



# High Grange Spring 2 Newsletter



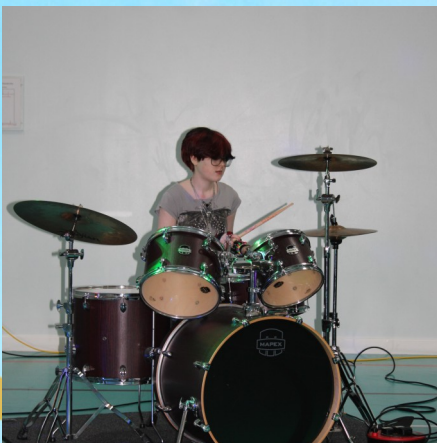
# Principal's Corner

The Spring Term 2026 has been an extremely busy and productive term, filled with exceptional events and outstanding pupil achievements.

A particular highlight has been the range of opportunities for families to engage with the school. Our Year 9 Options Evening, alongside our Year 11–12 Pathways Evening, provided valuable opportunities for pupils and families to explore both academic and vocational routes, supporting informed decision-making as pupils prepare for their next steps towards adulthood.

Our Whole School Parents' Evening was very well attended, and it was fantastic to see so many families engaging with teachers and therapists. We are grateful for the positive feedback received and hope the evening was both informative and supportive.

Thank you to all parents and carers who completed this year's questionnaire. We received our highest ever response, with 79 returns. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and will be carefully analysed to inform our next steps as a school.



We were also pleased to host two parent coffee mornings this term. While we always welcome greater attendance, we appreciate the time commitment involved and thank those who were able to join us.

Our Family Fun Afternoon once again proved to be a wonderful end-of-term celebration. It was fantastic to see pupils, families and staff enjoying time together in a relaxed and positive environment. Events like this reflect the strong sense of community within High Grange School.



Across the term, pupils have engaged in a wide range of enrichment opportunities, demonstrating resilience, creativity and a willingness to step beyond their comfort zones. These have included enterprise activities, fundraising events such as Comic Relief, sporting fixtures, cross-school visits, volunteering opportunities, STEM challenges and our 'Why Weeks', linking curriculum learning to real-life careers.

A standout moment of the term was the Spring Talent Show, where pupils demonstrated an impressive range of talents including music, dance, art, per-

formance and more. It was particularly pleasing to see so many pupils take part for the first time, reflecting growing confidence across the school. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by pupils, staff and guests alike, and showcased the creativity and individuality of our learners.

We are also proud of the continued opportunities within our wider curriculum, including competitions such as the D&T design project in collaboration with Roller Snakes, giving pupils the chance to apply their skills in real-world contexts.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all staff across education and our multi-disciplinary team for their continued dedication and hard work this term.

We look forward to welcoming pupils back on Tuesday 14th April 2026. I hope you all have a restful and enjoyable Spring break.

Take care and best wishes,

Gavin Spicer



# Lower School

Lower School have enjoyed another busy half term full of learning, laughter and creativity. Pupils have explored a range of engaging topics, including nursery rhymes, Deadly 60 animals and the magi-



cal world of Roald Dahl, bringing stories and learning to life in a variety of ways.

There have been lots of opportunities for pupils to take their learning beyond the classroom. Lower 1 made the most of the sunshine with outdoor learning and enjoyed an offsite trip to Little Used and Tesco to choose new class books, toys and snacks. Across Lower School, pupils have engaged in practical, hands-on learning, including building animal habitats using recycled materials and developing their understanding of the natural world, encouraging curiosity and teamwork.

World Book Day was a real highlight, with a fantastic buzz around reading across all classes. Pupils took part in a range of activities including cosy reading sessions, book reviews and immersive role-play experiences, particularly linked to Roald Dahl texts such as *The BFG* and *George's Marvellous Medicine*. It was wonderful to see pupils so engaged and enthusiastic about reading, sharing sto-

ries and recommending books to one another, developing a genuine love of literature.

Enrichment opportunities have continued to play a key role this half term. Pupils enjoyed events such as the Geography Enrichment morning, where buildings were transformed into different countries, allowing pupils to explore landmarks, food and culture from around the world. Activities like this continue to build curiosity, knowledge and confidence and help pupils make meaningful links between subjects and real-life experiences, strengthening their understanding of the wider world.



Creativity has been a strong theme throughout the term. Pupils have created their own newspaper reports, designed and built habitats, and taken part in a range of arts and crafts activities, including Easter crafts. There has also been a strong focus on developing independence, communication and confidence through shared activities, group learning and collaborative challenges, supporting positive relationships.

A number of pupils represented Lower School in the Spring Talent Show, confi-

dently performing in front of an audience through singing, dancing and even science experiments. We are incredibly proud of all pupils who took part and showed such confidence and resilience, demonstrating growing self-belief.

The Comic Relief disco was another highlight, bringing lots of fun and enjoyment for pupils across Lower School. It was fantastic to see everyone taking part and enjoying the event together, building friendships and positive memories that pupils will carry forward.

Overall, it has been a very busy but highly productive half term, with pupils showing great enthusiasm, creativity and resilience in their learning. We are very proud of everything they have achieved and the progress they continue to make..

We now look forward to a well-deserved rest over the Easter break and returning refreshed for the Summer Term.

Annie, Amy, Becky, Beth, Sim, Rose & Cat.



# Middle School

Spring 2 has been another highly successful term across Middle School. Pupils have shown excellent creativity in their learning, particularly in English, producing thoughtful and engaging work while continuing to challenge themselves. It has been particularly pleasing to see how positively pupils have interacted, supporting one another and contributing to a calm, respectful learning environment.

Pupils have made strong progress across the curriculum, exploring a wide range of topics including Space, 20th century history, equality laws and what makes a developed country. There has also been a continued focus on developing key skills such as fractions, decimals and percentages, alongside opportunities to apply learning in practical and meaningful ways.

Enrichment and offsite learning have been a real strength this half term. Pupils have represented the school exceptionally well on visits to a range of locations including East Midlands Airport, Sudbury Hall, Foremark Reservoir, Lichfield, Rosliston Forestry Centre, Derby Museum and local museums. These experiences have supported the development of independence, teamwork and confidence, with pupils consistently demon-



strating respect and maturity.

A highlight for Key Stage 3 was the trip to Harbour Rocks, where pupils experienced rock climbing, many for the first time. Despite challenging conditions, all pupils pushed themselves and supported one another throughout the day, reflecting the strong team spirit that has developed across the phase.

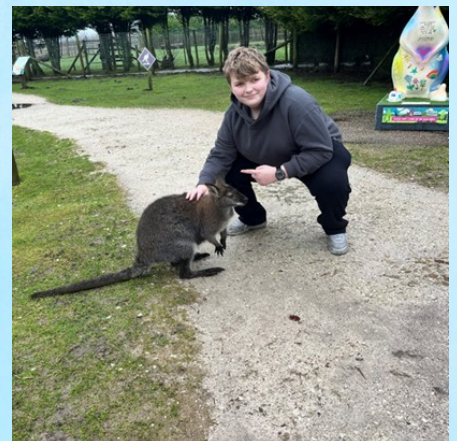
Creativity has continued to flourish this term. Pupils have worked collaboratively to create films, develop media projects and produce imaginative writing, including Terrifying Tales and short films. It has been fantastic to see pupils planning, recording and editing their own work with increasing independence. In Science, practical learning has been a highlight, including exploring electricity and using equipment such as the Van de Graaff generator.

Pupils have also enjoyed a wide range of additional activities including visits to Byrkley Park Garden Centre, where they explored animals and plants, as well as food technology lessons where pupils have successfully created a range of dishes. Events such as World Book Day and

enrichment activities have provided further opportunities for creativity and engagement.

There have also been fantastic examples of pupils contributing to the wider school community. Pupils have shown growing confidence as positive role models for younger pupils, while also demonstrating strong teamwork and collaboration. Fundraising efforts were also a success, with pupils raising money for Red Nose Day through events such as bake sales and discos.

We are incredibly proud of the progress,



confidence and maturity shown by pupils this half term. It has been particularly pleasing to see the way pupils have come together as a team, supporting one another and building positive relationships.

Have a wonderful Easter break. Chris, Aimee, Emily, Rich, Jonny, Nathan and Alison.



# Upper School

Spring Term 2 has been short and sweet; no sooner had it started than the Easter holidays are already here. We have welcomed Teagan into Upper School, who has settled in really well and is already making new friends.

This half term has been packed with events. A number of pupils have completed their English Functional Skills and GCSE presentations, speaking confidently on a chosen topic for over three minutes. Jacob, Willow, Benji, Jake, Noah, Maddie, Olivia and Aiden have all successfully completed their presentations this half term.



In Food Technology, Ethan has completed his BTEC Home Cooking Skills Level 1 practical assessment, producing a one course meal, while Jeffrey, Dexter and James have produced two course meals for their Level 2 assessment. Olivia and Amelia have also planned their meals for upcoming BTEC assessments. Benji and Will showed excellent technical cooking skills during their GCSE three-hour practical, producing three dishes to a high standard under timed conditions.

Across the term, pupils have engaged in a wide range of activities and opportunities. Noah visited Milldale to complete his Geography fieldwork. Pupils have also

been developing practical and vocational skills, including design and construction projects, preparation for Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, and participation in enrichment activities linked to independence and next steps.

There have been continued opportunities for pupils to develop confidence and independence through visits into the local community, as well as exploring future pathways through visits to settings such as Broomfield and Lees Brook. These experiences continue to support pupils in building confidence and preparing for life beyond school.

Creativity has also been a strong feature this half term. Pupils have been engaging in music, performance and practical subjects, with some learning new instruments and others taking part in wider school events such as the talent show. It has been particularly pleasing to see pupils stepping outside of their comfort zones and demonstrating increased confidence in performance and presentation.

In Design and Technology, pupils have been working on a range of practical projects, demonstrating increasing independence and attention to detail.



Alongside this, pupils continue to develop their skills in specialist areas such as Equine, Food Technology and creative subjects, applying their learning in meaningful and purposeful ways.

We have also seen pupils achieve important personal milestones this term, including increased independence, improved engagement in lessons and continued progress towards their individual next steps. It has been a positive and productive half term across Upper School.

As we come to the end of the term, we are incredibly proud of the effort and progress shown by all pupils. We now look forward to a well-deserved break before returning refreshed for the summer term, where many pupils will be preparing for exams and the next stage of their journey.

Have a great Easter Break. Vicky, Neil, Lisa, Lynn, Rebekah & Debs



# Senior School

This half term, Senior School students have been working incredibly hard as they build towards their summer exams. Many are preparing for final exams in A-Level subjects alongside their remaining GCSEs. Despite busy schedules, there has still been time to relax with peers during lunchtimes, particularly enjoying games within Post-16.

There has been strong individual progress this half term, particularly in increased time in school, improved engagement with therapies and growing independence. These developments represent a significant and positive step forward.

Students have taken part in valuable experiences, including a visit to Lubrizol. During the visit, they listened to employees share their career journeys, toured the site and took part in practical activities exploring how products are developed and improved. Those who attended represented both themselves and the school exceptionally well, demonstrating professionalism, teamwork and respect throughout the day.

Across the term, there has been excellent commitment to learning, with positive engagement in lessons and genuine



enthusiasm for subjects. It has been particularly pleasing to see such consistent focus and determination across the group. Alongside this, the sense of community continues to thrive, with many choosing to spend free time socialising through activities such as pool and darts, strengthening friendships and supporting one another.

There have also been some fantastic individual achievements. Progress in communication sessions has been particularly strong, with confidence developing week by week alongside clear resilience and integrity. Others have continued to



excel in practical settings such as the farm, showing dedication and care for animals, alongside producing high-quality dishes in cooking sessions with increasing independence and creativity.

Across the division, there has been strong engagement in a range of activities. These include farm-based work, the Supported Insight Scheme with visits to ASDA, and ongoing work experience placements. Pupils have also taken part in STEM challenges and World Book Day activities, further enriching their learning.



There has also been a clear focus on preparing for next steps beyond school. Many are exploring future pathways and gaining experience of key life skills, including driving and work-based learning. Others have begun exploring areas such as hospitality and catering through work experience, continuing to develop teamwork, communication and independence.

Overall, there has been strong resilience, determination and a positive attitude throughout the half term. We are incredibly proud of all that has been achieved and look forward to the Summer Term.

Stephanie, Amy, Ethan, Alex and Chris.

# Therapy

## Celebrating Communication Across the School

At the beginning of Spring 2, the Speech and Language Therapy team spent a week observing lessons across the school to explore how communication is supported and promoted within everyday teaching and learning. The week provided a wonderful opportunity to step into classrooms, see the incredible work happening across subjects, and reflect on the ways



communication-rich environments help all students connect and thrive.

What we saw was extremely positive. Across the school, classrooms felt calm, welcoming and emotionally safe. Teachers created environments where students clearly felt comfortable contributing in their own way, whether that was verbally, through demonstration, or by showing their thinking using practical materials. Flexible participation and supportive relationships were evi-



dent everywhere we went.

Staff were also naturally modelling language throughout lessons. Key vocabulary was introduced, explained and embedded within discussion, helping students access increasingly complex ideas. Many lessons also included strong opportunities for peer interaction, with students sharing ideas, collaborating on tasks and learning from one another. The use of visuals, demonstrations, practical materials and movement activities was another clear strength, helping to reduce language load and support understanding across a wide range of learners.

Alongside celebrating these strengths, the week also helped us identify areas for continued growth; leading to discussions with teachers about expanding the visibility of key vocabulary in lessons, extending simple visuals to support task instructions, and building in more structured opportunities for students to talk through their ideas.

Following the success of the Spring 2 observation week, we will now be scheduling an environment observation week at the beginning of each term.

You will recall we have been trialing a few weeks this academic year and after reflecting on the most helpful point in the school calendar to do this, the therapy team have identified that the best timing is shortly after each holiday period.

This allows students time to settle back into the flow of the school before their planned therapy sessions begin.

These weeks help the therapy team build a shared understanding of how students access learning across the school and allow us to work alongside staff to strengthen environments that support communication, participation and independence for all students.



# Pupil Project

## Newsletter Citizenship Action by GCSE Pupils

Our citizenship department has recently been working on a citizenship action project that focuses on widening the awareness of citizenship to the rest of the school. Our dedicated students, Jake and Jeffery, have been working hard to achieve this goal and have come up with numerous ingenious strategies to perpetuate this.

They began by attending Friday's student council sessions and educated some of the younger pupils on the economy. Advertising this with posters around the school, they managed to successfully inform a wider audience than usual. They also carried out a survey in upper and senior school about their opinions of the student council, and used those results to put a proposal together for Senior Leadership Team of different ways older students could be involved in the Student Council.

A mock election was held on Thursday 26th March where all students could vote for either Jake or Jeffery. They had each created a political party with an election poster and a manifesto of their main ideas. This promoted lots of discussions and questions across the school between staff members and students. This helped to highlight one aspect of citizenship surrounding democracy and voting.

The results are:

Jake - Me First Party 32 votes - 28%

Jeffery - Public before Profit 76 votes - 68%

Spoilt votes - 4

Turnout 50%

Thank you for all the support across the school.

Jake and Jeffery are continuing this project next half term with starting a lunch club on Thursday first half called Political Masters Debate Club. It will focus on discussing current issues in a considerate and equal space. Students from middle, upper and senior are welcome.

Below are the campaign posters that both pupils produced.



# Family Day & Events



Our Family Fun Afternoon was a fantastic success and a real highlight to end the term. It was incredible to welcome over 50 families into school, creating a brilliant atmosphere across the whole site.

There was a wide range of activities on offer, ensuring there was something for everyone. The sports hall was a hive of activity with badminton and trampolining, while Lower School hosted a variety of craft stations. In Design Technology, families worked together to create Easter wooden boxes and pen pots, and in Food Technology there was plenty of creativity on show with cake and biscuit decorating.

The Maths room proved popular with bingo sessions running throughout the afternoon, while the Science room offered engaging hands-on activities that captured pupils' curiosity and encouraged exploration. The English room provided a quieter space for family board games, and the Music room was full of energy with the drum workshop, which was enjoyed by many and created a lively atmosphere.

Our therapy team created a calm and welcoming chill-out zone, with Lego, music, bean bags, colouring and time with Bear and Bo, which was enjoyed by many pupils and families and provided an important space to regulate and relax.

This balance of activity and calm spaces ensured all pupils were able to access the afternoon in a way that suited them.

The Easter egg hunt brought everyone together, with forms setting off from the foyer at different times, and was a real highlight for many, even in the rain! Alongside this, the raffle and refreshments in the soft play area helped to create a relaxed, social feel across the afternoon, with families taking time to connect, talk and enjoy being together in a positive environment.

Events like this are incredibly important to us as a school. They provide an opportunity for pupils, families and staff to come together, strengthen relationships and enjoy time together in a positive and supportive environment. It was a brilliant afternoon, very well attended, and a great way to end the term, with many families commenting on how much they had enjoyed the afternoon. In total we raised just under £550 and this money goes straight into the student council pot.

## Looking Ahead to the Summer Term

We are already looking ahead to an exciting Summer Term. We are particularly



pleased to be introducing our first ever Leavers' Prom for all Post-16 students,

and we will confirm further details over the coming weeks as plans develop.

We are also planning our first Post-16 residential team-building experience, which will provide a valuable opportunity for students to develop independence, teamwork and confidence following what will be a demanding exam period beginning on 8th May, and will act as a positive end point to the academic year.

In addition, we will be hosting an online PDA workshop at 16:00 on 15th April, followed by our next coffee morning at 09:30 on Thursday 7th May. These



events provide valuable opportunities to connect, share information and continue to strengthen our partnership with families.

We look forward to sharing more details with you soon and continuing to build on the strong sense of community that makes High Grange so special.

Have a great Easter Break, Matt.

*Please remember that Gavin, myself, Dr Jo & Alison are all contactable in the holiday period.*