

# THE HOLDEN SCHOOL

Newsletter

Autumn 1

Part of the Acorn Group



**The Holden  
School**

## Welcome from the Head Teacher

My name is Alan Harrison. I live with my wife, two cats and two ferrets in Burnley. I have two very successful grown up children one of whom has recently been diagnosed with ADHD and autism. I have been a teacher for over 30 years and a headteacher in four previous schools covering over 10 years. My last two headships were in special schools for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs and autism. I am passionate about ensuring that all young people, especially those with additional needs, are given the very best opportunities, so that they can genuinely smash the glass ceilings that society can often place above them. I am thrilled to be the new Headteacher of The Holden School and am excited to meet the young people, the staff and parents/carers. When not at school I relax by playing guitar and singing; my wife tells me I need more practice (but preferably anywhere she isn't). I am really looking forward to meeting and working with everybody. After half-term I will send out dates for parents and carers to come into school to meet with myself and other members of the school team.



Have a lovely half-term break.

We look forward to welcoming pupils back to school on Tuesday 4th November 2025.

## Swimming

At The Holden School we believe that keeping ourselves safe whilst out and about is a really important life skill. That is why we support our children in accessing swimming lessons. We have been engaging in swimming at Howe Bridge with our Willow, Sycamore, Pine and Oak classes. All the children have loved spending time in the water with their swimming instructors, class teachers and learning support assistants. It has been a real pleasure to see their water confidence grow and their swimming and water safety skills develop. We can't wait to see their continued progress throughout the course of the year. If you have any questions about how your child is progressing with their swimming, please contact their teacher.



### **Sycamore Class Make a Splash!**

Sycamore Class have been diving into both the pool and their learning with fantastic enthusiasm!

Sycamore class go swimming on a Thursday and, what a brilliant time they have! From building confidence in the water to practising strokes and floats, everyone gives it their all. It's been wonderful to see how much progress they're making – not just in their swimming skills, but also in their determination and teamwork. Whether it's cheering each other on or giving their best effort during lessons, Sycamore Class truly make a splash!

Back in the classroom, the hard work hasn't stopped. The children have been showing real creativity when learning about the Egyptians and their way of life. This has included making Egyptian collars and bracelets using coloured paper, beads or pasta. They've even spent a morning mummifying tomatoes!



### **Pine & Oak Classes begin exciting new art unit: Self-Portraits Inspired by the Mona Lisa**

Pine and Oak classes have embarked on a creative journey into the world of self-portraits! Their new art unit is all about learning how to capture their own expressions and personalities through art. They have used a very special source of inspiration: Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting—The Mona Lisa.

Students have been learning about the incredible detail and mystery behind the Mona Lisa's smile and how Leonardo's masterful use of light and shadow brings the portrait to life. It's sparked lots of fascinating discussions about what makes a portrait truly captivating and how artists can express emotions through their work.

With pencils and sketching, and plenty of imagination in hand, our wonderful artists in Pine and Oak classes are eager to start creating their own self-portraits. This unit will give them a chance to experiment with different techniques and styles while developing their observational skills and creativity.

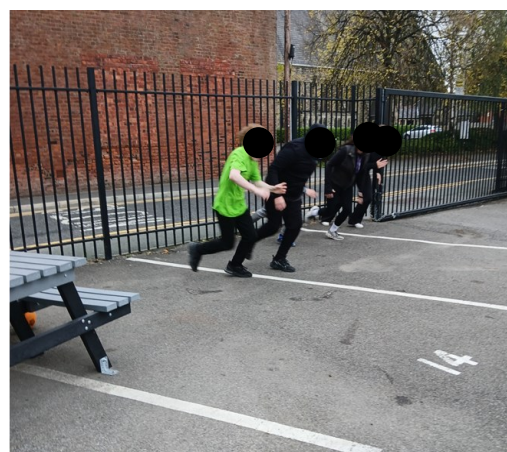
We can't wait to see how each young artist brings their unique personality onto the canvas – just like da Vinci did hundreds of years ago!



## Staff vs Students

We'd like to share some photos of all the fun we have had over on Chapel Street! Students and staff went head-to-head to see who would be crowned the 'Champion Speedster' – between us, we gave Usain Bolt a serious run for his money!

Beyond the friendly competition and laughter, occasions like this are a wonderful reminder of the importance of connection and coming together as a school community. Such events strengthen the bonds between students and staff by creating moments of joy, teamwork and a shared pride in our school spirit. It's these opportunities – to laugh together, cheer one another on and celebrate as one – that truly make our school a special place to learn and grow.



## Food technology

Children continue to enjoy their Food Technology classes and have produced some truly amazing dishes: from comforting winter warmer pasta bakes to mouth-watering Greek desserts such as Portokalopita. The lessons have been filled with enthusiasm, creativity and fantastic teamwork. It has been wonderful to see pupils stepping out of their comfort zones and experimenting with new techniques and flavours. Mr Andy couldn't be prouder – every student has done an outstanding job and the results have been nothing short of delicious!



## Clinical Team

Hello, from **Kellyann, Kate, Rachael, Kim, Claire and Janet**—we are the schools clinical team! Below, we provide more information about our roles & responsibilities and how we can support the staff and pupils here at The Holden School.

### Autumn term

It's been a busy term so far here at The Holden School.

We have focused on beginning each morning with a sensory circuit that provides children with regulation opportunities in preparation for the school day. We have been working hard to make our school environment sensory and communication friendly through whole class visuals, sensory equipment and by developing key areas to meet the needs of our pupils.

We continue to provide ongoing **Individual** sessions to the pupils that require one-to-one intervention across all the disciplines. We are planning new **group opportunities** focused on the pupils' interests and needs. Within our 'All' offer we continue to upskill the staff team, audit class spaces, review resources and provide a consistent and clinically informed approach to the pupils Wellbeing and Learning.

### Supporting the pupils:

We have enjoyed spending time in classes, and out & about around the school, getting to know our new pupils, and welcoming back those returning to us. We prioritise supporting in these transitions and developing positive relationships.

### Staff Training for the Autumn term:

OT— sensory circuits with Kate  
PDA—Training with Kellyann  
SaLT— Comic strip conversations/Social stories with Rachael  
TIP—(Trauma Informed Practice)- Refresher training with Kellyann

#### Staff Reflective Practice

This is something that is offered to all staff every term to provide an opportunity to reflect on the challenging nature of their role and discuss any areas of strength, positives and challenge. Working with children with complex needs can be tough at times and Staff Reflective Practice is a safe space provided to support staff through their thoughts, feelings and ideas.

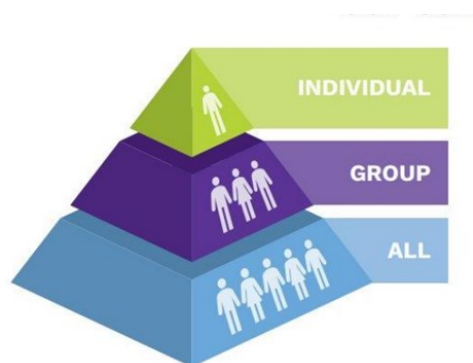
#### Class Conferences

Every class meets with the clinical team each term to discuss all pupils in the class. These sessions are planned to establish what areas of support can be provided both within the environment and through further targeted support and strategies.



### Parent 'drop in sessions'

We are going to be holding some **parent drop-in sessions via teams** to provide an opportunity for you to discuss any areas of concern or ask any questions you may have directly with clinical team. Please express your interest by emailing **Kellyann (Lead Clinician)** directly on: [Kellyann.fletcher@ofgl.co.uk](mailto:kellyann.fletcher@ofgl.co.uk) and a date/time will be arranged with you.



Some pupils at The Holden School need one-on-one therapy sessions. These are dependent on what the child **'needs'** and can be with a Speech and Language Therapist, an Occupational Therapist, or a Psychotherapist.

At The Holden school, groups of students participate in therapy sessions that help them improve in areas such as handwriting, social communication, making friends, sensory activities, understanding emotions, zone of regulation and fine motor skills.

Everyone at The Holden school gets help from the Clinical team, whether it's through training for the staff, assistance with the classroom, equipment, resources, supportive strategies or just having a chat during breaks or lunch.

## Meet the Team



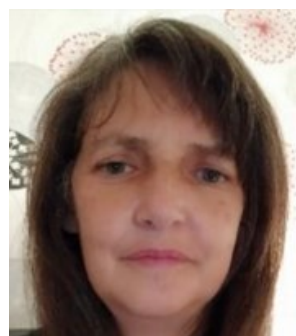
### Kellyann Fletcher

**Job Title:** Lead Clinician & Play & Creative art Psychotherapist

#### **What is Kellyann's role?**

I am here to help you work through difficult situations and experiences. I can provide emotional support to you and help you understand more about your own feelings and thoughts.

'It can sometimes be easier to show someone your challenges than trying to find the words'.



### Janet Smith

**Job Title:** Art Psychotherapist

#### **How might Art Therapy help me?**

Art Therapy can be helpful to those who may struggle to communicate verbally or to gain confidence in expressing feelings. We use art to explore these areas and to help to develop language around feelings and emotions.



### Claire Quigley

**Job Title:** Drama & Play Therapist

#### **Why might I go to see Claire?**

Drama therapy uses lots of creative mediums such as storytelling, role play, music, movement and drama to help you express your thoughts, feelings and emotions in a safe way. Drama therapy can help you process difficult experiences and supports you to begin to understand these. It can help develop your self-esteem, confidence and build resilience in challenging situations.



### **Kate Pierpoint**

**Job Title:** Kate Pierpoint

#### **Why might I go to see Kate?**

Occupational Therapy can help you with a lot of different obstacles you may be facing. The list of reasons is very long but you may see me because:

- You may need help with focusing or feeling more relaxed.
- You may need help with some day-to-day skills, like writing, washing or dressing.
- I could help you to work out ways to understand your sensory needs, support yourself and develop your independence.



### **Rachael Webb**

**Job Title:** Speech and Language Therapist

#### **Why might I go to see Racheal?**

Speech and Language therapy does more than just look at Speech and Language! In sessions we may work on: understanding language, figuring out what words mean, social skills and how to interact with others, fluency and pronunciation of speech and lots of other things! You may come and work with me in a joint session with other therapists and children - sometimes we do activities to work on lots of different areas of need.



### **Kimberley Atar**

**Job Title:** SaLT apprentice

I am new supporting at The Holden school to complete my apprenticeship; I will be working closely with Rachael to help you within all areas of your learning and communication needs.

