

## Report from Holbrook High School

### AGM of Shotley Parish Council 4<sup>th</sup> May 2006.

As the newly appointed Headteacher of Holbrook High School (from September 2005) I would like to take this opportunity to present this report to the AGM as a means of updating the council of the school's achievements over the past year. I am sorry that I am unable to attend the meeting in person this year, but will endeavour to do so in future years, as I see it as important that the parish council and all local schools have an open working relationship for the benefit of all young people.

Examination results at the end of Year 11 continue to be well above the national average. 64% of our students achieved 5 or more GCSEs at Grade C or above which has allowed them to go onto further education in local sixth forms or on to level 3 courses at college or indeed straight into employment with training. Our current Year 11 have a very positive work ethic although their prior ability is not as strong as that of last year's group. However, we have set ourselves and our pupils really challenging targets and hope to at least match our achievements from last year.

In January this year Holbrook High was inspected under the new style Ofsted arrangements. The school was recognised as 'A good school with the capacity to improve further'. This is a real achievement and bodes well for future success as it shows that the priorities we have identified for improvement are in line with what the inspectors found. There is a four point grading system used by the inspectors: Outstanding, Good, Satisfactory and Inadequate. The majority of schools are graded 'Satisfactory' and you only have to read reports on the Ofsted website to confirm this. Anybody can access the full report from [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Also in January we received the great news that Holbrook High has been successful in its bid to become a specialist 'Humanities and Languages' school with effect from September 2006. Specialist status will enable Holbrook High to share expertise in these areas with our partner schools for the benefit of pupils beyond our school boundary and with other groups in the local community. As part of our plan we will be working with our feeder primary schools to facilitate the teaching of French in Year 3 from September 06. A wide range of other projects are planned as part of the targets we have set ourselves to meet over the next four years.

Achieving specialist status has been the result of real hard work by a wide range of people including staff, pupils, governors, local community groups as well as key business partners. I see this as a real opportunity to enhance Holbrook High School further. Our aims are to use the specialist status to raise achievement for all pupils both in the specialist subjects and across the whole curriculum. It will also allow us to strengthen collaboration with our partner schools and facilitate high quality learning opportunities and outcomes in our specialist subjects for members of, and groups within, the wider local community, including local businesses and employers. As I have stated the bid involved much consultation with the local community as well as establishing business partners for the school with Norfolkline and the Haven Gateway Partnership.

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Holbrook High will receive additional funding from the government for a capital project to enhance our facilities linked to our specialist status. We are planning to build a Learning Centre which will be added as an extension to the new sports centre which is currently under construction. This centre, we hope, will enable the school to act as a real hub for the wider community enabling access outside of school hours in line with the government's Extended Schools agenda. I am really looking forward to the completion of the sports centre so that the facilities, which include a sports hall, community room and purpose built fitness studio, can be made available to members of the public in the evenings and weekends. The sports centre is due for completion in September 2006 and will be available for use by the public shortly after.

The Shotley Peninsula Youth Forum was established earlier this year and has support from Babergh District Council along with The Haven Gateway. The group meets regularly at school and plans to research two key questions – 'What young people want' and 'What already exists for young people'. From this research an action plan with the key priorities will be produced and shared with the Parish Council. In March, Anna Long, Julia Catterwell and Mel Matthews interviewed groups of students from most year groups at school as part of the consultation with young people within the Shotley Parish Plan. Some things the young people wanted to see happen have already been achieved i.e. tidying up the tennis courts and Janet Norden has taken on the role of getting some of their other suggestions put into practice.

The Over 60's lunch on Tuesdays continues to be a popular weekly event which any member of the local community is welcome to take part in and sample the delights of a nourishing school meal.

Finally, I am always willing to show members of the local community around the school during the school day, all I ask is that you contact Mrs Russell via the school office so that a mutually convenient time can be arranged.

Rob Sherington  
Headteacher