

# FOCUSON...



Issue 214  
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## Celebrating our school and community

### ...Game On!

And we're off! Our House Competitions have kicked off to a fantastic start this term. We are delighted to announce our first Academic and Creative House Competition winners who created amazing artwork inspired by poems and stories. Students showcased great creativity and dedication by attending lunchtime sessions each week. Miss Hargan commented "It was an incredibly tough decision, as there were so many wonderful entries to choose from!"



1st: Megan (Barkfield)



2nd: Emily (York)



3rd: Emily (Firs)



A special mention also goes to Rebecca and Smaragda Y13, who created excellent example material to inspire the students and even joined one of the sessions to share their ideas!



It has also been a great start to all years enjoying the first round of Inter-House Sports Competitions! Students in Years 7-9 have enjoyed set challenges, including a futsal penalty shoot out, netball shoot out, basketball shoot out and darts competition! They have shown fantastic teamwork throughout. Mrs Perry said "A big thank you to all our sports leaders who have helped to run the challenges and a big well done to the students who have won prizes for demonstrating great skill and have encouraged teammates throughout the challenges." Year 10 and 11 have also enjoyed games-based competitions in netball and futsal with some close games being played throughout the week. Results of all competitions will be updated after half term once all competitions have been completed!



It's been a lively and rewarding first half term for the Music Department, with plenty of fantastic opportunities for our students to engage with. Take a look at some of the *High Notes* from the past few weeks...

**North Wales Opera – Puccini's Tosca** - back in September, our students had the wonderful opportunity to experience North Wales Opera's stunning production of Puccini's *Tosca*. Performed in the magnificent surroundings of St George's Hall, the production captivated everyone with its powerful music and dramatic storytelling which was all performed in Italian! From the powerful songs to the dramatic ending, our students were swept up in the story, exploring themes of love, bravery, and betrayal. It was an eye-opening experience that showed just how exciting and emotional opera can be!

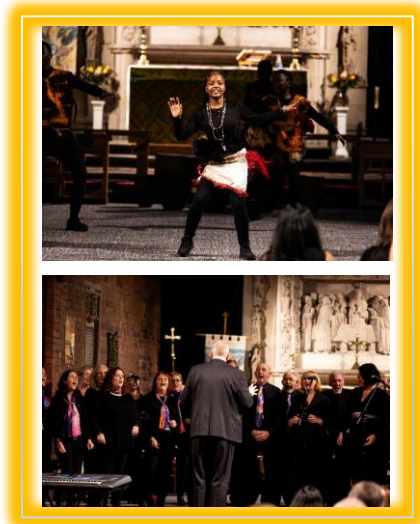


**The WaterBear Music College** - on Tuesday 7 October, our GCSE and A Level Music students had the exciting opportunity to take part in a seminar led by Jamie Mace from WaterBear Music College. Jamie shared fascinating insights into the ever-evolving music industry, exploring the wide range of career paths available to modern musicians. Students learned about the concept of a "*portfolio career*"—where musicians combine multiple roles and creative projects—and gained a real sense of what life is like as a student at WaterBear. The session was both inspiring and informative, sparking lots of discussion and new ideas. To top it all off, one lucky student even won an Amazon gift card! It was a thoroughly enjoyable and enriching afternoon for everyone involved.

**Hallé Orchestra Set Works Concert** - our GCSE Music students recently enjoyed an inspiring trip to The Bridgewater Hall for the Hallé Orchestra's GCSE & A-Level Set Works concert. The programme featured an exciting selection of music, including John Williams' *Star Wars* Main Theme, a captivating violin solo, and a powerful full-orchestral arrangement of Toto's *Africa*. Alongside these performances, the conductor and musicians provided insightful analysis of the pieces, exploring musical elements such as harmony, texture, and orchestration, with live demonstrations from the orchestra. It was a fantastic opportunity for students to see their set works brought to life and to deepen their understanding of how theory connects to performance.



**Pearl of Africa Children's Choir Visit** - our Year 8 students were treated to an unforgettable experience when the Pearl of Africa Children's Choir visited our school last week for a special assembly performance. Their vibrant music, dance, and energy filled the hall, inspiring everyone present. During the day, the choir joined our Voiceworks ensemble for a collaborative workshop, where together they recorded a beautiful rendition of "*Azizam*" by Ed Sheeran, arranged by our talented sixth form student, Lilly. The day concluded with a spectacular joint concert at Holy Trinity Church, featuring performances from the Pearl of Africa Choir, Voiceworks, and GForce. The Music Department has had a strong relationship with the Pearl of Africa Children's choir for many years, so it was amazing to have them return. It was a truly uplifting celebration of music, talent, and cultural connection.



## ...Now that's Aiming High!

A massive shout out to Alex (Year 12) who, at just 16 years old, became the youngest type 1 diabetic to successfully climb and summit Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak. The expedition took him 8 days in total, with 6 days up and 2 days down through the Lemosho route. Alex told us "Throughout the climb, I managed my condition carefully while pushing through the physical and mental challenges of the high altitude and rapidly changing weather. Reaching the summit not only represented a personal milestone but also a powerful message of resilience and possibility for others living with type 1 diabetes. I believe type 1 diabetes is not something to hold people back but to push them further and prove others wrong." What an amazing achievement and what a role model – congratulations from everyone at FHS, Alex!



## ...Paired Reading

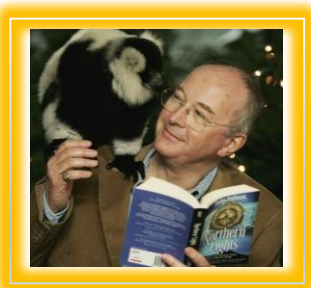
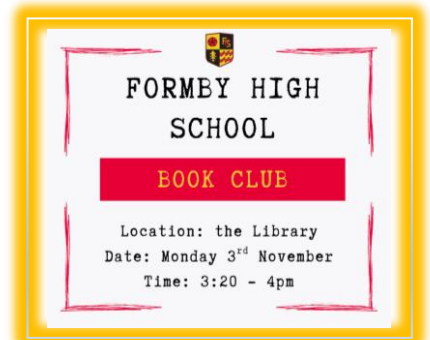


Paired Reading is an initiative to improve literacy skills and engagement, whilst developing young leaders. We are aiming to provide a level of reading intervention for all of our students at FHS. This first project is run in the Library and led by Year 11 and 12 students. The students all read 'The Graveyard Book', a challenging work of fiction by Neil Gaiman, in pairs or small groups. This exposure to quality reading daily and developing vocabulary is a proven method to enhance cognition, word recognition and most importantly engagement.

We are forging relationships across school for our new House System and building a community of role models. In the years to come we will be looking to use our current Year 7 readers for future ventures in leading projects. Similarly, we are so proud of the Year 11 and 12 students showing our school values to **"Aim High, Work Hard and Show Respect"**. Mrs Broomfield added "The spirit of sharing a love of learning and literature is what underpins our school community, and it is wonderful to see the positive safe atmosphere each morning in the Library."

## ...Library Corner

It's been another busy fortnight here in FHS Library! Mrs Dearden has been busy getting to know you and the books we have in stock. She has loved getting settled in during her first half term here and is very excited to announce the launch of Formby High School's Book Club! This will take place in the Library on Monday 3 November (3:25pm-4:00pm) and then each Monday following. Please come along and say hello – there will be biscuits! We will also be having a chat about the kind of books we all enjoy and introducing the FHS Book Club theme for the coming half term – **verse novels** – and exploring a diverse reading list of options, with the possibility of entering the National Literary Trust's 'Verse Novel Challenge' towards the end of term!



In my 'spare time' I have been re-reading Philip Pullman's The Secret Commonwealth in anticipation of yesterday's release of his 3rd instalment in the Book of Dust trilogy. The Rose Field is the long-awaited 6<sup>th</sup> and final book in Lyra's story, bringing His Dark Materials and The Book of Dust trilogies to a breathtaking conclusion. First released in 1995, Northern Lights introduced us to the world of Lyra and Pantalaimon and I have read and re-read their adventures ever since. Described as a "book which one can hardly bear to close", Northern Lights and the books that follow see Pullman crafting a parallel world to our own through thrilling adventures and thought-provoking reflection on the human condition. It is a trilogy that I cannot recommend highly enough for enquiring minds and lovers of fantasy and adventure. Pop up to the Library to get them out on loan!

## ...Attendance Rewards Incoming!



We will soon be recognising students with sustained or improved attendance during this first half term. Keep an eye out for certificates, merits, and rewards. We were pleased that 557 students had perfect attendance during September: well done! We are therefore looking forward to having the opportunity to celebrate those who have maintained that or, indeed, have worked hard to secure gains in their attendance during

October. When we return on 3 November please continue to encourage your child to come in every day they are able to. Every lesson really does count.

## ... Sporting Matters

Five lucky Year 7 girls took part in a girls' rugby taster session this week at Firwood Waterloo Rugby Club. They got to meet World Cup Winner, Holly Aitchison, who had her gold medal with her! Holly has just signed for Sale Sharks, who organised the day. The students got to play matches in a fun tournament against local Sefton schools and thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon. As always, our girls showed lots of

determination on the pitch and played with respect for the other teams and the officials. What a great opportunity! Both Firwood Waterloo and Southport Rugby Club are recruiting girls to play at the moment if your daughter is interested.

A huge well done to the cross-country team who competed at Camp Hill Park in Woolton on Wednesday. It was a hilly course which some found challenging but it didn't stop them!

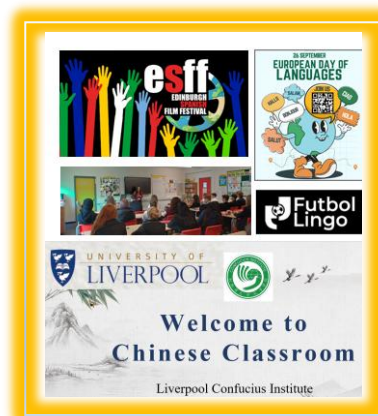


## ...Sixth Form Matters

At the end of the school day on Wednesday 5 November, University of Manchester will be delivering a live presentation on Alternatives to Medicine, followed by a Q & A session. This is open to students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 who are interested in all health-related careers, including Medicine and Dentistry, and will take place in O1. Later that week, Mrs Halton will be taking a group of Y12 and 13 students to the UK University and Apprenticeship Fair at Anfield Stadium where they will be able to meet student recruitment staff from a wide range of UK universities and apprenticeship providers.

## ... Languages Matter!

It has been a busy start to the year in the Modern Languages Department too! 26 September was European Day of Languages which we celebrated through webinars from languages students at local universities and a 'Football Lingo' webinar showcasing the variety of roles available with languages in the football industry. Several ex-students came back to see us including Grace, who studies Film Studies and Spanish, and has just enjoyed her year abroad in Valencia. Aleisha, who is celebrating after achieving a first in Mechanical Engineering with a year abroad in the Netherlands, also came along to inspire our current students. Year 11 and A Level students benefitted from speaking practice with ex-student Jack who has also inspired them with his first class degree and his year abroad in Brazil. Year 7 form Orrell took part in the Edinburgh Spanish Film Festival with the online screening of 'Futbolísimos' and, to round off our languages month, we had a visit from the Confucius Centre from the University of Liverpool with a taster session in Mandarin and a chance to try Chinese knots. The Chinese teachers said 'We were deeply impressed by students' curiosity and enthusiastic participation'. Thank you to our Languages community for making all of these events possible!



## On the Horizon...

- ★ Y11 RAP Parent Info Eve – 6 Nov
- ★ Sixth Form U&A Fair – 7 Nov
- ★ Sixth Form Open Evening – 13 Nov
- ★ Presentation Evening – 18 Nov
- ★ Y11 PPEs – 17 to 21 Nov
- ★ Y11 PPEs – 24 Nov to 1 Dec