



HGS News

Autumn term 2 2024

End of Term Message 2024 from Mr Renton

We have been really impressed with how positively students have embraced learning over the first half term. We have also been delighted to see so many wider curricular activities taking place.

It was a privilege to see all the celebration assemblies this week where our Head Students, Molly Clubb and Eleanor Batiste, delivered outstanding speeches about their time in school. We also hosted our annual celebration evening on

Wednesday evening, and it was a real joy to see our Year 11 and Year 13 Leavers collect their special prizes. It was also an honour to present The Kevin McAleese Award for Determination in the Face of Adversity to Mateo, on behalf of his sister Liz Hatton.



Curriculum Summaries and Reading

Our curriculum summaries have been updated for next term and can be found by clicking [here](#). Parents often ask about how they can help their child at home and ask about what they are learning next. The curriculum summaries are designed to give an overview of what is being taught over the next term.

We continue to encourage reading across our school and have a number of initiatives taking place:

- Form time reading takes place weekly, complimented by at least one hour of independent Home Reading for students in Years 7 to 10. This is focused on Sparx Reader in Year 7 and we hope to open this to Year 8 in the new year.
- The paired reading programme takes place every Tuesday and Wednesday.
- Years 7 and 8 have experienced a range of author talks and workshops.
- We have also ordered a book vending machine which will arrive in the new year. Students will be able to purchase new books, at discounted rates, via the cashless system.

Please click [here](#) for some book stocking fillers.

Peer review and changing rooms

In December, we hosted a two-day peer review where a lead reviewer with inspection experience, two headteachers and two deputy headteachers, visited the school as critical friends. We find external verification and review such as this to be useful in helping us to refine and further develop our provision. This year we focussed their attention on our Sixth Form and also attendance in the lower school. Below are a few extracts from the report:



The Sixth Form study programme is highly ambitious. The school have high aspirations for students, there are high expectations, and these expectations are clearly communicated to students. Pupils rise to these expectations and thrive from them. Teacher subject knowledge is of a very high quality. Students benefit from subject specialists across the full range of the A Level programme. Students value and appreciate the availability of subject staff and recognise the dedication of the staff in providing one-to-one support when they need it.

The systems to support attendance are robust and clear. The staff involved in the leadership and day-to-day management of attendance are clear about their roles. There is a strong strategic overview of attendance that begins with systematic analysis of trends and patterns.

In the new school year, we plan to refurbish our changing rooms. We appreciate the support from parents through the fundraising activity on Burns Night. Our final designs are currently being worked on, and work took place removing asbestos in the October break so we can start the work in the coming months. If you haven't purchased a ticket yet, please support us in our efforts to update the changing rooms by joining us for [Burns Night](#).

Year 9 Options

We look forward to welcoming Year 9 parents into school on Thursday 16 January to hear more about the Year 9 options process. Year 9 students have already attended an assembly about their option choices. Further information about the Year 9 options process can be found [here](#). We look forward to receiving Year 9 option choices by Monday 27 January.

Year 11

We have been incredibly impressed with how Year 11 approached their mock examinations, and they deserve credit for their conduct and hard work. We felt that it was very effective for the mock results day to be on the same day as the in-person parent consultation evening. Mr Mason has outlined in this newsletter some of the next steps of support that will now take place with Year 11.

We look forward to welcoming Year 11 parents (parents only) into school on the evening of Tuesday 11 February to find out more about the important months ahead as Year 11 prepare for their GCSE exams.

We also look forward to welcoming Year 11 students to the Sixth Form taster day on Monday 13 January. We ask students to complete their applications by the deadline of Friday 7 February.

Year 13 University Applications

This term has been the peak in the year for completing university applications. This year so far, the Sixth Form team have processed over 259 UCAS applications. Our students have applied for places at universities all over the UK for a range of courses. The number of applications is slightly higher than this time last year when we had processed 240 applications.



In the new year, we will turn our efforts to supporting students seeking apprenticeships and alternative options to university. In January, Year 13 students will sit their mock examinations, supported with home study leave.

And finally...

Our first term has been incredibly busy, and our students will be ready for a break by the time they leave this afternoon. I do hope that our students will take time with their families to relax this Christmas and make sure that they are fully rested and refreshed for the New Year. We all want our young people to be successful, but more than anything, we want them to be safe, happy, and healthy. Getting the balance right is sometimes difficult for young people and for us, as parents and teachers. I hope that this Christmas, you find that balance and are able to enjoy the festivities to the full.

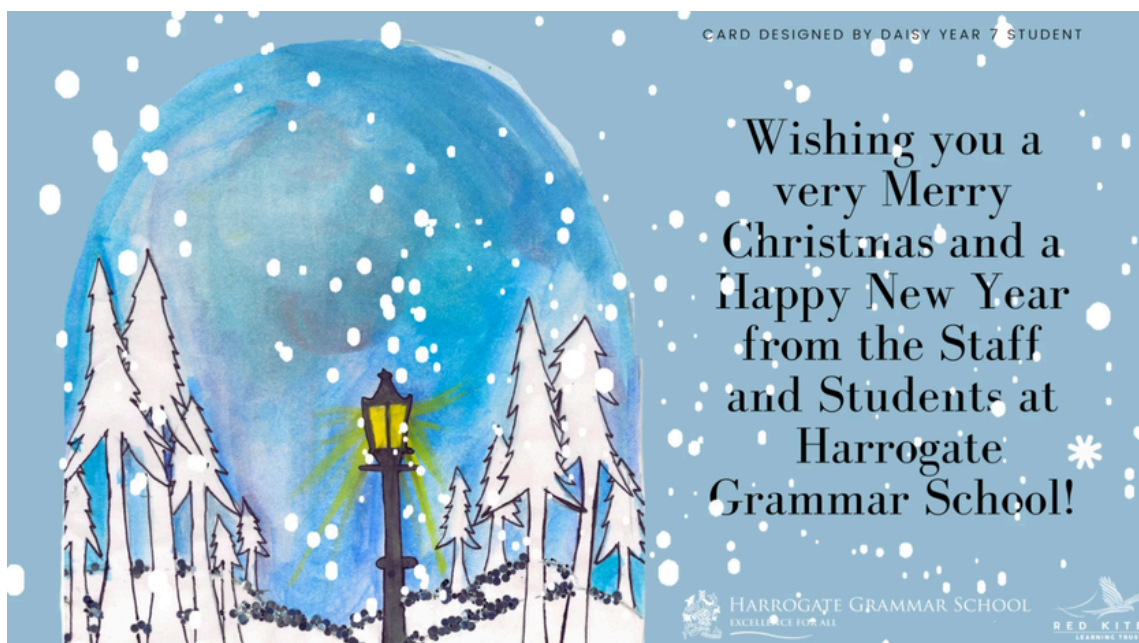
The start of the new year is an opportunity for students to start something new. Our aim remains for all children to engage in at least one wider activity outside of the classroom. Please click [here](#) to see the opportunities for next term.

We have been growing our social media platforms to share some of the experiences in school. Some of our posts and reels have had a large number of views. If you do not already follow us on Instagram, LinkedIn, or Facebook, please click on the links below.

[Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [LinkedIn](#)

I thank you for your continued support and wish you a very happy Christmas from all of us at HGS.

Mr Neil Renton - Headteacher





Dates for your diary - January 2025

Monday 6 January 2025	School Reopens	All Year groups
Wednesday 8 January 2025	Year 11 Speaking Mock exams for 2 weeks	Year 11
Thursday 9 January 2025	Trip to The Deep	Year 8 - Left Population
Friday 10 January 2025	Trip to The Deep	Year 8 - Right Population
Monday 13 January 2025	Year 13 Mock exams for 2 weeks	Year 13
Monday 13 January 2025	A Level Business trip to Disneyland Paris	Year 12
Monday 13 January 2025	Sixth Form Taster Day	Year 11
Monday 13 January 2025	Home Study Day	Year 12
Wednesday 15 January 2025	D of E Bronze Parent Meeting - 6pm	Year 10
Thursday 16 January 2025	Year 9 Parents Information Evening - 6pm	Year 9
Friday 17 January 2025	GCSE Science Live	Year 11
Saturday 18 January 2025	Sixth Form Open Afternoon 2pm - 4pm	Year 11
Saturday 18 January 2025	French Exchange Away Leg	Year 10 - 13
Tuesday 21 January 2025	Career Pathway Talks	Year 12
Tuesday 21 January 2025	Year 9 Parents Evening - online	Year 9
Thursday 23 January 2025	History trip to Durham	Year 10
Thursday 23 January 2025	Battle of the Bands - 7pm - 9pm	All Year groups

HGS Social Media

To keep up to date with Life at HGS please follow our School accounts.



Sixth Form
Accounts

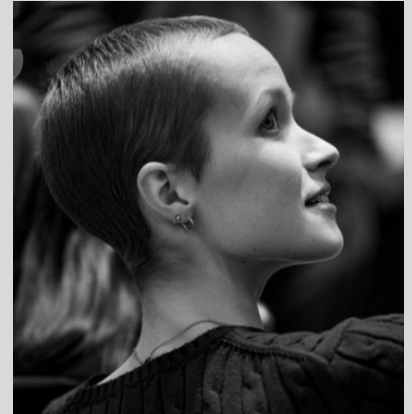




Fund Raising

Liz Hatton, one of our Sixth Form students sadly passed away recently. Her family are working to raise as much money as they can to fund vital research and support for others with Desmoplastic Round Cell Tumour. Donations can be made via the Just Giving page and they also welcome ideas for fund raising activities and offers of help.

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/vicky-robayna>



Reporting Absence in Years 7 to 11

We are now using a more efficient and secure system for reporting if your child will be absent from school due to illness. This system is called Studybugs.

Please download the free Studybugs app, or you can register on the [Studybugs website](#). Use this app to advise when your child is ill and unable to attend school. Absences should be reported to school by 9.30am each morning.

Why use Studybugs?

- Studybugs app is integrated with our MI system, Arbor, so we know straight away if your child will not be in school.
- It is quick and easy to use. The app is free, and registration only takes a minute to complete. The app prompts you to keep us posted about how your child is feeling.

When should I use the Studybugs app?


Use the **Studybugs app**:

- To report when your child is ill and too unwell to attend school
- To update the school about a current illness
- Please inform the school by 9.30am that morning

Use the **planned or unplanned absence form** for:

- Requesting time off school to attend a pre-arranged medical appointment, please state the date, time and time your child will leave and return to school. Use the [unplanned absence form](#)
- Other requests for time off school - please use the [planned absence form](#)

Additional information about attendance and reporting absences can be found on [this link](#).



Download the Studybugs app for reporting your child's absence.

A quick and secure way to report absence due to illness and send messages to school.

QR code and download links for Google Play and the App Store.

Studybugs logo

Notice

CAREGIVERS WANTED FOR RESEARCH STUDY

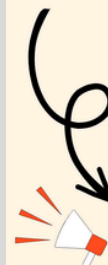
Are you supporting a child (aged 11-18) struggling to attend school due to anxiety or emotional difficulties (EBSA)?



We want to hear from you!

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

- **THE STUDY**
This research explores how caregivers' stress and resilience shape their experiences of EBSA.
- **SHORT QUESTIONNAIRE**
Approx. 20 minutes
- **INTERVIEW (OPTIONAL)**
Approx. 60 minutes



LINK TO THE STUDY:
<https://tinyurl.com/2n48x3ut>



QUESTIONS? SEND ME AN EMAIL:
OLIVIA.M.DAWSON@DURHAM.AC.UK



Message from Mr Mason, Director of Upper School

Year 11 is a year of both opportunity and challenge for our students. It is a time when they can put their learning, hard work, and ambition to the test, but it can also bring a degree of worry. As a school, I am incredibly proud of how our students rise to the challenge of the summer GCSE exams, and how we support them throughout the journey.



Our current Year 11 students have just completed their mock exams, a two-week period of intense assessments held under real exam conditions. This experience provides students with a valuable insight into what to expect in the summer exams, helping them refine their revision strategies and identify areas for improvement. It also gives them a benchmark of their current progress and highlights what needs to be done to achieve their full potential. Whether it is gaining deeper knowledge, improving time management in exams, or refining revision techniques, the mock exams provide a clear focus for the months ahead. The school runs a comprehensive Supporting Success Programme that includes subject masterclasses, revision sessions, and a mentoring scheme. These initiatives help target support for students who may need it. We also invite parents to attend an information session early in the year to understand how they can best support their child. Throughout the year, students have access to a range of resources via Showbie, including a live calendar, revision materials, and links to resources on managing stress.

After Christmas, the Learning Resource Centre becomes available at lunchtimes, and Saturday school will soon begin, offering additional study time and support in key subjects like English, Maths, and Science. As students approach study leave in May, further revision sessions will help consolidate their knowledge and exam skills. This support system ensures that every student has the resources and guidance they need to succeed in Year 11 and unlock their next steps.

Careers Fair November 2024



Recently, our annual Careers Fair hosted over 60 companies, attracting students from Years 7 to 13 along with their families. A big thank you to all the exhibitors who participated, our student volunteers, and especially to Mrs. Hinkins and Mrs. Mitchell for organising such an incredible event for our school. The Careers Fair offers a wonderful chance for our students to explore a range of careers, professions, and pathways. If you run your own business or work for a company who are interested in exhibiting at the next fair, please email to HinkinsJ@hgs.rklt.co.uk.

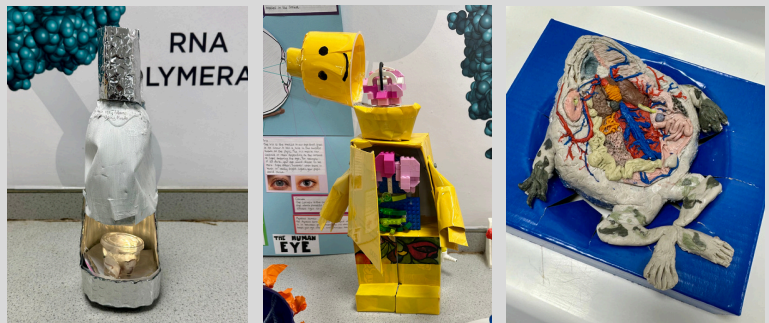
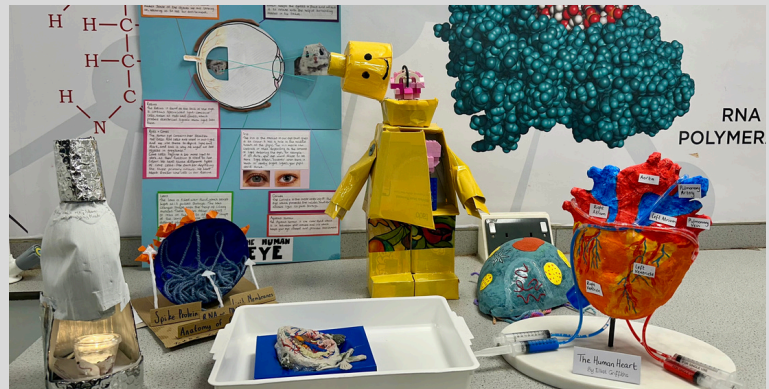


BioCraft Competition

We recently celebrated Biology Week, which saw the launch of the BioCraft Competition for KS3 students. Students were tasked to produce a biology-inspired 3D artwork from recycled materials. The competition is run by the Society of Biology and is open to all ages and for anyone in and outside the UK. Overall the school received nearly 200 entries with 25 selected for submission to the Society of Biology. The entries included: butterfly life cycles, homemade animal and plant cells, Covid-19, model hearts, dissections and microscopes.

Out of the 25 selected entries, the following were chosen as overall winners for their given year groups:

- Year 7: Microscope and Water fleas designed by Daisy Meade, Evelyn Collins, Holly Povey and Milly Adams.
- Year 8: Lego man dissection created by Jack Johnson.
- Year 9: Croak Cobain - Dissected Frog produced by Belle Pilcher.



We are keeping our fingers crossed for the entries in the Society of Biology competition, in which shortlisting will be announced in January, and then the winners selected in March 2024. Thank you to all our submissions. Dr Stafford.

PTA Update

The Christmas Raffle was a tremendous success this year, generating £1,550 for the PTA. A huge thank you to everyone who bought tickets!

HGS PTA has been selected to participate in the upcoming round of the Co-op Local Community Fund. Co-op Members will have the opportunity to choose HGS PTA as their cause, and the more members who select us, the more funds we can receive. Simply click on "Community" in the app or visit our website at <https://www.coop.co.uk/membership>.

We also want to express our gratitude for your support of the Minibus Fundraiser. Through our crowdfunding efforts, quizzes, used uniform sales, and raffles, we successfully raised £20,000 last year for the minibus. Upcoming events include the annual Burns Supper on March 1, for which tickets can be purchased at <https://hgsburnsnight.uk>. Following that, we will have a Used Uniform Sale on Saturday, April 26. Please drop off any donations at the main school reception.

Termly Curriculum Overview

Please click on the links below to access the Termly Curriculum Overview.

[Key Stage 3 - Years 7, 8 and 9](#)

[Key Stage 4 - Years 10 and 11](#)

[Key Stage 5 - Year 12](#)

[Key Stage 5 - Year 13](#)

Extra Curricular

Please click on [this link](#) to see the clubs we have available. To sign up visit the Arbor Parent App Clubs section.



Message from Mr Twitchin, Director of Sixth Form



There has been a huge amount of activity in the Sixth Form this term. It has been a pleasure to welcome our new Year 12 students. They have settled into the Sixth Form community superbly, throwing themselves into every aspect of Sixth Form life, from committing to their new academic studies to embracing all of the leadership and extra curricular opportunities that are on offer. While they have only been with us for a matter of weeks, students have already begun to research their options for the next stage of their journey beyond the Sixth Form through using our Unifrog platform, attending career pathway talks, visiting a university or apprenticeship provider, and taking part in the careers fair.

While Year 12 students are at the start of the process of determining their next steps beyond school, for our Year 13 students this is now coming to fruition through the submission of applications to universities and apprenticeships. We have submitted 259 university applications and have supported several applications for exciting apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships. With these plans in place, the focus of Year 13 students has turned to their mock exams in January. Students have been working hard in preparation for these exams through engaging with the weekly structured revision materials from each subject, and attending the large number of extra revision sessions being put on by teachers during lunch times and after school. We have been advising students about planning their revision time during this term and the Christmas holiday, and have been sharing a range of effective revision strategies with them to make sure they are fully prepared for their mocks.

University visits for Year 12



Our annual Year 12 visits to universities and apprenticeship programmes occurred in November. Each year, we take over 300 students on campus tours, where they listen to presentations about university and apprenticeship experiences, providing them with insights to guide their decision making. A big thank you to our hosts and the staff who made these trips possible. We explored 15 different universities, including Newcastle, Northumbria, Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores, Edinburgh, and Imperial College London, along with an insightful apprenticeship talk from Bettys & Taylors.

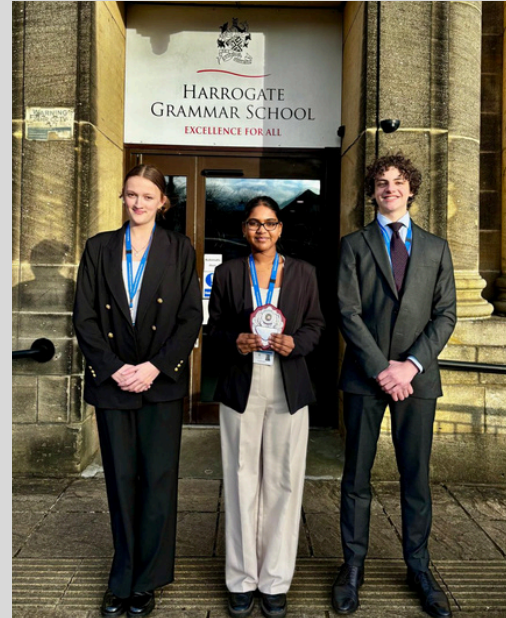




Mock Bar Trial Competition - Regional Winners

Fourteen sixth form students from HGS competed in the regional heat of the Bar Mock Trial Competition at Leeds Law School, facing 16 other schools. Their victory secured a place in the National Final in March, traditionally held at the Royal Courts of Justice in London.

The team, consisting of four barristers, four witnesses, a court clerk, an usher, and four jurors, have been preparing since September. They worked on two cases: one involving a security guard charged with assault, and another Olympic-themed case with a cyclist accused of possessing a controlled substance. The competition included three rounds, with Harrogate Grammar School earning the most points. The students demonstrated exceptional skills in cross-examination and witness testimony, and their court clerk and usher were praised for their organisation. The day concluded with a Q&A with judges, inspiring the students to pursue careers in law.



Brando Halloum, a participant, said, "participating in the mock trial competition has deepened my interest in pursuing a career in law, particularly as a barrister. I am looking forward to the final and representing HGS."

HGS is extremely proud of the team's achievement and looks forward to the national final.

Medical Conference



HGS hosted its tenth Medical Conference on 4 December, involving students and staff from 10 schools across the alliance. Students took part in a practice interview based on the multiple mini interview technique used in many medical schools with teachers drawn from across the Red Kite Alliance. The aim of the conference was to better prepare students for formal interviews.

Head Student, Eleanor Batiste said "this was a fantastic opportunity to simulate the actual interview day and get some realistic practice of the different interview stations. I received some really useful feedback which will help guide my preparation going forward as well giving me more confidence going into my interviews".



Life @ HGS



Senior Citizens Festive Coffee morning

A big thank you to our students and staff for another fantastic festive coffee morning for local senior citizens. The catering team provided some delicious festive bakes whilst our Drama and Performing Arts students delivered wonderful performances. Thank you also to our guests who made donations towards our chosen school charity Mind, we raised £304.50.

Shoebox Appeal



Our Sixth Form students created 46 parcels in form groups for our chosen local charities, The Village Babybank and the Refugee Council.

Celebration Evening



This week we held our annual Celebration of Achievement evening. Prizes were presented by our special guest HGS Alumnus, Harvey McCabe and Headteacher, Neil Renton, recognising the wide-ranging skills and talents of students, as well as their more personal journeys.

Christmas Concert



Last week, we hosted our annual Christmas Concert, and it was truly amazing to witness so many students from all year groups uniting to showcase their talents. The performances from our junior and senior orchestras, along with the A level band, Year 12 BTEC band and soloists, were a delight. The audience joyfully sang along to renditions of 'Rocking around the Christmas tree' and 'All I want for Christmas is you.' A huge thank you to all the staff who contributed to making the concert a resounding success. Alex Stanhope a parent, kindly filmed the concert which you can watch [here](#).



Life @ HGS

Year 9 Outward bound

In the first week of December, our Year 9 students participated in an Outdoor Education residential on the shores of Ullswater in the Lake District. Our students had the opportunity to build relationships and develop team and leadership skills in an adventurous setting. The Outward Bound Trust provided a wide range of challenging activities; each group started with a dip in the lake, students went on to climb mountains, scramble up gorges, row and canoe on Ullswater, all of which surrounded by the incredible Lakeland scenery. Supporting staff have commented on what a privilege it was to watch the students have fun and to witness them living out the school values. Students demonstrated:

Respect: Through effective communication. Listening carefully to instructions and to each other.

Adventure: Students stepped out of their comfort zones and tried new experiences, be it staying away from home for the first time or jumping off a cliff into Ullswater in December!

Commitment: In the gorge walking, students worked in tight knit groups to support each other up technical, cold and challenging terrain. They had to be fully involved for the duration of the activity for it to succeed.

Honesty: Students were honest with their limitations, saying when they wanted more or less challenge. In addition, students were honest with themselves and one another during constructive evaluation sessions.

Our hope is that Year 9 students can bring this learning back into the school environment as they begin their preparation towards Key Stage 4. A fantastic week, well done and thank you to all involved.





Faculty Focus

Performing Arts at HGS

The Autumn term has been busy for the Performing Arts Faculty. There have been eight whole school performances events including; HGS Remembrance Evening, Soundfest Music gig, War Horse Theatre trip and the Christmas Concert. Over 500 students have experienced an extra curricular club or event in Performing Arts this term and we were delighted to welcome 200 Year 5 and 6 students to a special performance of James and the Giant Peach. The Christmas Concert was a wonderful way to end the year and saw performances from students across the whole school, in a range of musical styles, from Rachmaninov to Bruno Mars, from choirs and orchestras to solo spotlights. We are delighted to have welcomed so many wonderful audiences into school who have shared our performances with us this term and we are thankful to the 981 members of our community who have joined us so far!



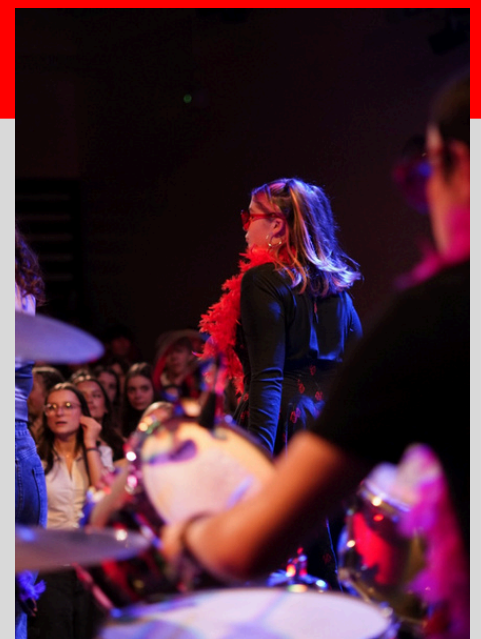
Our Encore Music programme continues to grow and 242 students have completed almost 2000 hours of one-to-one music tuition across 17 different instruments.

In lessons, students have experienced a deep, knowledge rich curriculum journey. Year 7 music students have been studying rhythm and preparing performances in groups using the djembes. Year 8 have been studying the minimalist movement of the 1960s and creating their own interpretations of this style of music and Year 9 have been learning how to manipulate the elements of music to create different moods and represent characters in film music, culminating in their own compositions for a film. In Drama, students have been exploring topics including an exploration of humanity, employing a range of performance techniques to understand what it is to be human in the current world. In Year 8, students have developed their understanding of Devising Drama as well as evaluating live theatre performance.



Faculty Focus

GCSE and A level students, in Music, have been working hard on their performances, compositions and set works with A level students focusing particularly on Jazz music. BTEC students are preparing performances for the BTEC Gig, and Battle of the Bands next half term, as well as writing articles bringing music theory and the history of pop music, to life. Year 11 Drama students completed their first NEA exam, performing their devised performances to audiences in school. Our A level Drama group have explored the play 'The Unreturning' and performed powerful extracts of this during the Remembrance evening in November. Finally, BTEC Performing Arts students have been busy exploring a range of theatre makers and their repertoire - analysing Emma Rice's Wuthering Heights has been particularly interesting.



The next term is equally busy across the faculty as we plan for the Co-create Festival at York St John University, the annual HGS opera visit (this year to the Magic Flute), as well as the Key Stage 4 performance of Blood Brothers and Battle of the Bands.



HGS Sport



U16s Girls Netball team

U14 Boys Rugby team



U14s Girls Netball team



Year 7 & 8 Rugby team



Sports Focus

It has been another action-packed term of sport at HGS, with over 600 students from Years 7-11 participating in sports clubs each week. Over the last 15 weeks, we have played 166 fixtures across six different sports. Rugby, Football, Netball, Hockey, Tennis and Cross-Country.

Highlights include the U16 girls' netball team, who triumphed in the regional netball tournament and have now qualified for the Yorkshire finals. This will take place at the English Institute of Sport after Christmas.

Additionally, the U14 boys' rugby team has excelled, advancing to Round 4 of the National Cup after facing several strong opposition schools.

Well done to all students involved, and good luck to those competing in the next stages.

Each academic year we ask if parents/carers can contribute towards the running of the school sports events. Thank you to the families who have already made a voluntary contribution. If you would like to contribute please visit the Parent Arbor App and select School Shop.



Diversity & Equality @ HGS

Equality & Diversity

At HGS, equality and inclusion are central to our core purpose and REACH values. We seek to celebrate the identity and individuality of each and every pupil as well as our wider school community, creating a culture of acceptance and safety. We have a dedicated Diversity and Reach Out team who have a particular focus of ensuring we maintain an inclusive approach, not only within our curriculum but within the whole culture of the school.

Our commitment to equality and diversity was showcased last year as we successfully achieved Stage 3 of the RED Award where the assessor stated, "you are working hard to ensure that the school and wider community is an 'accepting and kind' one". This year we continue to work towards the Silver Equalities Award.

There have been exciting developments this half term, with new lunchtime societies including EAL Club with Ms Boyd, 'This Girl Can', and 'Boys Don't Cry'. Mx Western has taken over the Pride Society. Sixth Form Diversity Ambassadors are being appointed to work with Ms Hooper on the empathy programme. Staff will also undergo training on race and ethnicity.

A new Prayer Room is being set up in SO2, accessible to both students and staff during lunchtimes. It will be near the main school and Sixth Form, with nearby washing facilities.

Faculty areas have been diversifying their curriculums this half term to reflect the diverse nature of HGS students. In Performing Arts, Year 9 music students explored the Blues, linking it to slavery and race, while Drama students in Years 10 and 12 studied transgender rights through Things I Know to be True. In Humanities, Year 7 historians examined the experiences of women in Roman Britain and the gendered violence of the 17th-century witch trials. The Maths faculty focused on diversity in learning, with Manjinder Jagdev from York St John University discussing critical mathematics education, highlighting topics like Chinese tangrams, Vedic mathematics, and Islamic tessellation.

Business and Economics students explored how multinational companies adapt to global economies. In MFL, Year 8 learnt French job vocabulary, addressing gender stereotypes in job titles. Year 9 German students discussed food-related cultural differences, including vegetarianism and religious choices. Meanwhile, Year 10 Spanish students are focusing on vocabulary related to places of worship during their town topic.

