



NATIONAL
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ACADEMY

Advent Newsletter

Christmas address from Mr Brailsford – Headteacher

As 2024 ends, all of those connected with National have a great deal to celebrate. If I were to summarise the main headlines, here are 7 impressive and exciting things to be aware about from this year.

1. National students achieved their best GCSE results for 8 years.
2. Planning permission was given for a brand new Sixth Form which is due to open in 2025. We have invested over £2m in a purpose built Sixth Form to support our students further.



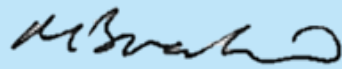
3. With your help, we won several nationally recognised attendance awards this year. We are recognised in the top 25% of all schools nationally for attendance.
4. Our 'Progress 8' figure was above the national average. This means that the progress our students make between KS2 and KS4 is above most other secondary schools nationally.
5. Our students continue to access a wide range of extra-curricular trips and visits including the WW2 battlefields trip, theatre visits, university experiences, performing at the Royal Concert Hall, ski trip to Italy, Hagg Farm, Galleries of Justice, sports events, wildlife centres and RS London trip to name only a few.
6. Our Academy remains an incredibly popular choice for parents and guardians and it continues to grow in stature and reputation across Nottinghamshire. In the last 5 years the numbers attending our open evening have almost doubled to 733 for one night.
7. We end the term celebrating student achievements including 449 students who have received no behaviour points this term and 238 students who have 100% attendance.

As the year comes to an end and we reflect on what a positive year it has been, we also acknowledge that for many, including those abroad and in our local community, this has been a tough year for a variety of reasons. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of those who are struggling at this time and we pray they have a more positive 2025.

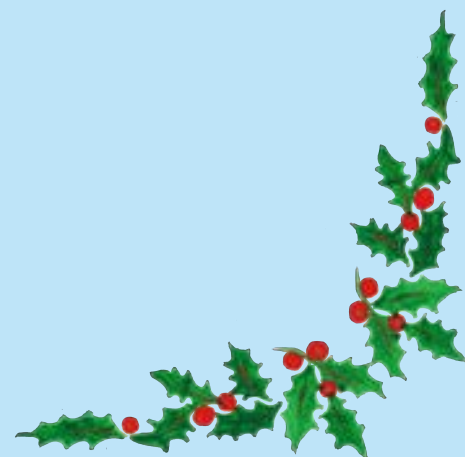
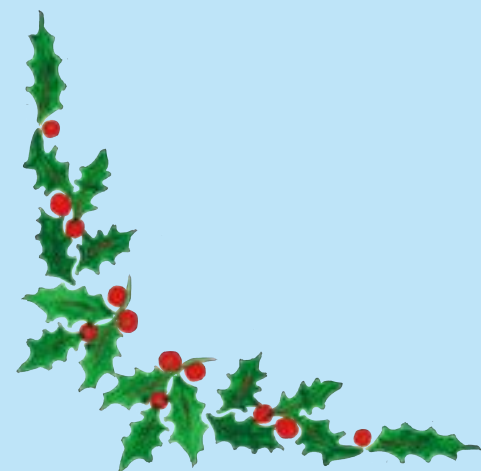
I will close with a few interesting facts I only found out this year. The market square Council building was designed by an architect from Hucknall. The invention of the shin pad is credited to a person from Hucknall. The worlds first ever vertical take off and landing took place in Hucknall, long before Elon Musk and his Space X rocket did the same this year.

Finally, as I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year, the year National was formed was 1788 and in that same year the Scottish Poet Robbie Burns wrote the poem 'Auld Lang Syne' which we now traditionally sing to see in the New Year.

Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Brash".

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people". Luke 10



'Life in all its fullness' John 10:10

Christingle Services

On Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th December, the Reverend Helen Chantry and I led two Christingle services for our year 7 students. It was a great opportunity to reflect on what Christmas time means to Christians. Through some quizzes, reflections, and prayers we thought about the different parts of the Christingle and what they represented. Two main areas of focus were the red ribbon and the candle. The ribbon represents the love and blood of Jesus Christ, a love that stretches all over the world, whilst the candle reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world, the light that can extinguish the darkness and bring great hope to others. The students behaved really well and were a credit both to themselves and to the academy.

Mr T Surgay - Academy chaplain



Christmas Tree Festival

Earlier in December, I had the privilege, along with Miss Clark, one of our LSAs, of accompanying five students to the Church of St Mary Magdalene to decorate our tree for entry in the town's annual Christmas tree festival. The students worked really well as a team and did a fantastic job of ensuring the tree looked its absolute best for the festival.

Our theme was 'Be the light', a response to Jesus' words in Matthew 5:14-16. In the passage he says: "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father." These words are central to our Christian ethos at the academy that through our interactions with the community others might glimpse who Jesus really is: the saviour of the world and the light in our darkness.

Mr T Surgay - Academy chaplain



An Inspired Christmas Concert



On Monday 9th December The National Academy took part in the Inspire Christmas concert at the Royal Concert Hall in Nottingham. The event was a great success, and the National Academy choir learnt two songs under the guidance of Inspire, who provide music education in Nottinghamshire. During the day Inspire led the workshops and this culminated in an evening performance in front of an audience of family and friends. The National students were a real credit to the school, and enjoyed the day thoroughly.

Mr I Baggott - Teacher of Music

Festive Theatre Trip

On Tuesday 19th December, 170 year 7s took a trip to Derby Theatre to see an adaptation of the classic story, A Christmas Carol. A Christmas Carol is a timeless tale of hope and redemption which follows Ebenezer Scrooge on an eye-opening, yet wondrous, journey through his past, present and future. Year 7 have been reading A Christmas Carol in class recently so this was a fabulous festive treat to end the year. The students thoroughly enjoyed the trip and were a credit to the Academy.

Mrs K Simpson - Assistant head of languages



Christmas Bake Off

Students from year 7 to year 11 took part in the Christmas bake off on Tuesday 10th December after school to demonstrate their cake decorating skills. They showed great creativity and technique to create these amazing cakes. First place was awarded to Sophie and Amber K, second to Olivia and Amelia in 7F and third was Matilda, Sophia, Roxy and Ava in 7B. Well done to everyone that took part.

Mrs S Reardon - Teacher of food



Christmas Concert

The National Academy held our Christmas Concert on the evening of Monday 16th December at St Mary's Magdalene Church, Hucknall. The evening showcased the wonderful musical talent the school has, including singers and piano performers. There were also readings from students and Tom Surgay the School Chaplain. The students were a real credit to the school, and we look forward to many more concerts in the future.

Mr I Baggott - Teacher of music



Year 10 Religious Studies London Trip

From Wednesday 4th to Friday 6th December, 39 students from year 9 and 10 went to London to visit a variety of places of worship. On the first day, students visited a Buddhist temple and were able to find out about Buddhist beliefs and meet a Buddhist monk, as well as participate in a guided meditation. From here we then visited a Roman Catholic place of worship to see the contrast with Buddhism and to also see some of the symbolism to support their understanding for their GCSE in Religious Studies.

On day two, students had a packed day with visits to a Hindu mandir where they got to see the largest temple in the UK and see the Hindu murtis on display. They then visited Leicester square and were able to do some shopping before having dinner at Pizza Hut and then going to the theatre to see Matilda the musical.

Day 3 concluded the visit with trips to St Paul's Cathedral where the students were able to see a Church of England place of worship and then to see a mosque and asking questions about how Muslim worship differs to Christian worship before making the trip home.

Ms R Hale - Head of social sciences



Mock Interviews

Our year 11 students took part in their mock interviews on Tuesday 15th October, welcoming a number of external guests to the academy and thriving in the opportunity to practice their communication skills. Students were encouraged to discuss their future plans and opportunities and celebrate the success they have had at National so far. A huge thank you to everyone involved!

Miss O Hyde - Teacher of English and CEIAG lead



Year 9 PD and CEIAG Day

On Tuesday 19th November, a number of representatives from local businesses battled the snow and visited the academy to support our year 9 Personal Development (PD) and Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) day. Our students enjoyed a carousel of workshops from criminology and engineering, and learnt vital skills in first aid and education on county lines the police. Despite the weather not being on our side, our students had a brilliant day and learnt a lot from the sessions.

Miss O Hyde - Teacher of English and CEIAG lead

Woodland Adventure Visit

On Tuesday 26th November a group of year 7 students were invited to go to the woodland adventure zone at Portland College. While there they developed their confidence, resilience and teamworking skills through activities including rock climbing, orienteering and archery. They even got to toast their own marshmallows!

Miss S Harris - Senior teaching assistant



Year 9 Battlefields Trip

Each year, year 9 have the opportunity to visit the sites of the Western Front from WW1. This year our trip ran from 15th - 17th October. We have three key aims during this trip, to deepen the students learning from their study into WW1, encourage students to reflect on the meaning of compassion and to broaden the students experience outside of the classroom. Our rather early start was worth it when we reached our first site at Zonnebeke and the fantastic Passchendaele War Museum. The dugouts here are maintained from WW1 and really show the nature of trench warfare.



Day two began with setting the context around the 1915 Ypres offensive and reflected the loss here. A visit to the Essex Farm Cemetery had an instant impact with students learning about the death of the youngest British soldier "Studwick" who died at 16 years, as well as the site where John McCrae first penned the poem "In Flanders Fields".

We then skirted Ypres to visit two contrasting cemeteries. Tyne Cot Memorial showed the gravity and scale of loss. The attitude to mourning in this British graveyard was completely different to the contrasting German cemetery at Langemark. With its gravestones contrasting with the white spacious feel at Tyne Cot, it highlighted how the two nations do remembrance in a different way. Hill 62 is indicative of the Battle of Ypres. Any watchers of War Horse will remember the

horses dragging an artillery piece up an escarpment that overlooked the town of Ypres. Such a hill was key to winning the battle. Hill 62 was one such hill and saw great loss on both sides. Today it gives an insight into trench warfare and holds an exhibit of images not seen elsewhere.



Having skirted around Ypres all morning we arrived in the beautiful market square. Some free time around the remarkable town square at Ypres was followed by another dive into trench warfare with a scout around the 'In Flanders Fields Museum'. A large museum with the purpose of commemorating the many men that fought in the war. Hungry again, a quick hop back for dinner gave the group the substance to head back to Ypres to partake in the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate; a granite arch that commemorates the journey of British soldiers as they left Ypres for the front line. In sombre mood, we watched the last post ceremony which was very touching. Some of our students laid a wreath on behalf of the school.

Our last day took us south along the old front line to the river Somme. We had studied this battle in our history lessons but to see the scale of loss in such a small area was sobering. We arrived amidst some overcast conditions and not the sunny skys of 1916. Thiepval Memorial holds the names of 72,000 missing soldiers. A powerful image of loss.

On the 1st July 1916 the British & Commonwealth soldiers were formed into "Pals" battalions. Therefore soldiers often fought for the first time with their friends, family or work colleagues. Newfoundland Park preserves a section of the battlefield as it was in 1916. It gives you a great insight into why the losses were so significant. All that was left to do was a return by ferry back to waiting parents. 60 outstanding students and their proud 6 staff arrived back to bleary eyed parents.



Mr M Jones - Assistant headteacher

White Post Farm Visit

White Post Farm came to visit school on Tuesday 12th November with some of their lovely animals. A small group of students were invited to stay after school to meet and learn about different kinds of animals, how to care for them and how they live in the wild. In this session we met three very cute guinea pigs Oreo, Hattie and Aida.

Miss S Harris - Senior teaching assistant



News from the library

Bookbuzz

This is always a fun term for year 7 as they all get the chance to choose their own free book to take home and keep! We do this through a scheme called Bookbuzz. Bookbuzz is a reading programme from Book Trust that aims to help schools inspire a love of reading in their students.

All year 7 classes visited the library to watch videos of the authors introducing their books and explaining why we should pick that one. Students then got chance to look at all of the books and make their selections. This year there was a selection of 16 exciting titles which included quick reads, non-fiction and graphic novels as well as fiction. Here are our students receiving their books.



Carnegie Book Awards Judging

Our school librarian, Mrs Prestwood is the East Midlands judge for the prestigious Carnegie book awards again this year, and she has been busy reading the 119 books nominated for the writing and illustration awards in her free time. This is her second and final year as a judge, which she has enjoyed very much!

The Carnegies are the UK's longest running and best-loved children's book awards, judged solely by librarians. The awards recognise outstanding reading experiences created through writing and illustration in books for children and young people.

Mrs Prestwood has received physical copies of all 119 books nominated and will donate all of the books to the Academy library once the judging is over. This adds to the 129 books she read and donated last year! So our students will be able to read and enjoy all of the books too.

The shortlists will be announced on 11th March 2025 and the winners announced on 19th June 2025

Faculty Blog - Languages

"Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things, but learning another way to think about things." - Flora Lewis

I begin my blog this year with a quote from Flora Lewis an influential American journalist of the 20th century. As the language's faculty, we believe all language is valuable and we aim to ensure our students have the right words and approaches to view the world from multiple perspectives with understanding and compassion and we strive for this daily in our lessons and with all our students. We had another busy year last year, utilising the opportunities to get our students out and experiencing language in as many different settings as we can and we will continue to do this as much as possible beyond our curriculum time.

Our first faculty trip was led by Mrs Bust in the Advent term who took a German GSCE group to the Christmas markets of Aachen and Cologne and then Mrs Guest took the year 9 group in the Pentecost term to Germany to stay in Boppard with a visit to Koblenz where they experienced a gondola over the Rhine. Both excursions got to experience the lovely Lindt chocolate and had the opportunity to visit Cologne's famous cathedral.

We have continued to review our curriculums and are proud to be offering German as an A Level this year, building upon the continued success of our key stage 3 and 4 German lessons. The Modern Foreign Language lessons are making fantastic progress with the continued use of the Conti teaching method and the classrooms are a buzz of activity and excitement as students practice their target language. In English, we have continued to review our text offerings in key stage 3 to ensure we are looking at a wide range of current social issues but also using literature as window to explore different cultural periods so for example our year 8 students are taken back to the Japanese Sengoku period and the conflicts experienced. Whilst our year 9 students have been very much in the present and have enjoyed studying their first full verse narrative, exploring modern issues that we see spoken about on our daily news feeds and channels. We are continuing through the year to update our text choices exploring memoirs in both year 9 and 10 and we hope the students continue to share their positive experiences with their teachers.

As we did last year, a number of theatre visits are planned and we will be taking year 8 to see *Juliet* in 2025 and year 7 to see a performance of *A Christmas Carol* in December. The Germany trip is already on the go and Mrs Guest is finalising this for the summer term. Please keep alert to your ParentMails and emails as any other opportunities we find will be broadcast in this way.

Get in touch...

If you have any questions about the languages curriculum, ways for students and parents to get involved, or would like to ask about extra-curricular opportunities, please drop Miss Hunt, our head of faculty, an email at: chunt@nationalacademy.org.uk



Head of Year Highlights

Year 7

I have been very pleased with year 7 and their attitude to learning as they have started their time with us here at the National Church of England Academy.

This has been reflected in the number of achievement points received as a year group – as it stands at the time of writing year 7 have accumulated 19,058 achievement points – this is an outstanding achievement and I am very proud of them as a year group. So far, I have awarded 119 Bronze Certificates and 28 Silver Certificates. I continue to see students on Fridays to celebrate 'Freddo Friday' and meet those students who are demonstrating excellence in their achievements. We recently celebrated our achievement assembly, with 7B being the tutor group with the most achievement points, 7D and 7E having the highest attendance. Alongside Leon J being awarded more 'Star of the Lesson' than any other student and our joint winners of Azaiah D and Owen M having the most achievement points this term. There isn't a single student in the year who hasn't achieved positive feedback from their teachers this term and this is something to celebrate and for each student to be proud of.

We have spent the term focusing on our kindness towards each other and on being respectful to all – which is one of our ARCH values. This will continue in assemblies and tutor time as we continue to strive to be the very best we can be and to live life in all its fullness.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a safe and restful break.

Ms S Craven – Head of year 7



Year 8

Year 8, what a fantastic start to the year you have had, and where plenty has been achieved. Consistently being in school is important to your child's achievement. We have had a grand total of 56 students that have achieved 100% attendance and 8B are leading the way so far. The top credit earner so far this term is Vienna L with an amazing 156 points, a fantastic a start! Well done!

There are four other students who have also managed to get over 120 credits this term so far and they are Tommy S, River W, Alice B and Finlay B. A huge congratulations to all of these students!

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our students and school community a fantastic and restful Christmas.

Mr J Beaver and Mrs S McDermott - Head and assistant head of year 8

Head of Year Highlights

Year 9

At the start of this year, we welcomed Mr Crossland to the year team as assistant head of year in replacement of Miss Bird who left us at the end of the last academic year. Mr Crossland is an experienced, dedicated AHOY and we are fortunate to have him support the year group as we enter this important final year of key stage 3 studies before options for GCSE are made.

Year 9 have really hit the ground running with improvements on last year's attendance and behaviour compared to this time last year. At the time of writing, the average attendance for year 9 stands at 92.3%, which is just above the national average for the year group. 9C are at the top of this table as a form group with an impressive 96% attendance rate! We also currently have 60 year 9 students who have 100% attendance since the start of the school year, which is just over 25% of the year group.

In the classroom year 9 have earned over 11,000 achievement points with 9B continuing to lead the way as they did last year with over 3,000 positive points already this year. The top 5 students this year; of which 4 are from 9B are: Zachary B, Blake H, Cohen G, Kai F, Shakiyah M who have each individually earned over 170 net points this term. Special recognition goes to Zachary B for leading this table with over 240 points already.

We look ahead to an exciting time in year 9 when the students will have their first opportunity to have their choice of subjects to study as they engage in the options process. For the first time in their education journey, they will get to impact their own future. Well done to all year 9 students for their hard work and achievements at the start of this term and in returning to school with such a positive mindset.

Mr L Gregory and Mr Crossland - Head and assistant head of year 9

Year 10

Year 10 have made an excellent start to their GCSE's and a very important academic year, where plenty has been achieved both in and out of the classroom.

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. Well done to 10B and 10G, leading the way with an average attendance over 95% this term, and the 95 year 10 students above our 97% target, with 42 students at 100%.

In lessons every student has received achievement points, as year 10 have collectively been awarded over 28,000 positive achievement points this term. 10B lead the way this term with over 4,600 positive achievement points. Individually, congratulations to Wisdom in 10A, Dylan in 10B, Isabella in 10C, Summer in 10E, Freya in 10E, Kalia in 10G, Lauren in 10G, Ruby H in 10G, Bodhi in 10G and Taylor in 10G for being our 10 most rewarded students in year 10 this term.

This term year 10 have been visited by staff from the University of Nottingham who delivered an assembly on higher education and what to expect from University life; 29 year 10 students enjoyed a residential trip to London, visiting several places of worship and having the opportunity to see some of the sights; and members of the year 10 student council have also planned a visit Annesley Lodge Care Home for a host of Christmas activities with the residents there, including bingo, a quiz and Christmas crafts.

Well done to all year 10's for each of their positives this term, and enjoy the Christmas break.

Mr J Gilham and Mrs L Newns - Head and assistant head of year 10

Head of Year Highlights

Year 11

As the festive season approaches, it's the perfect time to reflect on the achievements of our incredible students and look ahead to a bright future. This term has been filled with hard work, determination, and many successes, and we couldn't be prouder of our National Academy family.

A huge congratulations to Liddeyia B, Robyn T, and Amy H, who have truly gone above and beyond this term. With over 100 credits each, zero late marks, and 100% attendance, they've set an outstanding example for us all. Your dedication and consistency are inspiring—well done!

Looking forward, we know that the GCSE exams are just around the corner. This can be a time of mixed emotions, but we are confident in the resilience, effort, and talent our students will bring to the challenge. Keep believing in yourselves, stay focused, and remember that every step you take is a step closer to your goals. Your teachers and peers are here to support you every step of the way.

Enjoy the festive break and see you in 2025!

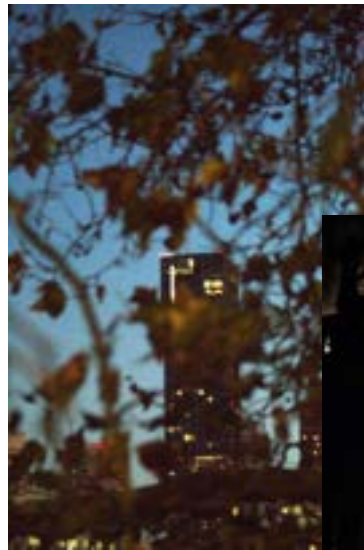
Mr K Mistry - Head of year 11

News from HSFC

From Monday 11th – Tuesday 12th November 2024 the majority of our Art and Photography year 12 and 13 cohort attended a trip to London.

Over the two days they walked nearly 20 miles around London, taking photographs and enjoying exploring the city. The students visited Tate Britain, Tate Modern and the National Photography Gallery, as well as landmarks such as the London Eye, Westminster, Big Ben, Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace and Covent Garden.

They were positive, enthusiastic, creative and extremely well behaved throughout the trip. They were an absolute credit to the Hucknall Sixth Form Centre.



On Tuesday 20th November we hosted our year 13 mock interview event. We were delighted to welcome a range of local employers to interview each year 13 and give them some bespoke feedback. The students were matched to interviewers based on their plans for post-18 education or employment. The event was very well attended and incredibly valuable to the progression of our post-16 students.

J Cliffman - Head of HSFC



Staffing Update

Leavers this term

Mrs H Smith (history teacher) promoted to head of history in another school
Ms A Wright (LSA)
Mrs R Ridley (finance officer)
Miss N Hallam (midday)
Mrs E Jamison (CEAIG advisor)

New starters

Mrs S Standen (midday)
Mr J Hall (midday)
Ms N Storer (LSA)
Ms K Boulton (CEAIG advisor)

Dates to remember

Monday 6th January 2025 - return to school for all year groups

Wednesday 29th January 2025 - Year 11 AMP evening
Wednesday 12th and Thursday 13th February 2025 - Academy show

Friday 14th February - Inset Day
Academy holiday - Monday 17th February to Friday 21st February 2025

Thursday 27th February 2025 - Year 10 AMP evening
Wednesday 5th March 2025 - Year 9 options evening
Tuesday 1st April 2025 - Year 8 AMP evening

Academy holiday - Monday 7th April - Friday 11th April 2025
Monday 21st April - Bank Holiday - Academy closed
Tuesday 22nd April 2025 - return to school for all year groups

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

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