

# School News

## NHGS is a HIGH PERFORMING SPECIALIST SCHOOL

NHGS was inspected in December 2007 and the subsequent report was published in January and distributed to all parents at that time. If parents of students that have joined the school since then want to see a copy of the report then it can be accessed through the school's website ([www.nhgs.co.uk](http://www.nhgs.co.uk)). Following the OFSTED inspection the school had to apply to be re-designated as a specialist science school. We had to submit a detailed three year school improvement plan to identify our priorities for development over the period 2008-2011 within six weeks of the Inspection Report being published. The three year plan was submitted in time and in April the school was informed by the DCSF that it had been re-designated for a further three years. To be re-designated, a specialist school must demonstrate at least adequate progress in meeting the requirements of the Specialist School Programme. This includes setting and achieving challenging targets for whole-school improvement, raising standards in their specialist subjects, and delivering purposeful support for partner schools and community-based activities. The school had fully met sixteen of its objectives set in 2004 when the school was first designated and made good progress towards the other five. The school was judged by OFSTED to have made good use of its specialist status and the additional resources it provided, *'The school has made particularly effective use of its specialist status to improve the quality of its provision in science and mathematics and raise attainment in these subjects'* (OFSTED Report January 2008).

In May the school was informed that we had met the criteria for designation as a High Performing Specialist School (HPSS). HPSS status was introduced in 2004 and allows schools that meet HPSS criteria to be given the opportunity at re-designation to take on additional roles. The criteria relate to the standards achieved by the school in the last year of the specialist plan. HPSS status rewards high performing schools but also creates incentives for continuous improvement. The DCSF want schools to be at the centre of the next stage of school reform. High Performing Specialist schools receive extra funds to enable them to play a role in system-wide reform. In return, they are expected to develop expertise in additional roles which are primarily for the benefit of partner schools and the wider

The North Halifax  
Grammar School



# NHGS News

NEWSLETTER 3  
NOVEMBER 2008

Page 1  
High Performing Specialist School

Pages 2 & 3  
Government & Politics Trip to  
Washington DC

Pages 4 & 5  
Ma Visite a Paris

Page 6  
Bag2school  
Contact Card Ads  
Maternity Leave Cover  
PA Meetings  
Craft Fayre  
German Conference

Page 7  
Halifax Swimming Club Schools  
Championships  
Disco Diva's!

Page 8  
Five Minute Fundraiser  
Netball News  
Science and Ethics

Page 9  
Top of the Bench Competition  
Empty out for eBay  
New Treasurer for PA  
A Musical Christmas

Page 10  
Citizenship Day  
Social Get Together for Mums

Page 11  
Personalised Learning

Page 12  
Head's Blog

Page 13  
Children in Need  
PA Monthly Prize Draw  
Wanted – M & S Clothes  
NHGS Christmas Hampers

Page 14  
Hair & Beauty Evenings

Page 15  
NHGS Parent Prom Dinner  
A Vote of Thanks from the Chair of  
Governors

community, although of course the school will also experience benefits itself. Central to the HPSS concept is that schools which have the capacity to lead others should form collaborative networks to share and disseminate good practice.

The school had to consider nine possible options for its HPSS status. They were:

1. Leading Edge Partnership Programme
2. Raising Achievement Partnership Programme
3. Leadership Partner School
4. Training School
5. Second Curriculum HPSS Specialism-Languages
6. Second Curriculum HPSS Specialism-Mathematics & Computing
7. Second Curriculum HPSS Specialism-Science
8. Second Curriculum HPSS Specialism-SEN
9. Applied Learning Specialism

Before deciding on our preferences we had to consult widely. From May to September the school consulted staff, governors, parents, other primary and secondary schools in Calderdale, Calderdale LA, The Learning & Skills Council and the Specialist Schools & Academies Trust. As a result of the consultation process the school submitted two preferences, our first was to have Languages as a second curriculum specialism and the second was as a Training School. We were informed on November 5<sup>th</sup> that our preferred choice of Languages had been accepted.

We have to submit a plan by December 19<sup>th</sup> to the DCSF setting out how we intend to develop our HPSS status over the next three years and so we have embarked upon another round of consultations with a range of partners to inform our proposals. The school has also been designated as a proposed centre of excellence for gifted and talented (G&T) education which is another element of the HPSS status that we will develop over the next three years. The school will receive an additional £40,000 pa for Languages and £10,000 pa for G & T, some 50% of which of both sums must be spent on supporting the wider community. In relation to our main HPSS focus this will support the implementation of the National Languages Strategy in other schools and for G & T it will relate to the implementation of the National

Strategies strand for G & T education. We are currently consulting schools in the North Halifax Federation to identify the best way to use this additional resource which will become available in 2009.

This is an exciting development for NHGS as it will enable the school, not only to improve our provision for languages and G & T students currently in the school, but also to impact positively on the wider educational community in Calderdale.

**GPM**

---

## **GOVERNMENT & POLITICS TRIP TO WASHINGTON**

The A level Government and Politics trip to Washington started with the long journey from Manchester to Frankfurt and then on to Washington DC, where we arrived 2 days before the presidential election and had an early night.

Our first day started early with a walk to Capitol Hill where we then walked down to the Washington Monument and back up to Capitol Hill. Here we had a guided tour of where Congress sat. We then walked to Union Street Station for some lunch. From there we took the scenic route down the road to the Archives Museum where we saw the Bill of Rights and the original written constitution which, being students of American politics, was important as these features run through the entire course.

On Election Day we had to get up early again to make our booking at the White House. Having seen the White House countless times on TV, it seemed like quite a privilege to be able to go inside and see where the President lives. On a stop at a souvenir shop, we were spotted by a woman with a camera and microphone, so our token Republican got a chance to air his views on what looked like local TV.



Being the day before the election we thought it would have been more bustling as it's the political heart of America but as much as the city itself was impressive and the buildings powerful, there seemed to be a stress free vibe.

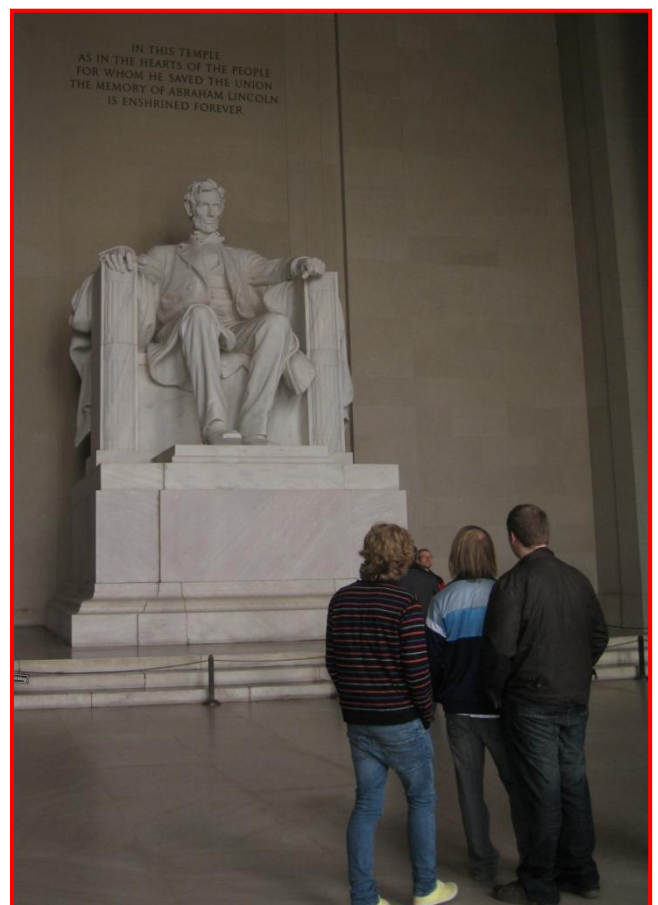
That evening we took the metro to a mall for dinner and shopping and then walked to the Lincoln Memorial, which was particularly impressive at night.

In the afternoon we took the metro out to the suburb of Alexandria where we went to see Democrats working at their local headquarters. The leader of the local Democrat party gave us an interesting insight into how they campaign and their thoughts on the likely outcome of the election. We also got to see a polling station; it was good to see the actual voting system at work.

On the evening of Election Day, we had planned to go to a democratic party at the local Jewish Community Centre but terrible map reading meant that we couldn't find it. So, we ended up piling into one room back at the hotel where we watched the results come in on the TV. As it became clear who had won, noises of car horns and the like from the street made it clear that people were happy

with the outcome. Later, large crowds descended upon the White House when Obama made his acceptance speech.

The next day it was obvious that people were pleased with Obama winning from the little comments made from all kinds of random people. We went on the metro again to Arlington Cemetery where ex-Presidents and servicemen are buried and some of us also saw a funeral taking place for a victim of the Iraq war.



In the afternoon we got the choice of what to do. Some went to the Air and Space Museum while others went to the Holocaust Museum.

For our last night we went to the sports bar across the road from our hotel. We played games for a while and then went and packed. We got the chance to do more shopping for a

couple of hours in the morning before having to make the gruelling journey back. Although we were all tired by the end of the week, we saw things that are completely relevant to our course as well as having a really excellent time in a really good American city.

**Robyn U6(2)**

---

## **MA VISITE A PARIS**

Je pense que tout le monde serait d'accord avec moi quand je dis que 5 heures du matin est trop tôt, particulièrement quand vous êtes sur le point de partir sur une excursion à Paris. En plus, le chauffeur n'était pas plein d'enthousiasme à nous attendre. C'était comme ça que l'excursion a commencé.

Après un voyage divers en avion et en RER, nous sommes arrivés à Paris. La première chose que j'ai remarquée sur la ville était les embouteillages apparemment infinis. Si vous ouvriez une fenêtre au centre-ville, je peux garantir que vous pourriez entendre le bruit des klaxons presque immédiatement.

Alors, vous avez déjà lu de l'atmosphère, mais vous vous demandez peut-être ce que nous avons fait pendant notre séjour. Après s'être effondrés, on avait l'occasion de se reposer et récupérer avant notre visite au Centre Georges Pompidou. Ce bâtiment est célèbre parce qu'il a été construit avec la tuyauterie à l'extérieur. Il en résulte qu'il y a plus d'espace à l'intérieur, pour les choses, comme une librairie et la galerie d'art moderne que nous avons visitée. Je trouvais stimulants certains objets d'art mais d'autres en étaient complètement bizarres !

Le soir, nous avons visité Montmartre et je voudrais faire noter que j'ai monté tous les pas à pied au lieu de prendre le funiculaire. Cela valait la peine, parce que la vue de Paris de nuit était brillante.

Le lendemain, nous avons pris partie d'une invention de Monsieur Allen. Il l'avait nommée « Une photographie, en forme de grille » qui est, brièvement, une grande expédition de photographie dans le centre de Paris. Et à mon avis, c'était une excellente méthode pour perfectionner votre compétence en navigation.

Nous avons passé l'après-midi dans la galerie du Louvre. Le point culminant de l'après-midi, c'était de se trouver à moins de cent mètres de la Joconde ! Mais sérieusement, il y avait de très belles maquettes et également célèbres.

La dernière journée avait la même quantité de choses à faire. Mais, malheureusement, notre première activité aurait dû monter la Tour Montparnasse mais puisqu'il faisait très nuageux, nous considérons une telle activité vouée à l'échec. Alors, on a changé au plan B. Ainsi, nous avons décidé de se diriger pour l'Île de la Cité où nous avons visité l'Eglise de Sainte Chapelle et la Cathédrale de Notre-Dame. Dans les deux cas, les bâtiments étaient très beaux et élégants.

L'après-midi, on nous a permis de faire les courses pendant une heure environ. J'ai acheté beaucoup de tablettes de chocolat qui seront les cadeaux pour ma famille ce Noël. Notre dernière visite était au Musée d'Orsay où les peintures les plus célèbres sont exposées, par exemple, les œuvres de Van Gogh, de Monet, de Manet et de Degas.

Notre retour en Angleterre était assez tranquille et sans histoire. On a suivi un itinéraire semblable à l'un que nous avons suivi pour notre voyage en France.

Alors, pour conclure, je pense que la visite à Paris était magnifique.

**par Matt 11(2)**

---

## MY TRIP TO FRANCE

I think anybody would agree if I say that 5 o'clock in the morning is too early, particularly when you're setting off on a trip to Paris. The driver wasn't too happy waiting for us either. And so, our trip began.

After a journey by plane and train, we arrived in Paris. What I first noticed about the city were the traffic jams stretching out as far as the eye could see. If you were to open any window in the centre, I can guarantee you'd be able to hear the noise of cars hooting straight away.

Now, you've read about the air quality, maybe you're wondering what we did during our time there. Well after collapsing for a while, we had the chance to rest and recuperate before our visit to the Pompidou Centre. This building is famous for its architecture, with its pipes built on the outside leaving more space inside for things like a bookshop and a gallery of modern art which we went to. I found certain art works really quite thought-provoking, but others were just completely weird!

In the evening we visited Montmartre and I'd like to state now that I walked up all the steps instead of the taking the funicular. It was well worth the effort as the view from the top of Paris by night was breathtaking.

The next day, we took part in an activity invented by Mr Allen. He'd called it "The Grid Photo" which, in short, involves a long expedition

round the centre of Paris taking photos. And, what's more, it turned out to be an excellent way of improving your navigating skills.

We then spent the afternoon in the Louvre, the highlight suddenly realising you're less than 100m from the Mona Lisa. But more seriously, there were other works that were really beautiful and just as famous.

The last day was another packed one although unfortunately our first activity, a trip up the Montparnasse Tower, didn't materialise as it was too cloudy and would have been a waste of time and money. So, on to plan B, and the decision to head for l'Île de la Cité, an island in the middle of Paris, where we visited the medieval chapel of Sainte Chapelle and the Cathedral of Notre-Dame.

In both cases, the buildings were really beautiful and finely decorated.

In the afternoon, we were allowed to go shopping for about an hour and I bought loads of chocolate as Christmas presents for my family. Our final visit was to the Musée d'Orsay where some of the most famous paintings are displayed; for example, works by Van Gogh, Monet, Manet and Degas.

Our trip home to England was quiet and uneventful, following a similar route back to the one we had done on the journey to France.

All in all, it was in my opinion, a great trip to Paris.



Matt, 11(2)

## Bag2school

A collection date has been arranged for Wednesday 11 February 2009 at 8.45am. As this is the morning after the Y7 parents consultation evening, bags can be brought in that evening, February 10<sup>th</sup> by parents. Please start collecting any old clothing, rags, duvets, pillows, footwear, handbags etc etc for this date. These can be collected in any bag and the blue bags will be distributed nearer the date as a further reminder. These collections are weighed, sorted and sold. Please see their website for more details [www.bag2school.com](http://www.bag2school.com) NHGS will be paid £400/tonne (as 2 collections have been booked) so please start saving that material that would otherwise be thrown away.

Please contact Helen on 01274 883906 if you need storage before this date.

*If it is too good to be thrown then why not donate it to our eBay department asap.*

---

## CONTACT CARD ADS

Why not advertise your business, large or small, in our Parent Prom "order of events"?

This is a new idea – send in your business card with a payment of £10 and we will include it in our literature on the evening.

Please support this fundraising idea as all proceeds are for the Sixth Form Learning Centre.

---

## Maternity Leave Cover



On 28 November Mrs Pegg will be going on Maternity Leave. We wish her well. Miss Hemingway will be covering Mrs Pegg's role as Progress Manager for Years 7 and 8.

**DRW**

---

## Parents' Association Meetings

Wednesday 3 December 2008  
Wednesday 7 January 2009  
Tuesday 3 February 2009 - AGM  
The meetings start at 7.45pm and all parents are welcome.  
Enter in the main entrance of NHGS

## CRAFT FAYRE

Once again this was a super event held in school and open to the whole community with a wide range of craft items at prices to suit every pocket. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way (far too many jobs entailed to list them all).

Huge thanks to all pupils and parents who baked all the fabulous buns, cakes and biscuits for the PA cake stall, this alone raised £175.

The total raised was in excess of £1300 and with matched funding there will be an extra £1000.

***Thanks to Nina Maclure for organising the past 14 Craft Fayres at NHGS.***

---

## GERMAN CONFERENCE

On the 7 November, lots of Year 9 students who are studying German travelled to Manchester to a German Conference.

We all met up at about 9.00am just in time to catch the 9.12am train to Manchester. The journey was about an hour long but everyone was having a laugh so the time just flew by and we arrived in no time.

When we got off the train we tried to make our way to the Methodist Centre. We did get a bit lost but with the help of a few students we got there eventually.

After about half an hour it began. At the start there was a theme tune by DJ Ötzi which everyone had fun dancing along to. We also made friends with the people in front of us before we started. We answered questions in the booklets. People were chosen to go up on stage and answer questions and if you got it right you got chocolate (or schokolade as it is in German). The students

from NHGS who went up on stage were Oliver, Amelia, Charlotte and Elizabeth.



After we had answered more questions and watched a few video clips we had just enough time to get a group photo before jumping back on the train to arrive back in Halifax at 4.45pm. Everyone enjoyed the day. Es war fantastisch!!

---

Elizabeth and Charlotte 9(1)

## HALIFAX SWIMMING CLUB SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS

NHGS entered 33 students in the Y7-11 championships this year at the Halifax Pool. It was good to see a large number of lower school students of varying abilities participating as well as our traditional entries in the upper school. Congratulations to all the students who swam and helped maintain the school's reputation as being one of the largest contributors to this historic sporting event.

Particular mention needs to be made regarding Hannah Midgley (Y10) who was placed first in the premier female event – 100m Freestyle - with a time of a 1m 05.35s. All events are open to all students over the Y7-11 age range. Hannah normally competes over the much longer distance of 1500m and this performance reflects the quality of her swimming repertoire.

Ethan Somerville-Jones (Y8) competed in the equivalent male event and was placed second. This is a remarkable achievement considering that Ethan is competing against boys several years older than himself. Hopefully, Ethan will continue with his swimming, develop his obvious potential and achieve at a higher level in the years to come.

---

SDL

## Disco Divas!

The Annual Christmas Disco at **LIQUID** for all Year 7, 8, 9 students will be on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December this year. This is an exciting event for our junior Disco Divas – who are already discussing what they will be wearing (and that's just the boys!). As parents, this will involve getting your child to **LIQUID** for 7.30pm and then collecting between 9.00-10.00pm. For many of you it may mean 2 'Taxi of mum/Dad' trips, or possibly just finding something to do for a few hours in town, rather than going backwards and forwards. So, we have a lovely solution ... why not join us at Bar Eleven? The PA has arranged an informal evening 'gathering' – for all parents who would like to pop in to the function room upstairs at Bar Eleven and have a drink/soft drink/coffee and chat to other parents. We may even be able to borrow Santa for a festive light hearted Quiz for the evening. Bar Eleven is only 3 minutes away from **LIQUID** so it is very convenient.

If you want further information, please call Helen Simpson on 01274 883906. If you could let us know if you will be taking advantage of this, it would help to organise refreshments and nibbles – but if you just turn up on the night that will be absolutely fine – we look forward to seeing you.

**This is an NHGS PA Social event**

---

## Five Minute Fundraiser

### *Easy Fundraising search engine*

Go to the site, register with NHGS, and make easy fundraising your search engine! Every time it is used, money is donated to the school, not a lot but it all adds up. Convert your work computers, if possible.

*Is there a parent, or student, who could help the PA by setting up a link and introducing parents to this idea at certain functions throughout the year?*

### [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)

Have a look at this site, it's as easy as 1 2 3 .

- 1 Register – easy and free, choose NHGS as cause
- 2 Login (it is your email and your own password that is needed)
- 3 Click retailer link

This raises money for the school and costs you nothing. When you order goods on line you just go via this web site link and your order, treated as a "normal order" by the retailer, could raise from 1%-10% of the total order value as a charity donation for the school. There are also lump sum payments from some retailers - check it out.

There are always great offers, and it's free! Here are just some of the companies that you can buy from – Comet, Woolworths, John Lewis, Amazon, pc world, play.com, NEXT, phones4u, your M&S, Staples, hotels.com, ELC, La Redoute, Littlewoods, Tesco, Grattan, The Body Shop, Freemans – and lots more.

---

## NETBALL NEWS

Congratulations to the following girls who have been selected to represent Calderdale this season:

U13

Jade White 8(3)  
Naomi Dyer 7(2)

U15

Amy Campsall 10(6)  
Sophie Clayton 10(6)  
Sophie Holmes 10(3)  
Ashlea Prescott 10(6)  
Becky Foster 10(6)

Congratulations to the following girls who have been selected to represent West Yorkshire:

Leah Farrar L6(7)  
Joanna Bullock L6(3)  
Zoe Littlewood 10(3)  
Beth Allen 9(2)

A big thank you to all those girls who have been attending training every week and working extremely hard. We have been rewarded with some excellent results so far.

Well done!

**KJH**

---

## SCIENCE AND ETHICS

As part of our Specialist Science School enrichment programme, Dr David Lewis came in to NHGS on 12 November to talk to the Year 10 and Year 12 students about experimentation on animals.

I believe that our students should engage with issues like this in an informed way, and felt that he dealt with this emotive subject in a very sensitive way which gave a fascinating insight. Included below is an account by some Year 12 students.

Last Wednesday Dr David Lewis from Leeds University came to school to talk about animal testing.

We learnt about the different diseases that have been controlled or cured because of animal testing, for example, Parkinsons disease, and he showed us how the animals are as humanely treated as possible. We learnt that only a small percentage of animals in the UK are used for animal testing, a lot less than are eaten by humans per year. It finished with a question and answer session including some in-depth questions about morals and ethics. It was a very interesting and thought provoking talk and it definitely made people think again about animal testing.

**Robyn Sweeney, Martina Wierzbicki and  
Jonathan Jagger L6(1)**

---

## TOP OF THE BENCH COMPETITION

On Friday 14 November, eight students attended the 'Top of the Bench' Chemistry competition at Huddersfield University.

The students were organised into two teams of four, (Team one – Thomas Howson, Zoe Littlewood, Elizabeth Lamb and Oliver McHugh. Team two – Georges Moss, Marcus Peel, James Nevison and Dorothy Finan). These teams then competed against 21 other teams from around the area.

There were various rounds, some of which contained straight forward Chemistry questions while others called on the students more in-depth knowledge of the subject. Both teams performed consistently well throughout all the rounds, with one team maintaining second place for much of the competition and narrowly missing out on a place in the final.

Well done to all the students who took part!

VL

---

## empty out for eBay

Ebay is continuing until Christmas. So if you have items you think we could auction on eBay please send these in to school as soon as possible. This current period leading up to Christmas is one of the busiest eBay times for selling. This week we have already listed a

didgeridoo, office chair, ice axe, Victorian wooden clogs, clothes, games, toys, photo printer, duplo, casserole dish, child's guitar, Barbour coats, sports items and a guinea pig lead/harness! So I am sure you must have something we can auction – the list is endless! All the money goes towards the completion of the new Sixth Form Learning Centre, which we hope will be finished (if we raise enough money!) in spring 2009.

This is a PA fundraising event to support the SFLC

---

## NEW Treasurer for the PA

We would like to welcome Laura Harris as our new PA Treasurer. Karin Oliver has been responsible for this position for the past 2 years, but due to work commitments Karin has had to step down. Laura has a child in Year 8 and has already been helping at the Craft Fayre. As a registered Charity, we must have parents' of NHGS students holding the official positions in the PA (Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, Prize Draw Secretary and Deputy) but all other duties are informal and anyone can help. Our next PA meeting is on **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**, in the School at 7.45pm.

If you would like to come along and join us, and find out what is going on – please come along – everybody is welcome. If you would prefer not to come on your own, we can always 'buddy' you with another parent, just call Helen Simpson on 01274 883906 to arrange this.

---



## A MUSICAL CHRISTMAS

NHGS musicians are busy rehearsing for a number of Christmas events. There are some events you may like to attend:

**Friday 5 December** – the Handbell ringers will be performing with the Halifax Choral Society in their "Carols and Brass" concert at the Victoria Theatre, 7.30pm start. Tickets are available from the theatre box office.

**Thursday 11 December** – The Concert Band will be playing seasonal music in the Westgate Arcade, Halifax from 4.00 – 6.00pm. Free admission.

**Tuesday 16 December** - The NHGS Carol Service at the Halifax Parish Church, 7.15pm. Free admission.

**Thursday 18 December** – The Handbell ringers will be ringing in the Christmas Spirit in the Westgate Arcade from 5.00 – 7.00pm. Free admission.

---

GJE

## **CITIZENSHIP DAY**

On Friday 14 November all of Year 9 had a Citizenship Day. All forms were split into groups and allocated a country. We were given Russia. We then had to present a 7 minute presentation on a bid for the 2016 Olympics. In the morning we were given a Sixth Former (ours was called Steve Jennings) that helped us prepare. In the afternoon we had heats where the best groups in each form went on to do their presentation in front of the whole year group. We won the heats and the final! Altogether the day was good and we would like to thank our Sixth Former and Mrs Jones for organising it.

**Georginal McArdle 9(4)**

On Friday 14 November, Year 9 held their annual Citizenship Day. The day comprised of each Year 9 form being split into 5 groups with each one being given a country. They then had to set up a bid to host the 2016 Olympics. The countries chosen were completely at random and groups were given countries such as Saudi Arabia and Australia. Each group had a Sixth Form adviser and I was the one for Russia. The groups had to take into account the stadiums, environment, climate and travel times and costs for their bid. The way in which we completed it was through the recent political history of the country. Each form had a semi final and the winner of these were put through into a final held in the Hall in front of the two head

judges, Mr Wood and Mr Maslen. Russia got through to the final and presented our bid on stage along with Morocco, Brazil, China and Spain. At the end, Mr Wood announced the winner and we couldn't believe it when he said "Russia".

I would like to thank everybody who helped during the day and all the Year 9 students who made the day thoroughly enjoyable for both teachers and Sixth Formers.

---

**Stephen Jennings U6(4)**

## **Social Get Together for Mums of Years 7 and 8**

Earlier this year we invited our Mums from year 7 forms (1,2,3,4) to join us for a meal and get together at Rim Nams restaurant in Hebden Bridge. The evenings were a great success, and gave new parents the opportunity to meet other Mums in their child's form, discuss school policy, projects, and problems and find ways to co-operate and help each other in the future.

When your child goes to 'Big School' it isn't only the children who have to find out how new things work, or to make new friends – sometimes parents do as well!

We have been asked to continue with these, and so we have some new dates for your diary. We are starting these off again in January 2009 (mainly because the next 6-8 weeks are usually a bit too busy for many people!), and hope you can join us.

### **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> Jan 2009 -**

Year 7(5) + any other Year 7 parents who couldn't come to the previous evenings

### **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2009 -**

Year 8(1), 8(2)

### **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 2009 -**

Year 8(3), 8(4)

### **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 2009 -**

Year 8(5) + any other Year 8 parents who can't make the other nights.

If you are interested in coming along (please do – we have a great time!) call Petra on 01422 885365. The cost for a 2 course Thai meal, plus rice and tea/coffee is only £9.99.

This is a PA Social Event

---

## PERSONALISED LEARNING

Personalised Learning is a key element of current government educational policy. It has been hailed as the centre piece of the Government's education reforms and the key plank in a £1.6 billion investment programme, but five years after the term "personalised learning" was first used it is still not clear what it means. Indeed three leading educationists who appeared before a parliamentary committee last week raised concerns about its meaning. Professor David Hargreaves who has spent four years working with the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust on approaches to personalisation told the House of Commons Schools Committee that the trust had struggled for years to find a definition for personalised learning. "I have concluded it is a total waste of time trying to find a tight definition. It does not work," he said. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) defines it in the following way:

'Personalised learning and teaching means taking a highly structured and responsive approach to each young person's learning, in order that all are able to progress, achieve and participate. It means strengthening the link between learning and teaching by engaging pupils - and their parents - as partners in learning'.

At NHGS we use the following definition of personalised learning which is included in the Handbooks distributed to parents and children in all year groups.

'Personalising Learning means close attention is paid to students' knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. Learning is connected to what they already know. The teaching enthuses students and engages their interest in learning: it identifies, explores and corrects misconceptions. Students are active and curious; they create their own hypotheses,

ask their own questions, coach one another, set goals for themselves, monitor their progress and experiment with ideas for taking risks, knowing that mistakes and 'being stuck' are part of learning. Work is sufficiently varied and challenging to maintain their enjoyment but not so difficult as to discourage them. This engagement allows students of all abilities to succeed, and it avoids the disaffection and attention-seeking that gives rise to problems with behaviour'.

The components of personalised learning at NHGS are:

Assessment for Learning (AfL)  
Effective Teaching  
Deep Learning  
Curriculum Entitlement and Choice  
School Organisation  
Beyond the Classroom

These are described in more detail in the Handbooks. In a recent assembly I developed one of these components – Deep Learning.

Deep learning is facilitated by:

- teaching that helps students to link new ideas to their existing concepts;
- encouraging understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and the search for meaning;
- promoting curiosity and motivation which are harnessed using direct, indirect and exploratory approaches that use a variety of student groupings.

It is helpful, sometimes, to think about how a process such as 'deep learning' plays out in the real world. Josh Waitzkin, who was born in New York City in the USA in 1976 provides an example of deep learning. He first caught a glimpse of a chess set while 6 years old and walking with his mother in New York City's Washington Square Park. He was going to play on the monkey bars but caught sight of some old guys playing a board game which he later realised was chess. He was immediately fascinated and intrigued by this game and went back to the park repeatedly, initially to watch and then to join in. The park guys taught Josh their aggressive, intuitive style of competitive chess playing. At age 7, Josh began his classical study of the game with his first formal teacher, Bruce Pandolfini. From age 9 on Josh dominated the US scholastic chess scene. He won the National Primary Championship in

1986, the National Junior High Championship in 1988 and the National Elementary Championship in 1989. At the age of eleven, he drew a game with World Champion Garry Kasparov in a simultaneous exhibition where the champ played 59 games simultaneously and Josh was one of only two competitors to draw. At age 13, Josh earned the title of National Master. He won the National Junior High Championship for the second time in 1990, and the Senior High Championship in 1991, as well as the U.S. Cadet Championship (under-sixteen).

In 1993 Paramount Pictures released the film Searching for Bobby Fischer, based on the highly acclaimed book of the same title written by Josh's father, Fred Waitzkin, documenting Josh's journey to winning his first National Championship. That same year, at 16, Josh became an International Master and the U.S. Junior (Under-21) Co-Champion. In 1994 he won the U.S. Junior Championship and placed fourth in the Under-18 World Championship.

After the release of the film Josh became the focus for a lot of publicity which he found difficult to cope with and he lost interest in chess. He embarked upon a study of the martial arts of Tai Chi Chuan and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. Josh began studying Tai Chi Chuan with Grandmaster William CC Chen in 1998. Initially Josh had no intention of competing in the martial arts, but for five years straight Josh was the Tai Chi Chuan Push Hands Middleweight National Champion in both the Restricted Step and Moving Step divisions and his competitive Tai Chi life came to a climax at the 7th Chung Hwa Cup International Tai Chi Chuan Championships in Taiwan in 2004, where Josh won the Middleweight World Championship title in Fixed Step Push Hands and became the Middleweight World Co-Champion in Moving Step Push Hands.

Josh had thus become world class in two very different activities. In 2007 he published a book, ***The Art of Learning***, in which he reflects on his learning experiences in becoming world-class in these contrasting areas. His accounts of his learning experiences and his personal insights into the learning process are readily accessible on Youtube (search Waitzkin). Some of his more helpful suggestions include:

**Numbers to leave numbers** - internalising technical skills, such as chess positions, so you can do them without conscious thinking.

**Investing in loss** - learning from your mistakes means accepting your imperfections and figuring out how you can improve in the future.

**Making smaller circles** - rather than trying to master the big picture, concentrate on understanding the smallest fundamentals with such depth that they become part of your mental framework.

**Making sandals** - rather than "paving the road," or trying to control external conditions, you "make sandals," or change the way you deal with those conditions. Instead of trying to block out distractions or emotions, for example, figure out how to channel them in positive ways.

Waitzkin's methods will not work for everyone in all situations. However it is always useful looking at the strategies and practices of other people who have been demonstrably successful in their learning.

**GPM**

---

## **HEAD'S BLOGS**

The Head's Blog is posted at <http://www.nhqs.co.uk/blogs/headsblog/blog/Default.aspx> at the start of each week. The post discusses an issue arising from events in school or nationally that provides some context for staff, students and parents to think about current issues. The most recent Blogs have covered the following issues:

October 28<sup>th</sup> – 'Principled Assessment'  
- the role of principles in the decision to end KS3 testing

November 3<sup>rd</sup> – 'Are Teens Getting Dimmer'  
- discusses the evidence about whether there has been a change in the intellectual power of teenagers

November 11<sup>th</sup> – 'Young People Give Democracy a Future'  
- compares the election for the UK Youth Parliament to the presidential election in the USA

November 17<sup>th</sup> – 'Heart Rending'  
- compares the decisions made by two thirteen year old girls with terminal conditions

November 24<sup>th</sup> – 'Where For Art Thou Brooklyn?'

- reflects on the relevance of Romeo and Juliet written over 400 years ago to today's teenagers & their parents.

The comments element of the Blog has not been working properly and posted comments have been lost into the virtual Blogosphere. This has now been corrected so that comments can be posted and they will be uploaded daily so please don't be concerned if the comment does not appear immediately, it is related to the spam filtering process.

**GPM**

---

## CHILDREN IN NEED

The North Halifax Grammar School Charity Committee held a Mad Hair Day. This was also accompanied by painting faces.



It was a great success with everyone and has raised **£345** so far!

Also a few members of the Charity Committee went to the latest Craft Fayre and painted faces whilst also auctioning off a chess board which had been made by two members of staff.

We intend to increase the monies raised to date with the auction of the chess board.

We would like to thank all those who got involved and give a big thank you to Mr Maslen for getting into the spirit of the mad hair day.



**Ben Robinson U6(7)**

---

## The PA Monthly Prize Draw

Our 3 lucky October 2008 winners are:

£150	87	A P Naylor	Brighouse
£75	53	Lynda Thurlow	Shelf
£25	157	Mr S M Beverley	Northowram

Congratulations! If you didn't win anything – it may be because you haven't signed up for this?

Just download a form (<http://www.nhgs.co.uk/pa/prizedraw.pdf>) or get one from the school office – commit to a £5.00 direct debit each month, and you could be one of our winners. Each month we give away £250 – **it could be you** ! Contact Linda Saunders on [linda\\_c\\_saunders@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:linda_c_saunders@yahoo.co.uk) if you want to know more.

---

## Wanted - M & S Clothes

If anyone has any unwanted M & S clothes (including Per Una etc) in whatever condition, please send them into school as we can use these to get M & S vouchers to use for our fundraising.

This is a PA fundraising event to support the SFLC

---

## NHGS Christmas Hamper Raffle

**Tickets can be bought on Parent Pay – the Easy Way**  
**£2.50 a book – we will complete the stubs for you with students name and form**

**Season's greetings – and this year Christmas could be coming to you via an NHGS Christmas Hamper!**

**Each Form in years 7 to 11 should have started creating a Hamper for our Christmas Hamper Raffle. This could be**

- **A Christmas Goody Hamper**
- **Chocoholics Hampers**
- **Pretty & Pink Hamper**
- **Car care Hamper**
- **Pamper Hampers for men and ladies**

- **And many more....**

Please support this venture by helping with the hamper and by buying raffle tickets. This is a new fundraising event, which gives each Form a chance to do something collectively involving all the Form members. There is to be a prize for the best Hamper created.

---

## Hair & Beauty Evenings Tues 11th, Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008

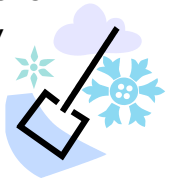
Well, Ladies you did us proud! Over 130 people attended the Hair & Beauty Evenings at the Nikki Collins Hair Studio. We were massaged, coiffed, manicured, waxed, coloured and re-styled and we loved it!

All the Beauticians and Hair Stylists were on hand to give advice, suggestions or show new techniques and products. So our 'ladies' were thoroughly spoilt with free hot wax hand treatments, eyelash extensions, lava stone massages, spray tans, blow drying techniques, hair extensions, hair mask treatments, new hair-dos, facial massage and general girly pampering.

Rob Warrincy our hunky Halifax Rugby player was on hand to help sell some raffle tickets, with encouragement from our wonderful National Girls Rugby Champions (Devon, Alice, Ashlea, Danica, Abby, Carolyn, Becky, Natasha, Harriet and Alice) and Franky who also helped with refreshments.



The event raised over £2000 and with 4 match funders who helped us arrange this event (Alison Bradley, Sue Dodd, Shellie Haime and Jabeen Sadiq) we hope to match this to make a grand total of over £4000.



Our enormous thanks go to Nikki Collins and Fiona McCall for allowing us to host this event in their wonderful hair & beauty salon, and also to everybody who helped on the two nights.

We have had such a positive response to this event we are hoping to do this again next year – so look out for this – it really was a brilliant evening and all for only £12.50 a ticket!

---

## **ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS**

**Please consult the advice in the Student Handbooks, copies of which can be viewed on the school website [www.nhgs.co.uk](http://www.nhgs.co.uk)**

**On Day 1 of snowfall, we guarantee to open. Please do not ring in to find out whether the school is open or not. SCHOOL WILL BE OPEN ON DAY 1.**

**GPM**

## **NHGS Parent Prom (Dinner & Dance)**

**Date: Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2009**  
**Venue: The Rock Hotel, Holywell Green, Halifax**

Time: 7.00pm till late  
Tickets: £25 per person  
Tables: Up to 10 per table

There is to be a fabulous menu, with a choice of 3 starters, 3 mains and 3 desserts which can be chosen on the night! The meal will be followed by a disco.

This promises to be a great night out! The newly refurbished Rock Hotel is tucked away in Holywell Green, it is about 3 miles south of Halifax centre and 1 mile from Elland. The Amethyst Suite at The Rock is an ideal setting for this event so remember to put the date in your diary. If you want to have a glamorous night out, then come along .... In fact why not get a group of friends together (you don't have to be a parent) and book a table of 10?

Couples and singles can be placed with others of the same year.

Why not have a "rugby mums" table, a "football dads" table, a Form table?

Further details from Helen Simpson on 01274 883906. or email [helen1simpson@tesco.net](mailto:helen1simpson@tesco.net). Booking forms and menu details are at the end of the newsletter.

### A vote of thanks from the Chair of Governors...

The Governors of NHGS would like to thank the Parents' Association, staff, students and parents for all their support in raising funds for the Sixth Form Learning Centre.

Phase I was completed on time and five classrooms were opened for use for the start of the new academic year on 2 September 2008.

Work on Phase II, the Ground Floor, has already commenced and it is hoped that this will be complete ready for the Summer term 2009.

Your support is very much appreciated.



Jacqueline Kershaw  
Chair of Governors

**Parent Prom**  
**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2009**

The Rock Hotel, Holywell Green, Halifax. - 7.00pm for 7.30pm

I would like:- .....individual tickets at £25 each  
.....tables of 10 at £250 per table

I enclose £..... cash / cheque  
(please make cheques payable to NHGS Parents' Association)

Names of those attending (to help with seating plan)

.....  
.....  
.....

Special requests:- ladies table, year.....table,  
Any others (please indicate)

Name and address

Telephone  
E-mail address

Name of student contact..... form.....

Please return to the Finance Office, for the attention of Mrs Simpson  
NHGS, Moorbottom Road, Illingworth, Halifax, HX2 9SU

.....

**Menu - to be chosen on the night**

*To Start*

Duo of Soups from Fresh Seasonal Ingredients  
Chilled Melon 5 Ways, Melon Shooter  
Ham Hock and Black Pudding Terrine, Spiced Apple Chutney, Pear Cider Dressing

*To Follow*

Slow Braised Rand of Beef, Horseradish Mash, Red Wine Jus, Bourguignon Garnish  
Breaded Fillet of Salmon, Tomato and Aubergine Caviar, Aioli  
Feta, Pine nut and Roasted Vegetable Baklava, Dressed Rocket, Balsamic

*Served with seasonal vegetables and roasted baby new potatoes*

*To Finish*

Selection of Traditional English Cheeses with Celery, Grapes and Biscuits  
Sticky Toffee Pudding, Butterscotch Sauce, Chantilly Cream  
Chocolate Mocha Tart, Red Berry Compote, Vanilla Crème Anglaise

\*\*\*\*\*