



Lady Manners School

Headteacher's Newsletter

Issue 4 Spring Term 2026

Welcome to our Easter newsletter!

As usual, there have been a significant number of key developments during this traditionally busy period of the school year. This includes events and visits which have provided valuable learning experiences for our students. We trust you will find the following updates useful, and we look forward to informing you of further progress during the summer term.

Schools White Paper and SEND Reforms

The long-awaited Schools White Paper ('Every Child Achieving and Thriving') was published earlier this term and will shape future educational practice at a national and local level.

The paper sets out the government's long-term plan to reform the education system so that high standards and inclusion are better delivered. It responds to challenges facing the sector in key areas such as attainment, disadvantage, SEND and attendance.

National targets have been established to ensure every child is encouraged to achieve their potential. These include:

- Better academic standards: the goal for children to leave secondary school with an average grade of 5 or higher across their GCSEs.
- Halving the disadvantage gap: supporting children from low-income backgrounds to achieve roughly a full grade higher in each GCSE than they do today.
- Recovering learning time through an increase to the national attendance rate, with an ambition to see children attending 20 million more days of school each year from 2028/29.
- Increasing pupils' 'sense of belonging' at school: by 2029, every school will be expected to monitor children's sense of belonging and engagement.

Key areas of improvement planning outlined within the White Paper include:

- A refreshed National Curriculum and revised qualifications (GCSEs / A Levels)
- SEND system reform
- Increased support for disadvantaged students
- Encouragement of partnership working between schools
- Increased parental collaboration and engagement
- Enhanced exclusion and behaviour procedures

We have already started planning for changes and look forward to implementing new procedures in line with defined timescales.

AI at Lady Manners School



Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to make headlines across the world and there are regular debates regarding the potential benefits and risks of AI use. The impact of AI is growing across all sectors of education, and this includes our own school.

All year groups have been surveyed on their use of AI. It appears that learners are using AI increasingly outside of school, especially in key stage 4 and key stage 5 age groups. The main tools students are using are Large Language Models (LLMs), such as Chat GPT, Copilot and Gemini.

Outside of school, students are using AI for homework support, research, writing assistance and revision.

Some of the learning-related websites we recommend to students for use in class or for revision purposes have AI tools built in, such as Kahoot and Carousel. A number of websites used within lessons have an AI function that enables questions to be tailored depending on student responses.

Year 11 students had a training session with teachers and tutors showing them how to use AI tools effectively for revision, both in terms of creating a more individualised revision resource and learning how to accurately check their answers.

Year 8 students also study a unit ('The appropriate use of AI') as part of their Skills programme.

We have run CPD sessions on two occasions for all staff on various school-approved AI tools. These include Key GPT, Oak Academy - AILA: Office 365 Copilot and Chalkie. Chalkie is a commercial AI tool, developed and co-owned by an ex-Lady Manners student. This has proved to be a big workload-saving asset, particularly for smaller subject areas with less widely available resources.

Next AI Steps

We are formalising our approach to teaching students about the use of AI, including benefits and risks, and the need to check validity of outcomes. We evaluate educational AI tools as they become available and investigate other ways AI could be used to enhance student learning and reduce staff workload.

Parents, Teachers, Friends, Association (PTFA)



Thank you to our excellent PTFA for their generous donation of £10,000 to purchase new Windows 11 PCs for the school. This will make a significant difference to the learning experience of our students and will ensure that they have access to up-to-date technology. I would particularly like to thank Tracey Hall, Chair of our PTFA, and wider committee members, for their dedication and hard work. Their ongoing support demonstrates the strength of our school community in working together to enhance opportunities for our young people. If you would like to get involved

with the PTFA, please contact Tracey at parentsassociationlms@gmail.com. We would welcome more parents and carers joining the team which continues to make such a positive difference to our school community.

Careers Week 2026

We celebrated Careers Week by inviting employers from a wide range of industries to take part in our careers cafés which were held during lunchtimes. Over 100 students engaged with this exciting opportunity and came along to meet invited guests, including a solicitor, a financial consultant, a deputy care home manager and the head of 'AI and Technologies' for a global clean energy company. There was a genuine sense of excitement during the café meetings and employers commented on how precise and well-considered student questions were. We would like to extend our gratitude to the employers who kindly gave up their time to support the events during the week.

All year groups had a careers assembly during the week, including Year 8 students who heard a National Farmers Union representative breaking down misconceptions and talking about the wide range of opportunities in agriculture. Year 10 students listened to an excellent talk from an entrepreneur and owner of a local hospitality chain whilst Year 12 students benefited from an insightful talk on the different pathways into a legal career.

Students also had careers lessons during their extended registration periods. Years 7 to 9 experienced employability skills sessions, which focussed on being resilient and developing a growth mindset. Year 10 students started preparing for their 'World of Work' week by creating a CV to send to an employer. Year 11 learned about different types of work, including knowing their rights and responsibilities, the benefits and drawbacks of both voluntary and paid work.

Year 12 students considering apprenticeships also attended an Apprenticeship Fair, listening to a range of employers who talked about available apprenticeships, including degree apprenticeships.

World Book Day



As part of the 'Year of Reading', the school celebrated World Book Day on 5 March. This was an excellent occasion which created a lot of excitement for students across the school. Staff engaged enthusiastically with the event and dressed in an impressive collection of costumes, which represented a range of literary characters. Staff walked around school with their represented book in hand and held discussions with students about their favourite characters. As well as being a lot of fun, the day turned out to be a positive educational experience for learners of all ages (including the staff).

Slovenian Visit

We were delighted to again welcome a party of Slovenian students and their teachers to Lady Manners School earlier this month.

This year students spent two days at our school and took part in a range of educational and cultural activities. Each of the guests was supported by our own Year 9 students. During the visit, students experienced a drama workshop, a language lesson, a maths challenge, and a bread-making activity. Our visitors also delivered a Slovenian 'language and culture' lesson to Year 7 students. This was an exciting experience for all students involved, and we remain committed to developing strong links between the two schools.

Lockdown Practice

We held a lockdown practice on 5 March to ensure our procedures remain clear and to remind students of our high expectations. The short practice went well and students across all age groups acted maturely and responsibly. Advance information sent to staff, students and parents appeared to allay any potential concerns.

Students remained calm and focussed throughout the drill. As always, there were elements of improvement to consider. Changes to practice will be implemented immediately and our procedure will be updated in accordance with feedback received.

Faculty in Focus: Creative Arts

Creative Arts - March 2026

The Creative Arts Faculty has been a hive of activity, with students pushing boundaries, developing new skills, and sharing their talents with our community. From powerful performances to innovative artworks, our young people continue to impress with their dedication and artistic vision.

Music

Our musicians have had an exceptional term of performances. The Ashford Recital showcased the remarkable progress of our advanced students, with sophisticated and accomplished performances. The junior concert in the Main Hall gave our younger performers valuable experience of performing to a live audience, helping them build confidence and stage presence.



The musical term finished with a bang at the Annual Easter concert. During this event we said thank you and farewell to our excellent musicians who will be leaving Lady Manners School following their summer examinations. We send them our best wishes as they continue to develop their musical talents.

Drama

Our GCSE Drama students experienced professional theatre at its finest with a trip to see John Godber's updated classic 'Teechers' at the New Vic Theatre in Stoke. The theatre-in-the-round staging gave students a completely different perspective on performance, seeing how actors engage with audiences from all angles. The highlight for many was the post-performance Q&A session with the professional actors, where students asked insightful questions about character development, rehearsal processes, and what it's really like to work in theatre. This kind of experience is invaluable for developing students' understanding of theatre as both an art form and as a potential career.

Art and Textiles

Before Christmas, our Textiles students visited an inspiring stitching exhibition in Harrogate, where they encountered contemporary textile artists pushing the boundaries of traditional craft. Students returned brimming with ideas for their own textile work, having seen how artists combine traditional techniques with innovative approaches to create powerful visual statements.

Outstanding Examination Work

We are proud of the exceptional work being produced across all creative subjects. Our A Level and GCSE students are creating outstanding examination pieces that demonstrate not only technical excellence, but genuine artistic vision. Students across the Faculty are taking exciting, creative risks in their work - experimenting with new materials, exploring challenging themes, and developing their own distinctive artistic voices. This willingness to push beyond their comfort zones is exactly what we hope to nurture in our creative curriculum.

Thriving Creative Clubs

Our extra-curricular programme continues to flourish, offering students opportunities to explore their creativity beyond the classroom:

- **Art Club** - Year 7 students are building confidence and technical skills through exploring mixed media techniques, learning how different materials can be combined to create striking visual effects.
- **Tote Bag Club** - Students have designed and created personalised bags with wonderful results, developing skills in textile design, printing techniques, and seeing a project through from initial concept to finished product.
- **Wreath-Making Workshops** - Parents and carers joined us to create beautiful festive decorations whilst learning traditional craft skills.
- **Lower School Drama Clubs** - Our younger students are developing ensemble skills and stagecraft that will culminate in an exciting summer showcase. They are learning the fundamentals of performance, from voice projection to character development, in a supportive and encouraging environment.

Creative Ambassadors and Creative Sparks

Our Creative Ambassadors programme continues to thrive, with Year 10 and 12 students supporting and inspiring their peers through mentorship, technical support, and sharing their expertise. It is wonderful to see older students taking leadership roles and helping to create an inclusive, supportive creative community.

We have also introduced our new **Creative Sparks** initiative, celebrating individual student achievements and the moments of brilliance that make teaching in the creative arts so rewarding.

Enhancing Our Creative Spaces

In Art, we continue to enhance our facilities to create professional studio environments where students can work and collaborate effectively. New benches have been fitted, creating flexible working spaces that mirror professional art studios and encourage students to see themselves as serious artists and designers.

Music Ambassadors

Our successful Music Ambassador scheme is running again this year, enabling younger students to learn instrumental skills from experienced peers. This peer-to-peer teaching not only helps younger students progress more quickly but also develops leadership and communication skills in our older musicians. It's inspiring to see Year 12 students patiently guiding Year 7 students through their first scales or helping them to prepare for their first performance.

And finally... 🧊❄️

We are thrilled to announce our 2026 annual production: Disney's 'FROZEN'!

This spectacular show will give students the opportunity to develop performance skills, work as part of a large-scale production team, and bring this beloved story to life on our stage. Whether your child is interested in performing, technical theatre, lighting and sound design, costume and makeup, set construction, or front-of-house roles, there will be opportunities for everyone to get involved and be part of this exciting production.

Auditions will take place after Easter, with performances scheduled for November. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to challenge themselves, work collaboratively, and create something truly magical together. More details to follow.



Key Dates for your Diary

Monday 13 April		Start of Summer Term 5
Thursday 16 April	4.00 pm - 7.30 pm	Year 7 Parents' Evening (online)
Wednesday 29 April	6.00 pm	PTFA Meeting
Sunday 10 May	7.00 am - 1.00 pm	PTFA Car Boot Sale
Friday 22 May		End of Summer Term 5
Monday 1 June		Start of Summer Term 6
Sunday 14 June	7.00 am - 1.00 pm	PTFA Car Boot Sale
Tuesday 23 June		Sixth Form Induction Day
Tuesday 23 June	6.00 pm	PTFA Meeting
Wednesday 24 June		Year 6 Transition Day 1
Wednesday 24 June	6.00 pm	Summer Concert
Friday 26 June		Year 6 Transition Day 2
Wednesday 1 July		Year 6 Taster Day/Intake Evening
Sunday 12 July	7.00 am - 1.00 pm	PTFA Car Boot Sale
Wednesday 22 July		End of Term

Students will now be looking forward to a well-deserved Easter break. We look forward to seeing them all again on Monday 13 April 2026.

G Peat
Headteacher

