



NATIONAL
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ACADEMY

Lent Newsletter

Easter Address from Mr Brailsford - Headteacher

As Spring arrives, I would like to welcome you all to our Easter Newsletter 2025. It is packed full of positive stories which will hopefully provide you with a sense of the work we do and the amazing children we serve.

The days may have been cold and the evenings dark, but National has remained a place of warmth, excitement and opportunity in what I consider to be the most challenging term each year. This 'middle' term has seen a wide variety of events and experiences for our community to enjoy. Students have attended the woodland adventure, worked with Forest School outdoor activities, visited the University of Oxford, visited Nottingham University to explore the world of cyber security and attended Jekyll and Hyde at the theatre. We have also been working with White Post Farm for several months, bringing a variety of animals into the Academy for children to experience, with the goats proving the most popular! One of our biggest trips, the ski trip to Italy, provided an incredible and enjoyable experience and our school musical 'Back to the 80s' was another roaring success. All of the children who performed were absolute stars and a credit to National yet again.

Looking ahead, after Easter our main examination period begins. For year 11 and year 13 the majority of learning is now complete and it is time for the finishing touches, final interventions and all-important final revision to take place. Next term also sees our time at Hucknall Sixth Form Centre come to an end and the transfer to National Sixth Form Centre take shape. The new Centre is on schedule to be open from September 2025 and the rapid progress is clear for all to see. Over the Easter holiday we have scheduled the most disruptive work to be completed so it does not affect the education of children and we have still managed to provide a range of Easter revision classes on site at the same time.



Finally, best wishes and good luck to all of the students taking examinations next term. We are 100% behind you and are here with you every step of the way!

"Stay awake, stand firm in your faith, be brave, be strong" – 1 Corinthians 16:13

On behalf of my team, our Governors and myself, we wish you all a wonderful and restful Easter.

A handwritten signature in black ink.

'Life in all its fullness' John 10:10

World Book Day

There was a real buzz around school on Thursday 6th March as we celebrated World Book Day. Over 60 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.

The key stage 3 students took part in a big book quiz at lunch time with over 50 students joining in to test their book knowledge! Our eventual winner after a tie break was year 8 student, Kaitlyn S. Big congratulations to her.

There were also 10 golden tickets for lucky finders to exchange for a brand new book of their choice! Those books were ordered and the students were able to collect them the following week.

Mrs J Prestwood - LRC Lead



Springtime Visit from White Post Farm

Spring came to the inclusion faculty on Tuesday 12th March. We had the pleasure of meeting two rear breed Greyface Dartmoor lambs, Kellogg and Kate. At four weeks old they were incredibly cute and calm, one even falling asleep on a students lap.

Miss S Harris - Senior teaching assistant



Ski Trip to Artesina, Italy

At 12:30am on Sunday 16th March, Mr Cockerill, Mrs Jones, Mr Brown, Mr South, Mrs Lee, Miss Harris, Mrs Dickin, plus 60 amazing students from years 8 - 10 embarked on, what would turn out to be, an incredible trip to ski in the Italian Maritime Alps. After a long journey to Turin Airport via Gatwick, we arrived mid afternoon in Artesina, part of the Mondole ski area at 1,500m – 2,600m in altitude. Boots and skis were fitted and we got acquainted with the resort.

Over the next 6 days our ski schedule was as follows;

10am - 12pm - Ski school with our amazing instructors

12pm - Lunch back at the hotel

2pm - 4pm - Ski school

6pm - Tea

7:30pm - Evening activities such as karaoke, disco, bum boarding and quiz nights.

Skill levels varied across the 6 groups however the majority of students had either never skied or had just had a few basic lessons on the dry ski slopes. Over the course of the week, progression was outstanding. Students learnt how to snowplough stop and turn, progressing to side slipping to parallel turning and carving. A huge dump of fresh snow on the pistes for Tuesday and then again on Saturday enabled most students to experience 'powder' skiing for the first time. Learning how to use chairlifts is not easy and eventually all of us mastered getting on and off with skis intact.

The ski instructors commended the school on the excellent attitude of our students and after our final session on the slopes the students were given report cards to show their amazing progress during the week. Many conquered extreme nerves and fears and seeing the faces of so many students marvelling at the stunning scenery and realising just what they had achieved was an experience that is impossible to put a value on.

This was more than just a ski trip. So many other life skills were learnt during this fantastic educational visit. Communication skills, conflict resolution, the ability to live in very close proximity to people of different ages and backgrounds, time management skills, trust, overcoming fear and being 'out of one's comfort zone' for long periods of time are just a few examples. Our students learnt to be considerate to other members of the public sharing the hotel, some of whom commented on how well mannered National students were. Many students were in awe of the scenery and for a few I believe it was also a 'spiritual' experience seeing the wonder of creation all around. The 'camaraderie' built up between students and staff was very special and unique.

As a staff we would like to thank the fantastic group of students who came with us. We are hugely grateful to the many kind parents who emailed their encouragements and support afterwards, and also to the school governors and members of the senior leadership team who gave the go ahead for this trip. We look forward to running many more ski trips in the future so that more students can take part in such a truly memorable and life affirming experience.

Mrs S Dickin



Year 8 Forensics Day

On Tuesday 4th February, 33 year 8 students took part in a forensic science day with Sci-High. During the full day workshop, they learned about the techniques that forensic scientists use in real life investigations, including handwriting analysis, blood spatter patterns, chromatography, scanning crime scenes with ultraviolet light and identifying suspects from descriptions. Later, they learned about the science of blood, cells and DNA and developed their skills in taking latent fingerprints using the same magnetic brushes and powder that would be used in a real crime scene.

In the afternoon, the students then tried out their drama skills by taking part in a mock trial, where they played the roles of a judge, suspects and barristers, and then decided whether they thought the suspects were guilty or not guilty, based on the evidence they had gathered. The students really benefited from this opportunity and it supported a lot of the subjects they study throughout the curriculum.

Mr B Walton - Deputy SENCo and teacher of science



Woodland Adventures



On Tuesday 4th March a group of 10 year 8 students went to the Portland College woodland adventure zone. All the students were amazing, having a go at all of the activities and pushing themselves to try things that scared them. They all did themselves and our school proud.

Miss S Harris - Senior teaching assistant

Back to the 80's Academy Show

Our Academy show was on Wednesday 12th and Thursday 13th February 2025 and wow! What a show! Full of fun, singing, dancing and nostalgia. From Rubix cubes, to Tetris, Rick Astley to Cyndi Lauper; we were getting in and out of cars, considering what it takes to be a material girl and walking on sunshine. In this instance video did not kill the radio star and all hearts were total eclipsing with love and pride for our youngest cast. Whilst it was Mr Baggott's first show, sadly it was Mrs Case's last, and we are incredibly grateful to have created such special memories, that will last a life time.

Thank you to all the students, parents and staff that supported us.

See you again this time next year!

Mrs J Chambers - Teacher of drama and leader of learning and professional development



Big Question Week

On the week commencing Monday 10 March we had our Big Questions Week. This always provides students with an opportunity to ponder and question major topics through the lens of faith. This year the topic was compassion which is one of our ARCH values.

The week began with Mrs Dickin coming back to lead a session with each year group looking at the meaning of compassion and how it links with the work of the King's Village in Ghana which we as an academy support. It was lovely to hear the progress being made by the students that we sponsor and the impact that the work there is having on so many members of the community.

On the Wednesday, we were delighted to welcome the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham, Paul Williams, to lead collective worship for year 10 and year 7. The message was recorded so that the other year groups could also listen later that week. He inspired and encouraged our students to look at the world with compassion, as Jesus did, and not to be overwhelmed by fear.

We were also visited by a member of Nottingham Street Pastors who led sessions for year 9 tutor groups about the work they do in the city centre at the weekends to support the night time economy which often involves helping people who are in need following an evening out. The students then thought about how they could show compassion on a daily basis.

There was an opportunity for some PE groups to engage with 'worshipcise' which was run by Jo, a Christian personal trainer. This proved to be an extremely popular and enjoyable, as well as tiring, workshop.

Our hope is that throughout the week students were able to think about which organisations show care for others both locally and nationally. This in turn may have led them to think how they can show compassion in the community through the way they speak and act.

Mr T Surgay - Academy chaplain

Faculty Blog - Maths and Computing (MAC)

Boost to students' digital skills

We have been strengthening and developing our students digital skills by embedding Microsoft Teams and associated technologies into their lessons. This is to give them increased confidence and skills in the processes involved in using computers. In year 8, we have also introduced a basic skills curriculum to address the weaknesses that some students have through a heavy increase in the use of tablets and smartphones, rather than desktop computing. These skills will have an increased impact on their ability to use computer software across the curriculum and, later on, when they enter the workplace. The assignment below shows an excellent piece of year 9 work, where the students have been learning how to program the micro bit to learn coding skills; the assignment was submitted in Microsoft Teams, assessed and then returned to the student for revision, enabling high levels of progress in their learning.

Advent 1 Computer Science Assessment

10 October 2023 09:15

Task: Create a game which picks a random integer (whole number) between 1 and 10. The person playing the game should be able to input a number using the buttons on the microbit. When they press A&B it should output a smiling face if their guess matches the random number. Otherwise, it should output higher if the number is higher than their guess or lower.

Paste a copy of your solution below.



In maths we have continued our use of Sparx online learning platform, using this for homework for years 9, 10 and 11. Once the homework has been completed, students then use time in lessons to work on individual areas of need taken from the homework, and for those who would benefit from more challenging homework there are personalised challenge questions. We have also embedded this into our assessment cycle, students are given the Sparx codes before an assessment to help their independent learning outside of lessons in preparation for an assessment. Then after the assessment students go to a computer room, and then work on whichever areas they struggled on in the assessment, hence completing the assessment cycle. This is proving to have a big impact on students progress and confidence.

Since September, students at the National Academy have completed 4264 hours of learning on Sparx and answered 192,343 questions correctly. Our top 3 students so far this year are Hannah G, Niamh O, and Oliver S. Year 9 has the highest percentage of students with 100%.

Mrs K Marshall - Head of MAC

Head of Year Highlights

Year 7

Celebrating success!

As we conclude another pleasing term, there's so much to celebrate and be proud of! We are thrilled to announce that three of our talented students—Lucas W, Daksh R, and Leon J—have earned the prestigious Head Teacher Award for their outstanding contributions to our year 7 community. The Head Teacher Award is given out to students who reach an impressive 500 achievement points.

In addition, we extend our congratulations to tutor group 7D for achieving the most positive achievement points this term!

A special shout out also goes to Daksh R, our student of the term, who, along with Leon J, has gained the most stars of the lesson.

Together, we are fostering a supportive environment that embodies our motto: "Life in all its fullness." Thank you for your continued support as we nurture our students' growth and achievements.

Wishing you a peaceful Easter.

Ms S Craven - Head of year 7

Year 8

As we move into the final term of year 8, students should begin thinking about their option choices. While there is still time before decisions need to be made, this is a great opportunity for students to reflect on their strengths, interests, and future aspirations. More information will be shared in year 9 to support them through this process.

This term, we are also making a real push on attendance. Attending school every day is essential for progress, and we encourage all students to aim for at least 97% attendance. A huge well done to 8B and 8E, who currently have the best attendance at 97%!

We also want to celebrate some fantastic achievements this term:

- 🏆 Top form for achievement points – 8B with 4,423 points
- 🌟 Fewest behaviour points – 8A
- 📚 Student with the most achievement points – Ethan H with 206 points
- 🌟 Most 'Star of the Lesson' awards – Isaac W (8C) with 9

Well done to all Year 8 students for their hard work and dedication—let's keep this momentum going for a strong finish to the year!

Mr J Beaver and Mrs S McDermott - Head and assistant head of year 8

Head of Year Highlights

Year 9

As we approach the end of the term, this newsletter marks my final communication with you as my maternity cover for Mrs Hopkin comes to an end at the beginning of the new term. It has truly been a pleasure working with such an enthusiastic group of students. I've watched year 9 grow in both academic ability and personal development, and I couldn't be prouder of all that they've achieved so far this year, and I am confident they are all set for the challenges to come in year 10.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of the year 9 students for their hard work, determination, and positive attitude. You have made my time as head of year challenging and rewarding in equal measures. I'd also like to thank the parents and guardians for the support over the past year. Your support and encouragement have been crucial in helping the students succeed and feel motivated every day.

Overall year 9 have achieved just over 45,000 achievement points, again this is an improvement of just over 4,000 compared to last year. 9B lead the way at this point in the year with almost 8000 points and 1000 ahead of second place. Special mentions go to Zachary B in first with over 550 points, closely followed by Blake H and Cohen G with just over 450 points, all three members of 9B. Although my time as head of year is coming to a close, I am excited for the journey that lies ahead for all of the students as they look ahead to move into year 10.

Once again, thank you to everyone for your support and cooperation. It has been an absolute pleasure being a part of this vibrant and hardworking year group.

Mr L Gregory and Mr C Crossland - Head and assistant head of year 9

Year 10

Year 10 have had a very positive term in a very important academic year. Well done to 10B and 10C, leading the way with an average attendance over 94% this term. We have 109 year 10 students above our 97% target (over half the year group), with 50 students at 100% (about a quarter of the year group).

In lessons every student has received achievement points, as year 10 have collectively been awarded over 17,000 positive achievement points this term. 10G lead the way this term with over 6,000 positive achievement points. Individually, congratulations to Wisdom in 10A, Ava in 10E, Kalia in 10G, Roman in 10G, Olivia in 10E, Lily-Jay in 10G, Martha in 10A, Lauren in 10G, Keyarna-Unique in 10D and Ruby in 10G, for being our 10 most rewarded students in year 10 this term.

This term year 10 have been embracing various leadership opportunities, as they look to embrace responsibilities and challenges that will develop their wider skills. We have a group of year 10 boys who have founded our young men's mental health team, Elevate. We also have a number of students developing our very own student magazine, National News. Both of these groups will be publishing information before the Easter break.

Mock exams will be starting for year 10 on Monday 16th June, and it is important that students start preparations early. Over Easter, they should ensure they are building a revision plan and begin revising regularly for their upcoming mock exams.

Well done to all year 10's for each of their positives this term, and enjoy the Easter break.

Mr Gilham and Mrs Newns - Head and assistant head of year 10

Head of Year Highlights

Year 11

Year 11, it's been an incredible journey watching you grow and mature into the young adults you are today. You've faced challenges that no one had ever faced before - navigating lockdowns, remote learning, and the uncertainty that COVID brought - but you've come through it stronger, more resilient, and ready to take on whatever comes next. Now, as you prepare to walk out of the school doors for the last time, embrace the excitement of the future and make the most of what is set to be the best and longest summer of your lives. Go out there, celebrate your achievements, and make unforgettable memories - you've earned it!

Mr K Mistry - Head of year 11

News from HSFC



On Monday 10th March 25 sixth form students visited Magdalen College, Oxford. Students found out more about the university system, toured the college and city, and took part in a history lecture - 'Would you survive the Black Death?'. Former National student, Odetta also visited with the group to give her first-hand account of being a National student now studying at Oxford.

A fantastic day, with lots of enquiring minds!

J Cliffman - Head of HSFC

Staff Update

After Easter, we welcome back Mrs E Hopkin from her maternity leave. She resumes her post as head of year 9 and we thank Mr L Gregory for all his work supporting the year group over the last year.

We also welcome the following staff who joined us in March,

R Joseph - Learning support assistant

K Ward - Learning support assistant

K Dobbs - Finance officer

Six additional exam invigilators have also joined our team ready for the upcoming exam season,

A Bywater

D Rhead

T Chibumbu

H Zobel

J Cave

S McDonald

Dates to remember

Tuesday 22nd April 2025 - Return to school for all year groups

Wednesday 23rd April 2025 - Year 8 theatre trip

Thursday 24th April 2025 - Year 7 AMP evening

Monday 28th April 2025 - Year 8 HPV vaccinations

Monday 5th May 2025 - Bank Holiday - Academy closed

Monday 26th May - Friday 30th May 2025 - Academy holiday

Wednesday 4th June 2025 - Year 12 parents' evening

Tuesday 25th June 2024 - Year 11 celebration service

Wednesday 25th June 2025 - Year 11 prom

Thursday 26th June and Friday 27th June 2025 - Year 10 ADT trip

Tuesday 1st July and Wednesday 2nd July 2025 - Year 12 sixth form induction days

Thursday 3rd July and Friday 4th July 2025 - Year 6 welcome days

Monday 7th July - Friday 11th July 2025 - Year 9 Germany trip

Tuesday 8th July 2025 - Key stage 3 sports day

Sunday 13th July - Friday 18th July 2025 - Hagg Farm trip

Wednesday 16th July 2025 - Enrichment day

Thursday 17th July 2025 - Creativity and innovation day

Thursday 17th July 2025 - Pop up second hand uniform shop (4pm - 6pm)

Monday 21st July 2025 - Student achievement evening

Wednesday 23rd July 2025 - ADT exhibition

Friday 25th July 2025 - Last day of term

Wednesday 3rd September 2025 - Year 7 and year 12 return to school

Thursday 4th September 2025 - All year groups return

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