

HIGHGATE



School Development Plan

2025 – 2030

highgateschool.org.uk

A Summary

Every five years the school undertakes a planning exercise to set our strategic direction. With the 2020-25 Vision coming to the end of its natural life, the summer of 2025 saw the development of the 2025-2030 version, along with some longer-range objectives.

The text below sets out our three overarching objectives for the next half-decade. They do not take the place of objectives relating to teaching and learning, pastoral matters, inclusion, sustainability and all the other vital elements of everyday school life: those are covered in our more detailed annual planning. Instead, they are intended to help us focus our discretionary effort on things that we think are important, but which might not otherwise receive the attention they need, given their cross-cutting nature and the (deliberately and joyously) busy and bustling nature of our school. They are objectives which are unlikely to be achieved without deliberate or renewed, coordinated action.

Two of the three, relating to our financial position and the effects of online life, will be familiar to you from our recent and ongoing work relating, for example, to international schools and our approach to the use of phones in school. The other, to provide an

open-minded and humane education, is worth explaining in a little more depth.

We believe that an open-minded person is one open to new ideas and willing to respect or accept behaviour or opinions different from their own. An open-minded education, therefore, develops and protects free-thinking and receptiveness. It guards against taking opinions off the shelf as a means of finding a place and an identity in society or community, and promotes enquiring minds, tolerance and curiosity – all valuable assets in what often feels like a polarised and binary world.

We also want our pupils, and therefore the education we provide, to be humane: that is, giving children learning that is intended to have a civilising effect on them, because people are not civilised without it. Again, one does not have to scroll far down the newsfeed to see how vital this is.

These, then, are the three threads that will run through our thinking, planning and actions over the next five years. However, Governors also ask for a longer-term vision which they sign off annually with senior leaders, allowing them to monitor the School's priorities and success against a deliberately wide but focused set of measures, about which they expect to be

informed and their advice and scrutiny are shaped. So we have also developed a series of priorities to guide us through to 2035.

Listed in bullet point form, the 2035 vision sets out in more depth where we want to be in ten years' time. There will, of course, be another five-year vision before then (2030-35) which will doubtless give us another set of goals to guide our overall direction. So if the 2035 vision is the destination, the 2025-30 plan is the route map. It may not be the most direct – a motorway heading straight towards The Exams is not for us – but it will ensure our pupils leave us with a fully functioning academic, social, personal and moral compass.

What follows is not exhaustive. In schools many things happen, every day, that cannot be caught or measured by even the most granular of plans: the momentary interactions that bring smiles, understanding or reassurance, the shared jokes, the lightbulb moments. Some of the planned actions will not take a full five years to be completed; others need to be the focus of continuous work. But I hope that the vision outlined below gives you a good flavour of where we aspire to be, and the principles that will guide us in getting there.

Adam Pettitt, Head



2030 Vision

Highgate's five-year plan is spearheaded by three whole-school objectives to galvanise efforts and focus planning and effort in areas where the School is either at greatest risk or sees greatest opportunity. These are:

Strengthening the School's financial position such that the impact of VAT and other costs are mitigated, in particular through the opening of additional schools abroad and in the UK, so that neither the School's curricular and co-curricular offering nor its charitable reach is reduced, and so the latter may grow

Understanding and, where necessary, mitigating the changing effects on young people, on families and on parenting of pupils' 'online lives' in terms of their wellbeing, behaviour and values

Strengthening the School's ability to provide an open-minded and humane education responsive to changing political tensions, in particular if faced by regulatory or external pressures

2035 Vision

In a longer ten-year period, Highgate has adopted a 2035 vision, to identify objectives specific to either one school or another (Pre-Prep, Junior or Senior) or the support staff.

Overall

- First class school, first class reputation locally & nationally, first class facilities.
- Consistently in top 30 schools nationally in A level & GCSE results, with strong elite/Oxbridge entry to higher education.
- Highly sought after school, sustaining the excellence of the educational offering whilst continuously striving to improve on all fronts.
- All pupils achieving their potential within a culture of a rounded education which takes full account of their individuality, differing passions, intelligences and objectives.
- First class pastoral system and welfare support for pupils.
- Bursaries: progress made to fund all bursaries from donations and other non-fee income by 2030-31, to increase the proportion of pupils on bursaries from 5% to 10% by 2035 (c.£3M and £8M annually), and increasing bursary numbers in the Junior School.
- Partnerships: LAET's reputation and success maintained and its reach into feeder schools established and funded from donation and/or endowment (or Government agreement to tax off-setting).
- Capitalising on 'all-through' strategies to optimise pastoral care and academic development between Key Stage 1 and 2 (Years 1-4) and Key Stage 2 and 3 (Years 5-9).
- Adapting to changing admissions patterns where necessary.

Academic

- Teacher training and recruitment: systems established to create reliable, sustainable pipelines of teachers in shortage subjects for Highgate and partner schools (e.g. LAET), and international schools.
- Succession planning and expansion: a sustainable pipeline established to provide strong middle and senior managers, through forward-thinking recruitment and succession planning, induction, training, and mentoring.
- Implications, opportunities and threats from AI understood, prepared for and, where necessary, implemented with regard to teaching and support services.
- The breadth of the curriculum for 14-18 year olds sustained to include humanities, languages and creative arts.
- Mining leavers' experiences and achievements to assess the effectiveness of Highgate's teaching and pastoral care.

Pastoral

- Developing support for and inclusion of bursary pupils and their families.
- Embedding an understanding of the differences between mental health, wellbeing and pastoral care.
- Training staff to understand and address changing behaviours and attitudes amongst pupils.
- Maximising opportunities of an all-through school.
- Supporting the safe use of digital technologies by pupils.

Capital Projects

Major building works completed, including the Mallinson Sports Centre, Science Block refurbishment and Dyne House (Sixth Form Campus and Music).

Financial

Strong, sustainable financial position such that the impact of VAT (and other costs) are mitigated as far as possible through non-fee income growth and cost control without reducing the curricular and co-curricular offering.

Diversity

Broadening the appeal of Highgate as a school and an employer. Increasing the numbers of minoritised and under-represented communities to come to Highgate, and developing strategies to meet their needs and fulfil their potential.

Sustainability

Continuing to commit to the School's environmental sustainability action plan, with its focus both on educating our school community and adopting positive, impactful sustainability practice.

International/UK Schools and Governance

Managing and governing international schools, and considering the risks and opportunities of a Highgate 'family of schools' in the UK and abroad.



A Highgate education is high-calibre, academically minded teaching with a focus on scholarship and independence for all, rather than on exam outcomes, complemented by a co-curricular, employability and service experience, in an inclusive environment which welcomes and understands all pupils, enables them to be themselves, encourages questioning and self-expression, and helps them to thrive.

Our aim is to be ambitious, accessible and attractive to able young people from all backgrounds who will grow up conscious of their potential and obligation to play a positive, transformative role in their communities.

Vision Statement

In what we plan to do, what we actually do and how we measure our success, our pupils are our starting point: what they experience as children and young adults, what they become and the lives they are able and inspired to lead. So, let us imagine our pupils as they leave us:

We imagine a happy, cohesive community whose pupils, from many different backgrounds, have learnt to respect and value the experience which emerges from diversity and who have grown up in a school which has taken nothing for granted and has cleared the way for all children, whatever their prior experience, to feel welcome and to thrive. They will enjoy life to the full and value their friendships. Open-minded and alert to opportunity, they will leave us for places on competitive courses in a wide range of universities in the UK and around the world, with the ambition, motivation, skills and staying power to equip them to study independently and with success. In their academic learning as well as in their lives beyond the classroom

they will have developed 'soft' skills along with qualities of self-awareness, resilience and self-confidence. They will have developed their emotional and mental as well as their physical health and will have insight into ways of preventing and getting help for ill health, without fear or shame. They will do voluntary work, work experience and internships and will be adept at matching their skills and attributes against possibilities ahead. They will have worked in partnership with young people in other schools and broken out of any school bubble. A Highgate education is high-calibre, academically minded teaching with a focus on scholarship and independence for all, rather than on exam outcomes, complemented by a co-curricular, employability and service experience, in an inclusive environment which welcomes and understands all pupils, enables them to be themselves, encourages questioning and self-expression, and helps them to thrive. Our aim is to be ambitious, accessible and attractive to able young

people from all backgrounds who will grow up conscious of their potential and obligation to play a positive, transformative role in their communities. The way they have journeyed to their exams, and the understanding that remains with them thereafter, will be as important as their grades. They will be creative, rigorous and eager thinkers and readers who have pursued learning for its own sake. They will have had a taste of competition and of the energising effect of entrepreneurship; they will be well informed about ways of living and working sustainably. They will have a range of hobbies and interests in which they will have participated with enjoyment and commitment. In these, and through service to others, they will have grown as individuals who can lead and can serve. They will be thoughtful and open-minded, conscious of the advantages they have enjoyed and of the choices and obligations such advantage should bring.

HIGHGATE

highgateschool.org.uk