



Appleby Grammar School Newsletter – Friday 17 July 2026

Under more blue skies and blazing sun the summer term has come to an end. There has been a whole host of activities in the time since I last wrote to you in late May and my intention, as ever is to give you as parents and carers, a window into what has been happening here. Capturing everything is impossible, so apologies now if something is missed out. There really has been so much on! From the Creative Show to Sports Day to Educational Visits to the Prom to the Musical, then so many of our students have showcased their talents and experienced memorable moments.

Many of these set-piece events are detailed below alongside other school highlights. It is always a poignant time of year too, as we say goodbye to both students and staff who are leaving AGS. Our Year 11s signed-off in style after undertaking their exams with great focus and maturity. Mrs Wright, our Head of Year 9, 10 and 11 reports on the Prom as follows:

‘On Thursday 25 June, Year 11 students came together for the final time to celebrate the end of their time at AGS. The Prom was held at the Roundthorn Country Hotel in Penrith, on a very warm and sunny evening, allowing students, family and friends to gather in the grounds of the hotel and share in the occasion. All the students looked amazing in their fabulous gowns and suits, showing their transformation from nervous Year 7’s into the wonderful young adults they now are. It was a truly lovely night of fun, dancing, laughter and sharing memories from their journey through school. We wish all our Year 11 students every success and future happiness wherever their next steps take them.’



And as the year turns the nature of school life means it is now time for our Year 10s to step into the breach. They too have tackled their recent exams with aplomb. These mocks are crucial preparation for next year and they have a realistic picture of where they are on their academic journey now. For some, the results are a shot across the bows and others confirmation that they are on track. Whatever category students are in, the vital thing is facing that reality and take the opportunity to improve. Another aspect of school life where Year 10 have stepped up is as leaders and Mrs. Wright summarises the picture:

‘As the summer term began, Year 10 students were busy writing their applications and gaining staff support for the position of Prefect for 2026-27. A large number of applications were received, and the quality of the letters submitted was of a high standard. On 1 June, the first cohort of 22 Prefects were awarded their special tie and badge, in a celebration assembly with the whole school. These students have already been busy with lunch and break time duties, helping the smooth running of

Headteacher: Mr P J Nicholson

Battlebarrow, Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria CA16 6XU

T: 017683 51580 E: admin@appleby.cumbria.sch.uk

www.appleby.cumbria.sch.uk



the school and keeping students safe. Some of the Prefect team were involved in the recent Year 6 Transition Day, helping to make the day a happy and positive experience for our new students!

This week, two further students joined the first cohort of Prefects, receiving their ties and badges in the achievement assembly. It is hoped that a further group will be announced early in the autumn term, bringing the number of Prefects to around 30. A further honour for some of the Prefects is to be awarded House Captain for the year. Ten of the new prefects have been selected to be House Captains and they proudly led their teams out on Sports Day last week. Many congratulations to all those who have achieved the accolade of Prefect. We wish you success in your duties and in being good role models for other students.'



Further up the school our most senior students wrote applications for the positions of responsibility. They were then interviewed by Mr. Hayman and myself. The standard was very impressive and it was not an easy decision to make due to the high quality of the candidates. We have announced to the school in our achievement assembly on Monday that Isabelle S, is our Head Girl and Jack W, our Head Boy. They will be supported by a strong team of deputies, namely, Niamh W, Chloe R, Chloe E, Jacob G, Nathan B and Orson B. Paige and Tolly will lead our new social media team, whilst Grace G will head-up our well-being team. The school is fortunate to have such talented and committed students to help lead.



They replace a similar group of Year 13s who leave us equipped for their challenge. Staff joined Year 13 for a most sociable evening in mid-June, where the competitive nature of both staff and students shone through at a Ten-Pin bowling alley in Carlisle. Perhaps, some of our leavers could spend their free time as undergraduates honing their bowling skills!

When our current Year 7s return in September they will be able to show a younger cohort the AGS way. The values that we live and breath here are fundamental and our Year 7s have developed these as the year has gone on. I look forward, alongside our Head of Year 7 and 8, Mrs. Bowes to seeing them embed even further as Year 8s. It is pleasing to note that September's incoming Year 7 will be our biggest year group, whilst still fitting comfortably into three groups.

There was strong representation from all year groups and especially Year 8 and Year 9 in our recent musical; Annie Jnr. The shows were played out to big crowds last week. On Wednesday we welcomed local primary school children to watch the dress rehearsal matinee and then in the evening of Thursday and Friday we opened the doors wide to friends, family and the community. They were not disappointed! The school's first production in fifteen years was a roaring success with the students displaying their acting and singing prowess. Not only that but the behind-the-scenes work was undertaken by another group of equally committed students. It really was an enjoyable way to spend an evening. Thank you to all the staff lead by Mr. Gordon, our Curriculum Leader for Music and one of our governors, Mrs. Burgess that made the idea a reality.



Our Year 9s are moving onto to their exam courses in September and those that have opted for Food gained a great experience as they helped make our Creative Show another night to remember. Our Curriculum Leader for Art, DT and Food, Mrs. Benson choreographed the whole evening which brought together the fabulous work our A-Level and GCSE students have produced this year in her faculty. After viewing the art and DT work, guests, (including a huge representation from our great supporters, the Appleby Rotary Club) were treated to a lovely three-course meal served to the table by our students.

Mrs. Benson gives some reflection on the evening:

'Our Creative Show is a celebration of the talent and creativity that we have amongst the students at Appleby. It showcases the very best of Art, Design &



Technology, Food and Drama, through inspiring GCSE and A-Level Art and DT exhibitions, creative displays from all year groups, highlights from our musical production Annie, beautifully crafted canapés, and a Year 10 student-run restaurant with the support of Kendal College and ingredient donations from Westmorland Family, Appleby Creamery and Low Howgill butchers.



The evening offers visitors the opportunity to explore the outstanding work and achievements of our students while experiencing the breadth and vibrancy of our creative curriculum. It is a celebration of imagination, skill, collaboration, and passion, reflecting the dedication of both students and staff across our creative areas.'

And there is more from Mrs Truch and her artists:



'Our Year 12 students will be exhibiting work at Rheged through the summer as well as lots of artwork entries to see at Appleby Show. In September Year 8 will experience a Woodmatters workshop for and there are plans for a GCSE trip to Alnwick.'

From one vibrant faculty to another as science report on another busy term. Mrs. Lightfoot, our Curriculum Leader for Science summarises all the activities that have been going on:

'This term has been a busy term for STEM activities. We invited over 70 pupils from the feeder primary school to our STEM day, which this year had a space theme. The pupils enjoyed a variety of activities including building rockets, making space vehicles, designing and testing space landers, estimating and calculating area, length and volume, creating some space themed art work and spent time in the planetarium. Our Year 9 volunteers were a fantastic help and represented the school in a positive way, maintaining our school values throughout the day.'



A group of KS3 students visited the University of Cumbria as part of the annual SmartSTEM day. Along with other students from around the county the students listened to keynote speaker from within the science industry; took part in workshops which included ecology and conservation, coding and cyber security and medical procedures; and visited trade stands to find out more about careers within the STEM fields.

All the Year 9 students took part in the Bloodhound Education workshop, delivered by the Royal Engineers. During the workshop the students had to work in teams to design and build a car powered by air. With many great designs it came down to the functionality and durability to see which group won. I think we have lots of female engineers of the future!



The sixth formers have not missed out either. In June they all visited Lancaster University to take part in a variety of STEM workshops. This was a great opportunity for them to find out what degree level courses involve and the higher-level practical work they could be doing. The biologists visited Sand Hawes dune in Barrow as part of their field work studies, which is an important part of the students practical endorsement to pass their A level course. Thank you to Mr Wright for assisting us on our visit.

Throughout the year we have been running STEM clubs at lunchtime. Mr Riley ran a Royal Air Force club for Year 7 & Year 8, whilst Year 10 have had the Technicians club. These will be up and running again in September.'

Modern Foreign Languages can also report on another year of success, as Mrs. Budgett, our Curriculum Leader for MFL explains:

'For the 5th consecutive year, AGS has achieved outstanding success in the prestigious Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators, organised by The Queen's College, University of Oxford. This national competition attracts around 25,000 students from across the UK each year, making it one of the largest and most competitive language events in the country. To be recognised in the competition once is a significant achievement; to receive awards and commendations for five years running is a remarkable testament to the talent, hard work and linguistic curiosity of our students and our staff who strive for excellence in this event.

The competition challenges students to translate texts creatively and accurately between languages, rewarding not only linguistic knowledge but also imagination, cultural understanding and attention to detail. We are all very proud of all the students who have taken part over the past five years. Their achievements continue to place our school among the country's strongest performers in this prestigious competition and demonstrate the excellence that our students are capable of achieving. Students who took part this year were in Year 9: Lexi-Anne R (who was placed), Maisie B and Izzy D and from Year 8: Amelia D, Jess D, Georgia P and Izzy S.'

A whole host of avid readers were recognised in our achievement assembly on Monday as Mrs. Griffiths, our Curriculum Leader for English presented certificates to those that had achieved via the school's reading programme. Earlier in the term two of our Year 7 students took part in shadowing books from this year's Carnegie medal for Illustration Award with other students from the Eden Schools Enrichment Cluster. They completed various activities linked to the books and voted for their favourite: 'The Endless Sea' by Chi Thai and Linh Dao which tells the story of family fleeing Vietnam to find safety.

Duke Of Edinburgh Award

Now in its Seventieth year, the award has provided opportunities for millions of young people.

[DofE at 70 - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award](#)

Our commitment to this award remains undimmed and Ms. Auchterlonie, who leads our provision reports on more Gold success:

'Earlier this month, Year 12 students successfully completed their Gold DofE assessed expedition in the Lake District. Starting at Loweswater, the team camped in Ennerdale and Buttermere before exploring the historic bothies near Honnister Pass. They conquered Great Gable, enjoyed a stunning wild camp in Borrowdale, and finished with a spectacular ridge walk along Maiden Moor and High Spy, keeping Keswick in their sights. Huge [congratulations](#) to Chloe, Jacob, Isaac, and Tolly!'



And thank you to all our staff that made it all possible.

Libby W raises funds for a great cause! Well done!

Libby W (Year 11) spent several lunchtimes with Mr. Hunter over the winter term creating a 2D image of the Great North Air Ambulance. The model is now sited at the cricket club to promote the venue as a collection point. Libby is an authorised collector for this charity and is now keen to do



more. In the autumn she would like to raise a small amount of money to purchase an outdoor and secure collection box which could be mounted on the sign. For now though there is a collection box in the bar and we hope that the remainder of the summer season will allow lots of generous donations whilst visitors attend the cricket fixtures.

If you can pop in and make a donation and we'll keep you updated next term on Libby's next fundraising work for the GNAAS.

[Great North Air Ambulance Service | Charity funded, world-class critical care](#)

The summer term has seen plenty of school sporting events with the whole school sports day last week a particular highlight. We are the only Eden school to hold a whole school event like this and in hot conditions on our school field our school values were on full display. There were some outstanding individual and team displays. There is no doubt we have some talented athletes. What we also have our students who will give it a go – jump up to run an extra race, jump or throw to help their house out. It was the school at its best, as a community. Runners coming in last were warmly applauded by those watching reflecting the kindness and respect that are integral to our school functioning as it

does. Our final assembly today has focused on celebrating the achievements on sports day and recognising the winners and those who gave it their all. Thank you to Mrs. Bond, our Curriculum Leader for PE for masterminding the whole day.

She was also proud of some of youngest athletes who earlier in the term several Year 7 and Year 8 athletes attended the Eden District Athletics on what was a very hot day in Cumbria! Our students worked hard in the heat and produced some excellent performances, showing teamwork looking after each other and resilience throughout. A particular well done to Year 7 for whom this was a county qualifying event. Tanner M, Rowan G, Emily A, Lacey O, Amelia J and Poppy B all qualified to represent AGS as part of the Eden team at the Cumbria Athletics competition being held at Sheepmount, Carlisle. Well done everyone.

Our students formed the backbone of the Appleby Eden CC U13 team that have become county champions too. Well done to them all on their victory over Cockermouth in the final. Not only are they cup winners, but they have done the double by winning the Westmorland Cricket League (North). A great season by any measure. Well done all!

We are always keen to hear from parents or the community on our students success outside of school and it is fantastic to relay information on Paddy L (Year 8). Paddy has achieved a remarkable result as he participated in the Pony Club Junior Boys Tetrathlon last month. Tetrathlon is a competition comprised of Shooting, Swimming, Running and Riding and is a variant of the Olympic sport Modern Pentathlon. Paddy dominated the competition throughout, placing first in the Shoot, Run and Ride categories and second in the Swim, giving him the overall title by over 546 points! An absolutely outstanding achievement from one of the most committed sporting students at AGS! We are all hugely proud of your success, well done!



We pride ourselves on our school values (it is nice that Ofsted noticed!) and promoting them and fundamental British Values, especially in what seem like quite challenging times to do so. A new educational visit happened last month with Year 7 heading to the Beamish Museum to focus on the British Value of Democracy. Mr Hook, our Curriculum Leader for PSHE picks up the details of the day:

'Year 7 students visited Beamish on Wednesday as part of their PSHE curriculum. Students took part in two workshops designed to test their understanding of key British Values, firstly exploring the process of voting in a mock hustings from the 1868 General Election. After listening to the original speeches



from the candidates, students were then given a glimpse as to what voting was like at the time, with candidates bribing and threatening them in order to win their votes. It was great to see our students identify the importance of voting, and the key changes which have occurred in our democratic processes since the 19th century. The second workshop focused on the allocation of a council house in the 1950s town, with our groups exploring

the area and interviewing various residents, before presenting their findings to the rest of the group and advocating for each of their chosen families. Visits to the Fish and Chip shop, the bakery and the famous sweet shop followed, capping off a fantastic visit! Thank you to the whole group for their outstanding behaviour and engagement on the day!’

Financial Advice!

In a changing world where young people need to have a handle on their finances, we dedicated a day to help inform our students about the topic. Mr. Hayman, our Head of Sixth Form organised the workshops as part of our revamped PSHE programme. The sessions featured:

KS3 students - budgeting and saving

KS4 students - scams and gambling

KS5 students - student finance

Thank you to WiseUp Education and Penrith Building Society for the sessions.



Since I last wrote to you, our Ofsted report has been published and I have written to all about it already. Ofsted and its inspection regime remains in the news and I suspect will always do so. It is not the be and end all, despite its obvious importance. I am pleased that the inspection team recognised the nature of our school, that are safeguarding is met and that across all seven judged areas we are doing what we should be doing. It validates the thoughtful and committed work the staff have being engaged in to provide our students with the best education we can. Our focus in 2026-27 will be to carry on that work being even more inclusive, developing our curriculum and teaching further and ensuring students leave AGS with real achievements both in and outside of the classroom. You can read more about our report and my thought on it here: [Appleby Grammar School - OFSTED](#)



So, as the school year closes, I want to thank three members of staff who are leaving us. Mrs. Walton, has worked in the PE faculty on a maternity cover over the past two years and now that has come to an end she moves on to another local school. Mr. Hockley, in English also leaves us after two years for a new life abroad, whilst Mrs. Edgar who has been part of our admin and finance team is retiring. All three colleagues have added to our school community and they will be missed.



It is also time to look forward; firstly to the summer holiday and then to September. I wish all our families a restful and enjoyable holiday. I hope all of you are able to spend some precious time together. I reflect that many of the events described in this newsletter have been enhanced by the support you offer your child and therefore, the school. Thank you for that – it is critical to our school's on-going success. And to September! Our new build continues apace. The skeleton of the building is



nearly complete and by the start of the new school year work on the inside of the building should have begun. On Monday a ceremonial signing of the steelwork took place with students, staff, governors, the DfE and the construction company all leaving their mark for posterity. We have another community event planned for Friday 9 October, so please

sign up for that to see the progress first hand.

Have a great summer and I look to welcoming all our students back to AGS on Wednesday 2 September ready for a 8.50am start.

Best Wishes



Mr P J Nicholson
Headteacher
Appleby Grammar School