



Holyhead

Teach What Matters

Candidate Pack



Welcome to Holyhead



Welcome to Holyhead School, a proud member of Central Region Schools Trust serving the community of Handsworth.

Our learning community and partnerships exemplify everything you would want to see from a visible commitment to the distinctive CRST culture defined by our people, places and processes. Beyond that, you will find dedicated professionals who care deeply about high quality service and expert pedagogy but above all, care passionately about improving the lives of the young people we serve.

There is a magic to Holyhead captured within our distinctive 'Teach What Matters' curriculum and mission but evidenced by the happiness, curiosity and positive relationships that drive the daily life of the school. We have many staff who have been here a very long time who support new staff through our excellent training, ITT and staff development programmes. People matter and that's why they stay. We have a very stable staffing structure and most promoted posts are secured by interval applicants. There are pathways for progression at every level. Everybody gets better every year.

We do work hard. That's what our mission requires. However, we are reasonable with what we ask, consult and listen. We have active Staff Representative groups and engage actively with our workload and well-being commitments that are described in the DfE Wellbeing Charter. We signed up to this without hesitation.

Thank you for your interest in the school and for your ambition to make a difference with children who need opportunity but have ambition, optimism and respect in abundance.

Best wishes,

Ross Trafford
Executive Principal



“At Holyhead School, leaders, teachers and governors are committed to improving the life chances of young people”

Ofsted - February 2020

Welcome to Holyhead



I am exceptionally proud to welcome you to Holyhead School and hope that you feel we are the right place to develop your career in the future.

We are a school that is proud of our track record in terms of academic performance through examination results leading to enhanced life opportunities with progress to courses and employment beyond Holyhead, and our strong Ofsted reports. More importantly, the local community recognises the value of our work and consequently there is a high demand for school and Sixth Form places.

We are a forward looking and energetic school with a commitment to develop our staff to best support the young people whose futures we are fortunate to be entrusted with. There is always a high level of interest in our work and I am very proud of the positive reputation that we have both locally and nationally. With an outward facing approach, we are keen to involve ourselves in collaborative and innovative work whether that be becoming one of the pioneer schools as part of the Inner Drive Cognitive Schools Network, or through a range of other partnerships.

Our students are entitled to a first-rate, context-specific education. Our curriculum is broad, balanced and inclusive, designed to reflect our diversity, ensuring that our students can learn and experience the best of all subject areas, whilst also reflecting the cultures and stories of our community as part of that. It is a global curriculum with a heartbeat in Handsworth.

It is also a curriculum with a high focus on reading, literacy and oracy, and has a specific aim of providing an equity of opportunity so that disadvantaged students thrive. Our curriculum is designed so that all subjects contribute to the development of the skills and experiences we have collectively defined as important to our students.

At Holyhead we Teach What Matters.

We invest a lot in the personal development of our students, helping to build their character and confidence, as well as their aspirations for life beyond Holyhead.



The focus on the development of character extends to staff. Whilst we have a strong commitment to staff wellbeing and CPD, we also expect staff to become role models for the school community. Our School Improvement Priorities place a strong emphasis on staff making a commitment to engage actively in their own personal and professional development. The end goal is a school where learning at all levels is prioritised, with everyone benefiting from this commitment, translating into outcomes for students that can help them to achieve those aspirations.

I thank you for showing an interest in learning more about, and potentially becoming a member of our special community!

Dave Knox
Head of School



- We want to be nationally noteworthy.
- We are working towards a Holyhead where every student reaches their full potential and first-choice destination. No gaps. No differences to diminish.
- In order to achieve this, we will build partnerships that improve outcomes for all students and provide rich and diverse learning experiences that complement an outstanding, context-specific but global facing curriculum, clear in its intent and purpose. We believe in a knowledge-rich curriculum and direct instruction by expert teachers.
- We aim to build relationships that deliver the 'highest quality' learning and enrichment programme. In particular, we aim to extend our provision for vocational learning, STEM and Creative Arts, areas of learning which ignite our learner's passions and ambitions.
- We will also lead and innovate in the areas of teacher development, character education, safeguarding and student support. We pride ourselves on creative thinking, action research and turning ideas into impact. We will push the boundaries of what is possible.
- We also have high ambitions for our learning environment. We will work tirelessly to develop a modern, welcoming school that epitomises high academic standards and creativity.
- Holyhead will continue to be a provider of outstanding education and a beacon of civic pride for the local community

Creativity	Character	Community	Care
Bespoke, forward-thinking approach to CPD and Pedagogy	Intense focus on enrichment and high aspirations	Active outreach work	Strong structures for student support
Broad curriculum	Well developed Character Education programmes – teachers of children first	Family values at the heart of student support	Focus on developing positive relationships
Emphasis on problem-solving, student-led learning and higher order thinking	Literacy and oracy at the core of what we do	Curriculum designed to meet community needs	Well developed commitments to wellbeing and workload reduction
	Development of leaders at all levels		High focus on inclusion and equality
	Focus on self regulation and positive reinforcement		Commitment to Quality First Teaching

EXCELLENCE, RESPECT,
RESPONSIBILITY

If you share our vision and values, we would love to tell you more. We are not satisfied with being outstanding and everything we do is about being better tomorrow than we have been today.

Once again, I thank you for showing an interest in learning more about our special community.

5 reasons why Holyhead could be your next destination



Every school will tell you that they are a special place to work, so it's important to read on to see what the justification is for such a statement. As the Head of School at Holyhead, I'm not necessarily going to be the most objective author in theory, but what I might lack in that respect, I'd hope to make up for in terms of my experience of this school having worked here for over 20 years from a novice NQT to the person who greets you here and now!

Reason 1: Do you share our values?

If you work here, you are passionate about **social justice** and will see yourself as part of not only the school **community** you work in, but the one that it serves in Handsworth. You show your **care** for the wellbeing and futures of the young people you work with here through your words and actions every day, as well as through your commitment to **excellence** by wanting to be the very best you can be in your role, taking every opportunity we will commit to give you to develop professionally and personally.

Decision making is informed by evidence and research, and is rooted in **integrity**. We communicate with honesty and do things because we believe it is morally right. We expect everyone to treat each other with **respect**, not only in the way that we communicate, but importantly in a way where we don't see a hierarchy of ideas. When you work here and can see problems, you will be encouraged to contribute ideas and solutions and we will listen when you've got them.

Reason 2: Recruitment and Retention!

Many of our staff have been here for a long time, and/or like myself, they started their teaching careers at Holyhead. To say that no one ever chooses to leave would be manifestly false and ridiculous, but in a profession where opportunities are widely available and many choose to leave the job completely within their first few years, then there must be something about Holyhead that keeps people here for so long.

We recognise and reward the commitment of our staff through Long Service Awards at 10 / 20 / 25 years, so if you join us and stay the course you'll benefit materially as well as in many other ways too!

Reason 3: A school community starts with the staff

We would describe ourselves as a friendly and welcoming school, but you'd expect that wouldn't you? The school is a genuine community though, one which in the words of John Tomsett (who visited us in November 2022 to conduct an intensive review of the school's culture) **"is remarkably strong... where students and staff feel part of something very special"**.

We have an active Staff Rep Group who ensure that staff voice is taken into account with all aspects of policy and practice, and we continue to rebuild the social connections that make a workplace more than just a place where we work, after the challenges of the COVID years. If you have a willingness to get involved and join in, you will find many others like you!

Reason 4: A culture where we all want to learn and get better

Creating the conditions where we can all get better is easy to say and more challenging to do. We've invested heavily in teacher development in recent years as a major school improvement priority (it will always be one!), be it in terms of providing high quality CPD both in-house or through external partners including Ambition and InnerDrive Academy, or through developing



5 reasons why Holyhead could be your next destination



capacity to provide non-judgmental instructional coaching which is built around making lasting improvements. Building a culture where we don't fear making mistakes when we try things is important, as is an emphasis on teachers taking more responsibility for their own practice through our use of Teaching Walkthrus. We want you to want to grow when you come to work with us, and that will include opportunities such as access to National Professional Qualifications alongside a range of other courses, including through the Central Region Schools Trust, and subject knowledge enhancement through our membership of the Princes Teaching Institute.

Reason 5: What about the students?

I'll leave this to John Tomsett again as the objective observer of our school:

"The greatest strength of the school is its students, who are an incredibly convincing manifestation of the cultural norms associated with CRST. They are respectful, considerate, happy, hard-working, accepting, engaging, and just generally delightful!"

Our students are also full of character, they are vibrant, inquisitive, occasionally lively and most importantly, they value the relationships they build with teachers at the school.



It would be entirely disingenuous to say they are all angels, schools after all are a microcosm of society, but students at Holyhead form a bond with members of staff at the school, such is the emphasis we place on relationships. This doesn't mean we accept or excuse poor behaviour or manners, but we look to build opportunities for our young people to grow from the mistakes they make, whilst celebrating their successes with them at every chance we get.

Our students build relationships and trust with teachers who are firm **and** fair, and show through their deeds and words that they genuinely care. A sense of humour goes a long way, but an ability to explain yourself and demonstrate your love for your subject will take you further!

Could we be the right place for you?

The context of the community we serve is such that the majority of our students are at an educational disadvantage when they come to us, be that through below average reading ages, significantly above national average Pupil Premium rates, or having English as an additional language. When we talk about having a passion for social justice, it comes through the determination to do everything we can to improve the life chances of all of our students, regardless of their starting point.

It's not easy, and it does require a level of emotional investment as well as the willingness to go the (somewhat cliched) 'above and beyond', but it is made possible by making workload reduction part of our commitment to staff, and by a genuine team ethos where we work together and treat each other like a work 'family'.

Teaching isn't a profession for the faint hearted, but I can honestly say that teaching at Holyhead is for the wholehearted and the kind hearted. It's a rewarding place to work in many ways. By all means read our Ofsted reports and look at our website, but if you think this might be the place for you then come and visit us first. We are open and honest, and we want to continually get better to do more for the young people of Handsworth. If you are that way inclined and this sounds like it might be right for you then get in touch and we hope to hear from you soon.



Holyhead

Teach What Matters

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Central Region
Schools Trust

Founded by the RSA