



# HEDNESFORD VALLEY HIGH NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2024



## HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE TO ALL

Dear Parents/Carers,

You will see from this newsletter how busy we have been this term with lots of exciting activities taking place. However, it hasn't been all fun and games. This term has also seen three important inspections taking place. It started with a visit from Ofsted in October. The report is now online for you to view using the following link <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/25/124508>. I am proud to inform you that Ofsted agreed with what we know, Hednesford Valley High is a good school. It was welcoming that the inspectors recognised the changes that have taken place to further develop the school's curriculum and the impact this is having on student progress. I'm sure you will equally be as proud with the numerous positive comments about your child and their experiences at school "pupils enjoy school and are rarely absent", "they display good manners", "pupils show respect for each other" and "pupils are proud of the leadership opportunities they hold in school".

As well as the review from Ofsted, we also had two further inspections. The first was from the National Autistic Society, where we have again been re-accredited with the Autism Accreditation Specialist Award. The inspection team was particularly impressed with the work the school has done to further improve standards, with the report stating the school has "maintained and developed standards of specialist good practice in supporting autistic young people". We have also received a visit from the Staffordshire Careers Standard Co-ordinator. We have just received fantastic news that we have been re-accredited with the Quality in Careers Standard. The report was amazing and made comment to "Hednesford Valley High School delivers outstanding career-related learning which benefits students, staff, and the wider community. It is an inspiring model of CEIAG best practice, and I am very pleased to reaccredit the school as "Fully meeting the (Quality in Careers) Standard"".

Cont....

All these achievements could not have been made without the hard work and dedication of all involved at HVH. I would personally like to thank my senior leadership team (SLT), our governors, who volunteer their time, to support our school, our fantastic teachers and support staff, our amazing students and you, our dedicated and supportive parents and carers. Thank you for all you do and the continued support you show our school.

Although it is pleasing to receive such positive feedback from renowned organisations, I know we are not the finished product and there is more work to be done. I look forward to the next year and making our school even better for your child/ren and there are projects already in place. When we come back in January, we look forward to the completion of our new Library that is being built over the holidays. In February, we will have a complete re-fit of our kitchen, and I can now share that we are in advanced stages with the local authority for the start of an expansion project at HVH, with the possibility of additional buildings and sports hall.

From all at Hednesford Valley High, I wish you and your family a wonderful and peaceful Christmas and New Year and look forward to seeing your child/ren back at school on Monday 6th January 2025.

Kind regards



Mr Stokes  
Headteacher  
Hednesford Valley High School

## ATTENDANCE

Mrs Harris on behalf of all at HVH would like to thank all students this term for their excellent Attendance! Our overall attendance is 93%!

We have had 100s of entries for the Attendance Prize Draw! Well done to the students who won the Amazon Fire 10 Tablet and the 2x £20 Amazon Vouchers!

A REMINDER: Please call on every day of absence.



## YEAR 8 HISTORY

Year 8 History Class had a lovely visit from Andy Burnett and Tony Jones both ex miners, who gave a talk to them about Littleton Colliery.

They enjoyed hearing Andy and Tony talk about their time at the Colliery and had lots of fun exploring the mining equipment. A big thank you to Tony and Andy from us all at HVH.

## SIXTH FORM @ CANNOCK LIGHT SWITCH ON

It was a wonderful evening at the Cannock Town Light Switch-On, where some of our Sixth Form students beautifully performed some festive Christmas songs. A huge thank you to all the students, parents, and staff who came out to show their support.

The students were absolutely incredible!

## SCHOOL EQUIPMENT/ UNIFORM

It is important for students to be fully prepared for their lessons to enable their learning time to begin promptly. The following items should be brought into school daily and taken to all lessons:

- Pencil case
- Handwriting pen
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Maths equipment
- Colouring pencils/pens

In addition, as we look towards the start of the new school year, we would like to remind all students of the uniform policy and ask parents/carers to ensure that students attend school in the following uniform:

- Navy blue blazer with school logo (optional)
- White shirt/blouse
- School tie (optional)
- 'V' neck navy blue sweatshirt
- Grey/ black trousers / skirt
- Sensible black shoes
- PE Kit: Navy blue t-shirt, black/ navy blue shorts, white socks and plain black trainers

## SILVER DOFE

Students in Year 11 have commenced learning towards their Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award. They have selected more personalised volunteering, skills and physical activities. For their expedition section they are required to complete two expeditions; a practice and qualifier.

The practice expedition took place at the beginning of October. Students travelled to Kibblestone Scout camp, Stone, where they set up camp for two nights. During this time they completed a 7 hour walk from Kibblestone and walked around the local area.

The qualifier expedition will be May 2025.



## REVISION CLUB

Mrs Rogers would like to give a special mention to Georgia and Harley from 11JCo for their outstanding dedication. They have attended revision club every week this term and have been working incredibly hard in preparation for their mock exams, which are set to take place in January 2025.

Well done, Georgia and Harley!



## ANIMAL THERAPY SESSION

Explorers have recently enjoyed taking part in an animal therapy session with Critterish Allsorts.

## SPECIAL NEEDS ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

This term Miss Rosies Class have been visiting SNAP Playground each week. The students have really engaged with this activity!



## KINGSWOOD OUTDOOR CENTRE

At the end of September, 20 of our students went to Kingswood Outdoor Centre near Wolverhampton.

For some it was their first time - learning and honing new skills; for plenty, it was a second trip where they were able to improve on things they tried in previous years.

The behaviour was wonderful and the level of cooperation between students and staff was something to behold!

Congratulations to all involved.





## MAKATON SIGN OF THE WEEK

Makaton Sign of the Week is shared with our students and signs are displayed in classrooms each week.

Incorporating the Makaton Sign of the Week into daily activities helps students become more confident in using sign language, improves their overall communication and social skills.



## SEASONS THEATRE COMPANY

### JACK AND THE BEANSTALK



We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Cannock Rotary for generously funding tickets for our students and their families to experience the magical adaptation of the classic *Jack and the Beanstalk*, performed by the Seasons Theatre Company at Staffordshire University Academy. Your support made this special experience possible, and we are truly grateful!



## ANTI-BULLYING ENRICHMENT DAY/CHILDREN IN NEED

On Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> November, students came to school wearing odd socks in support of Anti-Bullying Week and participated in a range of exciting enrichment activities. The day included a variety of fun and engaging activities such as Outdoor Learning, a PE Bootcamp, a Newspaper Fashion Show, Cake Making, and Creative Learning with a Balloon Tower challenge.

These enrichment days are designed to help students develop important skills such as teamwork, respect, independence, confidence, and kindness.

In addition to the fun, we are proud to have raised £114.50 for Children in Need.

Thank you to everyone who took part and supported such a fantastic cause!

## ENGLISH, READING & A NEW LIBRARY

As you are all aware, HVH is committed to promoting a love of reading for all our students. We are very pleased and excited to tell you that we will be having a brand new library installed over Christmas with brand new furniture, decoration and reading books that are fresh and relevant for our students to read and enjoy. We will also be asking students to take on a leadership role in applying to become Librarians and I have had some great applications so far! The students that take on this role will play a vital part in the upkeep of the new library, promoting new books to students and developing their teamwork, confidence and independence skills. I'm sure you will agree, the new library will be a fantastic addition to our school.

Our students on the Explorer pathway who participate with the Read Write Inc programme have made some very good progress also which I am very pleased to see. Well done to all of the students here with working hard to improve their reading. A special mention goes to Corey in year 8 who has successfully completed his Fresh Start reading intervention with Miss Gardiner. I'd like to say a big 'well done' to Corey and also thank you to Miss Gardiner for all her hard work with running the reading intervention programme for us.

Students in English this term have done some fantastic work. In year 7, students have been enjoying the fictional stories of popular authors and writing their own stories. In years 8 and 9, students have grappled with writing non-fiction texts and more advanced spelling, punctuation and grammar. Our year 10 and 11 students have been busy studying for their assessments and have worked very hard to achieve some positive outcomes so far. Lastly, our KS5 students at the sixth form have produced some amazing work and even tackled the more difficult comparison questions of the Functional Skills reading paper.

Overall, it has been a busy term with all students in English and reading working very hard and making myself and the English team very proud. I have no doubt they will continue to impress us in the Spring term. For now though, have a very merry Christmas and a fantastic new year.

Mrs Overbury  
Head of English

## WINTER MINI CHALLENGE

A great confidence booster! The Winter Mini Challenge is a fun online challenge that encourages children to keep up their reading across the Winter months. This year the Winter Mini Challenge runs from 1st December - 20th February.

It's free to take part on [wintermini.org.uk](http://wintermini.org.uk), where children can collect rewards for logging and reviewing books. Whatever your interest, it all counts.

Taking part is simple. Children read at least three books of their choice in the winter holidays and add them to their online profile. Reaching their online reading goal will unlock a limited-edition virtual badge and a special Winter Mini Challenge certificate to print off and keep.



## READING FOR PLEASURE

As part of our curriculum, students are engaging in reading for pleasure activities to foster a love of reading. Each Thursday afternoon, students from NWO have been visiting Cannock Library, where they have the opportunity to explore the library and participate in various reading activities.

Students who have signed up for a library card can borrow books to read both at home and at school, encouraging them to enjoy reading beyond the classroom. This initiative aims to inspire a lifelong passion for books and learning.



HVH is having a new library! We need some students to train as Librarians and help run the library. Your job will involve:

- ✓ Keeping the library nice and tidy
- ✓ Emptying the returns box and putting the books back
- ✓ Signing the books in and out
- ✓ Recommending books to students
- ✓ Helping to organise Book Fairs and other special events
- ✓ Working in the library one lunchtime every week

**What sort of person am I looking for?**

- ✍ Someone who loves to read
- ✍ An organised person
- ✍ Someone who is kind and likes helping others
- ✍ Someone who is reliable
- ✍ Someone who is respectful
- ✍ Someone who is a team player

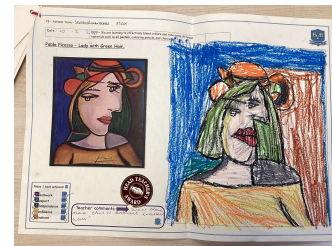
If this sounds like you, then please write a short paragraph explaining why you would like to be one of HVH's new Librarians. Give it to Mrs Overbury. Interviews will be the first week back after Christmas so lots of time to apply!

Good Luck!



## HEADTEACHERS AWARD

Several of our Year 8 students produced exceptional artwork this month, brilliantly recreating Pablo Picasso's *Lady with the Green Hair*. They have been learning to effectively blend colours and tone using different materials such as oil pastels, colouring pencils and charcoal. Their impressive efforts earned them Head Teacher Awards in recognition of their outstanding creativity and skill.



## MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

On 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024, we hosted a coffee morning at school in support of Macmillan Cancer Research, raising £58. Several of our students helped to organise and run the event, demonstrating their commitment to this worthy cause.

Students also participated by wearing non-uniform for the day, adding to the spirit of the occasion.

We would like to say thank you to everyone who attended and supported the event, as well as to those who contributed to both our students and Macmillan Cancer Research.





## CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY



We are delighted to announce that our school raised an incredible £114 for Christmas Jumper Day this year!

Thank you to all the students and staff who participated by donning their festive jumpers and contributing to this fantastic cause.

This fundraising event was in support of Save the Children. Your generosity and Christmas spirit are appreciated—well done to everyone involved!



## MANAGING CHRISTMAS CHANGES

The festive season is magical, but it can bring a lot of change, which isn't always easy for our children. From school holidays to visits with family, it's a lot to take in. A bit of preparation can make all the difference—perhaps a simple calendar to show what's happening next or keeping some favourite routines like bedtime or a daily walk to provide a sense of stability.

It's also fine to keep things low-key. If the big Christmas dinner or party feels overwhelming, creating a quiet space with familiar items can be a lifesaver. Small, meaningful moments—like reading a favourite story or hanging a special decoration—are just as valuable as grand traditions.

Above all, go easy on yourself. Christmas doesn't need to be perfect, and what matters most is that it feels right for your family. A little flexibility, a bit of planning, and lots of love will make the season special in your own unique way.



## AN AUTISM CHRISTMAS

Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house...

The noises were different, with more people about.  
I don't like not knowing, what to expect  
I need my routine and space to reflect.

I want to keep eating, my usual food  
Not talking to visitors, doesn't mean I'm rude.  
I love all my presents and having no school,  
But it can feel overwhelming, with new rituals and rules.

I may not react, like other children do  
But I really am grateful, for my presents from you.  
So be gentle with me, be patient and kind  
And remember your world, looks different to mine.

## CHRISTMAS TALENT SHOW

On Friday, December 20th, 2024, students took part in our highly anticipated annual Christmas Show, showcasing their talents and spreading festive cheer. The event was a highlight of the season, with parents warmly invited to attend and share in the excitement. The atmosphere was filled with holiday spirit as students performed a variety of songs.



## CHRISTMAS REWARD DAY

This year, we offered four fantastic options for students to enjoy on Thursday, December 19th, 2024. One option was a visit to Santa's Winter Wonderland at Tamworth's Snowdome, where students could experience a magical, festive atmosphere filled with winter-themed activities. Another option was attending the Jack and the Beanstalk Pantomime at Lichfield Garrick, a true Christmas tradition, giving students the opportunity to enjoy a live pantomime performance.

For our KS4 and KS5 students, we organised a Birmingham Christmas Market Trip, where students could explore the lively, festive market and enjoy the seasonal atmosphere while traveling by train. Lastly, students who preferred to stay at school could take part in a Christmas Film Day, where they were encouraged to wear their Christmas pyjamas, relax, and watch classic Christmas films while enjoying popcorn and hot chocolate.

It was a day full of festive fun and memorable experiences for all!

## CHRISTMAS REWARDS ASSEMBLY

Well done to Corey for winning the Amazon Fire Tablet, as well as Max and George each winning a £20 Amazon Gift Voucher! We had our awards for the Christmas Cake Competition and Our Decorate a Door Competition! Well done to all Staff and Students involved!



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### January 2025

- 13<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> - Mock Exam Week

### February 2025

- 6<sup>th</sup> - Parents/Carers Evening
- 17<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> Half Term
- 28<sup>th</sup> - Pastoral Coffee Morning

### March 2025

- 1<sup>st</sup> - St Davids Day
- 6<sup>th</sup> - World Book Day
- 17<sup>th</sup> - St Patricks Day

### April 2025

- 2<sup>nd</sup> - Easter Disco
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - Year 9 Options Evening
- 9<sup>th</sup> - Easter Church Service
- 10<sup>th</sup> - Easter Reward Day
- 11<sup>th</sup> - Easter Assembly

### May 2025

- 2<sup>nd</sup> - INSET DAY
- 5<sup>th</sup> - May Day Bank Holiday
- 16<sup>th</sup> - E-Safety Coffee Morning

## TERM DATES & INSET DAYS 2024 - 2025

Fri 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec - Staff Inset Day - closed to students

Mon 25<sup>th</sup> Dec - Fri 5<sup>th</sup> Jan - Christmas Holiday

Mon 6<sup>th</sup> Jan - Students return to school,

Mon 17<sup>th</sup> Feb - Fri 21<sup>st</sup> Feb - February Half Term

Mon 13<sup>th</sup> Apr - Fri 25<sup>th</sup> Apr - Easter Holiday

Mon 28<sup>th</sup> Apr - Students return to school

Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> May - Staff Inset Day - closed to students

Mon 5<sup>th</sup> May - May Bank Holiday - closed

Mon 26<sup>th</sup> May - Fri 30<sup>th</sup> May - May Half Term

Fri 18<sup>th</sup> Jul - Fri 30<sup>th</sup> Aug - Summer Holiday