



High Grange Summer 1 Newsletter



Headteachers' Corner

As we approach the end of another busy half term, it feels like the right time to reflect on the many successes, achievements, and experiences that have taken place across High Grange School. It has been a half term full of opportunity, positivity, and memorable moments, and I continue to be incredibly proud of our pupils, students, and staff team.

Learning and engagement have remained exceptionally strong across the school. From Lower School through to Post-16, pupils and students have embraced lessons, outdoor learning opportunities, enrichment, and wider experiences with enthusiasm. Our ACE ethos of Adaptive Thinking, Communication, and Emotional Wellbeing continues to be visible across all phases, with pupils demonstrating resilience, growing independence, and increasingly strong communication skills.

One of the standout themes this half term has been learning beyond the classroom. Lower School enrichment continues to flourish, with pupils making excellent use of outdoor spaces, creative activities, and play-based learning. Middle School pupils have enjoyed adventurous offsite experiences, including OAA visits, team building, bushcraft, and trips which

have helped strengthen social skills, confidence, and teamwork.

Our MasterChef competitions were a huge highlight. This year we hosted not one but two competitions, welcoming pupils from Pegasus and Holbrook Schools alongside High Grange pupils. The standard was incredibly high, with pupils preparing international dishes under timed conditions. The competitions provided a fantastic opportunity for creativity, resilience, and mixing with peers from other schools, with dishes judged by professional chef Matt Slack. We are already looking forward to expanding the event further next year.



Key Stage 3 has also enjoyed a fantastic half term. Pupils have embraced the Shakespeare curriculum with enthusiasm and confidence, while wider opportunities such as the Alton Towers visit and the Rollersnakes skateboard competition, attracting over 100 entries from different schools have added further excitement.

The Duke of Edinburgh Silver Expedition was another major success. Pupils demonstrated exceptional resilience and independence through cooking, navigating, and camping over three days and two nights.

Our Post-16 students have continued to thrive through Supported Insights and employer links, including recent work with Rolls-Royce around employability and mock interviews.

Finally, I would like to thank all our families for their continued support and engagement throughout the half term. Whether attending coffee mornings, parent training sessions, school events, competitions, or wider community opportunities, your involvement continues to make a real difference. The positive relationships between home and school remain one of our greatest strengths, helping us work together to support pupils and students both academically and personally. The sense of community across High Grange is something we are incredibly proud of, and we thank you for continuing to be such an important part of it.

It has been a fantastic half term full of progress, positivity, and success and we



look forward to even more opportunities ahead.
Matt



Lower School

Lower School has enjoyed a busy, engaging and positive half term, making the most of the sunshine and embracing a wide range of learning experiences both in and out of the classroom. Across the



provision, pupils have shown fantastic engagement, creativity and resilience whilst continuing to build friendships and confidence.

Lower 1 have thoroughly enjoyed their topic of People Who Help Us, taking part in a variety of role play experiences which brought learning to life. Pupils explored different occupations through imaginative play and enjoyed a memorable visit to Hero Town, where they immersed themselves in roles including firefighters, vets, doctors, mechanics, café owners and builders. The visit was a real highlight, showcasing teamwork, confidence and creativity. Pupils have also enjoyed spending time outdoors, making use of the trim trail, learning outside in the sunshine and developing positive interactions with peers from across Lower School.

Lower 2 explored all things money through an exciting enterprise project where pupils created and ran their own shops. A cinema, spa and supermarket

were opened and welcomed visitors from across the school community. The project developed communication, independence and real-life learning skills whilst creating a fantastic sense of pride and achievement. In English, pupils explored persuasive writing and even used AI to support the design of promotional posters. Science lessons focused on plants, with pupils growing and dissecting their own specimens to deepen understanding through practical investigation.

Lower 3 had a wonderfully active and engaging half term. Their topic Food Glorious Food saw pupils creating their own chocolate bar designs, whilst an offsite



visit to Fun Valley provided lots of fun and opportunities for shared experiences with peers. In English, pupils explored inspirational individuals, including David Attenborough, with enrichment activities celebrating his recent milestone birthday. Across DT, pupils designed, tested and adapted Lego vehicles, demonstrating excellent adaptive thinking and problem-solving skills.

Creativity flourished across Lower 4 and Lower 5. Art lessons explored artists including William Morris and Orla Kiely,

inspiring collaborative outdoor chalk artwork in the playground. Learning about the monarchy captured pupils' imagination, with royal banquet experiences, biography writing and the creation of royal gowns helping to bring history to life. Pupils developed a strong understanding of British monarchs and timelines, with particular interest shown in the Tudor period.

Alongside all of this fantastic learning, one of the greatest successes across Lower School has been the kindness, teamwork and positive friendships demonstrated daily, helping create a happy, caring and supportive environment for everyone.

Have a great half term everyone. Cat, Annie, Amy, Becky, Beth, Sim & Rose.



Middle School

Middle 1 have had a fantastic half term with a rich variety of activities and visits. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed exploring A Midsummer Night's Dream, bringing the text to life through drama activities, performances and even some entertaining Shakespearean insults. Their studies also linked learning across subjects, including applying maths skills around speed, distance and time to favourite video games and thoughtfully exploring the experiences of Jewish children during World War Two. Offsite visits to Tatenhill Airfield and East Midlands Airport further broadened learning and social understanding.

Middle 2 have enjoyed exploring the world of William Shakespeare, learning about his life and studying A Midsummer Night's Dream. Science lessons focused on the digestive and respiratory systems, whilst maths covered square numbers, cube numbers and square roots. A real highlight has been the independence shown during DT and Food Technology sessions, where pupils confidently developed projects from concept through to completion. Their visit to Elvaston Castle provided another memorable experience, including spotting goslings during the trip.

Middle 3 have enjoyed another exciting



half term with pupils demonstrating resilience and bravery during an offsite visit to Alton Towers. Pupils supported one another to overcome anxieties and fully engage in the day. The class also explored democracy through creating and voting for awards, promoting pupil voice and teamwork. A visit to Derby Theatre to watch Macbeth encouraged thoughtful discussions around themes and characters.

Middle 4 have had a brilliant and creative half term, demonstrating enthusiasm and engagement across learning. In English, pupils explored myths and legends, creating their own characters and developing imaginative stories. Science lessons focused on ecosystems and habitats, with outdoor learning opportunities investigating plants, insects and wildlife around the school grounds. In Art and DT, pupils created miniature gardens and nature-inspired sculptures. The class also enjoyed a visit to a local park and nature reserve, taking part in scavenger hunts and team challenges.

Middle 5 have had another fantastic term filled with learning and enrichment. In Maths, pupils explored probability through practical activities, whilst English focused on Romeo and Juliet, bringing

the text to life through drama and discussion. Science investigations into light and forces encouraged practical exploration using equipment such as light boxes and lenses. Food Technology has been a particular success, with pupils confidently trying new foods and developing new ideas. Visits to Bretby Garden Centre, Tenpin Bowling and Lea Green provided opportunities to build resilience and independence.

Middle 6 have had a wonderfully positive half term and should be incredibly proud of their achievements. Pupils particularly enjoyed exploring A Midsummer Night's



Dream and demonstrated fantastic enthusiasm and creativity throughout. Games sessions, especially Monopoly, brought opportunities to develop teamwork and resilience. Excellent work in MasterChef sessions also showcased creativity and growing independence.

Thanks for all of your support. Alison, Chris, Aimee, Emily, Rich, Jonny, Emma & Nathan.



Upper School

Upper School has had a busy and successful Summer Term 1, filled with achievements, new experiences and plenty of perseverance. The term certainly brought a mixture of weather, with warm sunshine at the beginning giving way to heavy rain and even hail towards the end. Fortunately, the weather was kind for one of the term's highlights, the Silver Duke of Edinburgh practice expedition.

Several pupils joined Post-16 students for the two-night expedition, demonstrating resilience, teamwork and independence throughout.



The expedition ran smoothly and provided valuable opportunities to develop navigation skills, problem solving and preparation for the assessed expedition later in the year. Alongside this, pupils have also been involved in horse riding, overnight camping and long walks as part of their wider Duke of Edinburgh preparation and outdoor learning experiences.

The Summer examination series has also begun, with Upper School pupils demonstrating exceptional maturity, focus and perseverance. Written examinations are now well underway, and pupils have approached revision and preparation positively. Some learners have shown remarkable dedication in preparing for

exams, making thoughtful choices to minimise distractions and remain focused on their goals.

Creative achievements have also been a real strength this half term. GCSE Art examinations saw pupils complete demanding practical assessments over several days, demonstrating impressive endurance and commitment. In Music, pupils have recorded original performance pieces, developed their own compositions and continued to build confidence performing and producing work independently. Photography and creative media have also flourished, with pupils producing some excellent independent projects and capturing high-quality work.

Food Technology has continued to be a particular success, with pupils completing accredited Home Cooking Skills qualifications and producing impressive final dishes as part of their assessments. It has been wonderful to see growing confidence, independence and willingness to try new foods and techniques.

DT projects have showcased both creativity and practical skills, including the construction of complex design pieces demonstrating excellent craftsmanship, planning and attention to detail.



STEM activities have also provided engaging



opportunities for investigation and problem solving.

A real highlight this term was welcoming a team from Rolls Royce, who delivered mock interviews for some of our pupils in upper school. Those involved represented themselves exceptionally well, showing confidence, maturity and professionalism whilst speaking with employees and taking part in the activities.

Alongside these wider opportunities, pupils have also continued developing independence within school life, showing increasing confidence in communicating their views, shaping timetables, engaging positively with staff and making informed choices around their learning.

Across Upper School, pupils have shown resilience, adaptability and determination. Many have overcome personal challenges, advocated for their needs, embraced changes positively and continued to make excellent progress. It has been a wonderful half term and we look forward to all that Summer 2 will bring.

Thank you for your support this term.
Vicky, Lisa, Neil, Rebekah, Sam & Lynn.

Senior School

Senior School has had an incredibly busy and successful Summer Term 1, with students continuing to demonstrate resilience, independence and ambition both in school and across their wider pathways. The half term has been filled with examinations, work experience, Duke of Edinburgh activities and opportunities to further prepare for adulthood.

Examinations have been a major focus across senior school with students showing excellent commitment and determination in their preparation. Staff have been particularly impressed with the maturity, focus and increasing independence demonstrated as students take greater ownership of revision and qualification work. Students have approached the exam period positively and should be extremely proud of their efforts so far.

The Silver Duke of Edinburgh programme has been a particular highlight this term. Students successfully completed their practice expedition, demonstrating outstanding resilience, teamwork and positivity throughout. They navigated a variety of terrains and woodland environments, applying their navigation skills confidently whilst supporting one another through camping, cooking and daily expedition challenges. The expedition



also included a creative team challenge which brought a fun and memorable element to the experience and helped strengthen team spirit. Students returned proud of their achievements and motivated for their qualifying expedition in Summer 2.

Preparation for adulthood opportunities have continued to flourish. Students have engaged in a wide range of work experience placements and vocational activities, including floristry experiences, funeral services placements, dog grooming, equine studies and volunteering opportunities. It has been fantastic to see



students exploring future career pathways, developing independence and building confidence within real-world environments. Significant milestones have also been celebrated, including apprenticeship success, driving achievements and progress within travel training.

Animal care and outdoor learning have remained important aspects of the curriculum this term. Students have spent time caring for animals, supporting stable duties, developing practical skills and showing responsibility whilst working with new arrivals on the farm. These



experiences continue to provide valuable opportunities for communication, teamwork and preparation for adulthood.

Students also welcomed back external partners who supported mock interview experiences, giving learners valuable insight into employment skills and future aspirations. Confidence and communication skills shone throughout these sessions. In lessons, learning remained creative and engaging, including collaborative investigations and problem-solving activities which developed teamwork and critical thinking.

We are incredibly proud of all our Senior students for their hard work, determination and achievements this half term and look forward to the exciting opportunities still to come in Summer 2.

Have a great break, Chris, Alex, Stephanie, Amy and Ethan.



Families & Events

As we look ahead to Summer Term 2, we have another incredibly busy and ex-



citing half term ahead with several whole-school events and celebrations that we are very much looking forward to sharing with our families and wider community.

One of the highlights of the term will be our annual Sports Day, taking place on Wednesday 8th July at 10:00am. Families are warmly invited to attend and support our pupils and students as they take part in a range of activities and events. Sports Day is always a fantastic opportunity to celebrate participation, teamwork, resilience and achievement, and we look forward to seeing everyone there.

We are also delighted to invite families to our Summer Fayre on Wednesday 22nd July at 13.00. The Summer Fayre is always a wonderful occasion, bringing together pupils, students, staff, families and the wider school community. Further details will follow, but we hope as many families as possible will be able to join us for what promises to be another enjoyable event.

A particularly exciting milestone for the school this year will be our second annual Inter-School SEND Athletics Event, taking place on 15th July. This has grown significantly and is shaping up to be a truly remarkable occasion.

We are expecting over 200 pupils from 10 different SEND schools to join us for the event. We are also proud to be welcoming sporting celebrities from the Paralympic community, alongside the local Mayor, and we anticipate interest from local Midlands media and news crews. Parents of pupils selected to represent the school will receive invitations closer to the event. We are incredibly proud to host such an important celebration of inclusion, sport and achievement.

As examinations continue through Summer 2, we would also like to remind families of the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between revision, rest and wellbeing. We encourage pupils and students to continue revising whilst ensuring they have time to rest and recharge. There are many excellent resources available online, with BBC Bitesize remaining a particularly useful platform.

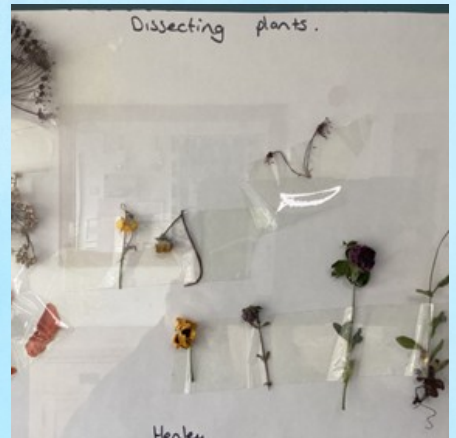
With warmer weather hopefully continuing, please also ensure pupils and students attend school wearing clothing suitable for both the conditions and learning environment. Whilst High Grange does not operate a formal uniform policy, recognising the importance of individual sensory needs, clothing should remain appropriate for a school setting.



As we move towards the holidays, we would also like to remind families of the importance of close adult supervision around online activity. Many of our pu-

pils and students can be particularly vulnerable online due to differences in communication, social understanding and interpreting intent. Unfortunately, we often see disagreements, friendship difficulties and heightened anxieties arising from online interactions, particularly where messages have been misunderstood or communication has been misinterpreted. We would strongly encourage all online activity, social media use and messaging platforms to be supervised on a 1:1 basis wherever possible, helping to support safe use, positive relationships and early intervention where concerns arise.

Finally, following the sharing of class groups earlier this week, we appreciate



this can bring a mixture of emotions. We would encourage families to spend time processing this information and discussing transitions positively with their child over the break. Introductions to new teachers, transition opportunities and any meetings required can be arranged after half term.

As always, if families need support over the holidays, please do not hesitate to contact myself, Gavin, Dr Jo or Alison. We are here to help where needed.

On the final page there is some useful information from the therapy team about the importance of sleep.

Have a great half term Matt.

SLEEP MATTERS

- An OT guide for autistic, ADHD and PDA students



Sleep is a vital occupation. Good sleep supports learning, emotional regulation, behaviour, attention, physical health and overall wellbeing.



Why can sleep be challenging?

Differences in sensory processing, anxiety, ADHD, PDA profiles and regulation can impact falling asleep, staying asleep and waking feeling rested.

- ✓ Nervous system may stay "on alert" for longer
- ✓ Brains may feel active even when bodies are tired
- ✓ Sensory needs can make it hard to get comfortable
- ✓ Anxiety and busy thoughts can interrupt sleep
- ✓ Not caused by "bad habits" or poor parenting

OT GUIDELINES FOR BETTER SLEEP



1. PREDICTABLE BEDTIME ROUTINE

Consistency helps the brain know that sleep is coming.

Repeat the same sequence each evening.

Examples:

- Dim lights
- Reduce noise
- Warm drink
- Calming music
- Reading familiar books
- Watching familiar programmes



2. MEET SENSORY NEEDS

Consider what helps your child feel calm, comfortable and safe.

This might include:

- Deep pressure input (weighted blanket, tight bedding, firm hugs)
- Low lighting
- Minimal sound
- Cooler room temperatures
- Soft or preferred textures

💡 What calms one child may overwhelm another. Observe and adjust.



3. MOVEMENT MATTERS

ADHD profiles often benefit from movement before bed.

- Physical activity can help regulate the nervous system
- Avoid highly stimulating activities or screen use close to bedtime

★ ★ Heavy work, stretching, walking, trampoline or sensory circuits can help the body get ready for rest.



4. PDA FRIENDLY APPROACH

Reducing demands and increasing choice can reduce anxiety and avoidance.

- Offer choices
- Use collaborative language
- Be flexible where possible
- Focus on connection not compliance
- Try: "Would you like to brush teeth before or after pyjamas?" instead of direct instructions



5. CALMING THE BUSY BRAIN

Anxiety can make it hard to switch off. Support a calm mind before bedtime.

- Worry time earlier in the evening
- Calming sensory activities
- Visual schedules
- Reassurance about the next day
- Mindfulness, breathing or relaxation stories

ADDITIONAL TIPS



Consider the type of content, not just the screen.

Choose calm, familiar or low-stimulation shows or videos.



Avoid caffeine and large meals close to bedtime.



Keep the sleep environment quiet, dark and comfortable.



Wake times are important too – consistency helps regulate body clocks.



Comfort items and familiarity can provide security.

★ REMEMBER

There is no "perfect" sleep routine. What works for one child may not work for another. The aim is not perfection, but supporting regulation, safety and rest in a way that respects the young person's individual sensory and emotional needs.



SEEK FURTHER HELP IF...

Sleep difficulties are persistent, significantly impacting daily life, or associated with:

- Breathing difficulties
- Frequent waking
- Extreme fatigue
- Concerns about physical or mental health

Speak to your GP or other healthcare professionals.

