

# THE HOLLINS TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE



## INFORMATION TO APPLICANTS

The Hollins Technology College is a mixed, 11-16, comprehensive school with a teaching staff of 50, support staff of 65 and 760 pupils on roll. It opened in 1967 as a County Secondary Modern School, later becoming a Comprehensive High School. We opened as a Technology College on 3rd September, 2001 and have re-designated successfully in 2005 and 2008.

The school is situated to the south of Accrington on a single site overlooking open countryside: Longridge and Hameldon Fells, Pendle Hill and Haslingden Moor. It is very well placed for the motorway network, in particular the M65 and M66. There is easy access to Blackburn, Burnley, Bury, Bolton, Manchester, Preston and the Rossendale and Ribble Valleys. We are on the edge of some of the most beautiful countryside in the North West.

The Hollins is a popular school which is regularly over-subscribed; there are 166 first choice applications for 2011 (in a 'dip' year) with our standard number at 152. Indeed the local authority has asked us to increase this and, subject to consultation, will increase to 158 for September 2012.

We enjoy excellent links with a wide range of establishments; including our partner primary schools and other feeder primaries, local secondary schools, FE colleges, the pupil referral unit, partner special school and training providers who all contribute to enhancing opportunities for the young people in Hyndburn. Pupils are attracted from many areas around the town of Accrington which provides the school with a cross-section of socio-economic status, ability, special needs, culture and race.

The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is approximately 18%, with the majority of these of Pakistani origin. There are above average numbers of students in receipt of free school meals (17.2%), though we suspect the number of eligible parents may well exceed this. Prior attainment of our year groups is generally below average and the mean CAT score is around 96, though attainment at Key Stage 4 is above average on virtually every key measure.

The school is forward thinking, building on its past and current successes. In 2006 the GCSE examination results showed the school as the **second most improved nationally**, based on 54% of students achieving 5 or more A\* - C grades including English and maths (against a National Average of 46%). In 2007 The Hollins Technology College featured 29th in the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust's list of the top 56 schools nationally which exceeded predictions based on the pupil intake at age 11, and was the only Lancashire school included. We were 'predicted to achieve' 32% of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades including English and maths, but actually achieved 52%. In 2008 a further improvement in our results led to us being recognised as a High Performing Specialist School, and we were invited to apply for a second specialism: from April 2009 we were designated a Leading Edge school. The results have continued to improve with over 60% of students achieving five or more A\*

to C grades including English and maths each of the last 3 years. On this key measure our results are consistently within the top 1% or 2% of schools based on the Fischer Family Trust data.

In addition to our Leading Edge status, working in collaboration with four local secondary schools, we are also supporting two schools via the *Gaining Ground* programme. This collaborative work has led to significant improvements and opportunities for all schools involved, not least The Hollins, and we hope to continue with these initiatives in the future.

The school was inspected in 2007 and the Ofsted Report states that The Hollins is "a successful school.....its overall effectiveness is good and that it has outstanding features." The report also states that, "Parents who responded to the questionnaire are overwhelmingly pleased with how their children are encouraged to do their best. They value the caring ethos of the school. One parent's view, typical of many, described the school as having 'a warm, calm feeling'." Our current self-evaluation, validated by our School Improvement Partner, judges us to be outstanding and we await an Ofsted inspection with confidence!

Our curriculum continues to develop and provides a range of opportunities for pupils of all abilities. Recent expansion of the curriculum ensures that pupils are able to choose a mixture of vocational and academic subjects in KS4 and we continue to seek innovative opportunities to personalise the curriculum. Our success has **not** been based on mass entering students for vocational qualifications, but ensuring our curriculum is appropriate for the individual. The six Hyndburn schools and the local college have piloted the "Hyndburn Partnership" over the last few years and well over 100 students from across the area access enrichment courses at partner establishments each year. This has worked very successfully and will continue to be developed.

The school believes in the development of the whole pupil and pastoral care has a high priority at The Hollins. Pupils retain the same Form Tutor and Year Coordinator throughout their school life and there are many avenues of support. In addition, there are high expectations of pupil behaviour and Ofsted stated that "Relationships between staff and students are good, leading to good behaviour in lessons and around school". We have worked hard recently to improve the communication with parents and have made significant progress. A rigorous approach to pupil tracking has been developed and has played a significant part in raising standards. Data is regularly scrutinised and intervention strategies employed for groups of students and individuals.

Students' learning is further enhanced by an increasingly wide and diverse range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, seeking to increase attainment, enhance skills and contribute to the personal development of every individual student.

The ICT facilities are excellent, the school having recently invested heavily in state-of-the-art equipment, including a wireless network. Broadband internet and intranet facilities are available throughout the school. Multi-media facilities are available in many areas of the school including the Learning Resource Centre. All classrooms have whiteboards and data projectors and all teachers have a laptop computer on permanent loan.

We have a talented, committed staff and the excellent ethos that exists at The Hollins is exemplified in many ways, not least by the very high attendance rates of our staff (less than 1.3 days absence per year per teacher). Staff development is an important issue in the life

of the school and it has again been confirmed, in December 2008, that we are an Investors in People school. Support staff make up over 50% of the school staff; they are crucial to our development and success, and they are offered every opportunity to develop professionally. The Business Manager is an integral part of our senior leadership team. The Hollins is increasingly regarded as a school where teachers' progress their professional development and we have an excellent track record of staff leaving to promoted posts at all levels. We are a leading school in the promotion and delivery of initial teacher training by a variety of routes, including Graduate Trainee placements.

High quality teaching and learning are the cornerstones of our success with over 90% of lessons observed good or better over the previous two years, with over a third outstanding. Quality is assured through a comprehensive programme of lesson observations which regularly includes paired observations and last year included paired observations with colleagues from another school, via a reciprocal arrangement.

The current SLT comprises headteacher, two deputy headteachers, two assistant headteachers and business manager. Whilst everyone has a clearly defined job description in reality there is considerable overlap with a real team approach to school improvement. The work of the school has been enhanced by the newly formed Extended Leadership Team, providing whole school opportunities to a wide range of staff. Strong middle leadership and departmental teams have successfully driven the school forward and provide strong capacity for further improvement.

The new White Paper, the Wolf review of Vocational Education, the forthcoming Green Paper on SEND and the current economic climate to name a few current issues, provides a range of challenges for all schools, but we view the future with confidence; a school with a talented staff, committed to providing the very best for all our students. There are exciting times ahead and the successful candidate will find the school supportive and eager to embrace new ideas and opportunities.

Mark Jackson  
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March 2011