

Abbey Hill Academy



Spring term newsletter 2025

Volume 31

Principals Message

Welcome to the spring 2025 edition of the Abbey Hill Academy newsletter!

As always, our students have been working incredibly hard across all areas of the curriculum. At Abbey Hill, we are proud of a curriculum that not only prepares students for their next steps, but also equips them to lead happy, fulfilling, and successful lives, whatever challenges they may face. Carefully crafted with this vision in mind, our curriculum offers a rich blend of knowledge, skills, and understanding of local, national, and global issues.

We also place great emphasis on student safety, particularly in today's fast-changing digital world. Whether it's e-safety, crime awareness, using public transport, or understanding road safety, we strive to ensure that our students are not only prepared to navigate the world confidently, but also know where and how to seek support when needed.

As we approach the end of the spring term and look ahead to the summer, I want to thank you for your continued support in making Abbey Hill Academy a place *"where amazing children do amazing things."* Your commitment, especially around encouraging strong school attendance makes a significant difference. Regular attendance ensures that students benefit fully from their education and continue to build positive, lasting connections with their peers.

Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable Easter break. We look forward to welcoming students back on Monday, 28th April.



WORLD
**BOOK
DAY**

6 MARCH 2025

World Book Day at Abbey Hill!



We enjoyed a Non-Fiction reading extravaganza on Wednesday 5th March to celebrate World Book Day in Abbey Hill. The school and college were all involved in exciting activities to promote the importance and love of reading, with fun and prizes galore!

Students were in tutor groups for the morning and created some FANTASTIC newspaper articles linking to their given decades.

Classroom doors were made into fact files and everyone learned interesting facts about different times in history.

We all had a fantastic morning, with fancy dress, photo opportunities and lots of fun galore. Our newspapers are hanging proudly on display so everyone can remember 'A Journey Through Time'!



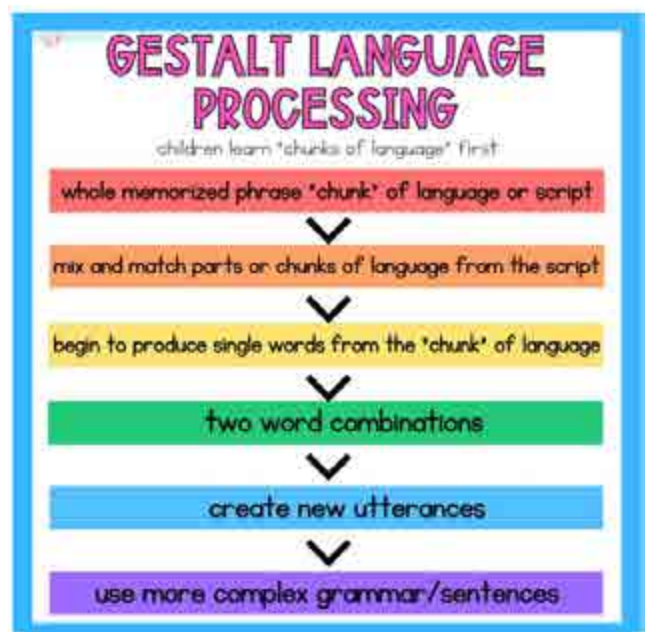


Speech and Language Therapy

This academic year, lots of our staff teams have been learning about Gestalt Language Processing.

What's Gestalt all About?

Gestalt Language Processing describes the theory that a lot of Autistic and Neurodivergent people may learn language differently to typically developing people. Rather than learning single words, then starting to combine words in short phrases and finally moving on to complex sentences (as is the norm for lots of toddlers), Gestalt Language Processors (GLPs) learn long strings of words first, then learn how to 'chop' up these long strings. For example, a GLP may learn the phrase 'this is the way we brush our teeth' before they use the words 'teeth' or 'brush' on their own. Over time, the GLP may use just part of the phrase, e.g. 'brush our teeth', and then may learn how to 'chop and change' the phrase with another word e.g. 'brush our hair' 'brush our dog'; 'this is the way we go to school' 'this is the way we eat our dinner'.





Speech and Language Therapy

How can we help?

We can help GLPs learn how to build their language by:

- Joining in with their play/activities, and talking about what they are doing, from their point of view e.g. if your child is rolling a tyre, say 'Let's roll it!', 'I love this!'.
- Keeping questions to a minimum: use comments instead, e.g. instead of asking 'what are you doing?' you could just comment from their point of view 'wow! I love playing Lego'.
- Speaking with lots of expression in your voice: lots of GLPs are very musical and most easily learn language when it is said with lots of expression.
- Use predictable phrases in lots of situations e.g. 'What's next?'; 'Now it's time for...'; 'Let's go...'

Find out more

If you think your child is a GLP, you can find out more about how to support their language by speaking to Kate Reader, our Speech and Language Therapist. You can contact Kate on 01642 677113 or kate.reader@horizonstrust.org.uk.

There is also a free online masterclass in GLP here: www.meaningfulspeech.com



Speech and Language Therapy

Try to reduce your questions - aim for one question for every 5 comments you make



You can change a question into a comment.
Here are some examples.

Question	Comment
Are you tired?	You look sleepy.
Is it sunny?	It looks sunny outside.
Do you like this toy?	You look like you are having fun!
Do you like your juice?	Juice is yummy.
Are you playing with the ball?	The ball is bouncing.
What's this?	Pointing at the item, comment " I see a dog"
How does that work?	Show how an item works while you comment.
What are you drawing?	I see purple & black & some circles.
What are you doing?	I see you are playing with play dough.



10AB

10AB had a fantastic trip out to Chocolatrice in Coxhoe. The students sampled a variety of toppings and then made their own chocolate bar. We all got covered in chocolate, enjoyed drinking chocolate and eating chocolate. A perfect morning out.



10AB always enjoy a trip out, but what we have Discovered, is they enjoy being teenagers and taking selfies. Here are just a few from our Christmas trip.





Key Stage 3 Design Technology

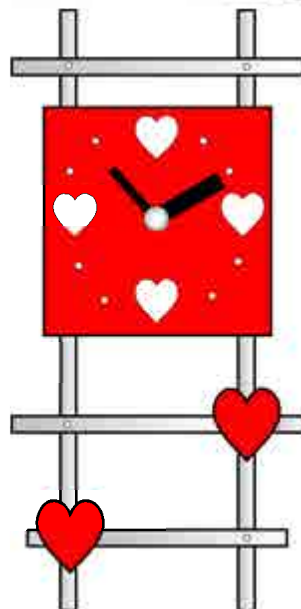
In Year 7 pupils have been learning about different types of movement and mechanisms. They have modelled a range of different mechanisms and have designed products with levers and linkages.



Year 8 pupils have been learning about different mechanisms and have produced a cam mechanism. They are presently working on designing and making light nights.

In Year 9 pupils have been learning about casting pewter and producing pendants of their own design.

They are presently working on designing and making clocks using aluminium, riveting techniques and acrylic.

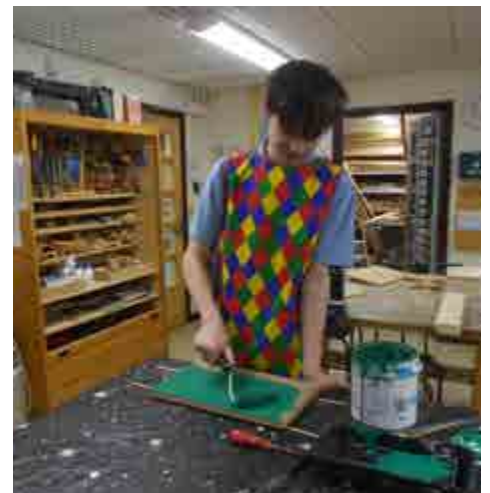




Key Stage 4 Design Technology



In KS4, pupils are presently working on their entry level qualifications in Product Design. They have designed and modelled a product of their choice using a range of materials and have used CAD (computer aided design) to produce virtual models. They are now using a range of tools and equipment to make their product in the workshop.





5AB The secret garden

Through stories , music and sensory sessions 5AB have been exploring a secret, magical garden!

This topic has let our imaginations run wild !

We have enjoyed feeling the cool breeze, spring rain and the warm sun.

We have watched unicorns gallop by, mermaids combing their long luscious locks and rainbow fairies dancing.

We have made butterflies, fairy wands, rainbow clouds and giant flowers.

We have enjoyed classroom picnics , tasting different snacks and nibbles. Everyone has loved this topic and worked really hard. We are all looking forward to our Easter break and then ready for the Summer term where we will be heading to the circus!!

Get ready to Roll up Roll Up!!!!





New Football Kit!



Darchem Engineering have very kindly sponsored the school Football Team with a brand new strip. The students are really pleased with and in their first match they drew 1-1 with top of the league. Ewan Burns scoring a fantastic goal for 25 yards out!

Slam dunkin!



Abbey Hill Academy played Beverley school in fantastic game of basketball. They all played brilliantly scoring many points in the process. Unfortunately, it was Beverley who won by a score of 32-26. The squad of Mayowa, Owen, Chloe, Emaliya, Lewis and the Lucas's were superb and showed great team work!



Online Safety spring term update

Digital Literacy is an individual's ability to find, evaluate, and communicate information using typing or digital media platforms. Individual and organisational online safety remains paramount in this process.

Year 7 students in the formal curriculum have recently been studying the importance of personal data and their digital footprint. Year 8 students have been identifying how dangers online can impact upon them and steps that must be taken to safeguard personal data. This term Year 9 students have focused upon digital literacy themes in Computing and PHSE considering a range of strategies that they can apply to keep safe in online environments. Significant themes have been learning how young people can use apps safely, identify fake news and be aware of the risks associated with overuse of gaming and mobile phones.

The 11-14 digital literacy curriculum makes a crucial contribution to core computing accreditation achieved in Years 10 and 11 where students have been undertaking units in the Open Awards curriculum. Students in Year 10 have been completing units focused upon the Internet & World Wide Web and upon understanding social media. This last unit helps students strengthen their appreciation of the many positives and negatives of having one or more social media profiles. Students discuss as class steps that they can take to maintain their personal safety when using social media. E-safety and online security themes are developed further in units undertaken in Year 11.



Online Safety spring term update

This year Safer Internet Day was celebrated at Abbey Hill on Tuesday 11th February. Key Stage 3 students accessed a live lesson hosted by BBC Teach that focused upon addressing key online safety concerns and encouraging young people to discuss and respond to online issues.



Students in Years 10 and 11 considered how they can better manage online relationships. The impact of screen time upon individuals feelings and offline friendships was emphasised. In addition students considered the effect over using mobile phones (especially late at night) upon their quality of sleep and ability to concentrate. A range of steps to reduce screen time were introduced to classes. Please see the ten top tips for parents and educators outlined in this newsletter.

Supporting online safety at home

In an ever changing digital world it can be valuable to be informed about emerging developments. Please refer to the parent e-safety advice on the [school website](#).

In completing an extensive review of its online safety provision Abbey Hill has demonstrated that it is working beyond the level for the [360 Safe online safety mark](#). Evidence will continue to be collected in the summer term in order that this accreditation can be achieved. mark benchmark which Abbey Hill is working towards in the summer term.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SAFETY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Currently, children are growing up in an immediate and throwaway culture when it comes to content that's consumed online. So much material is now deliberately created to be shorter in nature – and may often contain hidden elements such as advertising, or extreme political and cultural views. With complex algorithms built to keep people on their phones and engaging with social media content, it's becoming increasingly difficult to reduce time spent on these platforms.

1 REDUCE DOOMSCROLLING

It's increasingly common for young people to spend hours 'doomscrolling' – trawling through social media and aimlessly viewing every post they see, many of which might make them feel sad or anxious. Social media can be useful for keeping in touch with friends and family, as well as staying up to date on current events. However, it's important to use it with a clear purpose instead of aimlessly scrolling through content, which could lead to young people accidentally discovering harmful material.

2 TALK ABOUT THE CONTENT

It's important to keep apprised of the kind of content that a young person is being exposed to. Discussing what they're watching online can help you understand why they're using social media in the first place. Furthermore, ensure that children are aware of hidden content, such as advertising of a product – and that they know how to spot that the creator is being paid to talk about it.

3 FIND POSITIVE ASPECTS

Despite all the concerns, there's plenty of wholesome content on social media. It's worth spending time with children to help them find something suitable and enjoyable. Perhaps you'll even discover a joint interest, and you can enjoy the content alongside the child. As part of this, you should also point out why certain things shouldn't be given attention, explaining why it isn't suitable and why it's been created in the first place.

4 REDUCE SCREENTIME

Young people can sometimes be unaware of the exact amount of time they spend looking at social media. Smart phones don't just have the capacity to monitor screentime, they also record how much time is spent on each app. Consider setting targets to reduce this and support children to meet these goals, gradually reducing the amount of time spent on different apps.

5 FILL THE VOID

Monitoring and reducing screentime can create a lot of free time to fill, and young people can even face withdrawal symptoms when made to step away from their phones. To mitigate this, consider what offline activities you could introduce the child to, and what they would enjoy. This can ensure that young users will permanently cut down on their screentime, rather than temporarily doing so while they know it's being monitored.

6 REDUCE NOTIFICATIONS

One way in which social media platforms keep people coming back is through notifications. The algorithms behind these apps track people's daily habits, including the times of the day where they're most likely to engage with the platform. This data is then used to deliver specifically timed notifications to draw them back in. To avoid young users being exposed to this tactic, simply turn off notifications for the app in their phone's settings.

7 LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD

Overexposure to social media can distort someone's perception of the real world – from body norms to social conventions. This filtered environment can make it hard for young people to distinguish reality from online content, which is now becoming even more difficult with the rise of AI. To mitigate this concern, take time to teach young people how to discern truth from fiction, both on and off social media.

8 DIGITAL DETOX

Encouraging young people to take a 'digital detox', from even just a couple of the apps that they use, can result in an overall reduction of screentime and less exposure to potentially harmful content. Alternatively, rather than avoiding the app entirely, encourage children to take a 'digital detox' from content creators and influencers, and instead, keep in touch with friends and family – which is generally a far healthier use of these platforms.

9 MODEL GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Consider the habits that you're demonstrating to your children. How much time do you spend on your phone? How much do you 'doomscroll'? Comparing your own usage with the child's could put things into perspective for them – or if it turns out that you're also overusing social media, it can turn screentime reduction into a joint mission, which you and the child can work on together.

10 BE CLEAR ON THE "WHY"

Research shows that young people can become addicted to social media. There are many schools that are moving towards being 'phone free' due to the negative impacts of using social media and phones continuously. It's important to explain to young people why managing screentime is important. Set out the benefits and ensure they have all the relevant information, so it's not just seen as a punishment.

Meet Our Expert

John Insley is a senior leader in a Birmingham secondary school and has vast experience in leading schools over the past 15 years – including the development of computing curriculums across primary and secondary schools, writing e-safety policies and supporting schools with computing and e-safety advice.



The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/top-tips-for-safety-on-social-media>



Abbey Hill at North Shore

We hope this newsletter finds you well!. We are excited to share some highlights from our spring term as our students have been engaged in various enriching activities.

World Book Day

This year's World Book Day was themed around decades. Students thoroughly enjoyed dressing as their favourite characters, whether fictional or real. Throughout the day, we organized various activities to promote reading and celebrate literature.





Abbey Hill at North Shore

Cleveland Police

In PSHE, students engaged with PC Illingworth as part of their current topic on peer pressure and county lines. He provided insights into the arrest process, including custody suites and holding cells. The session was well received, leaving students both informed and engaged.





Abbey Hill at North Shore

Careers — Mock Interviews

Year 10 students participated in mock interviews as part of their career pathways program. This experience, though nerve-wracking, is extremely beneficial as students engage with interviewers and develop their confidence and communication skills in preparation for adulthood.

Royalty come to visit !

We were thrilled to learn that we would be hosting a visit from the King and Queen! We invited students to express their interest in attending this special event in Middlesbrough. After a random draw, six lucky students were selected to welcome them.

Unfortunately, due to delays—possibly caused by enjoying scones—we weren't able to greet them personally, as we had to return before home time.





Abbey Hill at North Shore

Peat Rigg

Our students had an incredible experience at the Peat Rigg Outward Bound Centre. They engaged in numerous activities such as ziplining and team building exercises, which helped them develop confidence, resilience, communication skills, and lasting friendships.





Abbey Hill at North Shore

Hampton by Hilton

Our Year 10 students enjoys a visit to Hampton by Hilton hotel. They enjoyed breakfast followed by a behind the scenes tour to gain an understanding of career pathways linked to hospitality and catering.



Raising awareness

Year seven student Isla has been raising awareness for Prader-Willi Syndrome. She will be organizing a tombola in May, so please stay tuned for further information on how you can support this important cause.



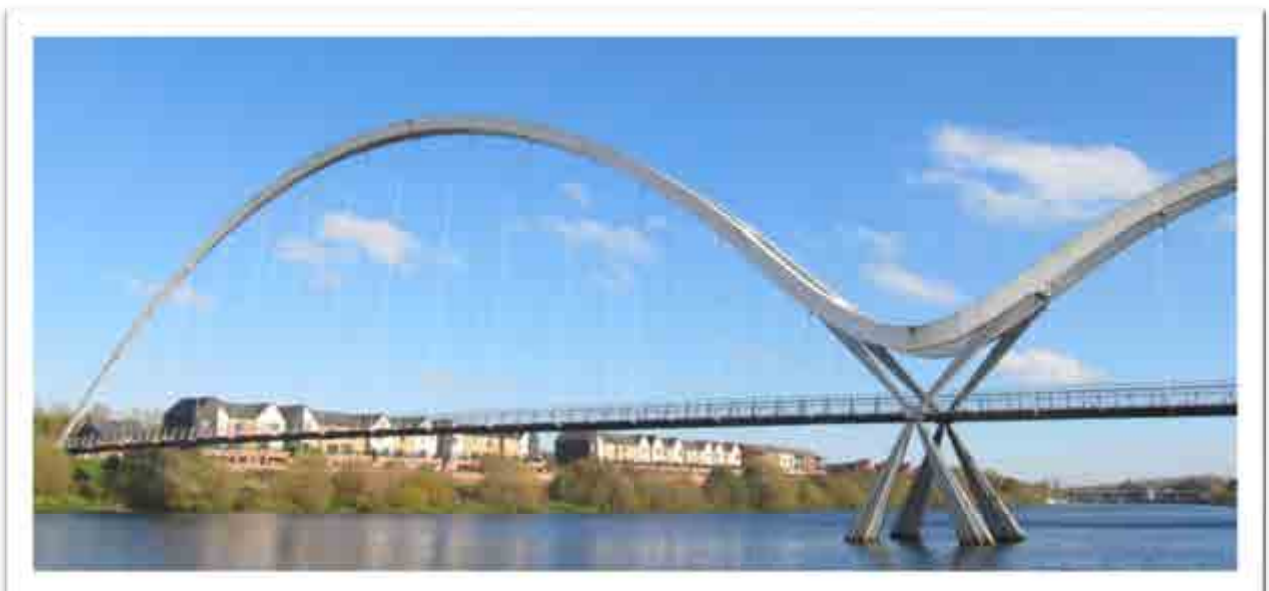


Abbey Hill at North Shore

Photography Option

Our Year 10 photography students explored local environments, and we are proud to showcase some amazing talents among them.

Please take a moment to admire the stunning photographs captured by Nathan and Rosie.





Peat Rigg March 2025

Wednesday 5th March 2025 was a bright sunny day and 55 students and 11 staff from both Stephenson Building Walker Building and our friends from North Shore packed our bags and left sunny Stockton and headed over the North Yorkshire Moors to Peat Rigg Outdoor Centre, this was to be home for the next 3 days and 2 nights,

Excitement filled the air as the 2 coaches left the Abbey Hill Academy grounds cheers could be heard all across the carpark.

We headed over the North Yorkshire moors admiring the beautiful scenery as we travelled in the coach.

As we turned off the road on to Peat Rigg land cheers of excitement filled the coach!

We were had a very warm welcome from the Peat Rigg Team. After a welcome meeting we had to make our own beds not a job we wanted to do but this was all part of our experience.

After a lovely lunch we took part in activities. Crate climbing zip lining, bush craft to name but a few.

We went abseiling, canoeing some of us braved the freezing lake when we jumped in. We made new friends, created long lasting memories, over come fears and had a very enjoyable time!

We would like to thank our staff for giving up their time to support the trip and enabling us to have this wonderful experience and the Peat Rigg team for making our trip very enjoyable.

See you next year!



Magic moments of spring term



Thomas, back in the hydrotherapy pool and loving it!



Zane using his fine motor skills to explore different objects.



James interacting with music lessons.



Daisy trying new foods including lemon and naan bread.



Manisha using her sense of smell to explore resources.



McKennah showing brilliant communication skills.





Magic moments of spring term



Celebrating Eid in our Sensory Assembly

