

# NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2024



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In Partnership to  
Educate, Nurture & Empower

01

# A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRINCIPAL

Half Term 3 is the shortest of the half terms in the year but in many ways it feels like the longest. After the late breaking up before Christmas, students were definitely ready for some time off and returned to the academy in 2024 refreshed and ready for an intensive term. Although only 5 weeks, you still have to fit in what would usually go into 7 or 8 weeks so it has been a busy start to the year combined with some cold, wet and windy weather – as well as arriving in the dark and leaving in the dark. This is where the resilience of hard work is built and with longer daylight days ahead of us in half term 4, we're well onto our way to summer and over half way through the academic year!

And that's what this half term has been about. We call it the epiphany term in respect of the Kings (or Magi) arriving shortly after the birth of Christ but it has also come to mean that big moment of realisation. For our Y11s, it has been about getting their mock results, attending their Sixth Form or College interviews and making those final preparations for their exams. For Y13, it is finishing their course content and completing their final mock exams. Y9 have been exploring and preparing to make those Option Choices for Y10. Y7 and Y12 are bolder and brave now and getting stuck into new lessons, experiences and subjects. And for Y8, it has been about passing that halfway point in Key Stage 3 and preparing to become those role models for our younger students.

The Lent Term is ahead of us, after the small matter of 120 students on a ski trip (stay tuned on social media for updates over half term), and the students will continue cracking on with their fantastic attendance and their fantastic hard work. I hope everyone has a lovely break and chance to spend time with family and loved ones.



**Mr Prinsep**



# CHAPLAINCY



**Kay Brown, Chaplain**

As we started in the season of Epiphany, that has been our focus this half term and we have been looking at changing perspectives and how belief shapes what we do. From our Christian vision statement, we have picked out the phrase through innovative and imaginative practice that seeks to transform lives which has been highlighted in our Abbey Character of Belief shaping who we are. Assemblies have highlighted these ideas, as well as looking time to talk day and Children's mental health week.

Year 7 are in the middle of their first big fundraising challenge with Lepra, a charity who support those with leprosy to receive the help they need and educate their communities to remove the stigma sometimes caused by the disease. Students are doing all sorts of activities, from sports challenges to sponsored silences to bake sales so a big thank you to all our students for embracing this challenge so well. We don't have the final total yet but students are cheering us all up with their activities!

It is the day to day life of the chaplaincy that makes such a significant difference to many, and from breaktime drop ins to lunchtime clubs, the leadership of our young adults makes all these things possible. Leeds Faith in Schools also come in twice a week to run lunch clubs and mentor individuals who are referred through our pastoral system for extra support. We are thankful to have extra support from St Matt's and St Paul's who help out at Rock Solid on a weekly basis.

We could not do all we do without the prayerful support of our parents, for which we are very grateful. Our next Praying Parents meeting is on zoom on Monday 26th February, 7-8pm so if you are able to join us or would like more information, please contact [agaprayingparents@gmail.com](mailto:agaprayingparents@gmail.com) for more details.

You can always find out more on Twitter [@chaplaincyabbey](https://twitter.com/chaplaincyabbey), but for now may I wish you every blessing for a safe and restful holiday, as we look forward to exploring the season of Lent and the run up to Easter.



# SCHOOLS OF SANCTUARY

Staff in all Trust schools are encouraged to work towards Schools of Sanctuary accreditation. Schools of Sanctuary are schools that have received a Sanctuary Award from City of Sanctuary UK or a partner organisation in recognition of its good practice in fostering a culture of welcome, belonging and solidarity for those seeking safety. Claire Buckler works with primary schools, and Fran Bailey with secondary academies, to support schools in the process of achieving this award.

To become a School of Sanctuary, a school must take an intentional and reflective approach to reviewing and refining school practice in relevant areas and demonstrate that they have implemented three key principles:

- LEARN Schools help their students, staff and wider community learn about what it means to be seeking sanctuary and the issues surrounding forced migration.
- EMBED Schools are committed to creating a safe and inclusive culture of welcome that benefits everybody, including anyone in their community seeking sanctuary.
- SHARE Schools share their values and activities with their local communities.

Abbey Grange have continued to embrace all the joys of working towards being a School of Sanctuary. Here is a snapshot of some of the sanctuary events that have been happening in our school:

- Students have led collective worship and assemblies using Black History Month resources and raising awareness of the importance of tolerance and kindness in Anti Bullying.
- PSHE days have engaged students with topics of migration, human trafficking, and sanctuary.
- Students have been encouraged to value different cultures as we learnt to say welcome in the different languages in our form groups.
- We are delighted that several of our older students have met with a young asylum seeker to learn his story, have undertaken training via the City of Sanctuary, and are volunteering to support men seeking asylum and are currently housed in Leeds.
- They also attended a speech by the founder of the City of Sanctuary; Rev'd Inderjit Bhogal at Leeds Minster.

As a school, we are really enjoying this project, as well as hearing about what other schools in our trust are doing to work towards the Schools of Sanctuary Award as well. Do get in touch if you'd like to know more!

**Fran Bailey & Claire Buckler**



# PARENT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

## JOIN THE PTA

Our PTA are a brilliant asset to the school and support us hugely in a number of ways. Last year the PTA raised over £4,000 for the school last year, they are pivotal in creating the strong sense of community that we have at Abbey Grange.

They are always looking for new recruits to help with fundraising and events for the school. If you are keen to get involved, please get in touch via [info@abbeygrangeacademy.co.uk](mailto:info@abbeygrangeacademy.co.uk)

## SPRING RAFFLE

The draw for the Spring Raffle will take place on **Friday 15 March 2024** and the winners will be notified by the Academy.

All funds raised from the raffle will go towards helping support the students and staff at Abbey Grange C of E Academy.

If you feel you are able to make a donation toward the hampers, we are also looking for Easter Baskets and items such as bottle of wine or fizz, craft beers, Easter themed sweets chocolates and biscuits, bunny ears! hot chocolate, marshmallows, luxury food items, gardening gloves, seeds, tools, plant pots, hand creams, pamper items like face masks, body lotions, scrubs, soaps, bath fizzers etc.

## UNIFORM SALE DONATIONS

The PTA hold Pre-loved Uniform Sales throughout the school year and are always wanting uniform donations. We are currently collecting Blazers, PE Kits, and Blue Polo Shirts.



PRE-LOVED  
UNIFORMS

We ask that all donations are laundered and where possible any identity labels removed.

Donations can be left at the main reception.

# STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

## ROBOTICS WORKSHOP



On 19th January Abbey Grange held a Robotics workshop available for students in years 7-10. Engineering 4 Kids were able to provide high quality robotic and electronic resources and state of the art coding software. The workshop allowed students to build and code robots without needing prior knowledge of coding.

This is a fantastic time to be inspiring students through robotics considering our local Leeds University are performing world leading research in medical robotics, field and infrastructure robotics, artificial intelligence and enabling technologies for autonomy in robotics.

This was also run with the support of year 12 volunteers, giving them an opportunity to learn more about robotics as they embark on the next chapter of their lives and consider which career route to take.

## UKMT INTERMEDIATE MATHS CHALLENGE

On 31st January our year 9, 10 and 11's competed against 700,000 brilliant mathematicians across the country in the Intermediate UKMT Maths Challenge. They took on 25 complex problem solving questions which require them to think outside of the box with the hope of getting onto the Olympiad.



# CAREERS & ENRICHMENT

## POST 16 APPLICATION PROCESS AND CAREERS

Over this half term and next, Year 11 are busily applying for post 16 places of education. As part of that process, we are identifying students who would benefit from a careers interview, with over 50 having 1-2-1 support this term. All students will have the opportunity for an interview with our independent careers advisor. Please contact Mr Golding via email , at [pgolding@abbeygrangeacademy](mailto:pgolding@abbeygrangeacademy), if you would like one booked in.

Beyond Abbey Grange, we have had support from our colleagues at Leeds City College, who have been in several times to support with the application process to their establishment. They have also continued to raise awareness around apprenticeships, along with other guests from Leeds council. Further events are planned to support student understanding of opportunities they have post 16 or post 18.

A number of our students attended the Leeds Apprenticeship Fair this week, with it being advertised to all parents via email and social media.

Year 12 students should be actively seeking their work experience placement for the week of 8-12 July. Please encourage students to contact various companies in order to secure a placement, which then needs to be logged on Unifrog. Students have been given lots of support for this but it is important that they are proactive in looking for a placement if they are to meet the end of March deadline.

## YEAR 11 MOCK INTERVIEWS

Early in the term we had over 35 volunteers from a breadth of industries to interview our year 11 students and support their preparation for the next stage of their journey. Our brilliant students did not disappoint. They came to the interview dressed to impress and were prepared with a CV.

To say they were impressed would be an understatement. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many saying they would happily employ our students. **Well done year 11!**



# EXTENDED LEARNING

## NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIPS WEEK

At Abbey Grange, we've been embracing National Apprenticeships Week (NAW) this week. Students had the opportunity to attend Leeds Apprenticeship Fair, and Youth Enterprise Group visited local business, Zenith in Kirkstall Forge.

[Find out more about National Apprenticeship Week here.](#)

## NATIONAL TIME TO TALK DAY

Abbey Multi-Academy Trust is proud to be a 'talk rich trust', where we encourage students to be open about mental health and the struggles they may face in sharing their emotions.

Teachers at Abbey Grange CofE Academy have embraced the spirit of Time to Talk Day by leading sessions that encourage open conversations about mental health.

[Read more here.](#)

## PSHCE DAY

This term our students took part in another of our PSHCE Days.

These events run once each term and provide students with the opportunity to learn crucial life skills and gain real-world knowledge to help them outside the school gates.

PSHE Day is deeply embedded in our Christian ethos, aiming to equip our students with values that extend beyond the academic realm.





# SCHOOL TRIPS SNAPSHOT

## EPQ ACADEMIC TASTER DAY

Year 12 EPQ students participated in an 'Academic Taster Day' at Leeds University in January which prepared them brilliantly for the next stage of their EPQ project. The outreach team delivered two sessions on 'Academic essay writing' and 'Referencing and plagiarism' opening the studies eyes to different ways of referencing research and top tips for writing formally.

After this, they had a tour of the campus and library. Students attended a short session with a university librarian, who explained how to search for books online; find them on the shelves and how to apply for a free university library card.

We urge students to make use of this excellent library resource for their projects. Forms can be printed From the website or see their EPQ teacher for a printed form. All completed forms should be signed by Mrs Spence and then handed in at the library.

## HISTORY THEATRE TRIP

Our Year 11 students went to see Doctors Show at City Varieties Music Hall in Leeds .

Doctors Show is play that brings to life the main characters and events in the History of Medicine, one of their GCSE History papers. Students were able to revisit Medicine Through Time through the memorable and educational experience of theatre.

## OXFORD UNIVERSITY STEP-UP PROGRAMME

Our Year 11 students visited New College, Oxford University this term on a 2 day residential. The experience is just one part of the extended Step-up Programme.

Abbey Grange is one of only 41 school country wide involved in the Step-up programme and one of only a handful of northern schools. Students will be supported by the programme as they move forward into Post 16 at Abbey Grange, whatever their future ambitions.



# SPORTS UPDATE



## NEW GYM

We're excited to share that we are now in the final stages of the finishing touches to complete the new Abbey Grange Academy Gym.

## FOOTBALL

Our Year 13s remain unbeaten in their league, with an incredible 13 - 1 win in January



## KS5 SPORTS WORKSHOP

We took our KS5 sports students to Leeds Beckett University to take part in a series of immersive sports science workshops this term. It was a great opportunity to put theory into practice by using the world class facilities.

Huge thank you to the University for putting on the workshops, we had great feedback and know that their learnings will be hugely valuable in achieving their GCSE grades.

## BASKETBALL

This year's Junior NBA team played their first games in the Yorkshire Competition last night. They're hoping to defend our title this year and with wins over Cardinal Heenan, Dixons Unity Academy and Leeds West Academy it's been a great start.

## NETBALL

After a defeat against Rodillian, the Year 8 netball team had a fantastic win 10-7 against GSAL.



## DANCE

We are looking forward to the two dance competitions next half term, the dance teams have been working hard since September, raising money for their costumes and we can't wait to watch them compete.



# STUDENT CELEBRATIONS

## RUTH & EVIE

Two Abbey Grange students, Ruth and Evie, both smashed it at the weekend as part of Leeds City Team winning the Northern Cross Country. Ruth also won the individual.



## RUTH - YEAR 12

Ruth in Year 12 has been accepted into the Under 18's Yorkshire Girls Rugby Union Centre of Excellence. A fantastic achievement and a credit to her talent.



## ETHICS CUP

Students from Years 11, 12 & 13 attended the Ethics Cup at the University of Leeds and performed brilliantly. Well done to Year 11s, Angelos, Nora & Charlie, and sixth formers, Isabel, Jasmine, Maddie, Esme, Scarlett & Caitlin.

## YEAR 11 GCSE MOCK RESULTS

Congratulations all Year 11's who received their GCSE Mock Exam results this term. Wonderful to see so many smiling faces and excellent results. Now you know what you need to do, let's work towards the same this summer!

# STAFF NEWS

## CONGRATULATIONS WENDY HIRLAM



Abbey Grange Academy has sadly lost a brilliant member of staff this term. Although their presence will be sorely missed, we wish them both a wonderful retirement.

Thank you for all your years of service to the school, your impact will be felt for years to come.

## CONGRATULATIONS

**HENNA MAHMOOD**

Got married!

**ZARAH WRIGHT & PARTNER**

Welcomed a new baby boy!

**TOM GOODHALL & PARTNER**

Welcomed a new baby girl!

**ALEX PASSINGHAM**

Got Engaged!

## NEW STARTERS

**DAVID FIRTH**

Facilities Assistant

**EMMA LANDAU**

Careers Advisor & Enrichment Officer

**KENNEDY HUGHES**

Food & Textiles Technician

**SORANA MATEI**

Exam Officer (maternity cover)

**ALICE ALBENTOSA**

Year 9 Manager

## NEW HEAD OF HISTORY

Congratulations to Jenny Anderson who has been appointed as our new Head of History! After taking on the role of Acting Head of History recently, she has made a huge impact on the department and deservedly been awarded the position. Thank you for all your hard work!



## SOCIAL MEDIA

For real-time updates on school activities, news and events, follow our social media accounts:

### Facebook

@abbeygrangeacademy

### Instagram

Main: @abgacademy

Sixth Form: @abgsixthform

PE: @abbeygrangepe

Drama: @abbeygrangedrama

### Twitter / X

@abgacademy

## AUDITION OPPORTUNITIES

### EXCITING opportunity to PERFORM at Northern Ballet Theatre in Leeds.

Vibe Youth Theatre are casting for the smash hit musical 'Mamma Mia!' We are especially looking for MALE teenagers with a desire to act (singing and dance experience an advantage but not essential).

AUDITIONS begin in February for male and female principal roles, featured dancers and ensemble/chorus members. All auditions will be in a welcoming, open and supportive environment.

To register for audition details

Email [info@vibeperformingarts.co.uk](mailto:info@vibeperformingarts.co.uk)

or Call on **07701 033877**

## THANK YOU

A short but busy half term, we'd like to thank all our staff, students, parents and carers for all your hard work and dedication to learning.

Our success at Abbey Grange Academy is always a team effort and we are lucky to have such a brilliant community around us to help solidify the school as one of the highest-regarded in Leeds. We really do appreciate your contributions.

Enjoy your well-deserved break and we look forward to continued success as we head into the new term!



# NEXT TERM KEY DATES

Monday 19th February	Y8 HPV Catch-up Immunisation
Wednesday 21st February	Y11 Ash Wednesday Communion
Friday 23rd February	Enrichment Afternoon
Monday 26th February	Y11 & Y13 Group Photos
Thursday 29th February	Y8 Parents' Evening
Monday 4th March	Y11 Core and Selected Mocks Begin
Tuesday 5th March	Y12 DT Food Practical Exam
Thursday 7th March	World Book Day Y12 & Y13 RS Candle Conference Y13 Parent's Evening
Friday 8th March	International Women's Day
Thursday 14th March	PSHCE Day 4 Y11 Theatre Performance - Inside Out
Monday 18th March	Y12 Mocks Begin

# NEXT TERM KEY DATES

Thursday 21st March	National Poetry Day
Friday 22nd March	Marrick Priory Trip Departs
Tuesday 26th March	Year Group Communion Services Y10 Mock DT Food Exam (P1-3)
Wednesday 27th March	Year Group Communion Services Spring Concert 6.30pm to 8.30pm Y10 Mock DT Food Exam (P1-3)
Thursday 28th March	Maundy Thursday Service Y11 Rewards Trip
Friday 29th March	Good Friday Term Ends

## SAFEGUARDING SUPPORT

If you need to contact a member of the safeguarding team at any time, please email our safeguarding team:

[aga-safeguardingteam@abbeygrangeacademy.co.uk](mailto:aga-safeguardingteam@abbeygrangeacademy.co.uk)

For safeguarding info and advice, [click to visit our website](#)

**IN THE EVENT OF AN URGENT SAFEGUARDING MATTER CALL 999**

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