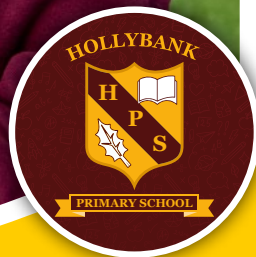


# Hollybank

## Primary School & Nursery Unit



ENGAGE, EMPOWER, EXCEL



“School is bright and welcoming, and children are very accepting of new pupils, especially those from different cultures.”

**GOVERNOR**

HOLLYBANK



PRIMARY SCHOOL

I'M ASPIRING TO BE  
THE BEST VERSION OF ME

SOWING SEEDS OF  
LEARNING TODAY SO I  
GROW IN EVERY WAY

MISTAKES WILL  
HELP ME TO ACHIEVE  
AND IN ME, HOLLYBANK  
WILL ALWAYS BELIEVE.

ENGAGE, EMPOWER, EXCEL

# THE HOLLYBANK FAMILY

Welcome to Hollybank Primary School & Nursery Unit, a place where every child is valued, and learning is an adventure. We believe in creating a warm, friendly, and inclusive environment where pupils thrive and develop a lifelong love of learning. This prospectus offers a glimpse into our school's ethos, the exciting learning opportunities we provide, and the strong sense of community that defines us.

At Hollybank, we understand that choosing the right primary or nursery school is a significant decision. While this prospectus provides a snapshot of life at Hollybank, we invite you to experience the true spirit of our school firsthand. A personal tour will allow you to witness the energy and enthusiasm of our pupils, the dedication of our staff, and the welcoming atmosphere of our vibrant classrooms. Please don't hesitate to contact us using the details at the back of this prospectus to arrange a visit.

We are committed to making learning fun, purposeful, and challenging for every pupil. Our curriculum is designed to foster individuality, promote inclusion, and develop a strong understanding of equality. We are incredibly proud of our pupils' achievements and celebrate their successes regularly. Furthermore, we prioritise the care and welfare of our pupils, responding quickly and sensitively to any concerns raised by children or parents. With a strong emphasis on mental health and wellbeing, we ensure every child feels supported and ready to learn, starting the day with a warm welcome, a healthy breakfast for all pupils, and mindful morning routines. We look forward to welcoming you and your child to the Hollybank family.





# WHO WE ARE...



Hollybank Primary School & Nursery Unit is more than just a building; it's a vibrant and nurturing community where pupils thrive holistically. Nestled on the edge of Monkstown Wood, our bright, modern school provides a safe and inspiring haven for all. With stunning views of the surrounding natural landscape and convenient access to major transport links and the local university campus, Hollybank offers the best of both worlds: a peaceful learning environment connected to the wider world.

Our facilities are designed to support every aspect of a child's development:



- **Dedicated learning spaces:** From our well-equipped classrooms and modern computer suite to our spacious art room and interactive Foundation Stage outdoor learning area, we provide a stimulating environment for academic exploration.
- **Specialised support:** We offer two learning support units for SEN pupils within mainstream integration, sensory room, and a dedicated Nurture Nest to ensure every child receives the individualised attention they deserve.
- **Well-being focus:** Mini calming Zen Dens in every lobby, a purpose-built sensory suite, and the Hollybank Haven (an outdoor wellbeing pod with sensory path and raised gardening beds) promote relaxation and emotional well-being.
- **Outdoor learning:** Our extensive outdoor spaces, including a full-size football pitch, a sizeable zoned playground, a modern outdoor classroom for Forest Schools activities, a polytunnel, a gardening area, a peaceful willow dome, an adventure playground, and outdoor reading and writing spaces, provide endless opportunities for exploration and discovery.



At Hollybank, our experienced and dedicated staff work tirelessly to create a happy and stimulating environment where every child can reach their full potential. We are proud to partner with our dedicated parents, who share our commitment to providing high standards of social, physical, academic, and pastoral care. Above all, we are immensely proud of our pupils, who consistently demonstrate positive, friendly, and respectful attitudes, earning countless compliments from the wider community. They are true ambassadors for Hollybank Primary School & Nursery Unit







**“Staff certainly are valued and individuals’ commitment and positivity is clearly evident.”**

**GOVERNOR**

# EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

At Hollybank Primary School & Nursery Unit, the emotional health and wellbeing of our pupils is central to everything we do. We believe that a happy and emotionally secure child is a successful learner. From the moment pupils arrive, we proactively foster a positive sense of wellbeing through daily emotional check-ins and a variety of engaging activities designed to promote self-awareness, resilience, and positive relationships.

We are committed to providing a nurturing and supportive environment where every child feels safe, valued, and understood. Our staff are trained to recognise and respond to pupils' emotional needs, and we offer a range of targeted interventions for those who may be struggling. These include individual coaching and art therapy, providing pupils with the tools and strategies they need to manage their emotions and thrive.

By prioritising emotional health and wellbeing, we create a positive and inclusive learning environment where every child can reach their full potential.

At Hollybank Primary School, we understand the importance of fostering self-esteem and confidence in our pupils. We employ a multi-faceted approach to nurture these qualities, ensuring every child feels valued, capable, and ready to embrace new challenges.

Our commitment to building self-esteem is evident in several key initiatives:

- **PATHS Curriculum:** Our PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) curriculum is designed to explicitly teach social-emotional skills, helping pupils develop self-awareness, manage their emotions, and build positive relationships.
- **Merit Reward System:** Our school planner includes a merit reward system where pupils progress through bronze, silver, and gold awards, providing tangible recognition of their achievements and boosting their self-belief and self-worth.
- **Take 5 Clubs:** Every Thursday, pupils in P4-P7 can participate in a wide range of "Take 5" clubs designed to teach new skills and foster self-confidence. These clubs offer diverse opportunities for pupils to explore their interests and talents, from gardening and singing to violin, arts and crafts, yoga, boxing, and more.
- **Marshall, the Therapy Dog:** Marshall is a beloved member of the Hollybank family, providing comfort and support to pupils throughout the school. He visits classrooms, spends time with individual pupils who may need some quiet time, and even assists with lessons, creating a calming and positive learning environment.
- **Ready, Respectful, Safe Recognition:** Each Friday, pupils eagerly check under their seats for a chance to win "Hot Chocolate Friday" as a reward for demonstrating readiness, respect, and safety. Additionally, each month, deserving pupils are celebrated at a special "Principal's Tea Party."
- **Kindness Counts:** Kindness tokens are an integral part of daily life at Hollybank. Each Friday, our prefects draw two names from the kindness jar, awarding the lucky recipients with a chip shop lunch and a slushy/milkshake voucher.

Through these initiatives, we strive to create a supportive and encouraging environment where every child can thrive and develop a strong sense of self-worth."



## ART THERAPY

Art Therapy at Hollybank Primary School offers a transformative programme that empowers pupils to explore their emotions, build self-worth, and enhance their confidence and self-esteem. Led by our dedicated and experienced therapist, Mrs. Mawhinney, this programme provides a safe and supportive space for pupils to express themselves creatively through a variety of art materials and techniques.

With her expertise and therapeutic approach, Mrs. Mawhinney has helped countless pupils over the years to overcome challenges, develop coping strategies, and unlock their full potential. Art Therapy provides a unique and powerful way for pupils to connect with their inner selves, fostering emotional healing and personal growth.

## TLG COACHING

TLG (Transforming Lives for Good) Coaching at Hollybank Primary School & Nursery Unit provides a comprehensive, year-long programme designed to support pupils through the various challenges they may face during their childhood. This programme offers a unique opportunity for pupils to develop a positive and supportive relationship with a dedicated coach who provides weekly visits.

These sessions are designed to be fun, engaging, and held in a safe and confidential space where pupils feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings. Through this consistent support, pupils can build resilience, develop coping strategies, and overcome obstacles, empowering them to thrive both in and out of the classroom.



**“My child really enjoyed their sessions with Mary, and it allowed them to have time to express their feelings in a safe space.”**

**“My child is much more confident and is able to talk about how they are feeling.”**





## MR SPOTS

Mr. Spots, our friendly giraffe, plays a special role in school life at Hollybank. He serves as a visual reminder for pupils, reinforcing learning targets, aspirations, and school routines in a fun and engaging way.

# EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING (cont.)

## FAMILY LIAISON SERVICE

Hollybank Primary School & Nursery Unit is proud to partner with Monkstown Village Initiatives to offer a valuable Family Liaison Service to our parents and families. This service acts as a bridge, connecting families with the resources and support they need to navigate various challenges and promote their well-being.

Our Family Liaison Service provides a confidential and accessible point of contact for parents who may be seeking assistance with issues such as housing, employment, financial support, parenting, or mental health. By working closely with Monkstown Village Initiatives, we can ensure that our families have access to the right information and support at the right time, empowering them to thrive and support their children's education.

## ATTENDANCE

At Hollybank Primary School & Nursery Unit, we recognise that regular and consistent attendance is fundamental to every child's academic development, mental health, and overall well-being. We are committed to working in partnership with families to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and benefit from the full range of learning opportunities we offer.

To support this, we closely monitor attendance and provide a tiered system of support through our four-stage attendance policy. We also work in collaboration with the Educational Welfare Service to provide additional support and guidance to families who may be facing challenges with attendance.

We actively promote good attendance through monthly awards and a "blue ticket" draw, celebrating and rewarding pupils who demonstrate excellent attendance. By prioritising attendance, we aim to create a positive and supportive learning environment where every child can thrive.



# PASTORAL CARE & CHILD PROTECTION

The pastoral dimension of our school involves all our staff and children. Our most recent inspection report stated:

**“Among the strengths are the welcoming, inclusive and supportive ethos throughout the whole school, the effective strategies to promote positive behaviour and the consultation with the children in the compilation of class rules. Individual merit systems, for example, the Principal’s Tea Party are in place and highly valued by the children: there is clear evidence that the reward system has a positive impact on the children’s motivation, confidence and self-esteem. The relationships between the children and staff are very positive...”. Education and Training Inspectorate**

Every student has unique talents and abilities which we nurture and develop. Pastoral care is of utmost priority and is emphasised through our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and our Positive Behaviour Policy. Our preventative curriculum ensures all pupils are aware of the risks and dangers of the modern world, and also helps them acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe. Hollybank Primary School & Nursery Unit seeks to provide an environment in which children, staff, governors and parents work together as a caring and supportive community of learners. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which not only develops the academic skills but also the social principles of respect, fairness, trust and responsibility.

Each day a ‘Pupil of the Day’ is chosen to receive compliments from their peers and have the golden star cushion added to their chair!



**“Every child deserves a champion – an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.”**

RITA PIERSON





"It was such a joy to walk in and feel the lovely atmosphere and the positive vibe in Hollybank PS."

VISITING TEACHER

At Hollybank Primary School & Nursery Unit, we foster a culture of open communication and provide tailored support to ensure that every child thrives. We encourage all pupils to communicate any concerns they may have, either directly or through our classroom worry boxes. Parents are also encouraged to contact us with any concerns, and we assure them that all matters will be treated sensitively, with appropriate attention and confidentiality.

We are committed to identifying and addressing the individual needs of all our pupils. Through the use of standardised tests, ongoing assessment, and teacher observation, we identify pupils who may be underachieving or have special educational needs. Where appropriate, these pupils receive an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with targets specific to their particular needs. Underachieving pupils receive carefully monitored interventions and mentoring sessions designed to boost their confidence and improve their attitudes towards themselves and school.

"Hollybank has exceeded our expectations of a Primary School: our child is reaching goals we never thought possible. His confidence is flowing, he really has found a special place at Hollybank- long may it continue, and the school goes from strength to strength." PARENT SURVEY



“Each of us has a fire in our hearts for something.  
It’s our goal in life to find it and keep it lit.”

MARY LOU RETTON



# A JOURNEY THROUGH KEY STAGES NURTURING GROWTH AT HOLLYBANK PRIMARY

## NURSERY

Nursery marks the beginning of your child's exciting learning journey in the Hollybank family. Here, pupils embark on their educational adventure through structured play opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, promoting and extending their curiosity and awareness of the world. Each child thrives under the care of our experienced and dedicated staff, who create a safe, inclusive, and stimulating environment where they can explore, learn, and grow with confidence.

We offer full time nursery places, from 8:50am - 1:30pm, with a hot dinner served at midday. Wrap around care is available from 8am to 5pm.

## FOUNDATION STAGE (PRIMARY ONE AND TWO):

The Foundation Stage builds upon experiences from Pre-school and Nursery, providing a smooth transition into primary school life. Play-based learning forms the basis of learning through indoor and outdoor experiences. These activities are well-planned and age-appropriate to provide a fun challenge that will develop positive attitudes to learning, promote achievement of early success, and encourage motivation. This is where pupils embark on their path to becoming independent readers. Throughout the key stage, they are grouped according to their reading development, ensuring each child receives instruction tailored to their specific needs at every stage.

All our pupils enjoy great success in our reading programme, and love attending their daily reading pods.



## KEY STAGE ONE (PRIMARY THREE AND FOUR):

Key Stage One builds on the learning achieved in the Foundation Stage in a more formal way. Continued emphasis is placed on the personal, social, and emotional development of cross-curricular skills, such as communication, mathematics, ICT, and thinking skills. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their thinking skills and problem-solving strategies through activity-based learning both indoors and outdoors.

## KEY STAGE TWO (PRIMARY FIVE, SIX, AND SEVEN):

In Key Stage Two, pupils continue to extend their knowledge and are encouraged to make connections between their learning areas. STEAM challenge days provide a wonderful opportunity for independent and collaborative learning with an emphasis on Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. There is a strong emphasis on pupil responsibility for their learning, encouraging all pupils at this stage to self-reflect and improve on their learning targets. Primary 7 develop these skills further by running their own business each year. Support for students wishing to complete the SEAG tests for Grammar School begins in P6, with extra assistance continuing into P7, and a Summer School keeping up practice in July and August.





# PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the support you have given my son, without doubt you gave me back my boy."

PARENT REPORT FEEDBACK



"The Principal and the teachers work conscientiously to ensure that communication with the parents is effective and maintained through regular newsletters, a newly established school website, open days, information meetings and a range of valuable courses for parents. There are well established and excellent links developed with the other local schools, including pre-school, primary and post primary schools, which enrich the children's educational and social experiences and ensure smooth transitions." *Education and Training Inspectorate*

Positive behaviour is essential for effective learning. All classes create a Class Plan for Learning based on respect, resilience, and kindness, reinforced by the Three Golden Rules: Ready, Respectful, Safe. The Positive Behaviour Policy highlights numerous rewards pupils receive, such as Kindness Tokens and the Principal's Tea Party. The school ethos focuses on highlighting positive behaviours and diminishing negative ones. Class Dojo is used in all year groups to encourage positive behaviour and track pupil progress.

# PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Hollybank Primary School & Nursery Unit believes a close partnership between home and school is vital and fosters these relationships in a number of ways. Parents are invited to assist in school on a voluntary capacity or join school more formally as a member of the PTFA. The school sends home a monthly newsletter and regularly updates its website. Teachers communicate and share details of daily learning through Seesaw posts and photographs. Introductory parent meetings are held in each year group at the beginning of each academic year. In addition, parents are invited to parental consultations twice a year and annually receive a written report on their child's progress. The school holds an annual Parent Praise Event where pupils can show off their learning and share successes with their parents and carers. Several parent-focused events are run to support parents during their children's education, by the family liaison support service such as coffee mornings and training sessions. The school has an open-door policy, where parents are welcome to arrange appointments with teachers if they are concerned about any area of school life.

*"I love coming into this school to do Time to Read, it's so welcoming and I wish I could go back to school. My school days weren't like this."*

## TIME TO READ VOLUNTEER



# SCHOOL LIFE

## PI BUDDY SYSTEM

At Hollybank we are extremely proud of the pastoral care taken for our pupils and by our pupils. Our P7 pupils buddy up with a P1 student the minute they arrive in school, on that daunting first day. This helps the younger pupils settle in with ease and creates a very special bonding opportunity, which is developed throughout the year. It has proven to be a great success for all involved.

## HOLLYBANK PREFECTS

Each year P4-P7 pupils nominate and vote for senior prefects who act as great ambassadors for the school throughout the year. These pupils are a wonderful addition to the school as a whole, always volunteering for extra responsibilities and supporting the Principal and staff on many occasions. They are excellent role models within our school, who enjoy their regular catch ups with the Principal over hot chocolate and cookies.

## DIGITAL LEADERS

Created by educational experts, the Childnet Digital Leaders Programme provides interactive, informative, and fun online learning modules which cover the latest online safety issues and trends.

Young people work through these modules on our gamified platform, equipping them with the skills they need to not only thrive online themselves, but also go on to educate and support their peers.

## DAILY MILE

Everyone in Hollybank, staff and pupils alike enjoy the benefits of an invigorating walk to blow away the cobwebs, in our pleasant surroundings.

## VOLUNTEERS

Reading is an essential skill for everybody; therefore, we place great emphasis on all pupils reaching their full potential in this area. Community schemes such as 'Time to Read' and 'Equipping for Life' offer great support to children who might benefit from extra practice, with additional adult support.







## PRINCIPAL'S TEA PARTY

In Hollybank we always seek to celebrate the success, achievements and efforts of our students. Each month a selection of pupils receive invites to a Principal's Tea Party, where children are served a party picnic by the Principal at a Mad Hatter's Tea Party...a tradition enjoyed by pupils and Principal alike!



## HOT CHOCOLATE FRIDAY

Each Friday a child from each class finds a Hot Chocolate Friday reward stuck under their chair, for being Ready, Respectful or Safe.

## SCHOOL COUNCIL

We very much value pupil voice in Hollybank, seeking to develop their aspirations and provide them with opportunities to inspire. Each year a new school council is elected working as innovators to develop the school for others. They help monitor and reward positive behaviour around school and manage the play equipment at break and lunch, always fulfilling their responsible role to the highest degree.



## BOOST

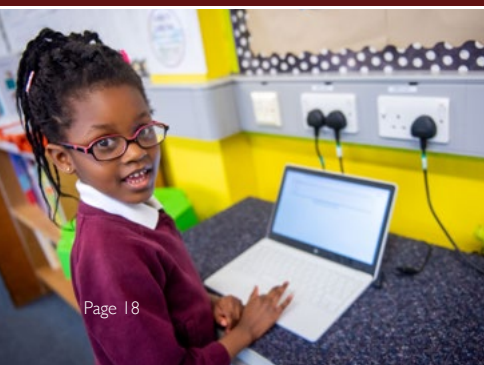
We offer small group tuition for pupils who may be underachieving in literacy and numeracy, alongside parental workshops to teach techniques and tricks for learning.





**“THE SCHOOL GIVES  
GOOD ATTENTION  
TO ENCOURAGING  
CHILDREN TO ADOPT  
HEALTHY LIFESTYLES.”**

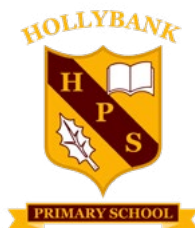
EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
INSPECTORATE



## EXTENDED SCHOOLS

We offer a range of after school activities which include:

- Art Club
- Scripture Union
- Lego Club
- Football
- Recorder
- ICT
- Hockey
- Table tennis
- French Club
- STEAM Club (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Maths)
- Eco Club
- AQE Club
- 2-3 Club (for P1-P3)
- Gardening Club
- Heartstart
- THE Hollybank Hub (after schools service)
- Basketball
- Boxing
- Drumming
- Violin
- Gymnastics
- Minecraft
- VR
- Scooters
- Nerf club



# SCHOOL TRIPS

Throughout their time in Hollybank, all students have many opportunities to explore new experiences through school trips.

Some of the trips our pupils have enjoyed so far include:

- York
- Edinburgh
- Corrymeela
- Belfast Zoo
- Streamvale Farm
- Crawfordsburn Scout Centre
- W5
- Loughshore
- Monkstown Wood
- The Waterfront Hall
- The Braid Museum
- Carrickfergus Castle
- The Tayto Factory
- Ulster Folk and Transport Museum
- Cinema
- Crusaders' Football Club
- The Giant's Causeway
- Aurora Leisure Centre





# WRAP AROUND CARE

## WIDE AWAKE CLUB

We offer morning care from 8:00am in our Wide Awake Club. Pupils can play games, read, draw and socialise with their peers, before heading off to class for tasty toast.

**£2.00 per day**

## 2-3 CLUB

2-3 club is available for pupils in P1-P3. It is a great opportunity for more play and craft activities, whilst waiting for older siblings, or heading to The Hollybank Hub at 3:00pm.

**£3.00 per day**

## THE HOLLYBANK HUB

The Hollybank Hub operates for all children until 5:00pm, 4:30pm on Fridays. Here, the pupils enjoy music, arts and crafts, cookery, and let's not forget completing their homework, with adult support.

**£6.00 per day.**







# SCHOOL UNIFORM



Our school is committed to ensuring that our uniform policy complies with the Department of Education's statutory guidelines under the School Uniforms (Guidelines and Allowances) Bill. This means:

- **Affordability and Value for Money** - We have designed our uniform to be practical, comfortable, and cost-effective. Branded items are kept to a minimum, and we aim to provide options that represent good value for families.
- **Supplier Choice** - Uniform items can be purchased from multiple suppliers. A list of approved suppliers is available on our website and from the school office.
- **Consultation and Transparency** - Parents and pupils are consulted when uniform policies are reviewed. We publish the rationale for our choices, including cost details, to ensure transparency.
- **Uniform Grants** - Families who meet eligibility criteria may apply for a uniform grant. Information on how to apply is available through the Education Authority and on our school website.
- **Review Cycle** - Our uniform policy is reviewed at least every three years in line with statutory requirements.

**Uniform Details and Costs** - A full breakdown of required items, approximate costs, and supplier information is provided on our website.





# ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

## ADMISSIONS TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Principal is authorised by the Board of Governors to admit children based on the admissions criteria listed below.

When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account the information which is detailed on, or attached to the application form. Parents should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child, and relevant to the school's admissions criteria is stated.

In the event of the school being oversubscribed the Board Of Governors will apply the criteria as set out below. The criteria are listed in order of priority:

- 1. Children who have a sibling attending hollybank primary school**
- 2. Applicants will be admitted based on the initial letter of their surname in the randomized order set out in the admissions criteria, published on the department's website.**

Year	Total Applications	Total Admissions
2023/2024	32	30
2024/2025	30	30
2025/2026	21	20

## ADMISSIONS TO NURSERY SCHOOL

In the event of oversubscription on the application of a statutory criterion the sub-criteria will be applied in the order set down.

- 1. Children whose parents have chosen Hollybank Nursery Unit as their first preference, over those who have named Hollybank Nursery Unit as a second preference and second preference will be admitted before third preference etc.**
- 2. Children who are the eldest\* or only child in the family or children with siblings who have previously attended Hollybank Nursery Unit (previously known as Hollybank Pre-School) to include step, half, foster brother and/or sister.**
- 3. Children with siblings who are currently attending or have previously attended Hollybank Primary School.**
- 4. The geographical location of the child's home address relative to the setting as measured by Google Maps Walking distance. Child closest in distance from the setting will be admitted first. In the event of 2 or more children living equidistant from the school final selection will be by lot.**

Individual family circumstances will be taken into consideration, upon verification, where the eldest child in the family attends a special school/unit



# Hollybank

## Primary School & Nursery Unit

**DEVENISH DRIVE  
MONKSTOWN  
NEWTOWNABBEY  
BT37 0HF**

**TEL: 02890 864944**

**WWW.HOLLYBANKPS.CO.UK**

**EMAIL: [info@hollybankps.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@hollybankps.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk)**

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

**SCHOOL STARTS 8:50 AM**

**BREAKTIME 10:20 - 10:30AM**

**LUNCHTIME 1 12:00 - 12.30PM**

**LUNCHTIME 2 12:30 - 1.00PM**

### **SCHOOL FINISHES**

**NURSERY 1:30pm**

**P1-P3: 2:00PM**

**P4-P7: 2:00PM Tuesdays only**

**3:00PM Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday**

# Hollybank

## Primary School & Nursery Unit



ENGAGE, EMPOWER, EXCEL