



Prince Henry's Grammar School  
COLLABORATIVE LEARNING TRUST



# Newsletter

December 2024

With 2024 almost at a close, it is yet again time to reflect on what a busy – and long – term the lead up to Christmas always is, fitting in a myriad of trips, visits, extra-curricular activities and celebrations. This year has been no exception! Staff and students are certainly feeling the exhaustion set in, but I hope we will all start the holidays with a real sense of pride in what we have achieved collectively. Our long-awaited Ofsted visit to confirm that we are indeed 'Outstanding in all areas', which took place in the first week of this half term, almost seems a dim and distant memory and old news by now, but I would like to take a(nother) moment to reflect on this, if I may. It really was a team effort, and to say we were immensely proud of our students and how they represented our school is an understatement! We were also bowled over by how many of you took time to contact us to pass on your congratulations and warm wishes. It really does mean a great deal to hear your appreciation and the extrinsic rewards make it so much more special to be part of this 'exceptional' community. If you haven't yet read the report, please do!

By the time you read this, students will have been recognised with intrinsic and extrinsic rewards at two of the highlights of the PHGS annual calendar. At the time of writing we have not yet had our Christmas Concert, but there are over 120 students currently practising and preparing furiously for their ensemble or solo spots in our musical celebration, following hot on the heels of the Carols by Candlelight Service at Otley Parish Church on Sunday in which our Senior Choir featured and were so warmly received and commended. On Thursday evening this week, we have an exciting departure from the norm with our Celebration Evening being held this year at a new venue - Otley Methodist Church. We are especially delighted to be bringing this event closer to home at last, now there is a building big enough to be able to accommodate our many prize winners and their families. The evening once again promises to be a memorable celebration of efforts and accolades, with alumnus Heather Thomas, the first female British skipper of an all woman crew to win a round the world sailing race in the Ocean Globe Race, as our guest speaker. We are looking forward to an inspirational and reflective evening as we celebrate students' achievement, both past and present. There will also be Celebration Events in school this week so that all students can take part in applauding themselves and their peers.

So, with 2024 coming to a close, old chapters end and new ones begin. I am sure you will join me in thanking staff who are leaving for all their hard work and care of our students over the years. Shane Green leaves his teaching position in Art after an impressive 26 years to combine teaching in Leeds with his work as an artist; he will be succeeded by Andrew Topley in the New Year. Amie Knowles is moving to a school closer to her home after many years of dedicated service, with Romily Thistlethwaite joining us in Geography. Serenity Stewart, Year 11 Manager, will be handing over the reins to Kira Combe. Sophie Lee in Maths is embarking on an exciting adventure in Australia and Robyn Davies takes her place as Area Leader. In English, Jo Sparkes has recently given birth to a gorgeous baby boy. We were delighted to welcome Sanjidah Yasmin to cover her maternity leave earlier this half term. Finally, Alison Stevens is leaving us to take up opportunities in well-being support beyond school and Enza Priestley also departs from her post in English intervention. We thank all departing colleagues wholeheartedly for their commitment to PHGS and welcome all our new colleagues – we look forward to you flourishing in your role and enjoying your time with us.

I really hope that whatever your Christmas entails, it brings you peace, happiness and comfort. With our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Look after yourselves and see you in 2025.

Sally Bishop  
Headteacher

### Key Stage 3 news

All students have contributed to a very productive term, and we hope they all enjoy a well-deserved Christmas break. It has been brilliant to host the end of term rewards assemblies for Years 7, 8 and 9 this week. More students than ever have had their achievements acknowledged with credit certificates issued to 50% of students, whilst a large number received awards for making a positive difference as one of their 'Form Heroes'.

Some students in Years 8 and 9 have been invited to attend this week's Celebration Evening to collect prizes for best Attitude to Learning, Progress, Attainment and Service to School for the last academic year.

We are grateful to all parents/carers who have engaged with the school this term, either through the Year 7 Parent-Tutor sessions, the KS3 Information events or in any other way.

We will continue to monitor all students to ensure that their attitude in lessons and around school enables them to achieve their very best. As always, if you do have any enquiries, please contact either myself or the relevant Year Manager.

Mr S Day  
Key Stage 3 Director

### Key Stage 4 news

As we approach the Christmas holiday, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Key Stage 4 students an enjoyable and relaxing holiday.

**Year 10** students are approaching the end of their first term of GCSE studies and parents/carers have received the first Key Stage 4 Progress Report. This shows students' Attitude to Learning and indicates that the majority of students have made a very positive start to their GCSE courses. It is really pleasing to see that so many students are focussed and working hard to be successful.

**Year 11** Progress Evening takes place in school on 23rd January and I hope all parents/carers will be able to attend. This will be an invaluable opportunity to meet with subject teachers to receive feedback on progress, discuss the recent trial exams and look ahead to the summer exam series. Progress Report 2 will be sent home shortly before this with up to date predictions.

GCSE Exam timetables and important information will be sent home in February. GCSE Exam timetables (once published), study guides, revision tips, revision timetables and subject specific material can all be found on our website [here](#). There is also information from last month's Year 11 Parents' Revision Strategy Evening which you will find useful if you were unable to attend.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Year Manager, Mrs Stewart, for her hard work and dedication in supporting Year 11 students this term. I look forward to welcoming our new Year 11 Manager, Miss Combe, to the Key Stage 4 team in January.

Mr S Knight  
Key Stage 4 Director

### Year 7 home learning

As part of our phased approach to home learning, after Christmas the following subjects will also be setting home learning for Year 7 students: Computing, History, Geography and Music (i.e. in addition to English, Maths, Science and MFL). Teachers will explain when home learning will be set for each subject and how often. All tasks will be set on Arbor, but students may be asked to complete the work in books or using other apps.

### Fundraising news



This year, our students have chosen to support the national young suicide prevention charity Papyrus and local conservation charity Wildlife Friendly Otley as the beneficiaries of our fundraising efforts for the year.

In the space of just a few weeks, our school community has already raised over £500 through a Christmas 'candy cane delivery service', a second-hand book stall and the Year 7 Christmas Movie Night. Thank you, too, if you are supporting this week's 'wear a festive item' day (Wednesday). Donations through Scopay can be made until Friday.

Mr C Lillington  
Assistant Headteacher: Community and Ethos



### Arbor Student app

Two weeks ago we launched the Arbor Student app. This is the best way for students to view data about their time in school. The student app gives them access to all the information they could find in the online version (timetable, points scores, home learning, attendance) but has the added benefit of allowing students to see for themselves who/where they have received stamps and credits from as well as negative red, yellow and behaviour incidents. This gives them the power to understand more easily what they have got right and where they need to make changes.

Mr S Clarkson  
Deputy Headteacher: Behaviour and Attitudes

### Year 13 next steps

Most students who intend to apply to university have now submitted their applications and are starting to receive offers. The absolute final deadline for applications to be received in school (in order to be sent for the final UCAS deadline) is 15th January 2025. The next Future Focus day in January will cover Life Skills needed to move on to university or living independently. Students considering jobs or apprenticeships after Sixth Form have been attending sessions with Mrs Robinson and these will continue in the New Year to support with applications.

Mrs C Willis  
Assistant Headteacher: Post-16 Learning

### Sixth Form applications

Thank you to all the Year 11 students who have already completed their application for our Sixth Form. For those still wishing to apply, there is still time to submit an application (using your current progress grades) through the online application form [here](#).

All applicants will be interviewed next term and any changes to courses can be discussed at that point.

Mrs C Willis  
Assistant Headteacher: Post-16 Learning



### Save the date!

**5th - 7th Feb 2025 at 7pm**

Tickets on sale Monday 13th January 2025 for this year's musical production. Look out for further details in the first week of term.



### Attendance matters

As we begin 2025, we are focusing on setting positive routines and ensuring every child has the best opportunity to succeed at school. One important part of this is encouraging regular school attendance, as consistent learning is key to your child's development.

We understand that children can experience a range of minor illnesses, especially in the winter months, but we kindly ask for your support in reducing absences due to low-level illnesses. The NHS provides helpful guidance [here](#) on determining

when a child should stay at home, stating that if your child is well enough to engage in their usual activities, they are likely to be well enough to attend school. Unless symptoms are severe, such as high fever or nausea, students can usually attend school and recover while continuing their learning.

By following this guidance, we can ensure that your child remains engaged and does not fall behind. If your child is feeling unwell but is still able to participate, please encourage them to come to school and let us know if there are any concerns.

Mr L Wilson  
Assistant Headteacher: Safeguarding and Wellbeing





## Online safety

The UK Safer Internet Centre's [website](#) provides a wide range of useful guidance for parents/carers to help to keep their children safe online. This year, in each edition of our half-termly Newsletter, we are including one of their 'top tips' for parents/carers.

### Tip 1: Talk with your child about responsible use of their internet enabled device

- ◆ Consider the internet enabled devices that your child has access to: mobile phones, laptops, games consoles, smart speakers and TV's, tablets.
- ◆ Discuss what each of these devices are to be used for, what is okay and what is not okay.
- ◆ Consider what the time limits and expectations of when and where the device can be used are.
- ◆ Consider where the devices should be charged at night, or placed when taking part in family activities.
- ◆ Explain to your child that if they see something distressing they should shut down the device and tell an adult.

Mr O Wharton

Assistant Headteacher: Exams, Assessment and Innovation

Ahead of next month's Holocaust Memorial Day, recent year group

**#Free2Bme**  
**@phgs**

assemblies have focussed on "the ladder of intolerance", considering what we can learn from history about how casual bullying, racism and discrimination can, if left unchecked, help to create a culture where more extreme acts of oppression, intimidation and prejudice-based violence are more likely to take place.

As part of this, students were asked to reflect on the role which they play as an individual to make life better - or worse - for others through what they *choose* to say and do:

- ◆ Am I a **supporter**? (someone who encourages bullying by laughing at unkind jokes, 'liking' unpleasant comments on social media, etc)
- ◆ Am I a **bystander**? (someone who allows bullying / discrimination to go unreported)
- ◆ Am I an **upstander**? (someone who stands up - and speaks up - to stop bullying / discrimination)

Please reinforce with your child the importance of always 'speaking up' if they experience, or witness, any form of bullying or prejudice-based behaviour.

Mr C Lillington

Assistant Headteacher: Community and Ethos

## Positive Discipline updates

We continue to develop our use of Arbor for praising students. Many parents have received frequent praise emails acknowledging repeated positive performance by their child this year, and earlier this term just over 300 students were praised for demonstrating resilience in some way. This week, further praise has been given to different cohorts of students, with a number of Year 7 and 8 students receiving certificates acknowledging their positive contributions and students in Years 9 to 13 being received by SLT at a 'reward breakfast'. Over the Christmas break, some students will receive postcards praising performance in specific areas - look out for these dropping through your letter box amongst the Christmas cards!

With the change to monitoring yellow incidents in groups brought in last term, we are now in a clearer position to identify when a student is repeatedly challenging a rule or expectation. Where this happens, we will then take steps to address this. A small number of students have now received warning letters regarding uniform issues and know that the next step will see restrictions added to what they are allowed to wear on an individual basis. This will only happen where students repeatedly flout our clear uniform expectations, and as such the overwhelming majority have no need to worry. Thank you for continuing to support your child to meet our uniform expectations, which are shown on our website [here](#).

Finally, a reminder (for the small number of students who get one) that regular after-school detention takes place on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon. It lasts until 4.00pm, with students allowed to leave at 3.45pm if they have behaved appropriately. Please can we emphasise that detention cannot be moved for any reason, beyond proof of a medical appointment, and non-attendance automatically leads to a one hour 30-minute SLT detention on the following Friday evening.

Mr S Clarkson

Deputy Headteacher: Behaviour and Attitudes



## Year 9 Options

Students in Year 9 have now started to receive a range of information to help them make decisions about how they wish to personalise their curriculum from Year 10. All students will receive a detailed 'Options booklet' this week following the Options launch assembly. This booklet outlines the process, key dates and options available. On Thursday 9th January 2025 at 6.00pm, we will be holding our annual Options Evening (an invitation letter with details was sent out last month and is available on our website [here](#)). Options Evening is an important event which gives students and parents/carers the opportunity to hear about the process, speak to subject staff about the range of options available and ask any questions.

To provide further support with decision making, students will receive feedback following year group exams (second week after the Christmas holidays) and as part of Year 9 Progress Evening. They will also be offered 'taster' lessons in some subjects, as well as the chance to speak with our Careers Adviser, Mrs Robinson. Decisions need to be finalised and the final options submitted by Friday 14th February 2025 (the last day of next half term).

Mr O Wharton

Assistant Headteacher: Exams, Assessment and Innovation

## Forthcoming dates

### Holidays

#### Close

20 Dec 2024

14 Feb 2025

#### Re-open

6 Jan 2025\*

24 Feb 2025

*\*Training day (school closed to students)*

### Events

19 Dec 2024

20 Dec 2024

09 Jan 2025

13 Jan 2025

15 Jan 2025

23 Jan 2025

28 Jan 2025

05 Feb 2025

- 07 Feb 2025

11 Feb 2025

11 Feb 2025

12 Feb 2025

12 Feb 2025

14 Feb 2025

Annual Celebration Evening

Early closure (12.25pm)

Year 9 Options Evening

Year 9 Exams start

Sixth Form Tours Afternoon

Year 11 Progress Evening (*in school*)

PSHE/Citizenship Day 2

School Musical Production -

Les Misérables

Year 9 Progress Evening (*online*)

NSPCC Online Safety Workshop  
for parents/carers

SLT Open Access Evening

Year 12 HE Information Evening  
(Early deadline applicants)

Year 9 Options Choices Deadline



## Food bank appeal

Thank you to everyone who has donated to the Sixth Form's Food Bank appeal, organised by our ASDAN students. A huge number of items were donated to Otley Food Bank to help families who are struggling over the Christmas period.

Please note that our **Term Dates for 2025-2026** can be found on our school website [here](#).



Please remember to top up your child's lunch card online before the start of the new term as we no longer have revaluation machines in school. Remember, too, that you can set up an alert on Scopay to tell you when your child's lunch card balance is running low. Simply go to the main menu and select the 'Alerts' option.

## REMINDER!

Students return to school at the usual time on  
Tuesday 7 January 2025.  
**And...Happy Christmas!**



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