April 2021	28 May 2021
	Term 6	7 June 2021	22 July 2021

* From 2015 schools have been able to consider variations to term dates provided they meet the statutory requirements. With this in mind we took the decision to return to school one day earlier for the start of the new academic year (Tuesday 1 September 2020) and finish the autumn term one day earlier (Thursday 17 December 2020). This was to ensure a smooth start to the academic year rather than students starting back with a staggered start on Thursday or Friday.

INSET days (no students in school):

- 1 September 2020
- 30 November 2020
- 4 January 2021
- 2 July 2021
- 22 July 2021

2021-22 term dates

Please note: the dates below are provisional term dates set by Derbyshire County Council for the academic year. Schools are able to consider variations to these dates provided the statutory requirements are met. Once dates are confirmed they will be uploaded to the school website.

		School Opens	School Closes
Autumn:	Term 1	2 September 2021	22 October 2021
	Term 2	1 November 2021	23 December 2021
Spring:	Term 3	10 January 2022	18 February 2022
	Term 4	28 February 2022	8 April 2022
Summer:	Term 5	25 April 2022	27 May 2022
	Term 6	6 June 2022	22 July 2022

INSET days:

Five staff training days (INSET days) will take place during the academic year. The school will be closed to students on these days. Exact dates will be confirmed and uploaded to the school's website.



Highfields School

Highfields School, Matlock, is a thriving community school of approximately 1,200 students maintained by the Derbyshire local authority. We are a co-educational, day comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 18 years. We aim to the best we can be in all that we do and are proud of our tradition of specialism in the performing arts. The school is situated on two sites, 1.8 miles apart, Starkholmes (years 7 - 8) and Lumsdale (years 9 - 13).

Transition to secondary school

At Highfields we know that the move from primary school to secondary school can be daunting as well as exciting. Our split site school enables a smooth and positive transition from primary to secondary education with years 7 and 8 being taught in the smaller environment of our lower school site at (Starkholmes). Key members of staff work hard to operate a carefully planned transition process. This involves regular and extensive liaison with primary schools and a programme of activities within Highfields during year 6, and earlier. This has a great track record of ensuring a happy and positive start to secondary education.

Feeder Primary Schools

We have students who join us from our following feeder primary schools:

Darley Dale Primary School
Darley Churchtown Primary School
South Darley Primary School
Winster Primary School
Elton Primary School
Castle View Primary School
St Giles Primary School
Tansley Primary School
All Saints Junior School
Holy Trinity Primary School
Lea Primary School
St Joseph's Primary School

In addition to this we have a number of children attending Highfields from primaries outside of catchment as well as student joining mid-year from other secondary schools.



Pastoral care

Highfields is recognised for the quality of the pastoral care and guidance (both academic and emotional) which the school offers and the care of all our students is our highest priority. Our focus is the safety, happiness and achievement of all students through individual care and guidance, a stimulating learning environment, a relevant and accessible curriculum and high quality educational experiences.

Good behaviour and relationships are based on courtesy and common sense. We expect students to attend school to learn and standards of behaviour must enable teaching and learning to take place.

Tutors meet with their forms on a daily basis during registration and are involved with maintaining high standards of attendance, punctuality, behaviour and uniform. Student progress is monitored carefully during each term with regular progress reports and parent consultation evenings.

Each year group also have their own dedicated year manager and head of year who can be contacted to discuss any concerns.

Home / School Agreement

Students, parents/carers and the school together will work in partnership to:

- Support and work within all school policies and procedures
- Ensure and promote regular, punctual attendance
- Support and respect policies promoting acceptable behaviour within the school community
- Ensure that homework is set regularly, is appropriate to the age and ability of the student and is completed and assessed
- Maintain an ongoing communication concerning the student's progress, issues or concerns that impact on the student's life within school
- Adhere to the school's uniform code



Attendance and punctuality

As a school we are committed to ensuring that each student gains the most from school through maximum possible attendance.



When absence does occur form tutors will expect communication from parents/carers giving the reason. Your co-operation in this matter is requested so that unnecessary telephone calls from year managers can be avoided. We also ask parents/carers to make every effort to arrange medical and other appointments out of school hours.

Students are expected to be punctual. Being late for registration will be officially recorded in registers and may incur a detention. Having registered at school, no student will be allowed to leave the premises without our permission.

In September 2013 the Education Regulations came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests should be completed on the 'Application for Leave of Absence under Special Circumstances' document which can be requested from the school office or downloaded from our website. This must be completed in advance of the leave of absence and the headteacher must be satisfied there are exceptional circumstances that warrant the leave requested and will confirm whether or not the leave has been granted prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made. You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

School expectations, rewards & consequences

Good behaviour is vital to students' progress and achievement in school as well as developing personal responsibility in the community. The school has robust systems to ensure that lesson time is used productively and that our happy and inclusive ethos is preserved.



We have a range of consequences which students will incur when they behave poorly towards themselves or others.

The rewards system recognises the work done by students in lessons and at home, their behaviour in lessons and around school and for their contribution to extra-curricular activities.



Mobile phone policy

Highfields School implements a no mobile phone policy on both our lower school and upper school sites. We have always strongly believed students need to establish good face-to-face interpersonal relationships with one another and with the staff that teach them in order to be happy and successful in school and the wider world.

We have worked hard to ensure as students join our school from a large number of primaries that they have regular opportunities to interact socially in order to build new friendships and to nurture longstanding friendships at a time of change. This would not happen if our students were interacting through screens. As a result of this they regularly report to us that they feel safe, happy and included.

This is important for all students but particularly those with additional needs who find social interactions more challenging. We are also aware that students who struggle with their mental health also need regular interactions with their peers and trusted adults to feel safe and connected to the world.

We recognise that many parents and carers wish their children to carry a mobile phone for their personal safety and for that reason we do not plan to ban them entirely from our school sites. They will not be permitted to be in use from 8.30am-3.30pm. During the school day the expectation will be that mobile phones will be switched off and in their bag / locker. However, we stress that the school accepts no responsibility for any phones which are lost. Should a student bring a mobile phone in to communicate with parents/carers on their way to/from school, the phone is the student's responsibility.

Student assessment data

Parents/carers will be given assessment data relating to their son/daughter's progress at three points during the academic year and have the opportunity to attend a parents' consultation evening annually to meet subject teachers.

Safeguarding policy

Highfields School fully recognises its responsibilities for Child Protection and Safeguarding.

For full details of our Safeguarding Policy please visit the school website. This policy can be accessed via the key information page below:

www.highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk/keyinformation.html

Homework

Homework helps students become independent learners. It helps them to consolidate their work, test their understanding, extend, deepen and strengthen their learning.





All students are required to do homework and we hope that you will encourage your child by providing a quiet space at home and by taking an interest in what they are doing. All students have access to 'Show My Homework' which is an online tool to help students and parents/carers keep track of homework. 'Show My Homework' helps improve organisation, time management and helps students keep on top of their workload. Parents/carers can also see details of the tasks set, the submission status and grades. All homework is set electronically through the website rather than paper planners. If your child appears to have major problems with work at home, it helps us greatly if you let us know.

Communication

We work hard to ensure effective communication with parents/carers and provide a variety of ways of working in partnership to support your child's learning. During the year you will receive student assessment data and have the opportunity to attend a parent consultation evening to discuss your child's progress.



Highfields operates a home-school communication service that allows messages to be sent to parents/carers reliably by text and/or email. Parents/carers are informed of important or urgent messages (for example urgent school closure information during the severe weather conditions experienced in the past), also information and reminders of events taking place at school and notified immediately if a student is absent.

Students with special educational needs & disabilities

Children who meet the admissions criteria and for whom there is a place at the school are offered a place irrespective of their additional needs. We have high aspirations for all students and believe that through high quality teaching and support most students needs can be met and good progress can be made.

For those who have additional needs, we have experienced and trained staff to support them and to move them towards greater independence. This is the essence of our inclusion policy; all of our students receive a mainstream education and become independent learners. The ethos of the school ensures that every child matters, and that **all** students understand about the way **everyone** can make a positive contribution to society.

Our student support is carefully focused to make the most of the reduced funds that secondary schools now receive.

To ensure the safety of our students we have put in place individual fire safety plans. Through our school accessibility plan, we are moving towards adapting the buildings on both sites to accommodate students with physical disabilities.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) guidelines, all students with SEND are entitled to access arrangements for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 in public examinations after being tested



by a specialist teacher. This has led to many students being supported to fulfil their potential.

Any student may have difficulty with aspects of their school work at some time in their school career. Those who we identify as having additional needs will be given extra support. We may withdraw a student from lessons for extra tuition in a small group, provide extra teaching support or teaching assistant within the normal lesson. All staff monitor the work of the students they teach and discuss any problems with learning support staff as they arise.

The Local Authority supports our learning support staff through the services of specialist professionals who may suggest materials or teaching methods to help students who are having difficulty with their school work. They will not however follow up an individual student's progress without parental permission. The school works closely with other external agencies such as social care, school health, the local police and education welfare to ensure the best possible support is available to our students. These agencies meet regularly throughout the year to discuss the needs of individual students. Parental permission will be sought before any external agency is asked to work with a student.

The emotional and behavioural support teams provide support in the following areas:

- Students in danger of permanent exclusion
- Persistent non-attenders
- Students returning from exclusion
- Students with low self-esteem, problems with relationships, anger management issues
- Seriously disaffected students
- Those showing very challenging behaviour
- Those having difficulty coping with bereavement, family issues etc
- Students suffering from anxiety

If you are concerned about your child, you can contact the appropriate head of year or Mr Hodkin, our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator for an appointment.

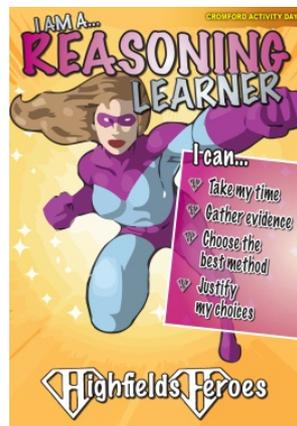
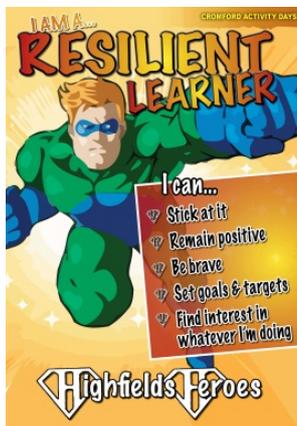
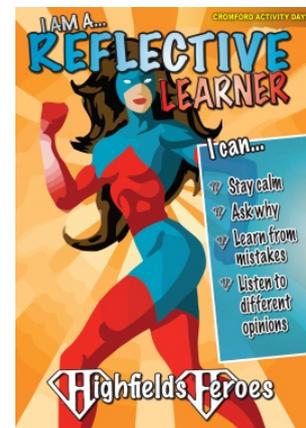


Teaching and learning

At Highfields School each teacher is expected to use the training and resources that the school offers to hone and perfect their classroom delivery. We aim to evaluate evidence about the effectiveness of different teaching strategies and constantly adapt our approach in light of this evidence. Teachers are learners.



The individuality of students is recognised and celebrated. A personalised approach to learning is used to ensure students are fully engaged, inspired and independent in the learning process. Activities are differentiated to accommodate individualised needs; independent learning is encouraged throughout the curriculum and students take responsibility for many aspects of their work. Students and staff are encouraged to focus on students' approach to learning and a framework is provided in the form of the 5Rs.



The use of technology is widespread and students are supported with a range of stimulating resources, including those available on our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The VLE provides a diversity of subject materials accessible from both within school and from home.

Written and verbal feedback is consistently provided to direct student learning. Strengths are highlighted and formative 'next steps' are clearly explained to facilitate improvement. Students are expected to act upon supplied feedback and their progress is monitored carefully.



Curriculum

The curriculum is everything – it is the sum of the whole student experience. It is not solely about qualifications and courses, though these play a vital role at its heart. Our curriculum is broad and bold, ambitious and rich, in order to meet our core aim of inspiring every individual to be the best they can be.



The Highfields curriculum is designed to engage and challenge all students to achieve their fabulous potential. We aim to inspire confident, considerate, knowledgeable and creative young people, who enjoy and appreciate the value of learning. We seek to develop young people who are equipped to live happy and fulfilling lives in a dynamic and rapidly changing world. Highfields students should be ready to make positive contributions as responsible citizens within our vibrant and diverse society.

Our curriculum seeks to deliver and develop:

- opportunities to learn, to lead, to create, to participate, to contribute, to be enterprising, to enable all students to find something that they enjoy are good at
- excellent experiences – inside and outside the classroom
- strong, embedded knowledge and understanding across a spectrum of areas
- high levels of literacy and numeracy – so that all students able to communicate fluently and apply key skills across all areas of learning
- confident, independent learners – who value learning and who are:
 - resilient - seeking challenge and able to deal with set-backs, seeing them as opportunities
 - responsible - able to manage their own learning, whether working alone or in a team
 - reflective - responsive to feedback, continually seeking ways to improve
 - resourceful - creative, able to approach problems in different ways
 - reasoning - able to think things through and reach well supported conclusions
- sensitive awareness of current issues, and ability to contribute to them through thoughtful discussion and well-judged action
- young people who model values of respect and tolerance, who value democracy and rule of law
- strong, sophisticated understanding of, and engagement with, equality and diversity in modern society
- an appreciation of beauty, a sense of awe and wonder, intelligent engagement with spiritual and moral discourse.



All students in years 7 to 11 follow the **national curriculum** which is divided into core and foundation subjects:

- **Core subjects** - English, mathematics and science.
- **Foundation subjects** - art, computing, dance, drama, geography, history, modern foreign languages (Spanish, French, German), music, physical education, philosophy and religious studies, technology (including design) and personal, social and health education which includes citizenship.

Key Stage 3 curriculum (years 7, 8 and 9)

Students in years 7, 8 and 9 follow a broadly-based curriculum which includes all the core and foundation subjects. Students are assessed on a regular basis throughout the key stage.

All subjects except mathematics are taught initially in mixed ability groups in year 7 but we gradually introduce setting by ability in several other subjects. In years 7 and 8 all students study dance and have the option of further dance lessons in year 9. In year 9 students have an opportunity to study a second foreign language.

On the following pages heads of department provide a brief introduction to the subjects they are so passionate about teaching. To find out more please view our KS3 curriculum guide that gives additional detailed information about what students learn and examples of students' work though our virtual learning studio (links are given at the end of this booklet and on our website).

Key Stage 4 curriculum (years 10 and 11)

Within the national curriculum students continue to study a broad range of subjects until the end of year 11. All students study English (language and literature), mathematics, science and philosophy & religious studies at GCSE level.

Additional subjects are offered within an option system and during year 9 the school helps students to make the best possible subject choices for their Key Stage 4 studies. This is done in conjunction with parents, careers advisors and subject staff.

Students have access to a broad range of GCSE subjects and a number of BTEC courses and there is an extremely successful programme of sports leadership courses offered within school, enabling students of all abilities to gain additional qualifications across a variety of sporting activities.



Highfields Sixth Form

Key Stage 5 curriculum (sixth form)

In the sixth form, a range of qualifications and new subjects are open to students. There is also an opportunity for sixth form students to undertake an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

Further information on the sixth form can be obtained by contacting the sixth form team. A separate prospectus detailing all aspects of the sixth form is available from school, or can be viewed on sixth form page of the school website (www.highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk).

Results and resilience

Never, ever give up. That could be the motto for some inspiring stories amongst our A Level students who left in summer 2020, at the end of the strangest year in education. Amelia achieved her ambition to study veterinary medicine, having stayed on to take year 14. Although she didn't apply in year 13, and there were times when she thought it might never be possible, through real hard work and perseverance she has made it. She was joined by Egan and Rose, whose own journeys to veterinary medical school were not straightforward but were all the happier in the end, given the preceding uncertainty. Following a similar route to Amelia, Millie finally achieved her goal of a place to study medicine through hard graft.

Connor joined Highfields sixth form from Tibshelf School. Due to one of the most unjust decisions we've ever come across, he was unable to take up a place to study law at Durham in 2019, but it proved a blessing in disguise. Connor, in his typically humble and extremely hard-working attitude, took a further year of study at Highfields and ended up being offered a place at Oxford to study law. He made it, and is heading there this autumn. Connor kindly emailed us recently to say, *"It was something of an unexpected situation last year; however, what it showed me was both the empathetic approach which Highfields sixth form has and also its unwavering support attitude of its students. These qualities have helped me immensely over the past few years and are ones which I wish to carry with me, as I move forward on to the next stage of my life. These are values which are not just superficial, but really lived out by everyone involved in the sixth form."*

A number of year 13 students secured high quality apprenticeships, following a lot of effort in the selection process in the 2019-20 cycle. Unfortunately some have fallen through, but we know that those students will show the same resilient spirit which will be important to so many people in these challenging times.

Despite the roller-coaster nature of the results season, there was at least the good news that 87% of our students who wanted to go to university this September had their first choice place confirmed on results day itself, without having to wait for the new grades to be issued. The remaining students all achieved good places through clearing.



High achievement this year has been the culmination of many years of very hard work, and there are too many examples to mention, but they include the following students who all achieved A*A*A*: Arden (English, Oxford), Jack (maths, Durham), Lucy (physics, Manchester), Robert (maths, Nottingham), Amy (biochemistry, Bristol). A final mention goes to Charlie who made so many memorable films for Highfields, and managed to span the disciplines, with A* and A in maths and further maths, plus A* in film studies and A in German and is heading to York to study film and TV production.

Our year 13 and 14 students have been great fun and a pleasure to work with. Given the difficult twists and turns of spring and summer, they handled situations with remarkable patience and we wish them the very best of luck over the next few years. We know they have the qualities to handle whatever challenges and opportunities they find ahead.

Mr Flett
Director of Sixth Form

If you would like further information about the sixth form, please see our website for the latest prospectus or contact the sixth form via the school office.



Curriculum Subjects

Art

Miss Fairbank - Head of Art

We believe that art is a vital and integral part of a child's education. It provides them with opportunities to develop a range of ways in which they can share and express their individual creativity, whilst learning about and making links with a wide spectrum of different types of art in our society. Art contributes to students' personal development in creativity, independence, judgement and self-reflection. Moreover, it enables students to develop a natural sense of wonder and curiosity about the world around them.

Our focus is in developing skills in drawing, painting and ceramics, with the overall aim of developing understanding, critical awareness and inspiration of art and design.

Understanding of the visual elements of art and design (line, tone, texture, colour, pattern, shape, 3D form) will be developed by providing an accessible and engaging curriculum that will enable student to reach their full potential.

Our curriculum allows students to:

- Develop the use of visual language by seeing, understanding, questioning and practising.
- Develop confidence in expressing and forming opinions whilst building an understanding of Art and Design throughout history and in today's society.
- The Art curriculum is critical and contextual at its core. Artists, craftspeople and designers are used to underpin practical tasks to support, develop and allow students to question.
- Investigate ideas through visual language.
- Explore techniques, materials and ideas.
- Develop the ability to draw.

We aim to produce students who demonstrate strong resilience and perseverance and are engaged in their creative process. In addition, students should demonstrate that they can work independently, are able to organise their time, materials and equipment, and can demonstrate their use of visual language with growing confidence. Evidence of this is developed in sketchbooks and high quality artwork produced is often used in displays.



Computing

Mrs Hadfield – Head of Computing

Computers are now part of everyday life and, for most of us, technology is essential to our lives, at home and at work. 'Computational thinking' is a skill that all students must learn if they are to be ready for the workplace and able to participate effectively in the digital world.

Computing lessons are designed to equip students with the foundational skills, knowledge and understanding of computing they will need for the rest of their lives. Through the programme of study for computing, they will learn how computers and computer systems work, they will design and build programs, they will develop their ideas using technology, and create a range of digital content.

Dance

Miss Bonsall – Head of Drama & Dance

The fundamental objectives of the dance department at Highfields School are based on a profound belief in the importance of dance both as an academic and vocational discipline within the school curriculum, and as an important foundation stone for living a confident and healthy life beyond the confines of education.

The specific aims of the dance department are based around four key ideas that we have identified as vital to meeting our objectives:

1. **Confidence** – as a department we aim to build the confidence of students in a variety of ways, including their ability to perform in front of others, share their own ideas and interpretations with people they may never have worked with before, lead a group task or try something new. Many students also develop a confidence in their own ability and take this further by taking part in the wider performing arts within the school.
2. **Cross-curricular** - we wish to transmit deep knowledge and understanding of social, moral, historical and cultural context, not just locally, but both within the United Kingdom and the wider world. Students will learn about a variety of dance styles from around the world, as well as dance by disabled performers or those they wouldn't necessarily expect to have success in dance.
3. **Create** - it is our aim to allow students to be creative, expressive and inventive, as well as gaining inspiration from theorists, choreographers and practitioners. We also hope that students continuously develop life skills such as critical thinking, evaluating, analysing, empathising and communicating; there are very few jobs that do not require these skills.
4. **Celebrate** – students should view dance and performing as a fun and interesting subject. All teachers within the department love and value the study of dance, its technique and its history. We want students to match this enthusiasm, generating an interest in dance and gaining cultural experiences that will remain with them for life.



We also want them to celebrate their love of shared learning and group work, working alongside peers and developing rapport with staff and classmates.

Students will experience engaging, challenging and interesting lessons based on British and world dance, or using a stimulus from history, poetry, art or society issues/news. These lessons will equip them with the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to succeed not just in written and practical examinations but beyond the classroom; creating well rounded, empathetic, considerate students who are confident in meeting the demands of modern life, as they are able to understand the world around them and the people they share it with. Students will experience trips to the theatre, dance classes/conventions, residential trips to London and can partake in extra-curricular activities at lunch-time and after school, should they wish.

The most important skills we wish to develop are those of listening, communicating and empathising. The ability to think imaginatively is the most fundamental skill to develop, but in order to express ideas, students must also be able to communicate effectively; within their group/company and for their audience.

Design & Technology

Miss Morris – Head of D&T

In our department we believe that a high-quality design and technology education makes an essential contribution, not only across the school curriculum but develops life-long skills that contribute to the creativity, culture, wealth and well-being of society as a whole.

We aim to encourage students to use their individual creativity and skills to design and make products that solve real world problems within a range of contexts, understanding their own needs and the needs of others. We want to encourage them to take risks and to become independent and innovative problem solvers. Through the evaluation of past and present design, technology, engineering and food products and systems, they develop a critical understanding of its impact on daily life and the wider world.

Students will learn:

- to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world
- to learn from wider influences on design, technology & engineering and food preparation and nutrition including historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic factors
- skills required for independent learning and development and the skills to be confident designers and practitioners
- a range of generic and transferable skills across sectors
- the ability to solve problems
- Understand how designers and manufacturers have a responsibility to make products sustainably
- To be creative and innovative in their designing and experimentation and understand that ideas that fail in the initial stages are learning experiences and part of product development



To achieve these aims, we provide a stimulating, well-resourced environment where students can see excellent examples of past students' design and practical work. They are taught by staff who communicate their enthusiasm and passion for designing and making, able to inspire awe and wonder with new processes and technology, relevant to a 21st century workplace and workforce. We also develop their ability to communicate their ideas with confidence through their drawing skills and written work. We use a range of scaffolded literacy that improves the students' ability to express themselves from simple description to higher level analytical language.

Drama

Miss Bonsall – Head of Drama & Dance

The fundamental objectives of the drama department at Highfields School are based on a profound belief in the importance of drama both as an academic and vocational discipline within the school curriculum, and as an important foundation stone for living a confident and successful life beyond the confines of education.

The specific aims of the drama department are based around four key ideas that we have identified as vital to meeting our objectives:

1. **Confidence** – as a department we aim to build the confidence of students in a variety of ways including their ability to speak in front of others, share their own ideas and interpretations with people they may never have worked with before, lead a group task or try something new. Many students also develop a confidence in their own ability and take this further by taking part in the wider performing arts within the school.
2. **Cross-curricular** - we wish to transmit deep knowledge and understanding of social, moral, historical and cultural context, not just locally, but both within the United Kingdom and the wider world.
3. **Create** - it is our aim to allow students to be creative and inventive, as well as gaining inspiration from theorists and practitioners. We also hope that students continuously develop life skills such as critical thinking, evaluating, analysing, empathising and communicating; there are very few jobs that do not require these skills.
4. **Celebrate** – students should view drama and performing as a fun and interesting subject. All teachers within the department love and value the study of theatre and its history. We want students to match this enthusiasm, generating an interest in theatre and gaining cultural experiences that will remain with them for life. We also want them to celebrate their love of shared learning and group work, working alongside peers and developing rapport with staff and classmates.

Students will experience engaging, challenging and interesting lessons based on British and world theatre or using a stimulus from history or society issues/news. These lessons will equip them with the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to succeed not just in written and practical examinations but beyond the classroom; creating well rounded,



empathetic, considerate students who are confident in meeting the demands of modern life, as they are able to understand the world around them and the people they share it with. Students will experience trips to the theatre, including residential trips to London and can partake in extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school, should they wish.

The most important skills we wish to develop are those of listening, communicating and empathising. The ability to think imaginatively is the most fundamental skill to develop, but in order to express ideas, students must also be able to communicate effectively; within their group/company and for their audience.

English

Mr Key – Head of English

Our key stage 3 English curriculum aims to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping students with a strong command of the written word. We want students to develop a love of literature and our main goal is for students to enjoy studying English at Highfields.

Reading

- **We aim to help students develop an appreciation and a love of reading.**
Teachers choose a variety of novels, plays and poems to cover with their classes relating to different themes such as 'sci-fi' and 'fearsome and frightening'. Texts cover a range of literature which includes two Shakespeare plays across the key stage.
In year 7, we also allow curriculum time for students to work on Accelerated Reader. Accelerated Reader guides children to read more challenging material independently.
- **We aim to equip students with the confidence and knowledge to comprehend and analyse texts.**
Teachers plan a variety of activities to support and challenge students to read texts independently, critically and analytically. We introduce students to new vocabulary and help them to gain an understanding of how words are formed to help them decode texts accurately. Our work on Let's Think in English encourages students to use debate and discussion to build confidence in approaching texts. We use these 'LTE' texts to work on students' understanding of writers' methods and think more deeply about why a writer has chosen to use these techniques.
- **We aim to build students' understanding of contextual issues to help their understanding of texts.**
Through a series of cultural capital, we hope to build students' knowledge to help them to place texts in history and further understand the themes and issues they present.

Writing

- **We aim to help students to write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for a range of different purposes.**
Throughout key stage 3, we teach students a variety of forms of writing such as essays, stories, poems and arguments. We allow weekly opportunities for students to write different forms of writing for different purposes and audiences. The focus for our



teachers is to give specific and accurate feedback in the form of 'next steps'. These allow individual students to improve their writing and build the skills over the key stage in order to produce effective and accurate writing at GCSE. We also focus on introducing students to writers' methods and techniques with a view to students using these effectively in their own writing.

- **We aim to improve students' knowledge of vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and grammar.**

Every week the students will have one lesson of 'writing next steps'. These lessons focus on teaching students a certain writing 'skill', a weekly spelling test, vocabulary challenge and students producing short pieces of writing. We hope to help every student understand how to improve the accuracy of their writing by focusing on personalised and specific feedback.

Spoken Language

- **We aim to help students build skills and confidence in spoken language.**

Students are expected to speak confidently in a range of contexts including classroom discussion, debate, speeches and presentations.

Geography

Mrs Barker – Head of Geography

The fundamental objectives of the geography department at Highfields School are based on a profound belief in the importance of geography both as an academic discipline within the school curriculum, and as an important foundation stone for living a productive and successful life beyond the confines of compulsory education.

The specific aims of the geography department are based around four key ideas that we have identified as vital to meeting our objectives:

1. **Enjoy** - students should view geography as a fun and interesting subject. All teachers within the department love and value the study of the Earth and its varied landscapes, and we want students to match this enthusiasm, generating an interest in the world that will remain with them for life.
2. **Educate** - we wish to transmit deep knowledge and understanding of the Earth, its landscapes and the physical and human processes that shape it, not just locally, but both within the United Kingdom and the wider world.
3. **Equip** - it is our aim that students continuously develop life skills such as critical thinking, evaluating, analysing, empathising and communicating; there are very few jobs that do not require these skills.
4. **Excel** – by becoming excellent geographers, we are ensuring that they succeed and perform to the best of their abilities in these measures, providing them with as many opportunities and life choices as possible.



Students will experience fun, interesting lessons on aspects of physical and human geography, as well as skills related to maps and data handling in addition to fieldwork skills, that challenge them on a regular basis. These lessons will equip them with the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to succeed not just in examinations but beyond the classroom; creating well rounded, empathetic, considerate students who are confident in meeting the demands of modern life, as they are able to understand the world around them and the people they share it with.

It is important for students to recognise the characteristics of a range of different landscapes, the natural processes that shape these landscapes and to understand the ways in which people interact with landscape – both positively and negatively. Students should have an appreciation that we live in a privileged region of the world, and that other places are less fortunate; this is as a result of our position in a globalised world, driven by flows of people, ideas and culture, technology and money. Students should acquire the ability to offer balanced views about what makes places different and how we can address some of the 'big issues' occurring at a range of scales. Students should be angry about the rate of climate change and be able to understand why some people need to migrate to survive, whilst others choose to do so in order to improve their standard of living for them and their immediate family.

To address these issues and develop understanding of landscape, the most important skills we wish to develop are those of thinking and communicating as well as practical fieldwork skills. The ability to think objectively is the most fundamental skill to develop, but in order to express ideas, students must also be able to communicate effectively. Students of geography are judged by their literacy and numeracy skills and so, in an increasingly non-literary world, it is our responsibility, along with other subjects, to instil the gift of developing written communication as well as the confidence to manipulate 'big and small data' (some of which they will have collected themselves in the field) in order to draw and substantiate conclusions.

As a department, therefore, we want our students to understand the world through empathising and critically assessing people and places so that they can develop their own views, in this way they develop their own critical thinking and ability to argue both logically and lucidly.

"The study of geography is about more than just memorising places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And in the end, it's about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together."

President Barack Obama



History

Mr Copeland – Head of History

The fundamental objectives of the history department at Highfields School are based on a profound belief in the importance of history both as an academic discipline within the school curriculum, and as an important foundation stone for living a productive and successful life beyond the confines of compulsory education.

The specific aims of the history department are based around four key ideas that we have identified as vital to meeting our objectives:

1. **Enjoy** - students should view history as a fun and interesting subject. All teachers within the department love and value the study of the past, and we want students to match this enthusiasm, generating an interest in the past that will remain with them for life.
2. **Educate** - we wish to transmit deep knowledge and understanding of the past, not just locally, but both within the United Kingdom and the wider world.
3. **Equip** - it is our aim that students continuously develop life skills such as critical thinking, evaluating, analysing, empathising and communicating; there are very few jobs that do not require these skills.
4. **Excel** – by becoming excellent historians we are ensuring that they succeed in perform to the best of their abilities in these measures, providing them with as many opportunities and life choices as possible.

Students will experience fun, interesting lessons on local, British and world history, that challenge them on a regular basis. These lessons will equip them with the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to succeed not just in examinations but beyond the classroom; creating well rounded, empathetic, considerate students who are confident in meeting the demands of modern life, as they able to understand the world around them and the people they share it with.

It is important for students to realise that there were people here before them and that these people, though similar to us in many ways, were also very different. Students should have an appreciation that the past is not just a number of events that happened to other people, but events that would have happened to us had we been born at a different time. To this end, students should not acquire the ability to simply judge people, but to try and empathise with people so that we can understand them. Students should be angry with slavery or be able to understand why some women in the last century gave their life in order to have the right to vote. We should also encourage students to empathise as to why people supported individuals such as Hitler. Simply knowing that events happened is not enough.

To this end, the most important skills we wish to develop are those of thinking and communicating. The ability to think imaginatively is the most fundamental skill to develop, but in order to express ideas, students must also be able to communicate effectively; after all, it is no good having a good idea if you cannot tell anyone about it. Students of history are judged by their literacy skills and so, in an increasingly non-literary world, it is our



responsibility, along with other subjects, to instill the gift of developing written communication.

As a department, therefore, we want our students to understand the past through empathising and critically assessing events so that they can develop their own views on which explanations they think seem most convincing. In this way they develop their own critical thinking and ability to argue both logically and lucidly.

Maths

Miss Wallhead – Head of Maths

Maths forms an integral part of our everyday lives. Within the department we are determined that students not only understand the importance and relevance of what they are learning but that they enjoy the subject as well.

Our curriculum aims to support the development of our students' understanding, turning them into confident mathematicians that enjoy challenge. We want to stretch our students so that they ask well thought out questions, pushing for a deeper understanding of the topics covered.

Our curriculum is structured to help students achieve success, allowing them to build upon previous knowledge. It will teach them how to approach problems logically, a skill which is key in adult life. It will teach them how to deconstruct a multi-step question so that it is more manageable and less intimidating.

We aim to:

- give students confidence in their numeracy skills and develop the ability to identify the different topics involved within a question.
- help students build resilience, encouraging them to try a different approach if their first attempt was unsuccessful, asking them to be brave and have a go.
- remove the fear of maths and empower our students to enjoy the subject without feeling nervous about getting something wrong.
- deliver engaging and challenging lessons covering all aspects of mathematics, including number, algebra, data handling and shape. This will provide a solid base for them to build upon in future years.

Modern Foreign Languages

Mrs Bowen – Head of MFL

Languages are a window on the world. We want our students to grow an understanding of other cultures and equip them with the skills they need to learn a foreign language. We want every Highfields student to be a confident linguist. We want to instill a love of languages and curiosity about the way they work. We aim to teach students how to listen and read effectively and pick out key information, how to pronounce words, how to construct sentences and ask questions, how to express opinions both written and orally and communicate effectively. Students will develop a knowledge of grammar and grammatical concepts and will be able to translate accurately into and out of the foreign language.



We have an expert staff team, all of whom have lived abroad which gives them a deep understanding of other cultures which they share with students. Our team of native language assistants help students to develop their speaking skills and gives them an 'authentic' experience.

Your child will be assigned either French, German or Spanish in year 7. They will continue this language into year 8. In year 9 students continue with their first language and will be able to choose a second language from the other two languages on offer. For example, if your child studies French in year 7 and 8, they will choose between Spanish and German in year 9. This gives students an opportunity to explore a different language and culture ahead of making their GCSE options choices in year 9.

Due to the quality of our lessons and staff, the proportion of students who choose to take a language at GCSE at Highfields is well above the national average, as are our results. Students at GCSE and A Level have the opportunity to participate in one of our very popular language trips to destinations such as Paris, Lyon, Berlin, Munich, Malaga and Madrid. We also have very strong uptake in all three languages at A Level, with over 20 students in our current A Level Spanish cohort. Highfields students have gone on to study languages at universities across the country and have subsequently studied all over Europe, South America and the Far East.

Music

Mr Rowley – Head of Music

Music offer a broad musical experience that encompasses performance, composition and appraising skills. This is achieved by embedding these processes into all of our distinct schemes of work and, in doing so, provide students with the opportunity to extend their studies into KS4 and beyond. Concurrent to this we aim to inspire and develop within our students a love and appreciation of music, and in doing so increase their levels of self-confidence, creativity and resilience as learners.

Students should be familiar with a range of notations, be able to musically appraise their own and others' work, perform confidently on an instrument of their choice, be able to improvise and compose and have gained an understanding of a range of musical styles and traditions.

Through the study of music at KS3 it is hoped that students have developed skills applicable to their wider learning – self-discipline (through practice and rehearsal), risk-taking (through public performance), imaginativeness and innovation (through improvisation and composition), empathy, listening and communication skills (through ensemble performance and appraisal) as well as wider cultural awareness.

PE

Mr Shirtcliffe – Head of PE

The core aim of our KS3 curriculum in physical education at Highfields School it to create an enthusiasm for sport that will last a lifetime.



In key stage 3 we offer a broad and balanced curriculum to all our learners to ensure students understand the value of physical activity. We want each student to find their own area in which they feel empowered and can develop further. Students have the opportunity to experience a range of sports and activities aimed at improving physical literacy, competency as well understanding the importance of leading a healthy active lifestyle.

The KS3 curriculum has been developed to create strategic opportunities for students to develop their resilience, team working skills and leadership skills, this is delivered through my Personal Best which allows students to focus, evaluate and set next steps based on the principles of Social me, Thinking me and This is me (mental, personal and social development):

Term 1 - develop rules and expectations and self-management

Term 2 - develop innovation and self-motivation

Term 3 - develop motivating and influencing others and responsibility/integrity

Term 4 - develop collaboration

Term 5 - develop evaluation and communication

Term 6 - develop resilience and empathy

Therefore, we place great value on PE's role in providing both sporting and character education and work hard to ensure that our KS3 programme succeeds in providing students with skills and knowledge they will find invaluable in adulthood. Through experience we believe that the best way to teach the core skills and knowledge is through practical activities which capture the students from the start of the lesson right to the end with both supportive and challenging tasks.

Our KS3 curriculum in PE is distinct from our KS4 provision, as the greater breadth and balance of our KS3 is underpinned by our belief that KS3 PE has its own unique value in embedding a broad spectrum of skills that can be transferred into all aspects of school and home life. Nevertheless, our KS3 does facilitate transition onto sporting pathways appropriate to the individual student at KS4 and most importantly is aimed at engendering an appreciation of physical activity that will last a lifetime and the broader benefits of physical activity.

Philosophy & Religious Studies

Mr Platts – Head of PRS

PRS is taught to all students as a core provision and allows students to:

- understand themselves
- build knowledge about different faiths
- understand others and develop empathy
- develop strong awareness of our ever changing multi-cultural society
- explore complex moral issues and understand different viewpoints on them
- develop wider skills – the ability to construct reasoned arguments, develop opinions and listen to others
- be aware of sensitive issues and how to appropriately discuss these in an environment of tolerance



Year 7 students will gain a greater understanding of themselves and develop an understanding of the six main faiths and humanism. They will have a broad overview of the issues of life and death and begin to evaluate them. Students will develop a more sophisticated understanding of Islamic and Christian beliefs eg, Sunni and Shia. By year 9 students are applying more detailed knowledge on Christianity and Islam and increasing their knowledge on beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity and Islam.

PSHE

Mrs Turner - Life & Work Skills Co-ordinator

PSHE is a subject through which students develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to keep themselves healthy and safe and prepared for life and work. The curriculum which is delivered on a spiral basis aims to develop skills and attributes such as resilience, self-esteem, risk management, teamworking and critical thinking in the context of the three core themes: health and wellbeing, relationships and living in the wider world community including careers and economic wellbeing.

The personal nature of PSHE education means that it can't be assessed in the same way as most other subjects. It is however possible to recognise and evidence progress and attainment in the knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes PSHE strives to develop.

Science

Mrs Morgan – Head of Science

Our curriculum is designed to equip students with a sound knowledge of science that is required to understand its uses and profound implications. We seek to inspire curiosity and open students' eyes to the presence of science in all aspects of our lives. We need our young people to be scientifically literate; this is an essential part of the cultural capital required for them to lead informed and fulfilling lives. Many will take science into further study and we raise awareness of the variety of future STEM careers. Science encompasses all disciplines, including numeracy, literacy, ethics and history. It can inform us about the past and equip us for the future. We enthuse students by engaging them in meaningful practical activities that help them develop a passion for science and appreciation of its breadth. We link our learning to the 'real world' as far as possible. Through our curriculum students acquire an awareness of environmental issues and the impact of their own and behaviour. We respond to issues as they arise and encourage students to explore new areas of scientific discovery and applications.

We have a proud history of inclusion in science which regularly results in 50 - 60% of students choosing to take triple science as an option at KS4. Success and enthusiasm in science at GCSE feeds into a high number of students choosing science in the sixth form. In the sixth form we offer biology, chemistry, physics and geology 'A' Levels in which we have a strong record of academic success and progress into Further and Higher Education. Each year our Y13 students proceed into highly sought after places on degree level Apprenticeships, Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science and many other pure and applied science courses at Russell Group universities. More than this our students leave us as self – motivated independent learners accustomed to high academic standards, interested in the world around them and their place in it.



Extra-curricular opportunities

There are a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities in school. These play a vital role in ensuring a rounded and wide-ranging education. They are invaluable in developing confidence, engagement, social skills and leadership.

Within performing arts students are encouraged to perform for a wide range of audiences, work with visiting professionals and attend trips to arts events. Equally many other subject areas, such as science, maths, technology and art operate extra-curricular extension and enrichment sessions on a regular basis throughout the year. For many students, the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme has become a natural and increasingly popular choice at three award levels (Gold, Silver and Bronze).

Talented students in sport are able to develop their expertise in terms of both leadership and performance. The school offers a selection of highly successful accredited sports leadership programmes including the Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership (formerly JSLA), the Level 2 Award in Community Sports Leadership (CSLA) and the Level 3 Award in Higher Sports Leadership (HSLA). We are proud to hold the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service for sports partnership work by groups in the community.

In the sixth form, students are given the opportunity to complete an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). This qualification is based on a research topic chosen by the student. Topics have been varied and have ranged from a classical guitar composition to a project researching the effectiveness of gene therapy. There is a taught element to the qualification which is based around enhancing research and report presentation skills. However, the majority of research and thesis production is left to the student, with each student assigned a staff mentor for guidance and support. The qualification enables students to demonstrate their independent learning skills to University admissions and often forms the basis of interviews.



Performing arts opportunities

Highfields offers a number of distinctive features and benefits for students. In addition to the range of foundation subjects at Key Stage 3 prescribed by the national curriculum, which includes music, students at Highfields also have one period per week of drama in years 7, 8 and 9. This encourages personal self-confidence, creativity and the capacity to work co-operatively to produce high quality presentations, evaluating their own and others' work. Dance is also an important subject within the curriculum, with lessons for all students in years 7 and 8, and a high take-up as an option in year 9. In music there is a great deal of use of music technology in the delivery of the subject, using the most up-to-date software packages to reinforce core skills and provide scope for composition and recording utilising Highfields' purpose-built recording studio.

At Key Stage 4 music, dance and drama recruit strongly to optional courses, and this provides a firm foundation for advanced level study where Highfields offers courses in music, music technology, dance and drama and theatre studies. A modern drama studio and highly equipped recording studio at Lumsdale offers students good facilities to refine their skills, and Starkholmes site has an excellent drama/dance space with a sprung floor.

Teaching in all the arts subjects is undertaken by well-qualified specialists, supported by visiting professionals who deliver workshops and master classes. Peripatetic staff offer musical tuition covering a wide range of instruments, and the school has a strong tradition in folk music as well as offering jazz band, rock bands, woodwind groups and the school orchestra. There are numerous performance opportunities during the year including school concerts, dance evenings, junior showcase events, school play and musical. Students are also taken to see arts events, and benefit from visiting artists performing at the school.



Sport at Highfields



At Highfields we are passionate about children's involvement with sport and we are delighted to have our excellence in sport and PE recognised by the Association for Physical Education Quality Mark which we have held since 2017. We aim to educate our students in the enjoyment sport and PE have to offer, the health benefits an active lifestyle brings, and the personal and life skills sport and PE develop, such as leadership, teamwork and collaboration.

We are very proud of our sporting achievements and always strive for success in the sporting arena. When students show skill and ability in any area of sport we aim to support and guide them through curriculum, extra-curricular clubs and teams to nurture that talent with the aim of future success or at least lifelong participation.

Our students take a lot of pride when representing Highfields and are committed to becoming the best they can. We are competitive and have enjoyed growing success in a range of disciplines. Recent successes include becoming County champions in cyclo-cross, runners up in the County rounders, Derbyshire Dales champions in several athletic disciplines including 100m, hurdles, shot put and long jump to name a few. We had great success in the Derbyshire Dales Cross Country Championships with winners in varying age groups and several going on to represent Derbyshire Dales at County level, we have won the football County Cup in recent years and regularly made the semi-finals as well as compete well in national competitions and league fixtures.

Our netball teams have had many successes both in league fixtures and in County competitions finishing runners up in one age group, our rugby teams have competed well in both league and cup competitions with some victories along the way and we have been very competitive in both badminton and table tennis winning several games against other Dales schools.

One of our students represents the County and has met the Great Britain National Standard for discus and another has represented the County for long jump. In addition, we have County representation at football, cross country and netball to name a few.

Our students participate in a wide variety of sports and activities in educational, recreational and competitive situations. Our aim is to help guide our students to find a 'sport for life', by offering them a wide variety to choose from, across a broad spectrum of pathways. We encourage them to participate in new activities that they wouldn't otherwise get the opportunity to try.



David Marshall Sports Hall



The core aim of our key stage 3 PE curriculum is to create an enthusiasm for sport that will last a lifetime. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum to all our learners to ensure students understand the value of physical activity and can find their own area in which they feel empowered and can develop further. Students have the opportunity to experience a range of sports and activities aimed at improving physical competency as well understanding the importance of leading a healthy active lifestyle. The key stage 3 curriculum has been developed to create strategic opportunities for students to develop their resilience, team working skills and leadership skills. We place great value on PE's role in providing both sporting and character education and work hard to ensure that our programme succeeds in providing students with skills and knowledge they will find invaluable in adulthood.

Through experience we believe that the best way to teach the core skills and knowledge is through practical activities which capture the students from the start of the lesson right to the end with both supportive and challenging tasks. Our key stage 3 PE curriculum is distinct from our key stage 4 provision, as the greater breadth and balance of our KS3 is underpinned by our belief that KS3 PE has its own unique value in embedding a broad spectrum of skills that can be transferred into all aspects of school and home life. This does facilitate transition onto sporting pathways appropriate to the individual student at KS4 and most importantly is aimed at engendering an appreciation of physical activity that will last a lifetime and the broader benefits of physical activity. We also promote within the KS4 curriculum a well-being element and the importance of exercise for stress management and increasing brain function developed through physical literacy.

Youth Sport Trust Lead School

We are the Youth Sport Trust lead school and one of only 32 founding schools on the Well Schools Programme. By demonstrating our commitment to maintaining and developing the highest quality outcomes for PE and sport in our school, the Youth Sport Trust awarded Highfields Gold Partner Status.



Sports Leadership Academy

Our Sports Leadership Academy is recognised internationally as a beacon school (one of only three in the country) and received The Queen's Award for Voluntary Services because of its sports partnership work with the community. The Queen's Award is the highest honour that can be bestowed upon groups of this kind and is equivalent in status to the MBE.



Sports leadership is about helping people to develop through sporting, or at least practical activity, essential life and work skills such as communication, organisation and working with others and, at the same time, making a positive contribution to the community. To succeed as a sports leader, you do not need to be a sports star; all you need is an interest in your chosen activity, a positive attitude and a willingness to get stuck in. Sports leadership has roles for coaches, scorers, marshals, adjudicators and managers as well as players. We enable every student to become a young leader and make a difference not only in their own lives, but also of those of others in the community. We offer accredited courses from junior leaders up to Higher Sports Leaders Award (HSLA), equivalent to an A level qualification, offering a clear pathway in leadership. We inspire our students to get involved in local teams and clubs and pass their skills on to the benefit of others. These opportunities are available from year 7 and we have students who have used their sports leaders qualifications to pursue related careers, sports apprentices and sports development officer.



Highfields Sporting Alumni

Highfields ex-students who have been successful in sport include:

Stephanie Jackson-Horner

Stephanie represents GB in the triathlon. She is a National Aquathlon Champion runner up 2015 and qualified for European and World championships. Since taking up the sport Stephanie has only ever finished races in the top four positions.



Ellie Watton

Ellie pursued her hockey career on a full time basis making her first England appearance against South Africa in the Investec Challenge Cup in 2013 and continues her success in the GB hockey team.

Sam Mak

Sam holds several World, European and National titles in Wushu (Chinese Martial Arts) and has starred in film, TV, commercials, music videos, and most notably Sam was cast as an actor and stunt performer working alongside Simon Pegg in 'The World's End'.





Careers information, advice and guidance

We want our students to find a pathway in life which brings them joy and satisfaction. All students follow a structured careers programme from year 7 upwards. Students are given individual help at each stage, from choosing their subjects in year 9 to post-school destinations. Guidance and help are provided by the careers adviser, personal tutors and heads of year and related work is done in PSHE lessons. We ensure that every young person receives the appropriate support. This includes guiding students as they move on to college or work and giving advice and help to students who are facing difficulties with decision making, whether about personal choices or future careers. We hope that parents/carers will also be closely involved in this process. All students are expected to undertake a period of work experience in year 10. There are further opportunities for work experience and job shadowing in year 12.



Religious education

Religious education is part of the curriculum throughout the school. It plays a vital role in helping students to understand the diverse society in which they are growing up and accords with our values of equality, inclusion, respect and tolerance. It is taught in accordance with the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus. Parents/carers who wish to exercise their right, on religious grounds, to withdraw their child from these lessons should write to the headteacher. This also applies to parents/carers who do not wish their child to attend assembly, which may on occasions include a religious content.

Sex education

The biology of sex is covered in the lower school science course. Part of the PSHE programme in KS3 covers topics such as development at adolescence, relationships, family issues and a first look at contraception. Factual information about sexual reproduction also forms part of the national curriculum science course at Key Stage 4 and we hold a year 10 health day that covers sexually transmitted diseases.

As required by law, the programme of sex education is approved by the governors. Parents/carers who wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child from sex education lessons should write to the headteacher. This right does not include sex education where it forms part of the national curriculum.

Highfields School will regularly review its curriculum provision to ensure that every child is able to follow learning pathways tailored to suit his or her individual needs and talents.



Summer 2020 exam success

A level

	2017	2018	2019	2020 Provisional
% A*	11.6	8	8	12.5
% A*- A	33	22	31	35.7
% A*- B	57	52	57.1	61.8
% A*- E	99.4	98.9	99.1	100
ALPS Grade	3 (top 25%)	5	3 (top 25%)	N/A
Average points per candidate	132.60	106.99	113.17	119.05
Average points per entry	35.10	33.38	35.96	39.02
DfE Progress score (academic)	0.23	-0.05	0.13	N/A

Percentage of candidates achieving thresholds at GCSE and equivalent (provisional)

	2017	2018	2019	2020 provisional
Cohort size / %	209	160	179	203
Basics A*-C / 9-4 (English & Maths)	70.2	71.3	66.5	71.9
Basics 9-5 (English & Maths)	48.1	44.4	42.5	50.7
Ebacc (Standard pass 9-4)	29.8	28.1	22.9	24.1
Attainment 8	47.74	47.54	47.72	51.53
5 A*-C / 9-4 (inc English & Maths)	65.9	65.6	63.7	71.4
5 A*-G / 9-1	93.3	96.9	95.5	95.6
Ave Grade (Att8)	C	4.75	4.77	5.15
Progress 8	-0.32	-0.21	-0.10	N/A

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic there are no performance tables produced for summer 2020 results.



If you would like a breakdown of the results for all the subjects we offer, please contact the school office on 01629 581888.



School performance indicators

Rates of authorised and unauthorised absences

	2019-20*	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17
Percentage Authorised Absences	4.3%	4.5%	5.3%	4.4%
Percentage Unauthorised Absences	1.5%	1.4%	1.2%	1.0%
Total Attendance	94.2%	94.1%	93.5%	94.6%

**Registers closed early due to Covid-19 but this did not affect attendance. However the norovirus outbreak in term 2 did have an impact on the 2019-20 attendance figures.*

Destinations for sixth form leavers 2020

Our Year 13 Leavers in 2020 were typical of most years, with 86% gaining places at university (a further 6% are reapplying in 2019), 6% heading for apprenticeships or other work, and 2% continuing into Year 14 at Highfields. Students go to high quality degree courses at a great range of universities, with success at Oxbridge every year for more than a decade. In more recent years, with the start of higher and degree apprenticeships, students have been passed rigorous selection processes to gain places with Jaguar Land Rover, Balfour Beatty, AECOM and other major employers.

Destinations for year 11 leavers 2019

Out of a cohort of 178 students leaving year 11 in 2018-19, 164 students have a place in full time education (101 studying GCE A, AS or A2 levels, one studying NVQ Level 2 or equivalent, one studying GCSEs and 61 taking other full time education courses), one student is in other supported training and one student is taking part in voluntary and part time activities. We have no students currently not in education, employment or training and 12 students did not respond.

	Number of students			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Full-time Education	84	80	164	89.4%	95.2%	92.1%
Training	-	1	1	-	1.2%	0.6%
Employment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Voluntary/part-time activities	1	0	1	1.1%	-	0.6%
NEET	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unknown (not responded)	9	3	12	9.6%	3.6%	6.7%

School destinations for year 11 leavers in 2020 is not yet available.



Admissions

The governors will review each year the number of places which will be made available, based upon accommodation and staffing resources. In September 2021 we can admit up to 246 students into year 7. Under current legislation on school admissions, there is no automatic right to a place at a particular school. Admission to Highfields therefore depends on parents showing the school as their preference, on the form received via the primary school. Children will then be allocated a place at Highfields in the following order of priority:

1. Looked-after children.
2. Children living in the normal area served by the school at the time of application and admission (including those living in another local education authority's area). For a definition of "living in the normal area" see note below.
3. Children not living in the normal area served by the school but who have brothers or sisters attending the school at the time of their admission.
4. Other children whose parents/carers have requested a place.

Where, in the case of 3 or 4 above, choices have to be made between children satisfying the same criteria, those children living nearest to the school (measured by the nearest available route) will be given preference.

Students who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) who have learning difficulties and/or a physical or sensory impairment and whose special educational needs can best be met in the school will be given priority where so determined by the Local Authority in consultation with the governing board, and where the school is named on their EHCP.

If parents are unsuccessful in applying for a place, appeal can be made to an independent committee. Information is available from the Centre for School Improvement, Matlock.

Note: "Living in the normal area", in (2) above is defined as the child having full-time residence in a property which is the child's only or main residence. Documentary evidence including proof of actual permanent residency at the property concerned may be required. Please note that where the authority has reasonable grounds for believing the home address is not the child's only or main residence it reserves the right to carry out investigations which may include visits to the property.

If you have any questions you can contact us on the main school number or via email on admissions@highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk

Admissions to Highfields School is co-ordinated through Derbyshire County Council.

Full details of how to apply for a place can be found on the council website: <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/schools/school-places/secondary-admissions/secondary-school-admissions.aspx>

Alternatively you can contact the Admissions and Transport team via email admissions.transport@derbyshire.gov.uk or by telephoning 01629 537479.



Further information

Please visit our website (www.highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk) to gain further information on our school. In addition to our weekly newsletters, the school website holds a wealth of information for parents/carers and students, in particular we have a dedicated admissions page where you will find key information and answers to a number of questions.

In addition you may find the following information useful:

Key stage 3 and Key stage 4 curriculum guides
(available on the school's website under the parent page – documents
<http://www.highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk/parents.html>)

Examples of students' work through the Highfields Virtual Learning Studio
<http://www.highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk/year6.html>

The latest Ofsted report is available from the school website
<http://www.highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk/keyinformation.html>

The school's policies – key policies can be found on the school's website
<http://www.highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk/keyinformation.html>

Sixth form prospectus
<http://www.highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk/pdfs/InfoPDFs/SixthFormProspectus.pdf>

All information can also be requested by contacting either school reception.



Highfields School:

What parents, students, staff and Ofsted say ...

On lockdown ...

You met the challenge of education in lockdown head on, swiftly and effectively. Your online assembly was a master stroke to help us all feel connected to the school community and one we proudly shared our to non-Highfields friends and family. Your enthusiasm and passion for providing the best education possible shone through. You have been simply brilliant!

Parent

A huge thank you to all of the wonderful teachers who have supported my children during the lockdown.

Parent

Just wanted to say a very big thank you to all staff at Highfields not just for the amazing efforts you have gone to throughout COVID-19 but also for your continued support you have shown both my children during their time with you. We are genuinely honoured to say we are a part of Highfields and I can honestly say we feel proud when we're telling friends who have children at other schools just how brilliant you have all been during these past few months.

Parent

I would like to say a big thank you to Mr Marsh for the daily assemblies, it has been great to keep up to date with what is going on. Also I would like to thank all my teachers for helping me with my lessons over the last few months.

Student

The past few months have been a very difficult time but, I believe, Highfields school has risen to this challenge. I've been impressed by how quickly your team have adapted and implemented new practices, whilst remaining upbeat and approachable.

Parent

So now it is time to say goodbye to Highfields and thank you to all the teachers who have guided them for the last 7 years. We really feel that they have thrived and got the best out of secondary school. We hope they will go on to make the most of the opportunities in front of them and to look back on Highfields fondly.

Parent



I'm very proud of my children; they have done well at school and I'm very proud to say they are/were at Highfields.

Parent

To be fair, Highfields as a whole have been simply FANTASTIC! You have all taken the Covid crisis in your stride, supported our children and continued to encourage and guide throughout, even though many of you I'm sure have faced your own challenges at home. The relationship you all have with each other and our children has been shown to be inclusive, caring and second to none, (we have not had this from any other school) and we are proud to be part of the Highfields family.

Parent

I want to thank you for helping me through lockdown and not only on work but in phone calls as well. You really made me happy and calmed me down when I'm stressed.

Student

We have been so impressed with the supportive nature of the staff and their professionalism throughout the lockdown period. The continuance of course work, the speed of marking and the comprehensive, individually tailored feedback has made our daughter, and us, very happy and made a very difficult situation bearable, even sometimes fun. It has been amazing to see how quickly the shift to reliance on IT was achieved – hats off to the those drawing up the contingency plans.

Parent

A massive thank you to Mr Marsh as the lockdown assemblies have really helped me to stay part of school I really want to say a huge thank you to everyone that has taught me and kept me going throughout year 11 and a huge thank you to my form tutor for the last 3 years she has helped me so much, with everything whether that is problems in life, in school and just overwhelmed. I am so grateful for the amazing school I have been with for the last 5 years and thank you for making me feel special and getting through this. I couldn't have done it without you behind me pushing me all the way.

Y11 student



On our changes to uniform ...

Driving through Matlock tonight and it was great to see the kids in their new blazers, looking like they belong.

Parent

We love the new uniform!

Parent

Well done Highfields School, the new school uniform looks excellent. The students are a credit to the school and our community.

Parent

As a father of two who one day will be coming to Highfields School, I noticed the new blazers this morning. In my opinion the children looked really smart. What a great idea. Well done Highfields.

Local resident and future parent

Students all look so very smart in their most beautiful grey blazers.

Local resident



On being a part of Highfields School ...

"You believe that all pupils can, and should, achieve highly. You communicate this belief very clearly to all who learn and work at the school. Your high expectations have a positive impact on the culture of the school."

Ofsted 2017

"Support from school is outstanding. Any concern is immediately dealt with. Wonderful staff".

"Pastoral and parental support since starting at Highfields has been exemplary! We could not have asked for more given our son's considerable special educational needs. He is very happy!"

"Great strategies for settling in students".

Extremely happy with all aspects of my daughter's first year at Highfields."

Year 7 parents

"Parents are very positive about the quality of care their children receive. Pupils told Inspectors that there are adults they can turn to when they need help and support. Pupils feel safe at school and records show that bullying is rare!"

Ofsted 2017

"My child loves school, the teachers and most of her fellow students. We are really pleased with our choice of school because she can realise her potential, even when she has doubts, the staff are so encouraging and supportive".

"We are delighted with our daughter's progress. Thank you!"

Year 8 parents

"Subject leaders make sure that the quality of teaching is their top priority. Leaders support other teachers to develop their teaching skills well."

Ofsted 2017

"Excellent support from head of year"

"We are really pleased with everything the school and students achieve."

Year 10 parents



"Pupils enjoy coming to school and benefit from the many educational and enrichment opportunities they have. Extra-curricular opportunities are extensive and varied."

Ofsted 2017

"We are very happy with Highfields and the education it provides for our son. All aspects of the school are excellent".

"Thoroughly happy, thoroughly impressed."

"Wonderful, caring school with excellent encouragement and wonderful mentors in many teachers. Thank you."

Year 9 parents

"Sixth Form students make very good progress."

Ofsted 2017

"The sixth form is rewarding and enjoyable. We are passionate about our chosen subjects and appreciate the quality of teaching and the whole learning experience. There are so many opportunities to get involved in extra-curricular activities.

Year 13 student



We Are Highfields





We Are Highfields





Highfields School



We are Highfields

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