



Highdown School &
Sixth Form Centre

ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

Although Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre is an Academy, for students seeking places in Year 7 a process of co-ordinated admissions is managed for us by Reading Borough Council's Admissions Team. The Admissions team can be contacted by telephoning (0118) 937 3777.

Highdown has agreed to admit 250 students in each year group in order to meet parental preferences wherever possible. Highdown is proud to be popular within the community it serves and hopes to continue to meet parental demand.

Parents who wish to apply for a place for their child at Highdown in other year groups (Years 8 to 11) should, in the first instance, apply for a place through Reading Borough Council who will then contact the school.

Applications for places in the Sixth Form should be made directly to the school. There are currently 1560 students on roll, including over 300 in the sixth form.

Timeline of Key Dates

ACTION	DATE
Online admissions site opens for applications	By 11 September 2023
National closing date for receipt of applications	31 October 2023
Deadline for late applications, changes of preference and changes of address to be accepted with good reason (evidence of reason must be submitted)	31 December 2023
National Offer Day	1 March 2024
Deadline for parents to accept place offered	15 March 2024
Closing date for submitting an appeal	30 March 2024

“This is a good school. The Headteacher provides outstanding leadership for this rapidly improving school.”

(Ofsted)



Headteacher and Head of School's Welcome

Thank you for your interest in our school. Highdown School was recognised by Ofsted as a **Good** School in May 2015 which was confirmed in a short inspection in 2018, and has many OUTSTANDING features. Please read our full Ofsted Report, available on the school website.

Attainment at Highdown is consistently above the national average, resulting from high quality learning, teaching and support.

If you have any questions about our school, don't hesitate to ask at our Open Evening (5th October 2023), on our Open Morning tours (week beginning Monday 9th October) or contact us by [email](#).

We hope you feel that Highdown is a good fit for your child, and look forward to working with you in the future.





Vision for Learning

Every Highdown student should expect to go from outstanding lesson to outstanding lesson. Students at Highdown School should be expecting to be challenged and stimulated and as a result of high quality teaching students' learning gains are rapid and sustained; progress is at or above expected.

This leads Highdown Students to gain the best possible accredited outcomes at 16 and beyond at A level. Our students go to the best Universities and there is a comprehensive support package to prepare them for interviews and selection testing either for the world of work, apprenticeships or university. The superb guidance ensures that all leave Highdown School well placed for the world beyond.

Students' personal development is outstanding with the support of fantastic pastoral care and guidance. All young people at Highdown School are encouraged to join the wide range of clubs and activities available to them. There are many opportunities to be inspired and to try something new.

Students develop their skills in learning through the rich diversity on offer at Highdown School. With so much variety, we aim to find what will inspire each student. All our students are individuals, learn as individuals, so we need to find the key to each student's inspiration.

Highdown School is a very special place. We are blessed with beautiful grounds and students benefit from the space this gives them. Separate spaces for different year groups allow all to feel comfortable in their areas and to enjoy the facilities for sport and leisure at lunchtimes and break times.

Ms RE Cave
Headteacher

Student Leadership

Students develop their leadership skills by taking on responsibilities. Our prefects have been successful at competitive interview and are ambassadors for Highdown showcasing all the qualities we strive

for in all our students. Many other students are Student Leaders, a group who work together to improve facilities and take real decisions on projects as diverse as the lay out of the Gallery Canteen and Students leading learning sessions.

All students in year 7 begin a programme called PiXL Edge. This is designed to help develop students' skills of leadership, organisation, resilience, initiative and communication. This programme together with the main curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities helps all students to develop their whole person while at Highdown.

One thing that we are very proud of at Highdown are the opportunities that we provide our students to develop themselves educationally, socially and emotionally. By the time a student completes their 7 year journey with us we aim to have helped each individual student to develop their whole person. We want them to leave us

having 'the Edge' as they go onto the next stages in their lives. Developing skills needed for further education, employment and life in general does not happen overnight.

Students will need time to practice, to learn and to reflect. It is for this reason that we run The Edge at Highdown.

All students in year 7 in September will start this programme as part of their PSHCE education.

It is aimed at developing the LORIC skills - LORIC standing for Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative and Communication. The Edge programme will follow the students from year 7 to year 13 and provide challenges to complete at three different levels of difficulty starting with the Apprentice level from year 7, Graduate level in years 9 & 10 and Master Level to be completed in the 6th form. The programme provides a massive range of challenges that students can undertake and can include both in school and out of school activities. Our current year 7 students have completed everything from fundraising events for charity to joining new sports clubs; from entering the BBC short story competition to completing first aid courses.



Inclusive Education

Students may face barriers to learning at some time during their school life. The reasons for this are varied and are not confined just to those students who find academic work difficult. Highdown's inclusion policy describes the ways in which students are assessed and their special learning needs are identified. Early identification through screening tests and close liaison with primary schools helps us to provide appropriate support. The school sets aside part of its budget to provide extra support for students who need additional help and is very successful in enabling students to make substantial progress. It follows the code of practice in the ways in which it takes students through the stages of diagnosis, provision and review; it keeps parents closely informed. A full copy of the policy is available for parents on request



“The highly inclusive nature of the school makes it a harmonious place in which to work and learn.”

(Ofsted)



The STAR Centre

The STAR Centre is a creative environment where students are able to talk about, express and understand their feelings through emotional literacy. We offer support groups, 1:1 mentoring, after school clubs and various other community work. We also run Year 7 transition groups which are aimed at helping your child settle within their new school environment.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN AIMS OF STAR CENTRE?

- To develop students' social and communication skills.
- To raise students' self-esteem and confidence.
- To provide positive interactions for students.
- To provide a safe environment for students.
- To assist in developing positive and healthy relationships/attachments with peers and adults

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL LITERACY?

Emotional literacy is aimed at improving self-esteem; leading to improvements in educational achievement. Emotional Literacy support focuses on developing the five following areas:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Regulation and managing emotions
- Motivation
- Empathy
- Social Skills

The Home School Relationship

The welfare of your child is extremely important to us and was rightly commended by Ofsted. Students commented to inspectors that they are safe and happy at Highdown. The academic curriculum is rigorous and makes many demands on the students. In order to support and encourage students, the school's pastoral system provides a variety of ways of ensuring that work is completed well and that contact between home and school is sound.

The mentors and the Heads of Achievement are the people who have responsibility for knowing and understanding the students and they may make frequent contact, either by letter, email or telephone, with parents. Each year parents can expect the following types of communication from the school about their children's progress:

- at least one parent/teacher evening consultation meeting with appointments
- formal academic reports
- Excellence Evenings
- ongoing feedback in exercise books

Students and parents in all year groups have an Excellence Evening at the beginning of the school year. These are tailored to the year group. Year 9 parents have an options evening. Year 10 parents and students have intervention evenings and a prospective sixth form evening. Additionally, all parents are invited to events, which are held during the year, to inform them about the nature of the various subjects.

Parents join us for celebration events throughout the school year. Headteachers awards for effort and achievement are given annually and at presentation evening, we celebrate exam successes with a formal event.



PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

We strongly recommend all parents engage in the learning process. Research shows this makes a significant difference to educational outcomes. Feedback in your child's exercise books is the best way to do this. We invite parents to comment in exercise books too.

If parents want to discuss anything about a student's education or well-being, they should contact us at once. If the query is only about one subject, then they may make an appointment or telephone the subject teacher. If the query is about school in general, then the mentor is the best person to contact. A discussion with the mentor is usually enough to resolve any problem. If not, however, other staff may have a role to play.





Extra-curricular

All young people at Highdown School are encouraged to join the wide range of clubs and activities available to them. From knitting to golf and pottery to coding club there are many opportunities to be inspired and to try something new.

Highdown offers many seasonal extra-curricular sports to participate in rugby, hockey, cross country, rounders, baseball, netball, tennis, athletics, dance, fitness and swimming are all part of the offer. Teams compete locally and many Highdowners go on to county and club sports.

In the sixth form students have a choice of a range of enrichment opportunities and can gain accreditation in a range of pursuits including becoming a personal trainer through Highdown Sport & Leisure Ltd.

Music and the performing arts are at the heart of life at Highdown. Whilst these subjects are firmly within our curriculum, many also add to their experiences with additional lessons and clubs.

Annual productions, performances, recitals and concerts are given through the year. These are in a range of genres and they are supported by student technical teams.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

All year 10 students have the opportunity to take this prestigious award. We are proud that our groups has one of the highest percentage completion rates. This is due to the hard work and support provided by the team – echoing the superb 1:1 guidance given to students in all they do. In our sixth form, students are able to take the gold award.

The Curriculum



Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre is a specialist mathematics and computing school recognising our success in these important curriculum areas. All students receive a broad, balanced curriculum with specialist teachers. The students are mainly taught in subject specific sets. Movement between sets is carried out after careful assessment and reflects our commitment to careful monitoring and tracking of progress. Students normally sit 10 GCSEs and Technical qualifications are available in iMedia, Sport & Fitness and Hairdressing in years 10 and 11.



Our curriculum meets the needs of our students well and enables most to stay on to our sixth form for A levels, from where most progress to university. Our success rate in supporting students gain places at Britain's most prestigious universities is excellent.

Mandarin is one of three languages taught at Highdown. We believe this subject gives Highdowners a unique edge and will make their CVs stand out to potential employers. We also offer the Mandarin Excellence Programme in



conjunction with University College London, which aims to have students fluent in Mandarin Chinese by year 11.

Highdown School has a variety of learning spaces available including specialist Science Labs, Drama Studios and Music Rooms and general teaching classrooms. Our campus is second to none. Few schools have such fantastic grounds and variety of buildings in which it is a pleasure to study and work.

Highdown School has three dedicated music rooms each with smaller practice rooms attached. One of our music rooms is used for Music Technology lessons and has its own recording studio.

We have two fully equipped Drama Studios. Both are ideal rehearsal spaces or can be used for smaller performances

The School Hall at Highdown is a fantastic venue. With a capacity of over 400 seats including a stage and outstanding audio visual equipment it is a truly versatile space.





"Thank you all for your professionalism, always getting the right tone and always putting the children first. We see it in every message."

(Parent)

"I would like to thank Highdown for supporting my two children in their education and giving me the experience of a rewarding career in teaching."

(Member of Staff)



"My children felt happy, safe, valued and recognised"

(Parent)





“The environment and overall feel of the school has allowed me to thrive in the Sixth Form due to the friendly and hard-working atmosphere created by teachers and students alike.”

(Sixth Form Student)



AT HIGHDOWN WE WILL SHOW . . .

ASPIRATION

RESPECT

EXCELLENCE



AMBITION

COURTESY

ACCOUNTABILITY

COMMITMENT

HONESTY

RESILIENCE

DETERMINATION

TOLERANCE

RESPONSIBILITY

*Our values as a community are what we all aim to live up to everyday.
We believe these values embody great Modern British Values as
we aim to be great citizens.*

#values

GCSE Results 2023

GCSEs	ENTRIES	NUMBER OF GRADES									% 9 to 7	% 9 to 5	% 9 to 4	% 9 to 1
		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1				
GCSE English Language	239	11	13	43	60	39	42	21	2	5	28.0	69.5	87.0	98.7
GCSE English Literature	236	9	21	33	50	40	30	28	13	5	26.7	64.8	77.5	97.0
GCSE Maths	239	11	23	36	30	52	47	23	12	3	29.3	63.6	83.3	99.2
GCSE Biology	77	12	11	16	29	8	1	0	0	0	50.6	98.7	100.0	100.0
GCSE Chemistry	77	10	14	15	23	15	0	0	0	0	50.6	100.0	100.0	100.0
GCSE Physics	77	9	13	18	26	8	3	0	0	0	51.9	96.1	100.0	100.0
GCSE Combined Science	320	2	6	13	52	95	74	56	13	7	6.6	52.5	75.6	99.4
GCSE Computing	25	4	3	3	4	2	2	3	2	2	40.0	64.0	72.0	100.0
GCSE Chinese	28	6	8	5	6	0	0	2	1	0	67.9	89.3	89.3	100.0
GCSE French	46	2	4	1	5	7	10	13	1	1	15.2	41.3	63.0	95.7
GCSE Spanish	20	0	1	4	4	5	4	1	1	0	25.0	70.0	90.0	100.0
GCSE Geography	145	12	17	26	28	19	16	16	8	2	37.9	70.3	81.4	99.3
GCSE History	95	10	9	16	18	10	9	12	7	1	36.8	66.3	75.8	96.8
GCSE Art	26	0	0	2	9	11	4	0	0	0	7.7	84.6	100.0	100.0
GCSE Art Graphics	16	0	1	2	5	3	2	0	2	1	18.8	68.8	81.3	100.0
GCSE Business	79	2	6	9	10	16	4	17	9	4	21.5	54.4	59.5	97.5
GCSE Citizenship	157	4	6	15	36	25	32	20	11	4	15.9	54.8	75.2	97.5
GCSE Design Technology	21	0	0	2	4	2	4	5	3	1	9.5	38.1	57.1	100.0
GCSE Drama	14	0	2	0	4	2	6	0	0	0	14.3	57.1	100.0	100.0
GCSE Food & Nutrition	25	1	4	1	1	4	7	1	6	0	24.0	44.0	72.0	100.0
GCSE Music	9	0	2	1	3	1	1	1	0	0	33.3	77.8	88.9	100.0
GCSE Music Tech	10	1	2	4	0	2	1	0	0	0	70.0	90.0	100.0	100.0
GCSE PE	60	0	3	2	9	11	10	20	4	1	8.3	41.7	58.3	100.0
GCSE Photography	22	0	1	6	6	3	3	2	0	1	31.8	72.7	86.4	100.0
GCSE Religious Studies	72	2	6	6	15	11	11	12	7	2	19.4	55.6	70.8	100.0
GCSE Textiles	21	0	1	1	0	5	5	4	3	2	9.5	33.3	57.1	100.0
GCSE Arabic	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
GCSE German	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
GCSE Italian	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
GCSE Russian	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
GCSE Polish	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
GCSE Turkish	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
TOTAL	2165	113	178	283	437	396	328	257	105	42	26.5	65.0	80.1	98.8

CERTIFICATE	ENTRIES	NUMBER OF GRADES									% 9 to 7	% 9 to 5	% 9 to 4	% 9 to 1
		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1				
Further Maths	17	2	5	5	3	0	1	0	0	0	70.6	88.2	94.1	94.1

TECHNICAL SUBJECTS	ENTRIES	NUMBER OF GRADES								% L2D*-L2D	% L2D*-L2P	% L2D*-L1P
		L2D*	L2D	L2M	L2P	L1D*	L1D	L1M	L1P			
Hairdressing	4	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	50.0	100.0	100.0
Sport & Fitness	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0.0	0.0	50.0
iMedia	9	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	2	0.0	22.2	88.9

Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding



Sixth Form

Our A level results are OUTSTANDING. Students achieve in the top 5% of schools nationally at A level. Sixth Form students at Highdown have all the advantages of being students in a large and thriving school and also of being a separate entity within that community. Highdown Sixth Form has an excellent reputation for being a very dynamic, caring and forward-thinking community.

Whether you are already a Highdowner in Year 11 or a student from another local or international school, you will be assured of personal attention to ensure we match the best curriculum offer to your skills and ambitions. We offer an extensive range of academic and technical (vocational) courses backed by strong academic monitoring and pastoral support.



In our Sixth form your personal mentor and Sixth Form Leadership Team are there to support your academic attainment and provide pastoral care. We give extensive advice on applications to Higher Education, including Oxford and Cambridge, and offer open day visits to universities. Help with applications and writing personal statements is superb so most students progress to great options for University.

“The environment and overall feel of the school has allowed me to thrive in the Sixth Form due to the friendly and hard-working atmosphere created by teachers and students alike.”

(Year 12 Student)

“Sixth Form students enjoy being members of the school and the Sixth Form is as inclusive as the rest of the school. Students have high aspirations for their futures.”

(Ofsted)

A Level Results 2023

SUBJECT	ENTRIES	NUMBER OF GRADES							% A*-E
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	
A-Level Art	4	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	100.0
A-Level Biology	49	1	6	12	10	9	6	5	89.8
A-Level Business	22	1	1	3	9	6	2	0	100.0
A-Level Chemistry	23	1	1	5	5	4	4	3	87.0
A-Level Computing	4	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	100.0
A-Level Economics	17	1	1	3	3	5	3	1	94.1
A-Level English L&L	14	0	1	5	1	5	1	1	92.9
A-Level English Lit	10	0	1	0	6	2	1	0	100.0
A-Level Further Maths	5	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	100.0
A-Level Geography	26	0	3	8	7	4	4	0	100.0
A-Level G&P	18	0	1	3	4	5	3	2	88.9
A-Level History	19	0	2	7	5	4	1	0	100.0
A-Level Maths	41	1	11	7	7	5	7	3	92.7
A-Level Music	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	66.7
A-Level Music Tech	7	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	100.0
A-Level Physics	22	0	0	6	4	3	7	2	90.9
A-Level Psychology	46	1	2	13	14	9	5	2	95.7
A-Level Sociology	46	1	8	13	13	5	5	1	97.8
A-Level Textiles	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	100.0
Total A-Level	379	8	41	92	93	72	52	21	94.5

SUBJECT	ENTRIES	NUMBER OF GRADES							% A*-E
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	
Core Maths	10		2	4	0	0	1	3	70.0
Extended Project	9	3	3	2	1	0	0	0	100.0

SUBJECT†	ENTRIES	NUMBER OF GRADES							% A*-E
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	
L3 ICT Ext Cert	6		0	0	2	4		0	100.0
L3 PE Ext Cert	14		3	4	4	3		0	100.0
L3 PA Ext Cert	4		2	2	0	0		0	100.0
L3 PSY Ext Cert	9		0	1	3	5		0	100.0

†Equivalent Grades

Uniform



The school has a formal [uniform policy](#) and parents are asked to work with the school to support this.

Uniform sets a business-like tone and reduces peer pressure. We believe in all having pride in our Highdown badge. Students know the badge represents our values. Our uniform is sensible and practical. We have good value provision to meet the aims of the policy. This ensures inclusivity.

Our PE kit is smart and practical. Our teams look highly professional when representing Highdown.



"I have truly loved working as part of this team for the last 10 years, and appreciate the opportunities that I have had for personal and professional development."

(Member of Staff)



Contacting the School

Contact with the school is easily made either by telephoning the main office on (0118) 901 5800 or contacting the member of staff via email. Urgent messages will be passed on immediately. Other messages will be passed on during the school day. We will return calls as soon as possible but certainly within 24 hours.

We strongly recommend you sign up to SIMS InTouch, our communication service which will email all letters to you. You will also be provided with log in details for ParentPay which will allow you to load up your child's lunch money online and pay for trips, and Class Charts which is used for announcements and allows you to see what homework has been set for your child.

Our [school website](#) is constantly updated and often is the first port of call for information.

Parents and students can also receive information by following us on:



[@HighdownSchool](#)



[@highdownschool](#)



[@emmergreen](#)





HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

Surley Row, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8LR

Telephone: 0118 901 5800

Email: office@highdown.reading.sch.uk