

SCHOOL READY; WORK READY; LIFE READY



Dear Families,

Welcome to our February newsletter, where once again we are proud and excited to share with you what has been happening in and out of Horizon. The month has been packed with opportunities for our students to grow in confidence, leadership and independence – from trips to New York to celebrating the success of our Y10 Duke of Edinburgh participants. Students have also enjoyed enriching educational visits, including an inspiring trip to the National History Museum and a theatre trip to Bradford. Alongside this, we marked National Apprenticeship Week by exploring future pathways, celebrated Mother Language Day by recognising the diversity of languages within our community and took part in Safer Internet Day to promote responsible and positive online behaviour.

We hope you enjoy reading.

New York Trip

Our recent trip to New York City was a tremendous success, with our Year 10 students demonstrating exceptional engagement, curiosity, and maturity throughout the experience. As they explored iconic landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty, Times Square, and Central Park, they asked thoughtful questions and showed genuine enthusiasm for learning beyond the classroom.

Despite walking long distances each day and navigating the busy city streets, students displayed remarkable resilience, supporting one another and maintaining a consistently positive attitude.

They also embraced the opportunity to try a variety

of different foods, stepping outside their comfort zones and representing the school brilliantly in restaurants and cafés. Even when the weather was less than ideal, they refused to let it dampen their spirits or enjoyment, approaching every activity with determination and optimism. Their energy, teamwork, and willingness to make the most of every moment made the trip not only educational but truly memorable for everyone involved.



Duke of Edinburgh

This half term we were delighted to celebrate our Year 10 Duke of Edinburgh cohort. These students completed their expeditions back in July and have since finished all three of their focus sections: volunteering, taking part in a physical activity, and learning a new skill. This is a significant achievement, as each young person had to demonstrate

sustained commitment over a full three-month period.

Seventeen students proudly received their Bronze Award certificate and pin badge, presented to them by our Duke of Edinburgh assessor, Mr Bacon.

A huge well done to all involved - an outstanding accomplishment and something they should be incredibly proud of.



Young Drivers Experience

This January, all Year 11 students who achieved 100% attendance in December were entered into a special prize draw to win a free driving lesson with Young Driver. Our lucky winners enjoyed an exciting 20-minute hands-on session with a fully qualified instructor, gaining valuable

driving experience and developing important life skills along the way. It was fantastic to see their enthusiasm and confidence grow during this unique opportunity. There will be more chances later in the year for students to win a free driving lesson, so keep striving for excellent attendance!

Children's Mental Health Week

During Children's Mental Health Week 2026, themed "This Is My Place," our school focused on exploring what it truly means to belong. Throughout the week, pupils engaged with a range of opportunities that encouraged connection, participation, and pride in our Horizon community. Barnsley FC Community Trust delivered lively lunchtime sessions that promoted sport, teamwork, and inclusive participation. Our BYouth Workers, endorsed

by the Childhood Ambition Programme, also showcased the activities they offer, from Darts Club to the popular Tuesday "Football for All" drop-in. Each event was designed to help student see Horizon as their place: a space where everyone is welcome, valued, and supported.



National History Museum

Due to the overwhelming interest last year, we were delighted to take two groups of students to the Yorkshire Natural History Museum in Sheffield. The students had a wonderful hands-on experience in the museum's laboratory, where they were able to extract their own fossils - something they were incredibly excited about.

They also enjoyed a guided tour of the museum and an engaging talk from the curator, who brought the exhibitions to life. A particular highlight of the visit was being among the very first school groups to see the museum's brand-new 3D-printed Tyrannosaurus rex head, which the children found fascinating. It was a memorable day that sparked plenty of curiosity and conversation!



National Apprenticeship Week

The Careers Team recently marked National Apprenticeship Week, highlighting the wide range of pathways available beyond traditional academic routes. Apprenticeships combine paid work with recognised qualifications, enabling students to gain valuable skills and real-world experience across sectors such as engineering, healthcare, digital, business and the creative industries.

Throughout the week, students explored what

apprenticeships involve, the skills employers value, and how these pathways can lead to rewarding long-term careers. We were pleased to welcome apprenticeship providers including Waites, AMRC, Lavender International, RAF, Virgin Money, Berneslai Homes and Naylor, and to host workshops supporting students with applications and interview preparation.

National Apprenticeship Week is about raising aspirations and challenging misconceptions. We encourage parents and carers to continue these conversations at home and explore the opportunities available together.

Mother Language Day

On Thursday 12th February, we were delighted to celebrate International Mother Language Day. This special occasion provided a wonderful opportunity to recognise and celebrate the rich cultural and linguistic diversity within our school community.

With over forty different languages spoken by our

students and staff, our rich linguistic diversity is something we are proud of and truly reflects the inclusive values we promote every day.

Our dedicated Student Language Ambassadors worked hard to plan and deliver a range of engaging activities throughout the day. These included an exciting treasure hunt, interactive language quizzes, and a wonderful "Recipes Around the World" competition.

It was fantastic to see many students taking part with enthusiasm and pride.



Safer Internet Day

During the second week of February, Horizon took part in National Safer Internet Day. This year's theme focused on using artificial intelligence safely and responsibly, ensuring that AI tools are used to support learning and creativity rather than cause harm or offence. All students received guidance on how to use AI appropriately, including what safe use looks

like and what actions could break the law. They also learned about recent updates to the Computer Misuse Act, which now includes the misuse of AI to create images that could cause harm or distress.

AI can be a powerful and exciting tool in everyday life, and we hope our students continue to use it positively to support their learning and personal development.



“Send My Friend to School” UK Campaign Champions - Stratford-Upon-Avon residential

We are incredibly proud of Lily and Matilda in Year 9, who recently represented our school at the Champion Residential in Stratford-upon-Avon as part of the Send My Friend to School campaign. They joined student champions from schools across the UK for an inspiring and action-packed few days of learning, collaboration and campaigning.

During the residential, Lily and Matilda received specialist training from the Send My Friend to School coalition on how to campaign effectively, design creative awareness-raising initiatives, and write powerful letters to their local MPs to advocate for global access to education. They

worked alongside other young people passionate about making a difference and developed the confidence and skills to speak up on issues that matter.

A particular highlight was a live video call with Phillip, who works on the ground in Uganda with UNICEF. He shared first-hand insights into the challenges many children face in accessing education, bringing real-life context to the statistics the students had been exploring. The group also examined case studies from Afghanistan, discussing the barriers to education for women and girls and reflecting thoughtfully on the impact of being denied schooling.

Lily and Matilda represented our school with maturity, compassion, and determination. We look forward to seeing how they continue to use their voices to champion education for every child, everywhere!



Nuclear Power Station Visit

Earlier this month, our Year 9 students took part in an engaging and insightful visit to Hartlepool Nuclear Power Station. The experience provided them with a valuable first-hand understanding of how electricity is produced and emphasised the important role nuclear energy plays within the UK's energy mix. While there, students also took part in a practical beach activity where they designed their own sea defences, exploring how the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, can be managed in the future.

Throughout the day, students were introduced to the wide

range of careers available at the power station. They met and learned from engineers, armed police officers, sea defence specialists and other professionals who ensure the site operates safely and efficiently. This helped students to see clear links between geography, science and engineering, and the diverse career pathways connected to these subjects.

Our students represented the school superbly, demonstrating excellent engagement, curiosity and maturity. We were extremely proud of the way they conducted themselves throughout the visit.



Oracy Vision

At Horizon, we believe that strong communication skills are vital to students' personal development, helping them grow into confident, respectful and self-aware individuals. Through carefully planned opportunities where students both learn through talk and learn how to talk effectively, we support them in developing their confidence, resilience and ability to express their thoughts and feelings clearly.

Oracy plays a crucial part of our personal development experiences; it supports students in finding their voice, strengthening their self-belief and preparing them to navigate challenges and opportunities beyond the classroom.

Please take a moment to read our shared vision for oracy.

Vision

At Horizon we strive to create a community where every student is an articulate, confident and empathetic communicator. Through carefully integrated experiences where they learn through talk and to talk, students can express themselves fluently and confidently, so they are well prepared for life.



Let's Talk



Take Turns

Encourage everyone to have the opportunity to speak. Don't interrupt and respect the speaker's time.



Ask Questions

Engage actively in the conversation by asking questions to probe, clarify or deepen understanding. This shows you are listening and valuing what the speaker is saying.



Listen Actively

Pay full attention to the speaker without distractions. Nod, give eye contact and appropriate verbal acknowledgements to show you are engaged.



Keep on Topic

Stay focused on the subject being discussed. Avoid tangents and help guide the conversation back to the main points when necessary.

Year 10 Sports Leaders

Our Year 10 Sports Leaders have been generously volunteering their time after school to support the Holy Rood Dance Club, and the impact has been fantastic. The school has praised the exceptionally high standard of delivery from our students, highlighting their professionalism, enthusiasm, and ability to inspire younger pupils to develop a love of dance.

Many of the children had

never danced before, making the confidence and enjoyment they have gained even more special. Due to the club's tremendous success, it has now been extended for the next half term; a true testament to the dedication and talent of our wonderful Sports Leaders.

We have also enjoyed a fantastic afternoon working with Year 4 children from Gawber Primary School and St Mary's Primary School to help develop their rugby skills.

For many of the children, this was their first experience

of the sport and there were certainly a few nerves at the start. However, our Sports Leaders were exceptional role models. They demonstrated skills with confidence, offered encouragement, and created a supportive environment where everyone felt able to get involved.

By the end of the session, those early nerves had turned into smiles, teamwork and determination. It was a brilliant afternoon of learning and fun... even if everyone was a little muddy by the end!



Poetry Trip to Bradford

On 9th February, 65 Year 10 students attended Poetry Live at St George's Hall in Bradford: an event aimed specifically at securing key knowledge for GCSE Literature students. The attendees heard talks from the Lead Examiner for

poetry from AQA, listened to a reading by Poet Laureate Simon Armitage, and sung along with the infamous John Agard as he recited his work 'Checking Out Me History.' The students left with a clearer understanding of the choices the poets make when crafting the works which feature in the GCSE exam.



Key dates in March

W/e 2nd March

- National Careers Week
- World Book Day
- Friday 6th Y8 optional Work Shadow Day
- Sunday 8th - International Women's Day

w/e 9th March

- Science Week
- Tuesday 10th - Y9 Science Live visit
- Wednesday 11th - Battle of the Bands

Saturday 21st march

- World Poetry Day

w/e 23rd March

- Y11 Barcelona visit
- Y10 CERN visit
- Y8 Italy Skiing visit

Easter Holidays commence Monday 30th March

College reopens to all students on Monday 13th April

**MARCH
CORE VALUE
of the month is
INDEPENDENCE**



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