



Lent Newsletter

Easter Address from Mr Brailsford - Headteacher

As we reach the end of the spring term, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on the many achievements across our school community and to wish you all a restful and joyful Easter break.

This term has been full of energy, ambition, and kindness and when considering the many challenges we face in the World today, it only takes a brief walk around our Academy to reassure me that the future is bright. I read a quote last week which can link nicely to this, "To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow".

Our students have shown tremendous commitment in their learning, whether preparing for upcoming examinations, participating in enrichment activities, or representing the school with maturity and pride. Their enthusiasm continues to make our school a vibrant place to work and learn.

Celebrating Our Students

We have seen wonderful successes in recent weeks:

Academic Progress: Teachers have been impressed by the dedication shown by so many of our students. Our year 11 and year 13 students, in particular, deserve recognition for their determination as they approach their final examinations. Revision sessions held after school have been well attended and students are determined to make this a successful summer. We have your back and will be with you every step of the way!

Arts, Sports, and Enrichment: This term's school production was a true highlight—an impressive showcase of talent and teamwork in the show 'Our House'. Our sports teams have also enjoyed strong performances, demonstrating resilience and excellent sportsmanship. Several students were recognised by our Trust and received praise and commendations for some wonderful artwork on the subject of 'flourishing and togetherness'. We have enjoyed World Book Day, multiple theatre visits, the Ski Trip to Alpe d'Huez, a criminal investigations day, a visit to the University of Cambridge for our sixth form students and we have taken the time to visit local care homes in the community.

Community and Kindness: A special thank you to everyone who has supported our charity initiatives this term. Your generosity has made a real difference and reflects the caring ethos we strive to nurture. So far this year we have supported Women's Aid, Hucknall Food Bank, animal shelters, Young Minds, The Anti-bullying Alliance and the King's Village in Ghana. National Academy continues to be a place of compassion and humanity, with the great gift of Easter bringing hope.

Looking Ahead

After the break, we look forward to a busy and purposeful summer term. Key dates including examination timetables, parents' evenings, and upcoming events have been shared via our usual channels. Please do encourage students in examination years to balance rest with a little revision to help them return to school feeling confident and prepared.

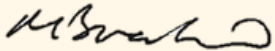
A Well-Deserved Rest

Easter is a time for renewal, reflection, and fresh beginnings. We leave the dark and cold days behind; things begin to bloom and we remember the promise of new life. I hope you are all able to enjoy time with family and friends and take the chance to relax after a busy term. Spring is a wonderful reminder of how quickly things grow—something that resonates strongly as we see our students continue to mature, learn, and thrive here at National.

Thank you for your continued support of our school. It is a privilege to work with such a positive and committed community.

Wishing you all a very happy Easter.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Brailsford', written in a cursive style.

Mr M Brailsford - Headteacher

'Life in all its fullness' John 10:10

World Book Day

There was a real buzz around school on Thursday 5th March as we celebrated World Book Day. On the day, books were hidden around school for students to find and take home for free. Students were also able to collect £1 world book day tokens from the library, to use in supermarkets and bookshops to exchange for one of the £1 world book day books, or to get £1 off any book of their choice.

Students were able to take part in bookish quizzes, creative writing and book themed crafts throughout the week in the library, with lots of prizes up for grabs.

There were also 10 golden tickets for lucky winners to exchange for a brand new book of their choice! The tickets were handed in to the library so we could order their books and the students were able to collect them the following week.

Many of our staff dressed up as characters from books, generating lots of discussion from students about who staff had chosen to be and why.

Mrs J Prestwood - LRC Lead



Author Visit

On Wednesday 4th March, we had a visit from local author, Paula Rawsthorne. Paula came to school as part of our World Book Day celebrations to promote reading and creative writing to our students.

First up, all of year 7 had an assembly, where Paula talked about her books and the inspiration behind her writing. Following on, smaller groups of year 7 and 8 attended some creative writing workshops. The students created some interesting pieces of persuasive letter writing and thoughtful ideas personifying what they would pack on their journey through life.

Paula has written four award winning young adult novels, all of which are available in the Academy library for students to borrow and read.

Mrs K Simpson - Assistant Head of Languages



Brilliant Book Award

On Tuesday 24th February, ten of our year 7 and 8 students took a trip to the Squire Performing Arts Centre, to see some of the shortlisted authors of the Brilliant Book Award. The Brilliant Book Award is a local book award specifically for schools in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.



5 of the 6 shortlisted authors were in attendance, and they spoke to the students about their books, how they became authors and inspiration for their writing. They then answered some questions from the audience.

At lunchtime the students were able to meet the authors and get signed copies of their books.



It was a wonderful celebration of reading! The students are then able to vote for their favourite book from the shortlist and the winner will be announced at the end of March.

Alongside our World Book Day celebrations, we have been continuing to promote the 2026 National Year of Reading. We have been shadowing book awards in the library, like the Brilliant Book Award, but also the Royal Society Young People's Prize for science books and the Excelsior Award for manga and graphic novels, as a way to read the best books a subject has to offer. We have also this term been promoting ways to read more around subjects we already enjoy in our literacy lessons with year 7 and 8.

Mrs J Prestwood - LRC Lead

Year 9 Theatre Trip

The York Grand Opera House was a wonderful building for a production of Susan Hill's, *The Woman in Black* that delivered chilling suspense, atmospheric staging, and gripping performances, immersing the audience in a haunting tale of mystery and lingering supernatural presence. It was a joy to see the novel turned into a fabulous stage performance that mixed the eerie experiences of Arthur Kipp as he told his story of Eel Marsh House and its abiding doom. Our year 9 students behaved brilliantly, showing maturity, enthusiasm for the production, and exemplary conduct that made the trip enjoyable for everyone. It was also lovely to receive compliments from the public about the well-mannered behaviour of our students.



Miss C Hunt - Head of Languages

Ski Trip

Our January 2026 ski trip to Alpe d'Huez was an unforgettable experience and a tremendous success from start to finish.

Set against the stunning backdrop of the French Alps, students embraced every opportunity to challenge themselves on the slopes. Over the course of the week, the progress made by all ability levels was truly impressive. Beginners quickly gained confidence mastering the fundamentals, from controlling their speed to linking turns smoothly, while more experienced skiers refined their technique, developed greater control on steeper runs, and tackled new terrain with determination and resilience.

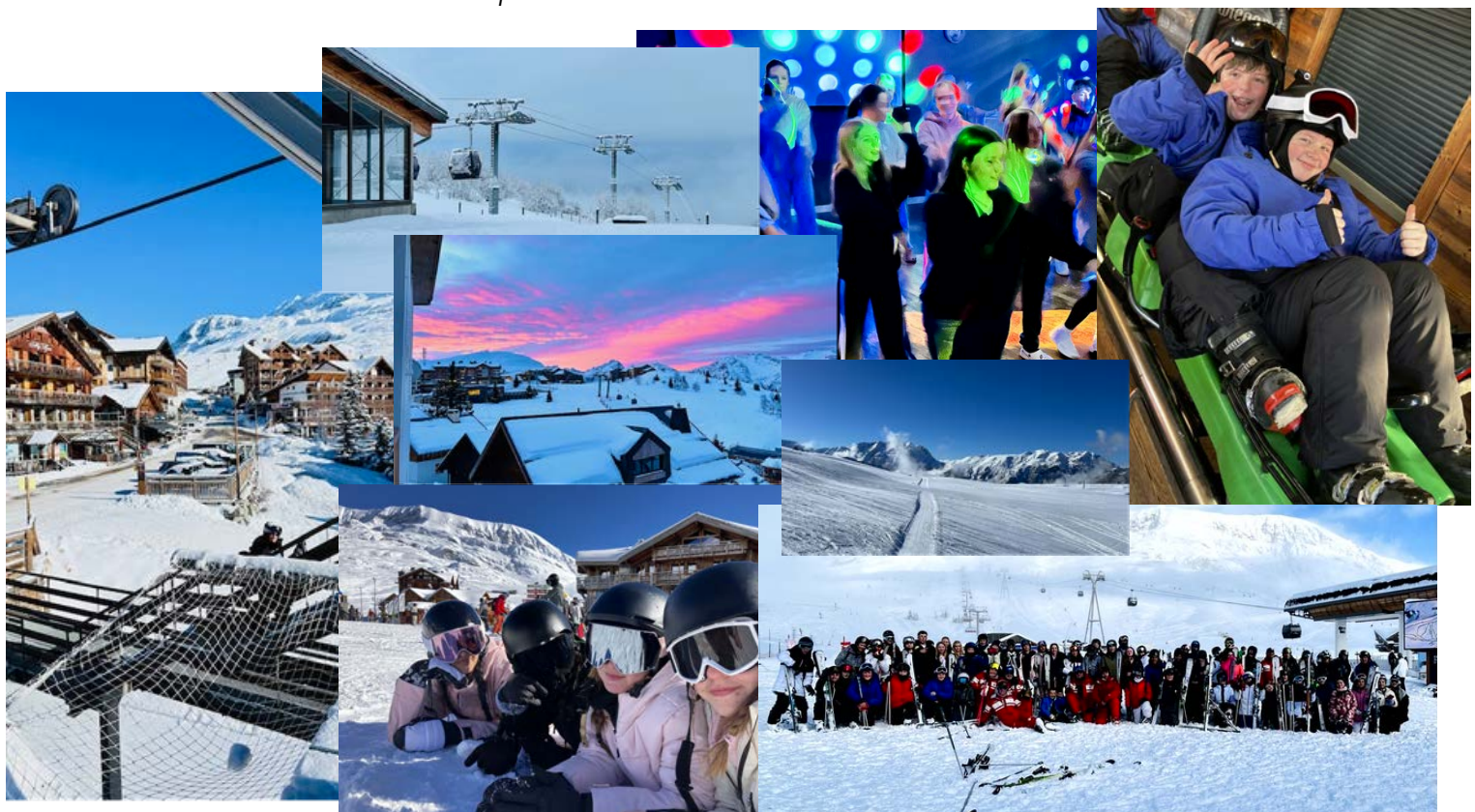
Beyond their technical improvement, students developed a wide range of valuable life skills. They demonstrated perseverance when runs felt challenging, courage when trying something new, and teamwork as they encouraged and supported one another. Their independence grew throughout the trip, whether managing their equipment, organising themselves each morning, or navigating the mountain responsibly.

We were particularly proud of the students' behaviour, which was exceptional throughout. They represented the school superbly, showing respect to instructors, hotel staff, and members of the public at all times. Their positive attitude, enthusiasm, and willingness to step outside their comfort zones ensured that the week was not only successful but thoroughly enjoyable for everyone involved.

The fun certainly didn't stop when we left the slopes. There was a fantastic range of evening entertainment for students to enjoy, including lively karaoke sessions, a high-energy disco, and even ice skating. These activities gave everyone the chance to relax, have fun together, and continue building friendships outside of ski lessons. Evenings were filled with laughter and shared memories, strengthening friendships and creating stories that will be talked about for years to come. Most importantly, every student returned home with a genuine sense of achievement and a love for the mountains.

It was a fantastic trip all round – full of progress, positivity, and plenty of fun. We are incredibly proud of all who took part.

Mr A Cockerill - Associate Leadership Team



Our House - The Academy Show

This year's Academy show, was *Our House*, an Olivier Award-winning jukebox musical featuring the songs of British band, Madness. Set in the 1980s, it follows 16-year-old Joe Casey, whose life splits into two parallel paths, "Good Joe" and "Bad Joe" based on a decision made on his birthday. Our students and staff worked exceptionally hard to bring this show to life, with evening shows on Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th February, as well as matinee performances that same week, for Annesley Lodge Care Home and local primary schools.

Elijah in year 8 said, "I enjoy being in the show, it's a lot of fun. My favourite part is the actual shows themselves and getting to perform."

Joel in year 10 said, "The school show was and always is, an awesome experience. Having done the show every year since 2023, I have been able to watch others grow not just in personality but also in confidence. It is always one of my favourite times of the year."

Miss Hornbuckle said, "Being part of the school production for the first time this year has been an absolute joy! The enthusiasm from the students was contagious from the very beginning of rehearsals and their hard-work and dedication shone through on the show nights. It is a real testament to the dedication of Mrs Chambers, Mr Ward and Mr Baggott to support and nurture the students involved as well as continuing to promote the importance of arts subjects in education. It was a real privilege to be involved!"



MITRE Art Project and Competition

We are excited to share the results of the MITRE Art Project and Competition. All schools across the Trust took part, creating incredible artwork around the theme "Flourishing and Togetherness."

Every entry was judged by Doug Leman, a member of the Nottinghamshire Society of Artists, and Mr Parris, CEO of the Trust, with the criteria of:

- technique
- creativity
- response to the theme

The judging panel enjoyed carefully looking at each piece to choose the 'highly commended' winning pieces of art in each of our three age categories. Both judges were truly blown away by the creativity, imagination, and talent shown in every piece submitted.

Olivia M and Rajpreet B were both highly commended and Mia S, Lorelai C, Jack L and Niamh G were all commended in the key stage 3 category.

The students met with Mr Brailsford, who proudly presented them with their certificates, and a prize for the highly commended. A huge congratulations to all of our winners, and well done to every student who took part. Your artwork shows fantastic flair, creativity, and talent – we are incredibly proud of you all!



Highly Commended



Commended

Outstanding Achievement



We would like to say congratulations and good luck to one of our year 11 students, Ava. Ava currently plays for Aston Villa and has recently been selected to play for Wales under 17s. Over February half term Ava travelled to Spain to play in an U17 tournament. Playing against several teams, including the USA.

In March, Ava again represents Wales in the U17 European qualifiers. The side begin their Round Two League A campaign and will face the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia at venues across South Wales.

Her hard work and dedication has paid off and we really do wish her every success. Good luck Ava, we are so proud of what you have achieved - live the dream!

Mrs M Jones - Head of PACE

Year 10 Theatre Trip



164 of our year 10 students went to Regent Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent on Wednesday 21st January, to see the DTC Revision on Tour adaptation of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

The show is specifically designed to support revision and study for school students. With key themes, important dialogue and character studies spotlighted during the show, it will help our students further their understanding of this classic piece of literature ready for their year 11 exams.

Chaplaincy

Although January seems to have 483 days in it, this has seemed like a really quick term. We have journeyed from New Year's resolutions, to love (in February), and then into Lent and here we are approaching Easter.

As the Chaplain, the rhythm of the year offers spaces of reflection, celebration, lament and during Big Question Week, we thought about the big question of, 'Where is God in my world?' We had lots of questions over the week but also considered the story of Jesus asking a blind man, 'what do you want?' It's interesting to pause and imagine God asking us that question, often we have a list of things we come to God with, but what if we truly pause and think what our answer might be. I am incredibly grateful to Richard Dawson, a DJ on Radio Erewash, Actor and Lecturer, who came in to share a day of activities around the questions. Throughout the week our year 9 students had some great thinking and answers led by Kirsty Bell from Kirkby Community Grocery and Matilda who shared her experience as a sixth form student of God in her life.

Matt Little from Watnall Road Baptist Church visits school on a Wednesday, where we run our Rooted lunchtime club and we regularly have over 50 students attend. It's a great space for chatting, playing games and a reflection on God.

Our Chaplaincy team has also been in delivering Encounter in tutor time, this term focusing on Micah 8 – what does it mean to love kindness? This has provoked some really interesting discussions.

And so here we are at Easter, our Arch Ambassadors are hiding 50 crosses around school to be discovered and there will be rewards for those who find them. When we return, after the Easter break, I will be running a lunchtime club for people who are interested in finding out more about God or deepen their faith.

This school has a very special atmosphere and it's such an honour to be here, whether it be when someone turns up at my office door and needs to chat something through or when I am wandering around school and hearing about life in all it's fullness.

Lucie Hutson - Academy Chaplain



News from NSFC

Year 11 Ask Me Anything Event

On Friday 6th February we were delighted to welcome our year 11 applicants to NSFC to ask anything of our year 12 students. Deciding on your next place to study after year 11 can be tricky and we believe that hearing from the students actually experiencing life at NSFC is one of the best ways to help you decide what is right for you. Year 11 were keen to know how it feels to study in the centre, how timetables for post-16 work and how to manage level 3 studies with part time work and other hobbies. Our year 12 students graciously gave their time to help answer their questions and we hope it was a useful event.



EPQ Days

The EPQ qualification allows students to select any topic and produce either a dissertation or artefact in response. This qualification also requires students to manage their time and workload independently and so is sought after by employers and universities alike. On Thursday 12th February we gave over one whole day to allow students in year 13 to take a deep dive into their projects, prior to handing in their first drafts. We followed this up with a day for our year 12 on 23rd March. This was valuable time and was well spent by all. Their supervisors have also learned so much from them, with topics including (but not limited to!) motor racing, representation of religion, music composition and forensic science!

Year 12 Criminal Investigation Day

Our year 12 criminology students were invited to take part in a Criminal Investigation Day hosted by the University of Law in Nottingham on Friday 6 March. The focus of the day was in-depth exploration of the Stephen Lawrence case, one of the most significant and influential cases in modern British criminal justice history. This case provides an invaluable case study for the Criminology course, particularly in examining investigative procedures, police response, institutional failings, and the broader criminal justice system.



Throughout the day, students took part in workshops, scenario-based activities, and discussions led by legal and criminology professionals. These sessions will directly support their course understanding and strengthen their ability to apply criminological concepts to real-world events.

World Book Day

NSFC were delighted to step into the world of books and reading to celebrate World Book Day on March 5th. With some very excited Post-16 staff joining in with fancy dress of famous book characters, we were able to spread a little literature love in our sixth form. We also created a fantastic display of book recommendations to share our favourite reads (both now and when we were little!) with our peers.



Visit to London

On Wednesday 11th March, students from year 12 and year 13 took part in a joint visit to London with our friends from The Holgate Academy Sixth Form. Our Extended Sixth Form Offer is a fantastic opportunity for students to collaborate with students from other schools and this visit was no exception. The students travelled to London by coach and separated into groups to visit venues including The Natural History Museum, The Science Museum and The V&A Museum.



Ms J Cliffman - Head of NSFC

Faculty Blog - Art, Design and Technology (ADT)

After-School ADT Clubs: Creativity and Commitment in Action

There is something special happening in the Art, Design and Technology department after the final bell rings. While many students head home, our classrooms and workshops come alive with creativity, focus and purpose as key stage 4 students gather for our after-school coursework clubs.

Running twice a week in Art (Tuesdays and Thursdays) and on Tuesdays in Engineering and Product Design, these sessions have quickly become a hub of activity within the department. It's not unusual to see students staying for over an hour, fully immersed in developing their ideas, refining practical work and pushing their projects further. In fact, many students regularly ask if additional sessions could be offered – a clear sign of the enthusiasm and commitment they have for their subjects.

These clubs only happen because of the dedication of our staff. Teachers willingly go above and beyond the school day to provide extra opportunities for students who want to improve their work, develop their skills and make the most of their coursework projects. Their support ensures that students can access specialist equipment safely, expert guidance and valuable one-to-one feedback outside of normal lesson time.

Just as impressive is the attitude shown by the students who attend. Choosing to stay after school week after week demonstrates real independence and determination. These sessions help students develop key habits that will benefit them well beyond their GCSEs – organisation, self-motivation, time management and resilience when tackling complex projects. They also give students the chance to build strong, positive working relationships with their teachers as they seek advice, refine ideas and problem-solve together.

In Art, the sessions showcase a fantastic mix of technical and creative skill. Students experiment with materials, develop personal ideas and express themselves through their artwork as they work towards their coursework and final pieces. The studio atmosphere is one of concentration and creativity, with students carefully refining techniques and building ambitious portfolios.

Meanwhile, in Product Design and Engineering, the workshops are equally busy. Students are developing the technical and design elements of their projects while also bringing their ideas to life through practical work. From using hand tools and machinery to programming CNC (Computer Numerical Control) equipment, students are gaining real hands-on experience as they manufacture and refine their designs.

As coursework deadlines begin to approach later in the year, these sessions are expected to become even more popular. They provide a valuable space for students to manage their time effectively, stay on top of project milestones and continue developing high-quality work. All of this hard work will ultimately be showcased at the ADT end of year exhibition, where students' creativity, technical skill and dedication will be on full display. More details about this exciting event will be shared later in the year.

For now, if you pass the ADT corridor on a Tuesday or Thursday evening, you'll see exactly what makes these sessions so special – a department full of motivated students, passionate teachers and a shared commitment to producing outstanding work.

Mr L Gregory - Head of ADT

Head of Year Highlights

Year 7

As we head into the Easter break, I wanted to share how well year 7 have been doing this term. 98% of the cohort have earned over 50 credits each, which is a brilliant reflection of their effort and attitude since joining us. Attendance has also been really strong at almost 96%, around 2% above the national average.

A special mention goes to Ellivia in 7E, who currently has the most credits in the year group, an excellent achievement.

Thank you for your continued support, and I hope you all have a relaxing Easter break.

Mr K Mistry - Head of year 7

Year 8

This term, year 8 have been focusing on the ARCH value of Respect, by working on demonstrating positive attitudes towards one another and towards staff across the school community. During tutor time, all tutor groups have taken part in the Justice Project, exploring fairness, responsibility, and how their actions can influence the wider world.

We recently celebrated our end-of-term achievements in our assembly, with Lucas W recognised as our Student of the Term for his outstanding effort and contributions. Congratulations also go to 8E, who have once again earned the title of Tutor Group of the Term. As a year group, we continue working hard to improve our overall attendance and appreciate the support from you as parents/guardians with this.

Wishing all parents and guardians a happy and restful Easter break.

Ms S Craven and Mrs S McDermott - Head and Assistant Head of year 8

Year 9

As we move into the final term of the academic year, this is an important time for all our year 9 students. Especially as their option choices have now been made. This is an exciting milestone, as students begin to shape their individual pathways towards their GCSEs. We encourage all students to start taking a greater interest in their chosen subjects, as these will form the foundation of their studies next year. While GCSEs may still feel some way off, the habits students build now such as organisation, revision routines, and engagement in lessons make a significant difference in year 10 and beyond.

A key factor in success is attendance. We ask for your support in ensuring that students attend school regularly and arrive on time each day. Good attendance not only supports academic progress but also helps students feel more confident and connected in their learning.

A big congratulations to our top 5 achievement point earners so far this year, Vienna L, Mia B, Finlay B, Gracie H, and Poppy C.

As always, we appreciate your continued support and look forward to a positive and productive final term. Let's finish the year strong!

Mr J Beaver - Head of year 9

Head of Year Highlights

Year 10

As we come to the end of another busy and successful term, it has been a pleasure to pause and reflect on the many achievements of our students during our year 10 achievement assembly. The event gave us a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the hard work, resilience, and positive contributions shown across the year group. We continue to be incredibly proud of the way our students support one another and uphold our school values.

A special congratulations goes to 10B, who earned the highest number of achievement points this term, a real testament to their consistency and teamwork. We also celebrated some fantastic individual achievements: Eryk P received the most Star of the Lesson awards, recognising his outstanding attitude and effort in class. Sophie P topped the achievement points leader board, with Edith J and Jessica S following closely behind, each demonstrating admirable commitment and positivity throughout the term.

Well done for all your achievements that have helped to make year 10 shine, and we look forward to seeing what you accomplish next term! Have a restful break.

Mrs Hopkin and Mr Crossland - Head and Assistant Head of year 10

Year 11

This is the last newsletter piece I will write about our current year 11 cohort, and I want to use it to express by limitless pride in them, and how much I feel privileged to have worked with them, and seen them grow and develop from the young children we met in year 7, to the young adults they now are.

Attendance continues to be strong, with the year group averaging 93.04%, compared to 90.61% for year 11's nationally. This year, 11F lead the way with 95.25% attendance, 11B with 95.01% and 11A with 94.57%.

In our recent achievement assembly, we celebrated 121 students who have maintained over 95% attendance across their five years here. Taye in 11B, Kalia in 11G, Isabel in 11E Ruby in 11F and Abbie in 11F are our five highest attenders in that time, all over 99.5%.

Since the beginning of year 7, 11B have been awarded the most achievement points in total, 41386, followed by 11E with 40506 points, and 11G with 38688 points.

We also have 22 year 11 students who have not picked up a single behaviour point during their time at National, meaning no behavioural issues, uniform or lateness issues, and every piece of homework completed on time. They are Amelia in 11A, Amy in 11A, Freya in 11A, Lily in 11A, Grace in 11B, Hannah in 11B, Martha in 11B, Taye in 11B, Lucy in 11C, George in 11D, Ruby in 11D, Aimee in 11E, Antonia in 11E, Freya in 11E, Gracie in 11E, Hannah in 11E, Maria in 11E, Olivia in 11E, Sienna in 11E, Abdul in 11F, Kayden in 11G, and Saffire in 11G.

This term year 11 students have completed their final set of mock exams in the lead up to their external summer exams. This is likely to lead to some stress and worry over the coming weeks, which is perfectly natural at this stage. I would advise all students to have a revision plan and timetable to follow over the Easter break and beyond. There is mental health and wellbeing support and guidance available online at <https://www.kooth.com/>, <https://www.themix.org.uk/>, <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>, <https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/nottinghamshire/>, <https://casy.org.uk/> and <https://boysinmind.co.uk/>.

We wish all of year 11 the very best of luck in all of their exams, and hope they do themselves proud.

Mr Gilham and Mrs Newns - Head and Assistant Head of year 11

Staff Update

We have welcomed back Mrs K Harrison this term, as Head of Science following her maternity leave. We would like to thank Mrs E Almeida for stepping up into the role in Mrs Harrison's absence. Mrs Almeida will now continue in her role as Assistant Head of Science.

Dates to remember

Monday 13th April 2026 - Return to school for all year groups (week B)

Wednesday 15th April 2026 - Year 7 AMP evening

Thursday 16th April 2026 - Year 8 HPV vaccinations

Monday 4th May 2026 - Bank Holiday - Academy closed

Friday 22nd May 2026 - Year 13 leaving service

Monday 25th May - Friday 29th May 2026 - Academy holiday

Wednesday 3rd June 2026 - Year 12 parents' evening

Friday 19th June 2026 - Inset day - Academy closed

Tuesday 23rd June 2026 - Year 11 celebration service

Wednesday 1st July 2026 - Year 11 prom

Tuesday 30th June and Wednesday 1st July 2026 - Year 12 sixth form induction days

Thursday 2nd July and Friday 3rd July 2026 - Year 6 welcome days

Monday 13th July - Friday 17th July 2026 - Year 9 Germany trip

Sunday 12th July - Friday 17th July 2026 - Hagg Farm trip

Wednesday 15th July 2026 - Enrichment day

Thursday 16th July 2026 - Creativity and innovation day

Thursday 16th July 2026 - Pop up second hand uniform shop (4pm - 6pm)

Monday 20th July 2026 - Student achievement evening

Wednesday 22nd July 2026 - ADT exhibition

Friday 24th July 2026 - Last day of term

Thursday 3rd September 2026 - Year 7 and year 12 return to school

Friday 4th September 2026 - All year groups return

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