



Primary High Notes Friday 16th January 2026

Dear Parents

This week has prompted me to reflect on the value of independence in education. What it allows schools like ours to do well, and why it matters so much for the pupils we serve. On Wednesday, I attended the Society of Heads' Board meeting. This is a small group of elected Heads who meet regularly. Being part of this board is both a privilege and a responsibility. It requires careful thought, open dialogue and a commitment to acting in the best interests of independent education as a whole, not just our own individual schools. These discussions are always energising and professionally enriching. They provide space to share best practice, to challenge one another's thinking and to learn from different contexts. They also reaffirm why independence in education is so powerful when it is exercised thoughtfully: it gives schools the freedom to make decisions that are right for their pupils, rather than decisions driven solely by national prescription.

At Derby High, our independence allows us to design a curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of our pupils, academically, pastorally and holistically. It enables us to prioritise depth of learning, curiosity and confidence, rather than simply preparing pupils for the next set of tests. One clear example of this is our decision not to sit SATs in Year 6. This is a deliberate choice, allowing our pupils to enjoy a rich primary education without the pressure of high-stakes testing at such a formative age, and ensuring they move into Senior School ready to learn and flourish.

Our independence is also evident in the rich curriculum we offer in the Primary School. Throughout their time with us, pupils benefit from specialist teaching in French, Music and Physical Education, ensuring depth, expertise and continuity in these subjects from an early age. As pupils move into Years 5 and 6, this specialist provision expands further: Science is taught by a Senior School specialist, while pupils study Spanish in Year 5 and German in Year 6. This approach not only supports high-quality teaching, but also helps pupils develop confidence, curiosity and a strong sense of readiness for the transition to Senior School.

Independence also allows us to offer pupils meaningful choice as they progress through the school, in the subjects they study, the opportunities they pursue and the paths they take. This sense of ownership plays an important role in helping our pupils achieve highly and move on to exciting destinations when they leave us at the end of Year 13.

As part of the normal rhythm of school life, we are now within the window for our next ISI inspection. It has been almost exactly three years since our last full inspection, and the current framework operates on a three-year cycle. The new ISI framework, introduced in September 2023, no longer uses single-word judgements or grades. Instead, inspections focus on how well schools meet the standards and on the lived experience of pupils, their learning, wellbeing and personal development.

Independence matters here too. ISI is the inspectorate specifically for independent schools, and its approach recognises the diversity and individuality of schools within the sector. It provides a rigorous but thoughtful process that allows schools to be evaluated in the context of their aims, values and ethos. We will not know which week inspectors are coming until we receive notification on a Monday morning, but this is something we approach with confidence rather than concern, seeing inspection as an opportunity to reflect on and share the everyday work and culture of the school.

As ever, thank you for your continued support of Derby High School, and for sharing our belief in the power of an independent education rooted in high expectations, strong relationships and choice.

Best wishes,

Amy Chapman

Head

Lunch Time Clubs

It is great to see our pupils enjoying our lunchtime clubs and after-school activities with such enthusiasm.

Our extra-curricular programme opens up exciting opportunities for pupils to explore new interests, stretch themselves, and build confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills beyond the classroom.

To see what's planned for this term, visit our extra-curricular timetables on our website [click here](#)





Book Donations

Already this term, we have had three wonderful pupils demonstrating one of the school's core values of kindness. Hadley and Rupert have donated their own books to the school - for the enjoyment of others. Their kindness has meant that we have over 50 'new' books which can be discovered and appreciated across the entire primary school.

What a glorious example of recycling! Thank you!

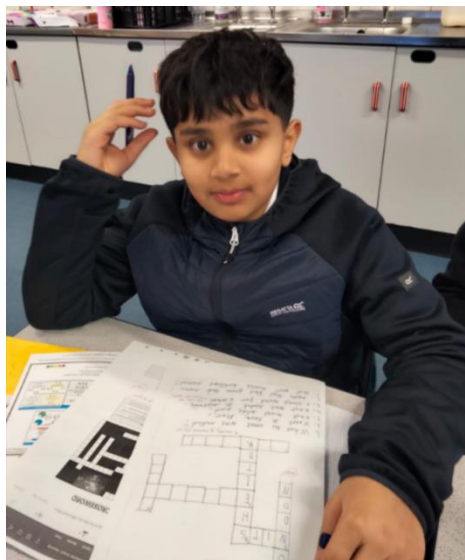


World War 1 & 2 Crosswords

On Thursday afternoon, Year 6 sharpened their deductive reasoning, spelling skills and problem-solving abilities when they worked studiously to solve crosswords which the pupils themselves had created from scratch. The entire crossword was brought to life as part of a homework activity where the children taught themselves how to manipulate functions in Word to create a very professional-looking crossword. These were all based around our topic theme of the World Wars.

The activity was wonderful to witness and the learning conversations which took place were excellent.

Well done to every pupil in Year 6 for working so hard on this and demonstrating such enthusiasm - and resilience - throughout the whole process.



Calling all Alumni

At Derby High School, we are working hard to connect with our Alumni, and we love to hear from our past students. If you, or someone you know, attended Derby High School and would be happy to share what you are now doing with our wider community, please do get in touch.

To sign up to our Alumni database please complete this short form on our website: [Alumni Form - Derby High School](#). Thank you.



Please Submit Your Vote - Lots for Tots Awards

Last week we were delighted to announce that Derby High Primary has been nominated for three Lots for Tots awards.

- Preschool Education Provider of the Year
- Primary Age Education Provider of the Year
- Early Years Educator of the Year: Dora Eleftheriou (Mrs E)

Voting is still open! Please cast your votes and help us get to the finalist stage by [clicking here](#). Thank you for your support!



Akido Achievement for Rhia

Congratulations to Rhia in Year 6! On 13th December, Rhia passed her Aikido grading and is now a Junior Shodan Black belt! Incredibly, Rhia is one of the youngest in her Aikido club to achieve her Black belt at 10 years old. What a pride-inducing achievement. From starting her Aikido journey – here at school – to becoming a Black Belt is very impressive! Well done, Rhia.



Martial Arts Success for Isaac

Congratulations to Isaac, Year 2, who has recently been awarded Student of the Year in his Martial Arts. Congratulations Isaac, keep up the hard work.



Piano Success for Anaya

Congratulations to Anaya, Year 6, who sat her piano exam last term. Anaya was pleased to achieve a pass and is excited to move onto the next grade. Well done, Anaya, keep up the hard work!



Drama Classes

Action Academy are holding drama classes at weekends at their studios in Littleover.

Please contact infoactionacademy@gmail.com for more information.

Please note, this is not run by Derby High School.

A promotional poster for Action Academy Kids Drama Classes. The top half features a group of six diverse children smiling and holding LAMDA certificates. Below them, the text 'KIDS DRAMA CLASSES' is written in large, bold, yellow and red letters. The background is red with yellow stars. The bottom half of the poster contains text about the classes, including exam results and contact information.

**KIDS
DRAMA
CLASSES**

Fun, confidence-building classes for ages 4–16. During our last LAMDA exams ALL students received distinctions! All classes are held at our very own studios in Littleover, Derby.

Midis: Age 4-7yrs Junior/Senior: 8-16yrs
Junior/ Seniors LAMDA: Sat 9.30-10.15AM
Midis Drama: SAT. 10.15-11.00AM
Junior/ Seniors LAMDA: SAT. 11.00-11.45AM
Junior/ Seniors musical theatre: SAT. 11.45-12.30PM
Classes restart SAT. 24th January
Next term - £85.50 (9 lessons)

Book your free trial today!

07769224333 infoactionacademy@gmail.com

Safeguarding Corner

Safeguarding Podcast: Episode 55, In2 Early Intervention

This week Mrs. Bellman and Mrs. McBride discuss pastoral care at Derby High School. Two outside agencies are also discussed which are, Bridge the Gap and Compass.

To listen to the podcast, [please click here.](#)



Links for more information can be found below.

[Child Mental Health Support | Bridge the Gap | Derby | Emotional Literacy | Anxiety Support](#)

[Compass Changing Lives - Compass](#)

[Early Help Assessment - Derby City Council](#)

Dates For Your Diary

Thursday 22nd January – Primary Teatime Concert

Wednesday 28th January – Year 6 Hawkeye Falconry Visit

Useful Links

Menu for week commencing 19th January - [please click here.](#)

Calendar (via the Parent Portal) - <https://derbyhigh.parents.isams.cloud>