

14 February 2025



Headteacher Mr P J Nicholson

Appleby Grammar School – Newsletter

The first half-term of 2025 has hurtled by at Appleby Grammar School packed full of activity. I hope this newsletter gives you all a flavour of what has been happening and highlights some of the forthcoming school events.

Our core business is teaching the curriculum, so our students learn what they need to equip them for whatever comes next. Our curriculum leaders work hard to create a sequenced curriculum in their areas. In science that curriculum has involved learning outside the classroom with visits to a local farm. Mrs Lightfoot, our Curriculum Leader for Science writes,

‘As part of the KS3 Science curriculum all Year 7 have started to learn about reproduction. To enhance the learning in this topic we organised a fully funded trip to Bankwood Farm in Appleby. Gemma Dobson ran the informative sessions which allowed the students to get hands on caring for the animals and learn about their life cycle. The students spent time in the dairy learning about how to maximise milk production, discovered the different parts of the male and female cow's reproductive system and gained knowledge about artificial insemination. The students now have a better understanding of reproduction which they can transfer to their classroom learning as well as knowing more about why it is important in the farming industry.

The Year 11 students will also be visiting Bankwood Farm after half term, this time to learn about the importance of selective breeding and how mathematics is used on a day-to-day basis in farming.’

Photographs of the visit are in the gallery of this newsletter and the visits are another example of the school working closely with the local community it serves. The Year 7 students I spoke to had very much enjoyed their visit to a place at the heart of our local community.

Ms Auchterlonie, our Curriculum Leader for Maths launched the Sparx Maths this calendar year and reports that this has been a real hit with students. The programme produces a whole school leader board based on students responding to online questions. The school's top three are Oscar N (Year 7), Amelia D (Year 7) and Natalia G (Year 7), so our youngest students are currently blazing a maths trail! There are plenty of older students in the top ten, so it will be interesting to see how it develops. Elsewhere in Maths, that love of learning in the subject has been developed through entry into the UKMT Maths Challenge. I presented certificates in the whole school assembly this week, as part of our weekly rewards celebration. Well done in particular to Jonny B (Year 9), Harry (Year 10) and Sam (Year 11) who were the highest scorers in the their year groups with Jonny B the highest across the school. It is brilliant to see this interest in STEM subjects here.

It is not just the STEM subjects that have been busy as Mrs Budgett, our Curriculum Leader for Modern Foreign Languages reports:

‘It has been a very busy half term in French, with the year beginning with the annual Year 7 and 8 House role play competition. This year Yates swept the board, so we will be keeping an eye on this House for future languages greatness! In KS4, Year 11 have been working hard on their preparations for their GCSE Speaking exam, which is now only a matter of weeks away. Again, we have been so lucky to have the assistance of our two Year 12 students who have diligently come every week to support their preparation. Thank you, Rosemary and Scarlett. We are also delighted to be entering the Oxford University Translation Prize again this year, with entries ranging from Year 7 right through the school. We wish these students the best of luck, hopefully building on our successes of the last 5 years.’

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One of the privileges of my role is to be able to spend time in all the classrooms in school and I can see first-hand the hard work and dedication that goes into teaching great lessons here at AGS and how our students positively respond to that.

Academically, the external examinations are now coming into focus with Year 13 having followed Year 11 with a full set of mocks and a parents' evening. Both the parents' evenings were well-attended and positive events. It was nice for me to meet so many of our parents in person. Students know what they have to do and with the support and guidance from staff they can continue to improve. A clear revision plan is essential and an investment in themselves is vital, right now. There will be a need for sacrifices over the next four months. By that I mean attending academic support sessions at school, foregoing some social activities and putting in the extra hours required to really make a difference. Then, when all the examinations are finished by mid-June, the long summer will stretch out for them! Before Easter all students and parents will receive more detail on the examination season. Our Exams Officer, Mrs Titterington leads on this and as Head of Centre I work closely with her on this aspect of the school.

Year 11 have shone over the last couple of weeks with their Social Action project work. The last two Wednesday mornings has seen the culmination of that with presentations in the hall in front of their peers, staff and visitors. The standard was impressive with the thoughtfulness and preparation of the ten groups evident. Congratulations to the winners, who were the wonderfully named 'Gym Rats'. Their plan to create a school gym to aid student well-being was well-planned and presented. It will make a real difference to our students and fits perfectly with our desire, as a school to support mental health for all.

We have boosted our mental health provision in school by agreeing to work in partnership with North Cumbria Mental Health Support Team and Barnado's. In practical terms this will see Allison Gething, an Education Mental Health Practitioner having some time to work on site to support our students and staff. We are delighted to welcome Allison into our school community. Alongside her role, there has been a focus on well-being during Children's Mental Health Week in the first week of February. We also are working with our local churches to provide well-being activities in school for students and a facility for both staff and students to talk with Rev. Andrew Burrell and his colleagues. Another whole school assembly, tutor activities and PSHE lessons helped draw attention to the importance of mental health and gave strategies for students to use to support their own mental health.

Mr. Hook our Curriculum Leader for PSHE shares that:

'As part of the PSHE curriculum, all KS3 and KS4 students took part in workshops led by practitioners from Kooth mental health services. Students learned about a range of topics including friendships, anxiety, exam stress and anti-bullying. The service is available to all free-of-charge and is a wonderful tool to support students in managing their mental health, providing articles, activities and counselling. It was great to see the groups work so well and begin to understand the issues which can arise. The service can be used at www.kooth.com. We are currently holding a competition in school, with students entering a raffle by creating their own 'Feel-Good' playlist!'

There will be more information on this topic coming out over the next few months and a reminder that Miss Gilder is our new whole school mental health lead.

Inextricably linked to mental health is physical health and there has been an abundance of opportunity for students to engage in the physical education offer at school. It is the envy of many!

The detail comes from our PE staff, Mrs Walton and Mr Hook:

In late January seven (four boys and three girls from Year 7 to Year 11) students qualified to represent Eden in the next round of the cross country. The runners took on a mixed and tough course at Fitz Park in Keswick. They all ran incredibly well against great competition. Extra congratulations to Paddy (Year 7) and Tolly (Year 11) who have qualified to run for Cumbria in the next round.

Badminton has been one of our indoor sports this term with Year 7, 8 and 9 taking part in friendly singles and doubles matches at QEGS, Penrith. It was great to see so many taking part. In the middle of January, GCSE badminton players travelled to QEGS to take part in a doubles tournament. There was some incredible play and nice pair tactics on show.

Netball is a vibrant part of our PE curriculum and in late January, Year 7 and 8 netballers travelled to Kirkby Lonsdale to play QES. The Year 7 team continue their winning season with some fab shooting by player of the match Holly. Year 8 had limited numbers but nevertheless battled hard in a well contested match. Further up the school our girls again showed their sporting qualities, as Year 10 and 11 netballers hosted QES. In two nail biting matches with well-matched teams, there was victory for Year 10 and a tight loss for the Year 11s. Great effort girls!

Continuing with the netball successes our U15 captain, Tamzin L reports on the U15 Eden District Tournament, which showed our strength in depth as the ski visit was on at the same time:

On Tuesday 4 February we travelled to QEGS to compete in our annual Eden District tournament against schools Kirkby Stephen, UCC and QEGS. The tournament began with us playing UCC in a very evenly matched game ending the first half at an equal 5-5 score; in the second half after some position changes and excellent shooting from Amber all around the D we managed to make it a 6-8 win. Player of the match was awarded to Tamzin for a solid centre court performance all round. We followed up from this playing QEGS, another strong team who we are evenly matched with; at the end of the first half we were 2-1 up but it was still all to play for, when it started to pour down just before the second half the competition was moved inside, with excellent work in defence from Isabelle and Jasmine and some fantastic intercepts from Jasmina we managed to make it a 9-5 win. Player of the match was awarded to Jasmina for her impeccable intercepts. Finally, we played Kirkby Stephen, an incredibly strong team, in the first few minutes we managed to keep a 0-0 score; Eve was excellent in centre court playing out of her usual position and Lexie excelled in Goal Attack (again out of position) in this match but Kirkby Stephen's strong side won, leaving it a 7-1 loss. Amber was strong in this match getting us our goal, as well as getting awarded player of the match! Although not our usual team due to the ski trip everyone performed well leaving us taking second place!

We have also had success in gymnastics at the county competition with two U14 and three U19 competitors. Incredible routines and vaults were on show. Huge well done to Lucy, Nicole, Eve, Belle and Molly.

And just last week thirteen students took part in an Inclusive Leadership Day at William Howard School, Brampton. Our leader of the day was Riley for his clear communication, demonstrations and positive feedback. Ethan showed exceptional confidence when talking in front of a large group and well-done David for being supreme rock, paper, scissors champion!

The Year 11 boys took part in a friendly football fixture against QEGS, which was also being used as part of moderation for those taking GCSE PE. The boys played some excellent football, moving the ball well as a team and creating numerous chances. Josh S was a menace up front, hassling the defenders relentlessly and taking several chances as he scored an excellent hat-trick. Aidan H and Harry A were very strong at the back, being well protected by Jack W and Rohan K in front of them in midfield. Beau R battled away on the left wing, showing real skill with the ball and never giving his opponent a second in defence. The whole performance was strong from start to finish, leading to an excellent 3-0 victory.

Sam W, Jack W, Rohan K and Matthew C travelled down to Blackburn in early January for the U16 North of England Table Tennis Finals, after qualifying as Cumbria Champions in early December. The boys played to such a high standard on the day and really raised their games to match their vastly more experienced opponents. The team battled hard but came up heart-breakingly short in the final game of the final match to finish 3rd in their group and miss out on qualification for the finals on the day. A wonderful effort to progress so far, well done!

As the days get lighter after half term there will continue to be more and more sporting opportunities and I would encourage all our students to make the most of those chances provided. One such opportunity comes on 6 March when a team of Year 7s will take part in a Chess Competition at Long Marton Primary School. Good Luck to Jack, Charlie, Tommy, Alex, Reuben, Ted, Corey, Joel and Robert who are representing the school.

In the last couple of weeks one of the school's biggest overseas visits has taken place, namely the ski visit. Mr Hayman led the visit and provides this summary:

'42 students and four staff headed off to Serre Chevalier in the French Alps for the 2025 AGS Ski Course. After a flight from Newcastle to Grenoble and then a bus to the resort, students met the ESF instructors and headed out onto the slopes for the first time. Beginners started on the nursery slopes, using the drag lifts to practice their snowplough turns and basic skills. Later that day students headed further up the mountain in a gondola to a 7km tree-lined green slope called 'Aravet'. As the week progressed beginners moved onto more challenging blue slopes such as 'Vallons' at over 2500m altitude, where they developed their parallel turns. Towards the end of the week, students were moving onto more varied terrain, such as some off-piste skiing and jumps in the snowpark. Intermediate skiers started the week on blue slopes, before advancing onto more challenging red and even some black slopes, such as the Olympic 'Luc Alphand' black run. The instructors were extremely impressed with the progress made by all students, especially as the majority had never skied before. On the evenings, students took part in activities such as Task Master, games and movie nights, as well as a crepe night.

Photos and student comments from this year's ski course can be found on the school Facebook page and in the gallery section of this newsletter.

Applications for the 2026 Ski Course are now open for Year 7, Year 8, Year 9 and Year 12 students. The deadline for applications and deposits is Friday 28 February.'

A thank you to the four members of staff, Mrs Land, Mrs Lightfoot, Mr Noble and Mr Hayman for giving their time to allow the students to have this experience. It is no mean undertaking to take students away abroad and we are blessed as a school to have staff who are willing to do so. I am sure that the 42 students who went skiing will feel the same.

The next half-term will be jumpacked too. Year 9 are very much in focus with a parents' evening and then GCSE options evening. I would encourage students and parents to attend those events, so that choices for courses are made with all the information available. National Careers Week is the first full week of March with events planned in school and a number taking place outside of school too. Also in that week is World Book Day which we plan to mark in a big way, as we highlight reading as an area to continue to develop. There is also a musical event to look forward to at the start of April under the leadership of our Curriculum Leader for Music, Mr Gordon. The details of all these events and more can be found in the calendar section on this newsletter. Can I also draw your attention to the reminders sections too, which will help school run smoothly.

Before Christmas all the key stakeholders in the school were canvased for their opinion on the school's values and crest. The results of those are now confirmed and I will share those with parents shortly after half-term. Thank you to all those parents who responded. If you do wish to contact the school, we are always keen to hear from you and you can email at admin@appleby.cumbria.sch.uk and your message will be dealt with by the most appropriate member of staff. Remember our leadership structure is on the website too, alongside a host of other updated information about the school.

Finally, some great news, as we are in the position now where we can announce that we have purchased a school minibus. This has been largely financed through kind donations from a number of sources. It is intended that the vehicle will be fully in use after half-term and help with the daily runs to ferry some sixth formers to and from school, as well as for school visits. It will in time also be available for hire by community groups. More details and individual thank yous will follow soon!

I hope everyone has a nice half-term and thank you to all parents and carers for your continued support of our great school.

Please see Calendar of Events and Reminders on the next page:

Best wishes



Mr PJ Nicholson
Headteacher

Calendar of Events (14 February to 4 April 2025)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17-21 February – Half-Term Break • 24 Feb-07 March – Year 10 Mock Exams • 25 February – Year 7 and 8 Art Visit, Brough • 25 February – Year 9 Parents' Evening (virtual) • 26 February – Year 11, 12, 13 Art and Year 12 DT Galleries Visit to Manchester • 05 March – Year 9 Options Evening (in-person) • 06 March – World Book Day • 06 March – Year 11 Science Visit • 06 March – Chess Competition (selected Year 7 students), Long Marton School • 10-14 March – Year 10 Work Experience Week | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 March – Year 8 and 9 UKMT Maths Challenge Event • 14 March – Rotary Technology Tournament (selected Year 7, 8, 9 students), Queen Katherine School, Kendal • 20 March – Immunisations DTP Men ACWY (catch up session), Year 9, 10, 11 students • 21 March – Careers Fair at AGS (pm) • 24 March – Cricket Visit to Lords • 01 April – Year 12 Geography Fieldwork Visit • 02 April – Year 8 Life Centre Visit • 03 April – Full School Photo • 03 April – Appleby's Got Talent (7.00pm) • 04 April – End of Spring Term (3.30pm) |
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Donations of good quality school uniform

Donations would be much appreciated to help set up our sustainability uniform shop. Please bring any items into main reception.

Fundraising

We are planning our fundraising events for the next half-term. A Big Breakfast and Bingo!
.....more details to follow!

Reminders

Notifying school of your child's absence / medical and/or other appointments

Please remember to notify school when your child is absent through illness and contact us each day for any period of ongoing absence.

You can notify us in the following ways:

- By phone / answer machine
- By email using attendance@appleby.cumbria.sch.uk
- Through the MCAS app

Please remember we need to receive evidence of all appointments during the school day so this can be added to your child's record. Again, please send to either the attendance@appleby.cumbria.sch.uk email address or via MCAS.

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Parking and Drop-off at school

Parents are reminded that there is BUS ONLY access to the parking area in front of school from 8.30-9.00am and from 3.15-3.45pm. This is for the safety of all our students and staff. Parents are politely asked to respect this without exception. Please also note that only students with mobility issues should be dropped off inside the main school gates.

Thank you for helping to keep all our students and staff safe.

The Year 7's visited Bankwood Farm recently to learn all about reproduction in mammals. This visit links to the KS3 Science topic of reproduction.



Lots of fun in French, with the Year 7 and Year 8 classes taking part in the annual Inter-House role-play competition.



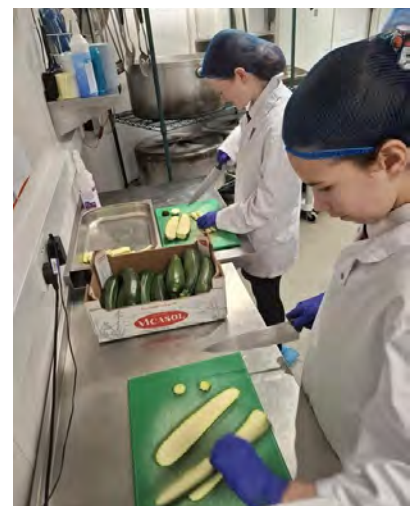
Recent visit to the Creative Networking Event, at Kendal College. Students attended talks as well as meeting a wide range of creative professionals.



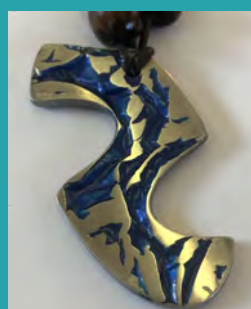
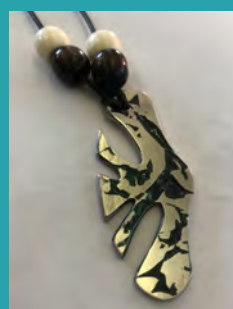
Well done to our team for cleaning out the nest boxes at school and refilling them with new hay ready for the next nesting season.



The Rotary Young Chef Competition reward visit to Rheged allowed Melita and Libby to get some hands-on experience in the Westmorland Group industrial kitchens.



Great clock designs from Form 7B.



Some fantastic Māori inspired pendants from Year 8.

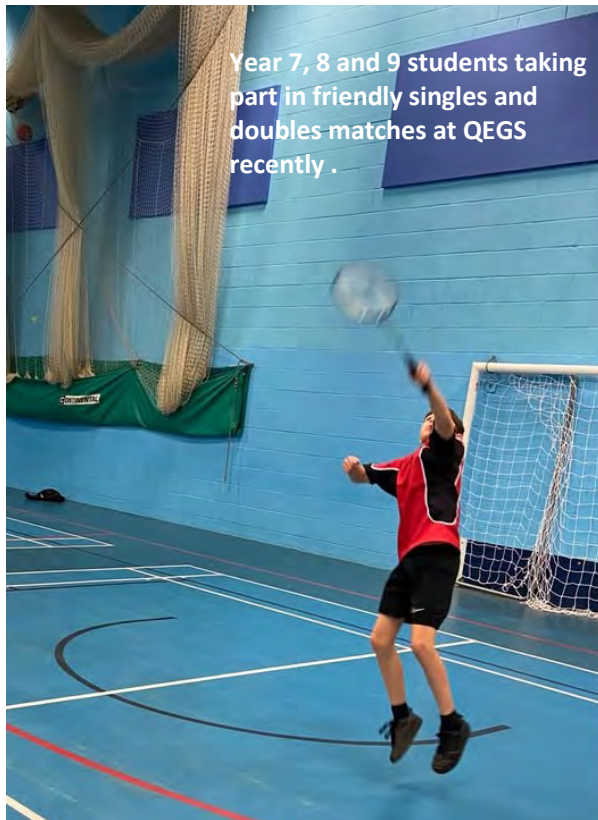




GCSE badminton players travelled to QEGS to take part in a doubles tournament.



The Year 10 and 11 netballers recently hosted QES.



Year 7, 8 and 9 students taking part in friendly singles and doubles matches at QEGS recently .



Seven AGS students qualified to represent Eden in the next round of cross country recently. The runners took on a mixed and tough course at Fitz Park in Keswick. They all ran incredibly well against great competition. Extra congratulations to Paddy and Tolly who have qualified to run for Cumbria in the next round.





What a super cooking extravaganza we've had over the past couple of weeks!

Here's a glimpse at some of the wonderful displays that Year 9 have been creating, in groups.



Chefs of the Week

Wonderful Eco-prints created by our talented Year 12 artists.



Artists of the Week



Thirteen students took part in an Inclusive Leadership Day at William Howard School last week. Our leader of the day was Riley for his clear communication, demonstrations and positive feedback. Ethan showed exceptional confidence when talking in front of a large group.





meaningfulness and significance (Singer 1996, 112–18; 150, 186). There is also debate about how the concept of life relates to the ideas of a life that is *flourishing* (Nigel 1970, Berg 1980; Belliotti 2019), futile (Singer 2002), and *nihilistic* (Landau 2017, 12–15; Matheson 2017, 12–15). What thinking about

JOURNALLING

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AN OPPORTUNITY TO COME
ALONG CHAT AND BE YOURSELF
WHILE DOING SOMETHING
MINDFUL AND FUN.**

**WHERE:
IN THE LIBRARY**

**WHEN:
27/02/25 & 13/03/25**

**TIME:
3:30 - 5:00PM**





Read Your Way on World Book Day!

This year's theme for World Book Day is **Read Your Way**, encouraging students to read what they like, whenever and wherever that may be!

We have lots of great celebrations planned for the day (including the competitions below) and students will receive WBD tokens which can be exchanged in most book stores and supermarkets for one of twelve exclusive WBD books.

Reading improves concentration, vocabulary and language skills and also develops imagination and empathy which helps both academic attainment and well-being. Most importantly, it should be fun and we hope World Book Day at AGS will be just that!

Competitions

Dress up as a character from a book!

Bring along the book with your character in it.

Prizes for individual, group, form, staff and House.

Whole school short story reading

A short story will be split into 5 sections which will be read out each lesson. Complete the quiz on the story.

Prizes for individuals and Houses.

AGS Staff – A book I love...

Lunch time mission: find out what staff love to read.

Prizes for the top 3 students who have collected the most names and titles.

