Sir Thomas Wharton Academy

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Principal: Mr M McDonald

Our ref: MMC/NWI

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Dear Parents and Carers

As we move further into the autumn term, I continue to be incredibly proud of the energy, ambition and commitment shown by our students and staff across the academy. There has been so much to celebrate over recent weeks, both inside and outside the classroom, from record levels of engagement in our year 11 Achieve sessions and the fantastic commitment shown by year 10 students to their GCSE studies, to the growing success of our enrichment programme, including the recognition of our inclusive Duke of Edinburgh offer by its national Chief Executive; our students continue to make the most of the opportunities available to them.

We have also enjoyed some excellent sporting performances, celebrated the enthusiasm and achievements of our students through our rewards and house competitions, and seen continued strength in attendance. What makes me particularly proud is not simply the number of things happening, but the attitude, determination and sense of belonging that our young people demonstrate every day. Thank you to our staff for the dedication they show and to parents and carers for the continued support you give us.

Together, we are creating an academy where every young person is encouraged to aim high, experience new opportunities and achieve things they may not have thought possible.

Teaching and Learning

Year 11

October Half Term Achieve

Over half term, we enjoyed record attendance to our year 11 Achieve sessions, with well over 60% of the year group attending at least one session over the course of the week, accessing an additional 582 hours of learning! We would like to place on record our thanks to staff for giving up their time to deliver to students, as well as parents and carers for their continued assistance with supporting students to attend. Finally, a huge well done to students for demonstrating the highest standards and investing to achieve the best outcomes possible.

Trial Examinations

A reminder to all parents and carers that students will complete trial examinations as follows over the next two weeks:

- Monday 9 November – Friday 13 November: core trial examinations (English, Maths, Science).
- Monday 16 November – Friday 20 November: Achieve Week (trial examinations in Option subjects, including practical examinations and Geography field trip).

To support students during the core trial examination week, we will be hosting Pre-Achieve sessions from 7.30am each morning. During this time, subject teachers will be available to support students with preparing for each morning's exam in the activity hall, with free tea and toast also available.

We're excited to invite all year 11 students and their families to our **Sixth Form Open Evening** on **Wednesday 11 November** from **5:00 to 7:00 pm**. This is a fantastic opportunity to explore the wide range of subjects and pathways available after GCSEs. Throughout the evening, you'll be able to visit subject stalls, meet our teachers, and discover more about the courses you can study. Current Sixth Form students will also be on hand to share their experiences and answer your questions.

Year 10

Securing Success Evening

On Tuesday 3 November, were thrilled to welcome 90% of our year 10 students, along with their parents and carers, into the academy for our annual event, which saw every student receive a set of bespoke revision guides to support their GCSE studies. Thank you to all parents and carers who attended the Skills to Success Evening on Tuesday of this week.

Achieve Week

Our first year 10 Achieve week of the year, commenced on Wednesday 4 November, with students immersing themselves in their Option subjects on Wednesday and Thursday before focusing on English and Maths on Friday. This week is essential to allow students to complete coursework and exam components, as well as practical examinations, that will contribute to students' final grades. The Achieve week continues next week with Option D on Monday and Option B on Tuesday.

There are three Achieve weeks throughout year 10 to support delivery of GCSE and BTEC courses, with 100% attendance being essential to ensure students achieve the best possible outcomes.

- Achieve Week 2: Wednesday 10 February – Tuesday 23 February (either side of February Half Term)
- Achieve Week 3: Wednesday 14 April – Tuesday 20 April

Tassomai

The final week before half term saw another excellent week of quizzing on Tassomai, with students in years 10 and 11 quizzing for over 250 hours and answering almost 75,000 questions to test their knowledge of English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography and Computer Science.

A reminder that all students are expected to use the app to achieve their weekly goal, which takes on average 15 minutes per subject. Further information about Tassomai and its potential impact can be found here: How does Tassomai work? — Tassomai

Careers

Year 8 Work Shadowing

Today, our year 8 students embarked on a work shadowing day. This was an exciting opportunity for students to develop their understanding of the world of work. Students explored the skills builder framework and the essential employment skills and how these are applied in different career situations.

Personal Development

Duke of Edinburgh

We were delighted to host Ruth Marvel OBE and CEO of DofE on Thursday 22 October. Ruth is an advocate for enrichment for all students and worked alongside the Department for Education to introduce enrichment benchmarks in all schools nationally. Ruth had heard we had enrolled all year 9 students in Bronze DofE and that we have removed all barriers to ensure all students can complete the award and she wanted to see how we had achieved this. A number of our year 9 and 10 students spoke eloquently and confidently to Ruth and her team about the experience and skills they have acquired through DofE and Ruth was very impressed! In addition, she thought the model of using the Wednesday electives to gain the skills, volunteering and physical elements of the award was fantastic. As a result of the meeting, our school will now be used as a case study to others, in the hope that more schools will increase their enrichment offer and DofE participant numbers.

Enrichment Clubs

After school clubs taking place this half term were shared with students during tutor time on Monday. Details are also available on our website and on our social media platforms. We have over 30 after school enrichment clubs running; it would be great to see as many students there as possible. All clubs run until 3:40 pm. If a club has a later finish time, it will be communicated by the enrichment lead.

Sports Fixtures

Football

Boys

On Thursday 22 October, our year 8 boys team played away against Ridgewood Academy in the Doncaster Cup. From the minute the boys stepped foot on the pitch, they were up for the match and proved it, scoring within the first 5 minutes of the game.

The boys kept possession brilliantly and high-quality football continued for the remainder of the match. The boys kept constant pressure on their opposition and secured a 4-0 victory.

The whole team showcased exceptional performance and attitude.

Girls

On Monday 2 November, our years 7/8 girls team were back in action playing against Rossington Academy; securing a 6-2 victory in what was an excellent performance from start to finish.

The girls demonstrated some excellent teamwork, determination and brilliant attacking football - with 6 goals in the back of the net, it is fair to say, the girls had their shooting boots on! Rossington Academy did manage to score 2 goals, but the girls remained composed and continued to dominate the game.

It was particularly pleasing to see the confidence, communication and encouragement between players throughout the match. Every member of the team contributed to a well-deserved victory.

A huge well done to all the girls involved, who continue to represent the academy with pride, enthusiasm and a fantastic attitude.

Events

Armistice Day

Members of our Student Parliament have been invited to take part, by reading a poem, in a short remembrance service at the Cenotaph in Edlington on Wednesday 11 November to come together with other local schools and the community to honour all those who have served and sacrificed for our country.

Our Student Parliament have been raising funds for the Royal British Legion by collecting donations through selling poppies during tutor time.

Sixth Form Open Evening

On Wednesday 11 November, we will welcome prospective Sixth Form students and their families to our Open Evening from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The evening will commence with a presentation from our Sixth Form team at 5:15 pm, followed by the opportunity to tour the academy, meet subject teachers, and learn more about the courses on offer. Please join us to find out more about our exceptional experiences.

House Update

As our house competitions are fully underway for the academic year, students have their quizzes, box tasks, awareness day challenges and extended house project available to earn their house points. This term, our winning house will be invited to attend a Christmas film cinema screening, as long as students have a minimum of fifty house points and less than 50 negatives.

Friday 13 November marks Children in Need 2026 where we will have the Pudsey House Games competition for students to compete to earn house points. Student volunteers will be selected during tutor time and timings for participation will be communicated next week.

Rewards

Our lucky KS3 daily draw winners will be taking part in a Xscape ski lesson on Monday 23 November as a reward for being awarded a golden ticket in lesson.

Our lucky KS4 daily draw winners will be going to the Christmas markets on Friday 27 November as a reward also.

We can't wait to celebrate with them!

Following this, the top 400 students with the most golden tickets will be awarded a free cinema screening in the New Year so keep earning those tickets!!

Attendance

We have seen strong attendance during the first week back from the half-term break, continuing the record-breaking attendance we had during the first half term.

This week, we have launched our new attendance rewards for this half-term. Each Friday we are going to be awarding one student in each year group with a FREE takeaway for themselves and their family - so 5 winners each week!

Every student who attends all week from Monday to Friday will gain entry into the weekly draw, which resets each week.

We want to reward students for their continued attendance and ensure they are in school each day to make the most of the fantastic opportunities they get at the academy. We are also continuing to visit families to offer support when students are not in the academy, so we can ensure they are not missing learning if it is not necessary.

Standards

Just a reminder to parents and carers that the entrance gate is closed each morning at precisely 8:20 am. Please ensure that your child arrives at school before this time to avoid being marked late. It is important that all students are in the building ready for their morning standing assembly.

Move from ParentPay to MCAS

We are pleased to confirm that our move to the MCAS payment system is now complete and the system is fully operational. ParentPay is no longer being used for payments for dinner money or trips/visits. All payments, including dinner money and school trips, should now be made through MCAS.

If you have any questions or experience any difficulties using the new system, please contact the academy and we will be happy to help.

Tea and Talk Evening

To enable us to reflect on the areas of strength and the opportunities for development within our school, our Tea and Talk group meets once per term with members of staff and the Senior Leadership team.

The Tea and Talk group has a dual purpose:

- It allows parents and carers and members of the community to provide feedback to leaders on current systems, successes, and areas for development.
- It is an opportunity for the academy to provide updates to our members on the progress we are making and share early thinking about upcoming developments.

Our first meeting will take place on Wednesday 18 November from 5:00 until 6:30 pm.

If you would like to join our group, please email: admin@stwacademy.com.

Further meetings during this academic year will be held on Wednesday 27 January and Wednesday 12 May 2027.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr M McDonald
Principal