



# High Grange Christmas Newsletter

# Principal's message

Another calendar year has come to an end, and the autumn term has been one of the busiest since the school opened. We have welcomed thirteen new pupils/students and their families, and alongside the largest internal transition across every key stages, the term has been both challenging and, upon reflection, immensely rewarding. This term has seen a wealth of highlights, achievements, and accomplishments that deserve recognition.

One of the most memorable events was our volunteering afternoon, where middle pupils supported our primary pupils throughout the day. Older pupils paired with younger pupils to deliver a variety of activities, from board games, card games, Lego, and reading, to football and art. The younger pupils gained so much from this experience, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The event allowed older pupils to demonstrate their caring nature while helping younger pupils feel more confident during interactions across the school. We plan to make this a regular event in the future.

Earlier in the term, pupils enjoyed Arts Week, which included drumming, pop art, food technology, T-shirt designing, and concluded with a disco. Later, during



Occupational Therapy Week, pupils & students explored activities under the theme 'right support, right time, unlocking the power of occupational therapy,' with therapists providing a variety of engaging sessions. Both themed weeks were very popular, and participation was excellent across the school.

Students also resat exams in November, and our sports teams have had a remarkable term. The football and curling teams hosted fixtures at High Grange and competed away matches, remaining undefeated so far. The number of pupils/students representing the school continues to grow, reflecting their commit-



ment, teamwork, and determination. The winter showcase was another highlight, with outstanding performances that filled both staff and families with pride. It was wonderful to see pupils/students supporting one another and celebrating each other's successes throughout the term.

This term we welcomed sixteen new staff members across various departments. They have settled in exceptionally well and are building positive relationships with our pupils/students. Their dedication, energy, and passion have

already made a noticeable impact on the school community. Our growing staff team remains central to the school's ongoing success and the continued progress of our students/pupils.

I hope parents have enjoyed receiving weekly updates from Matt in the Headteacher Corner. These regular communications complement the termly newsletter, keeping families informed of highlights, achievements, and upcoming events, while allowing everyone to plan ahead for the busy school diary.

Finally, I would like to thank all staff for their dedication and hard work, and all parents, carers, and friends of the school for their continued support. We are so grateful for the encouragement and involvement of our families. I wish everyone a joyful festive season, a restful Christmas break, and all the very best for 2026.

Thanks

Gavin Spicer, Principal



# Across the school

Lower School have had a busy and successful term! Pupils have shown great enthusiasm and effort in their learning, producing impressive work in maths and science. They have also enjoyed a variety of trips, which enriched their learning and created memorable experiences beyond the classroom. A particular highlight was the Winter Showcase performance. All pupils participated with creativity, confidence, and energy, making it a memorable celebration of their talents and hard work. Pupils also focused on budgeting, managing their money sensibly, and enjoyed a well-earned Christmas shopping trip. It has been wonderful to see them supporting one another, embracing challenges positively, and contributing so well to the school community this term.

**Catherine Pope, Assistant Headteacher, Lower School**

Middle School have had an exciting half-term leading up to Christmas. Classrooms have been decorated since early December, with sparkling lights adorning walls, desks, and trees. We are extremely proud of all pupils for preparing the wonderful drama pieces for the Christmas production. Middle 1 have excelled at working as a team off-site, while Middle



2 have enjoyed the Wii, sharing games and taking turns. Middle 3 set up and hosted a fantastic debate club, Middle 4 have worked brilliantly together throughout the day, Middle 5 have become dedicated jigsaw puzzlers, and Middle 6 win the prize for the best Christmas tree, decorated beautifully by staff and pupils.

**Alison Seager-Spicer, Assistant Headteacher, Middle School**

All our pupils have enjoyed decorating their form rooms with Christmas decorations as we approach the end of a busy Autumn term. Excitement is building for



our first High Grange disco, an idea suggested by one of our Upper School pupils, which will take place on the penultimate evening of term. We have also welcomed a new pupil and new members of the staff to the Upper School Team. A real highlight for me was watching the pupils perform at the Winter Showcase.

**Vicky Sheridan, Assistant Headteacher, Upper School**

Post 16 has been a hive of activity this half term. We introduced a morning drinks station, offering students a hot drink and breakfast on arrival, which has

been very popular. Reena has also been cooking at lunchtimes twice a week, giving students the chance to try new dishes and enjoy a social mealtime together. By student request, a dartboard and PlayStation have been added to the common room, providing hours of fun and social opportunities. There has been a noticeable change in the Post 16 atmosphere, with students becoming more sociable, supportive, and considerate of one another's needs.

**Chris Haines, Deputy Headteacher, Senior School**

"A huge thank you from all of us for all your support and engagement this term. Wishing all our pupils & students, families, and staff a very Merry Christmas and a restful, joyful holiday. I look forward to welcoming everyone back in the New Year for another exciting term!"

**The schools' Leadership Team.**



# Lower School

What a wonderfully busy term it has been in Lower 1! The children have worked incredibly hard and embraced all the exciting activities leading up to Christmas. Our visit to Church Farm was



a particular highlight, where pupils enjoyed meeting the animals and taking part in festive crafts.

We are especially proud of their resilience during timetable changes in the run-up to Christmas, as they adapted brilliantly and maintained fantastic attitudes throughout. A special mention goes to Rudy for his outstanding singing in our play, *Christmas Under the Sea*.

Lower 2 have had a fantastic term, strengthening friendships and engaging in a wide range of exciting activities. The children especially enjoyed exploring forces in Science, bringing curiosity and energy to their learning. Alongside this, they worked hard preparing for the Christmas show, showing creativity and enthusiasm. We are very proud of their achievements and the positive attitudes they have shown throughout the term.

Lower 3 have had a wonderful term, engaging enthusiastically with a wide range of topics through stimulating, multi-sensory lessons. A key highlight has been their excellent participation in therapy sessions, where they have learned strategies for body regulation to support learning in the classroom. The children have shown focus, resilience, and positivity throughout, making great progress academically, socially, and emotionally. We are very proud of all their achievements this term. Their curiosity and eagerness to learn have made this term particularly memorable.



Lower 4 have had a busy and enjoyable term, approaching every activity with enthusiasm and curiosity. The children have engaged fully in a wide range of lessons and activities, demonstrating creativity, interest, and a willingness to try new things. Their positive attitudes and eagerness to learn have made this term particularly successful, and they have consistently supported one another, strengthening friendships and developing important social skills along the way.

Lower 5 have had a busy and enjoyable term, engaging enthusiastically in a wide range of lessons and activities. The children thoroughly enjoyed their Tudor History morning, banqueting like kings and queens, which brought history to life in a fun and interactive way. They have shown curiosity and creativity in their learning, approaching new topics with interest and energy. Their teamwork and positivity have made this term particularly successful.

Finally, a huge well done to all our pupils involved in the Christmas play, *Christmas Under the Sea*. We are incredibly proud of their determination and resilience throughout rehearsals, prop making, costume creation, table decorations, and the performance itself. Thank you to everyone who helped, you were all amazing!

We wish you a very happy and well-deserved Christmas break and look forward to seeing you in the new year. With best wishes,  
Amy, Annie, Becky, Beth, Sim, Rose and the rest of the lower school team.



# Middle School

Another busy half term has come to an end for Middle 1, with pupils engaging enthusiastically in a wide range of learning experiences. Over the past seven weeks, pupils have written autobiographies, explored forces in Science, and investigated the geography of Russia. They thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the Winter Showcase video. Middle 1 also impressed staff during offsite visits to the National Memorial Arboretum, Rosliston Forestry Centre, Byrkley Park, and Nottingham Castle, travelling confidently and representing the school exceptionally well.

Middle 2 have had a very busy and enjoyable half term, filled with exciting learning experiences. Pupils held a successful bake sale in support of Macmillan Cancer Support, raising £34.50 and demonstrating excellent teamwork. The class enjoyed visiting local shops and a garden centre to choose Christmas decorations. Drama lessons were a highlight, with a car heist mystery video created for the Winter Showcase. Pupils have also made strong progress in DT and Science, showing great independence.

Middle Class 3 have had a fantastic half



term, showing creativity, initiative, and



teamwork. A highlight was the creation of a lunchtime Debate Club, fully led by pupils who designed posters, set rules, and chose engaging topics. The club has sparked thoughtful discussions and great enthusiasm. The class also organised a bake sale during the Winter Showcase, raising an impressive £140 for charity. Their sense of responsibility and generosity has been outstanding, making this a very successful and rewarding half term.

Middle 4 have experienced a busy and rewarding half term, demonstrating commitment across both academic learning and extra-curricular activities. Several pupils represented the school in football and curling events, achieving excellent results and boosting morale across the form. The class has also shown great kindness and inclusivity, warmly welcoming Harry and helping him settle quickly into the group. Overall, it has been a very positive half term, and staff are extremely proud of all the pupils.

Middle 5 have had a positive half term, showing commitment and maturity across academic learning and wider school activi-

ties. Pupils have engaged well in lessons and demonstrated resilience and teamwork. Several pupils have taken part in extra-curricular opportunities, contributing positively to the school community. The class has shown strong relationships and supportive attitudes, making good progress as a group.

Autumn 2 has been a busy and successful term in Middle 6! Everyone has shown enthusiasm and effort across their learning, producing impressive work in maths and science. Pupils enjoyed several trips,



which enriched their learning and created memorable experiences outside the classroom. They worked hard on budgeting, managing their money sensibly, and enjoyed a well-earned Christmas shopping trip. It has been wonderful to see pupils supporting one another, approaching challenges positively, and giving their best in all activities this term.

Have a great Christmas everyone! Chris, Aimee, Emily, Rich, Emma, Jonny, Nathan and the rest of the middle school team



# Upper School

It has been a busy and exciting term in Upper 1. Laila has been organising the school disco as part of her DofE and assisting Zoe with preparations for the Winter Showcase. On Christmas Jumper Day, Noah won a prize for the best jumper. Jake has increased his independence by cooking his own baguettes at lunchtimes. Chloe has been exploring local garden centres and comparing their Christmas displays, while Michal has ordered a poly tunnel for spring gardening projects. Pupils have also enjoyed visiting local Christmas markets, and it has been



wonderful to see such positive interactions within the form group this half term.

Upper 2 have had a busy and exciting second term. Pupils enjoyed festive activities, including making gingerbread houses and preparing for the Winter Showcase, painting numerous candlestick holders. They have also participated in horse riding, off-site trips, and exploring future pathways. Most importantly, we welcomed our newest form member, Maddison, who has settled in perfectly.

Next term, we look forward to preparing for upcoming assessment points and as a staff team we look forward to watching the pupils grow with confidence.

Upper 3 students have been actively involved in a variety of school events. Jacob completed his BSL Level 2 exams with determination and resilience. Jacob and James participated in offsite photography trips, developing creativity and collaboration skills. Will performed confidently in the Winter Showcase drumming as part of a band, while Oscar supported the school by helping decorate shared spaces, showing pride and a positive contribution to the school community.

Upper 4 have had a busy and festive term! Dexter and Jeffrey enjoyed a trip to the Denby Christmas Market, treating themselves to sweet treats. Aiden has been developing independence at Hargate, gaining confidence with the horses and discovering a love for Top Trumps. Ethan continues to run a popular DnD club. Lilia has been actively engaging in school, sharing her artwork and interests



with peers. We have also warmly welcomed our new Teaching Assistant, George, into the Upper 4 family.

Upper 5 have had a busy half term, with a variety of sporting events, including Curling. We celebrated a seventeen-nil football victory against another school, with two goals scored by Darwin. Noah captured these key moments through photography. Benji and Will have shown excellent cooking skills, producing complex pastry dishes for their GCSE. The term finished with enjoyable trips to Christmas markets, and on Friday most of the form gathered to watch the Winter Showcase together.

A huge thank you from Upper School and we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Lisa, Neil, Rebekah, Debs, Lynn and the wider Upper School Team



# Senior School

Post-16 has had a strong sense of community this half term, with pupils working hard in lessons and extra-curricular activities. Evie has shown great commitment in class and during farm visits, approaching tasks with enthusiasm and curiosity. Finlay has made excellent progress in accessing his timetable. Tanner, Theo, and Oliver have regularly attended lunchtime football, improving their skills and demonstrating teamwork and positive behaviour, highlighted by a 9-2 win against St Clares.

Megan has had a unique work experience placement this term, working alongside a Funeral Director and gaining insight into all aspects of the profession, from preparing clients to embalming and funeral processions. Toby has been developing his skills at pool and darts, teaching and sharing his expertise with interested staff and students. Calum continues to explore pathways connected with cars and photography, producing some outstanding images that reflect his passion for motors and his perspective



on the world around him.

This term has been both busy and positive. Students have been showing excellent engagement in their learning and participating in a wide range of activities. Joe has produced some fine work in Food Technology, creating delicious dishes to take home, while Grace and Chloe have been fantastic at the farm, caring for animals and embracing outdoor work. Jack has supported several PE events and lessons for younger pupils. We welcomed visitors from STEMVen-



turi, the Supported Insight Scheme, and Derby College. Students have embraced future pathways with enthusiasm.

Edgar has started a new work experience at Mickleover Sports Social Club, serving drinks and snacks to the Wednesday morning golfers at Pastures Golf Club. Kai has continued to engage positively in a bespoke timetable, while Andrew has made excellent progress with his academic qualifications and also practiced diligently for the Winter Showcase. His hard work culminated in an outstanding



performance of a trio of pieces, which he delivered brilliantly at the showcase. The team have shown great commitment, enthusiasm, and dedication throughout the term.

Students have shown great resilience this term, staying committed to their learning and developing their independence. Frankie has engaged well in her practical course developing new skills and enjoying hands on experiences. Sporting achievements continue, with strong performances on the football pitch and in gaming tournaments, especially Chester. Academically, students have made excellent progress, showing determination and focus in new activities. Their perseverance and enthusiasm this term have been impressive, and staff are very proud of their efforts.

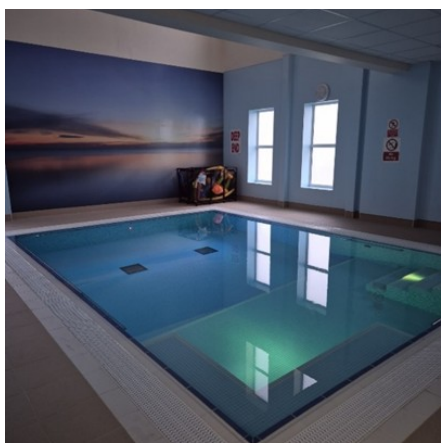
A huge thank you from everyone in Senior School, have a great Christmas everyone. Ethan, Amy, Alex, Stephanie & Chris.



# Therapy & Safeguarding

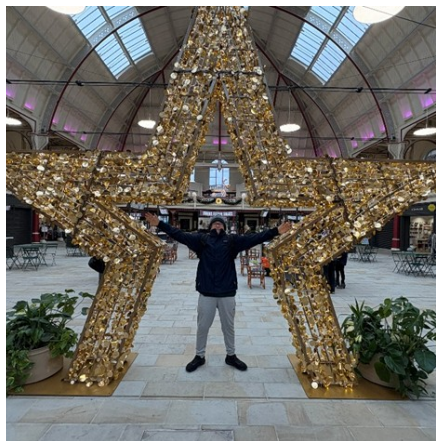
We are delighted to share that the new therapy pool within the Therapy Building is now fully open and operational, with regular sessions successfully underway. This marks an exciting development in our specialist provision and has already had a noticeably positive impact on pupil/student engagement and wellbeing.

Since opening, therapists have begun delivering planned therapy sessions within the pool tailored to individual needs. Early feedback from staff has been extremely encouraging. In particu-



lar, we have seen pupils & students who have previously found it difficult to engage with more traditional therapy approaches respond positively to the pool environment. The sensory qualities of the water, combined with a calm and supportive therapeutic approach, have enabled some pupils & students to feel more regulated, motivated, and confident in accessing therapy input.

For several pupils & students, the therapy pool has provided a meaningful alternative route into therapeutic work, sup-



porting emotional regulation, physical confidence, and relational engagement with adults. This has allowed therapists to build connections and therapeutic momentum in ways that were not previously possible.

As sessions continue, therapists will be monitoring progress and outcomes closely to ensure the therapy pool is used effectively and responsively. We are very pleased with the initial impact and look forward to seeing how this provision continues to support pupils & students across the school.

## Safeguarding

As we approach the festive season, we recognise that Christmas can be a joyful time for many, but it can also be challenging for some children and families. Changes to routine, increased social pressures, and online activity can sometimes affect wellbeing. We encourage parents and carers to talk with their children about managing online use responsibly, setting boundaries, and ensuring they feel safe and supported.

During the Christmas period, certain staff will be available to provide support if

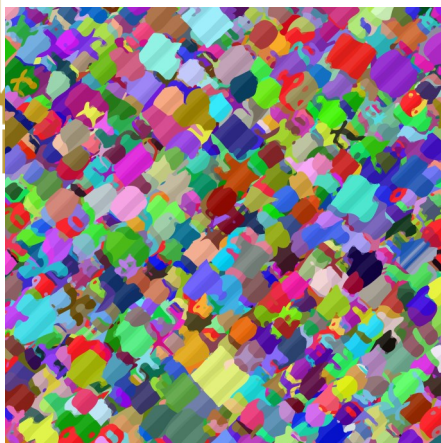
needed. You can reach out to Gavin Spicer, Matt Cottrell, Dr Jo Harrison (week one only), or Alison Seager-Spicer for guidance or advice regarding your child's wellbeing.

We hope that you and your family can enjoy a safe and positive festive season, and please remember that seeking support early can help prevent small worries from becoming bigger challenges.

Please scan the QR link below for some useful tips to help keep you and your family safer during the festive period.



# Events & Exams



As we approach the exam season (assessment points), we would like to remind parents and carers of the importance of supporting pupils & students through this period. Pupils/Students and parents should all be aware if they are sitting exams. We have given paper copies to be sent home and we have also posted letters with all of the information included.

We recognise that exams can be a stressful time for all, and it is essential to prioritise wellbeing, maintain balanced energy levels, and encourage positive routines. Adequate sleep, nutritious meals, and regular breaks can make a significant difference to focus and performance. Please take time to offer support and reassurance, helping pupils & students approach their assessments with confidence rather than anxiety.

If you have any questions regarding the upcoming exams or timetables, please contact Stephanie

([exam.correspondence@highgrangeschool.co.uk](mailto:exam.correspondence@highgrangeschool.co.uk))

There are no silly questions, if you are unsure please ask!

We would like to take a moment to thank all parents and carers for their continued support and collaboration this term. Working together between home and school is essential for ensuring pupils and students reach their full potential, feel supported, and maintain positive wellbeing. Your engagement in learning, communication with staff, and encouragement at home make a real difference to pupils' and students' progress and confidence.

We also thank you for attending events this term, including ADHD training, coffee mornings, the Family Fish and Chip Quiz Night, and, of course, the Winter Showcase. Your support, involvement, and enthusiasm make a real difference to our school community and are greatly appreciated.

A gentle reminder: if your child is absent, please contact **Zoe or Nikita** as soon as possible to report it. This ensures we can maintain accurate attendance records and provide the necessary support for your child's learning.

The Spring term is set to be busy, and there are some key dates for your diaries. While we shared these dates back in September, we are providing an updated



version to ensure everyone is up to date, as there has been one change.

- 20th January 15.30 Parents Evening
- 28th January 16.00 Sensory workshop (online)
- 9th February 14.00 Coffee afternoon
- 26th February 15.30 Post 14 and Post 16 Options Evening\*
- 10th March 09.30 Coffee Morning
- 27th March 13.00 Family Fun Day

*\*change since September*



Merry  
Christmas  
Everyone



# Exam Timetable

Week 1 (12 <sup>th</sup> -16 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2025)					
	Monday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Friday 16 <sup>th</sup>
AM	NO EXAMS		9:30 START	9:30 START	9:30 START
			GCSE English Language Paper 1 1hr 55mins	GCSE Mathematics Paper 1 1hr 30mins	GCSE Chemistry Paper 1 1hr 45mins
			A level Mathematics Paper 1 2hrs		
1:30 START			1:30 START	1:30 START	
PM	NO EXAMS		GCSE Design and Technology 1hr	Functional Skills English Level 1 & 2 Writing 1hr	Functional Skills Maths Level 1 Paper 1 30mins
			ELC History Paper 1 1hr	GCSE Computer Science Paper 1 1hr 30min	GCSE PE Paper 1 1hr

Week 2 (19 <sup>th</sup> -23 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2025)					
	Monday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup>
AM	9:30 START	9:30 START	9:30 START	9:30 START	9:30 START
	GCSE Biology Paper 1 1hr 45mins	GCSE English Language Paper 2 1hr 55mins	GCSE Food and Nutrition 1hr 45mins	Functional Skills Maths Paper 2 1hr 30mins	GCSE Mathematics Paper 2 1hr 30mins
			A level Computer Science Paper 1 2hrs	A level Mathematics Paper 2	
			GCSE Citizenship Paper 2 1hr 45min	GCSE RE Paper 1 1hr 45mins	
PM	1:30 START	1:30 START	1:30 START	1:30 START	1:30 START
	Functional Skills English Level 1 Reading 1hr	GCSE Biology Paper 2 1hr 45mins	GCSE Geography Paper 1 1hr 15min	GCSE Geography Paper 2 1hr 15mins	GCSE Computer Science Paper 2 1hr 30min
	Functional Skills English Level 2 Reading 1hr		ELC History Paper 2 1hr	GCSE Citizenship Paper 1 50 mins	
				GCSE PE Paper 2 1 hr	

Week 3 (26 <sup>th</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2025)					
	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Friday 30 <sup>th</sup>
AM	9:30 START	9:30 START	9:30 START	9:30 START	9:30 START
	GCSE Art 1hr 30 mins	GCSE Chemistry Paper 2 1 hr 45mins	NO EXAMS	1:30 START	1:30 START
	GCSE RE Paper 2 1hr 45mins	A Level Math Paper 3 2hr			
	A level Computer Science Paper 2 2hr 30mins				
PM	1:30 START	1:30 START			
	GCSE Mathematics Paper 3 1hr 30mins	GCSE Geography Paper 3			
		GCSE Citizenship Paper 3			

