



# WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been a wonderful week here at Higham Lane School. Our students have been working so hard and have produced some incredible work, demonstrating excellent attitudes to learning. They have truly embodied our school vision of **'be the best you can be'** by working hard, being kind, and taking responsibility.

## A Visit From Other School Leaders

On Wednesday, we had a visit from a group of headteachers, deputy headteachers, and assistant headteachers from another high-performing multi-academy trust. They contacted us to speak to us so they could learn from our school following our recent Ofsted inspection where we maintained the grading of Outstanding. The visitors were extremely impressed with the behaviour and attitude of our amazing students. They were equally impressed with the quality of teaching and learning taking place in lessons.

In particular, the visitors commented on how every lesson starts with what we call a rapid recall, which is an opportunity for students to retrieve previously learned material. This is a vital skill for success in formal examinations. Our visitors were also really impressed with the use of visualisers, which are devices similar to a camera that staff can use to show live footage of student work and to model answers, showing students how they can improve. When we were visited by Ofsted, the lead inspector made similar observations about the quality of pedagogy in our classrooms. It was a lovely experience for us to share our excellent practice with other high-performing schools; the reason why we are here is to make a difference to the lives of young people and as an Ofsted outstanding school, I think it is only right that we support other schools where we can to the benefit of children, no matter where they attend.

I would like to thank our expert teachers for all their hard work. We are very lucky at our school to have such experienced expert teachers, many of whom are exam markers for examination boards. In some cases, staff have written textbooks due to their level of experience and expertise, which, of course, means our children are being taught by some of the very best teachers around. This expertise is a key reason for the outstanding outcomes our students achieve. We are very proud to be the only Ofsted outstanding school in Nuneaton and our GCSE and A-level results are among the best not just in Nuneaton but in the whole of Warwickshire.

## Outstanding Work Event

Today, we held our Outstanding Work Event. Students nominated by staff for producing phenomenal work had the opportunity to meet with me as Headteacher, with Mrs. Elmer (our Chair of Governors), and Mrs. Bissett (our new Deputy Headteacher for Curriculum, Learning and Teaching). They received a praise postcard to take home and a tasty treat. We were bowled over by the quality of the work from our students and are so proud to see them working so hard and taking responsibility for their learning.



## **Student Well-being and Mobile Phones**

The well-being of our students will always be a top priority. As adults, we recognise the many benefits of modern technology, but we also know the potential risks. Please do monitor the use of electronic devices carefully to ensure your child is safe and is not overusing them. Please also think very carefully before providing a device to your child. Regularly check their security settings and their phone to ensure they are not engaging in unsafe or illegal activities. Please see below a recent research study on the use of mobile phones:

[Mental Health – Worrying Impact of Smartphones Before Age 13](#)

## **E-bikes and E-scooters**

We have noticed that a very small number of students have started to arrive at school on e-bikes. E-bikes are legal on UK roads, and as a school, we will allow students to ride them to school. However, we will review this approach and reserve the right to change our policy if there are accidents or near-misses.

Current UK guidance states that riders must be at least 14 years of age and the motor must have a maximum continuous rated power of 250W and a motor cut-off speed of 15.5 mph. Any student below the age of 14, or with a motor that exceeds these specifications, is strictly prohibited from riding their e-bike on a public highway or pavement, and therefore to or from school. Please note that there have already been fatalities in the UK where young people have been killed in e-bike crashes, and sadly, there have also been deaths of pedestrians who have been struck by e-bikes. It is vital that school and home work together to keep our young people and the local community safe.

The government also recommends purchasing a complete e-bike from a reputable retailer rather than using conversion kits, as these are often not designed or tested for this use and can be more dangerous. Please also be aware that there have been cases in the UK where imported e-bike batteries have self-combusted and caused house fires. For this reason, imported battery packs for e-bikes are prohibited.

We work very closely with Warwickshire Police and ask for your assistance to ensure that your child, if they choose to ride an e-bike, follows these rules strictly. The school reserves the right to confiscate a bike if we believe it is dangerous, is being used in a way that does not follow school rules or is potentially being ridden illegally. For more details, please see this website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/battery-safety-for-e-cycle-users/battery-safety-for-e-cycle-users>.

If your child cycles or uses a scooter to get to school, please ensure they have completed a Higham Lane School Bicycle Agreement and are wearing a helmet.

## **Fire Alarm Drill**

We held a fire drill on Friday morning last week as previously communicated. While the practice went well, we had a small issue with a switch in the fire alarm system that caused a slight delay. This error has now been fixed, earlier this week and we have been informed by the engineer that there should be no further issues with this in the future.

## **Canteen System**

We have had some significant problems with the electronic system for our new school canteen. We can only apologise for the disruption this has caused. We would like to be clear that the fault was not with our school system. We have worked tirelessly with the new catering company over the last few days to resolve the matter, and we are now delighted to say that we believe the issue has been fixed and there should be no further problems. Can we please ask all parents and carers to check their balance to ensure there are sufficient funds for your child to purchase food on Monday?

## Year 12 Open Evening

I would like to say a big thank you to Mr. Sears and the whole Sixth Form Team for their hard work in putting together the Year 12 Open Evening on Wednesday. Thank you also to all the parents and carers who attended. We hope you found the evening useful in helping your child achieve their full potential at A-level.

## Important Dates and Information

- Aspire Programme: Your child has been informed about the Aspire programme, which will provide wonderful opportunities to develop cultural capital, explore different careers, and consider different avenues in life.
- Enrichment Day (Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September): This will be a day of special activities for all students.
  - Year 7: Wolvey 5 Ways Team Building
  - Year 8: Subject Options
  - Year 9: Prison Me No Way
  - Year 10: Core Subject Offer
  - Year 11: Practice Interview Personal Development Day
  - Sixth Form: Trip to Alton Towers

## Our "Vulnerable First" Approach

On my way into school this morning, I was listening to BBC Radio 4 where young people who have been in the care system were speaking. A recent report has shown that children who have been adopted or are in the care system are twice as likely to be a NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). This is a shocking national statistic. We are so proud that here at Higham Lane School, we work tirelessly to aim for zero NEETs every year, irrespective of whether a child has been in the care system or not. A significant part of our school development plan this year is to support our most vulnerable children. As Sir Martyn Oliver, the Chief Inspector for Ofsted, said recently, "If we get it right for the most vulnerable, we will get it right for everybody."

I attended an Ofsted training session on Wednesday evening on the new inspection framework. I believe the new report card style will be helpful for parents as it will provide more detailed and useful information. However, as I have stated previously, I do have reservations that the new framework has not gone far enough to protect staff as the inspection process is an extremely stressful, tiring and time-consuming process. I have concerns that following the tragic death of Ruth Perry, this new framework will not support staff as much as I had hoped. However, one area with which I am in complete agreement is the focus on vulnerable children and at Higham Lane school, we will continue to work tirelessly to try to further improve our provision for our students from disadvantaged backgrounds, our students with SEND and for our students who are known to children services. This is why our vulnerable first strategy is a key part of our school development plan for the current academic year.

### **Open Day (Thursday 2nd October 2025)**

A reminder that next Thursday 2nd October is our Open Day. Prospective Year 7 students and their families can visit the school, with the main Open Evening event running from 5:00 pm until 7:30 pm. I will be giving two speeches to explain the school's vision and what we offer. Our school dates back to 1939 and has a proud history of families sending generation after generation of their children here because they know they will receive a first-rate education. It is a testament to the high standards we set that so many of our staff send their own children to our school. We look forward to welcoming prospective students and their families into our school and we hope that they will choose us as their first choice.

Thank you all for your continued support. I wish you and your families a wonderful and restful weekend.

Best wishes,



Michael Gannon  
Headteacher  
Higham Lane School