

Our ref: MMC/NWI

13 February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

What an exceptional half term it has been at STWA! Our academy continues to go from strength to strength, and it is a privilege to witness the dedication, ambition and talent of our students each and every day. From record-breaking first-choice applications for year 7 places to the unforgettable Gym and Dance Spectacular, our community spirit has truly shone. The atmosphere at Thursday evening's showcase was electric, and we are so grateful for the support of families who joined us to celebrate the outstanding commitment and performances of our young people. It is moments like these that remind us what a special place STWA is.

Teaching and Learning

Year 10 Achieve Week

This week we held our second year 10 achieve week. On Thursday and Friday, students took part in their subjects for extended periods of time. This allowed them to complete set assignments, coursework, live trials, practical assessments and even go to Polypipe. Students have been fully invested throughout the last two days, and we are looking forward to continuing this to their remaining two options subjects on Thursday and Friday during the first week after half term.

Year 11 February Half Term Achieve

Over February half term, we'll be hosting a number of Achieve sessions to support students' preparations for trial examinations which start the week after half term.

Over the last four years, students who attended these sessions found them to be incredibly beneficial and they performed significantly higher than students who did not attend the sessions. Students are not expected to attend in uniform, but they will need to bring equipment and refreshments.

To support with resourcing the sessions, we'd like to request students sign up using this form: [Year 11 February 2026 Half Term Achieve – Fill out form](#)

Tassomai

Students' investment in Tassomai continues to go be incredible, with students in year 11 completing almost 200 hours and students in year 10 completing almost 120 hours!

In year 11, we are running a number of rewards linked to Tassomai:

- The student who gains the most points between January and May will win a Prom VIP table.
- Students who achieve 100% of their weekly goals and secure accuracy above 60% will be rewarded with the Mrs Cowley acadimal.



Sparx

As an academy, we have completed over 5,700 hours of personalised learning, answered a half a million questions correctly and over 300 students have improved their times table fluency this year. We thank every parent and carer for their support and encouragement in completing Sparx mathematics tasks.

After half term, every student from years 7 to 10 will be improving on their required needs using the Sparx "Fix-Up" application.

Also after the half term, as we start to engage year 10 with best practise for GCSE, they will be switching to Tassomai and exam question homework. This will provide fluency in mathematical concepts and the recall needed ahead of year 10 trials.

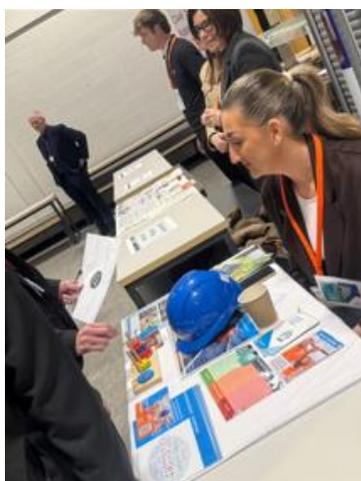
Careers



What a busy half term for Careers at STWA. On Tuesday 3 February, we invited over 30 companies into our academy so students from all year groups could attend a Careers Fair. Our students met with and discussed careers relating to local and national employers, Post 16 and Post 18 training providers, apprenticeships, as well as volunteer and charity work.



This week, we celebrated National Apprenticeship Week through tutor period and subject lessons to develop students' understanding of what apprenticeship are and what they can offer.



Continuing with the theme of raising aspirations, our year 11 cohort had their last activity day on the Access to Sheffield programme, which they have been attending for three years to improve revision skills and raise awareness of their learning methods, whilst being on a university campus and networking with professionals and alumni.



Personal Development

Enrichment Electives

Week one of block three has been a huge success; it's so wonderful to see students on a Wednesday afternoon trying new electives, mixing with different students and learning new skills. This is the seventh block of electives since the launch in September 2024 and it is firmly embedded as part of the STWA culture to offer exceptional learning experiences.

Sports Fixtures

Girls Football

On Monday 9 February, our year 7, 8 and 9 girls played in a round robin tournament against Wath and Maltby Academy. The girls showed fantastic teamwork, determination, and sportsmanship throughout the day — supporting each other brilliantly and giving their all in every game. It was great to see their effort and enthusiasm pay off on and off the pitch.

Boys Football

Our year 9 boys also played on Monday 9 February in the Doncaster Schools Cup, beating De Warrene Academy 5-0 to proceed to the next round. The boys were superb both in personality and ability and represented the academy brilliantly! Well done boys!

Events

Year 11 Achieve Weekend

Last weekend, we hosted over 50 year 11 students at PGL Dearne Valley for our first Achieve Weekend, which saw students alternate between English and Mathematics Achieve sessions alongside adventure activities, including Archery Tag, Ambush, Jacob's Ladder and High Equilibrium. The behaviour and investment of students was impeccable, so a huge thank you to them and parents for their support. A special thank you to all staff involved in preparing and delivering the sessions, which we know will prove both impactful and memorable for all students.

London Question Time

On Tuesday 10 February, 15 of our sixth form students attended Westminster's Abbey Question Time where they were presented with the opportunity to meet with various political figures. Throughout the session, students were able to pose questions and participate in a live debate amongst the politicians tackling ideas such as the proposed social media ban and how we need to effectively use our online platforms.

University of Cambridge Visit

On Thursday 12 February, selected year 12 students visited the University of Cambridge to attend a talk about the Oxbridge admissions process, a Q&A session with current students, and a tour of Corpus Christi College. Students also got the chance to experience a guided punting tour on the river Cam. The trip aimed to ensure that students interested in applying to highly competitive universities are well equipped and informed ahead of the admissions process in October 2026. The visit was very informative and thoroughly enjoyed by our students.



Gym and Dance Spectacular Showcase

On Thursday 12 February, STWA held its annual Gym and Dance Spectacular Showcase - 'The Icons'. Students worked exceptionally hard, both in and out of lessons, to ensure their routines were flawless and I am sure you will join us in congratulating them on their performances.

The Lecture Programme

Friday 13 February saw the return of the Lecture Programme. A programme for sixth form students aimed to broaden their knowledge beyond their core courses, whilst developing university style study skills, preparing them for higher education.

We welcomed Dr Katie Mellor from The University of Oxford who delivered her lecture 'Beyond the Blood Test: What Really Matters to Patients'.

Students had sessions preparing them for lecture style learning, pre/post strategies and effective note taking strategies for during the lecture, building on prior Character Education input in KS3/4.

University of Cambridge Schools Tour

On Friday 13 March, from 2:00 – 3:30 pm, we are hosting the University of Cambridge Schools Tour for the second year. This session is aimed at students in years 10 to 12 who are interested in studying at Cambridge or Oxford.

During the session, the following areas will be covered:

- The benefits of going to university
- Financing university
- Teaching, social life and careers afterwards
- Studying at the University of Cambridge
- KS4/KS5 qualifications and subject choices
- Making a competitive application (including writing a personal statement and interviews)

If your child is interested in attending this session, please express your interest by completing this form by 5:00 pm on Monday 2 March: [University of Cambridge Schools Tour 2026 – Fill out form](#)

Students should see Ms Shaw for more details.

House Update

This week, we have seen a shakeup in our current house standings! Brodsworth have managed to maintain their lead in the top spot, but Cusworth have made a huge comeback securing second place which has been achieved through their investment in the extended house projects. They are being closely followed by Wentworth in third place and then Chatsworth in fourth. As we head into half term four, our next house reward will be a matinee performance of The Little Shop of Horrors, where all students in the winning house, who have a minimum of 40 house points and less than 50 negatives, will be invited to attend.

Attendance

We have given out our 97% draw this half term! The winner was **Daniel (9H2)**, who selected the 50-inch TV and now gets to take this away over the half term. It's fantastic to be able to reward our students for their excellent attendance.

We are also pleased to have been awarded a **National School Attendance Award** in recognition of our attendance in the Autumn term. Well done to everyone for your continued effort to ensure students are in the academy every day! Let's now push on to get the Spring term reward.





Standards

We are committed to maintaining high standards around the academy. Any incidents of bullying are taken very seriously and dealt with swiftly. We encourage students to speak up if they experience or witness bullying, so we can keep our academy a safe and respectful place for everyone.

Please also be reminded that fur hoods are not allowed in the academy. If students bring coats with fur hoods, they will need to either remove the fur or hand the coat in at single point at the start of the school day. We appreciate your support in helping students follow our uniform expectations.

First 552 Bus Service (Plantation to STWA, via Alverley Lane)

School services' arrival times have been raised as an immediate issue with the Traffic Commissioners for punctuality and late starts/arrivals etc. Therefore, from Monday 23 February 2026, First Bus have been instructed, by the Traffic Commissioners, to commence their bus service from Woodfield Way at the earlier time of 7:31 am, calling at Alverley Lane at 7:53 am, arriving at Sir Thomas Wharton Academy for 8:05 am.

Parents and Community Advisory Board (PCAB)

To enable us to reflect on the areas of strength and the opportunities for development within our academy, our Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB) meet once per term with members of staff and the Senior Leadership team. Our next PCAB meeting will be held at STWA on Tuesday 3 March from 5:00 until 6:00 pm – we hope you can join us.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr M McDonald
Principal

