



# Irlam and Cadishead Academy Newsletter

December 2025 EDITION

Proud to be  
**GOOD**



Resilience | Respect | Enthusiasm | Ambition | Determination

## EXPECT THE EXTRAORDINARY



### In This Issue

- Rewards Update
- Aspire Day
- Mock Results Day
- Year 11
- Motivational Speaker
- Transition
- Sports Update
- Lots more



### KEY DATES



- Students Return to School - 6<sup>th</sup> January
- Year 10 Parents Evening - 8<sup>th</sup> January
- Mid Year Assessments Y7-10 - W/C 12<sup>th</sup> January
- Year 9 Options Evening - 15<sup>th</sup> January
- School Closes for Half Term - 13<sup>th</sup> February
- Students Return to School - 23<sup>rd</sup> February





Dear Parents, Carers, and Students,

What an incredible half term it has been, filled with achievement, energy and memorable moments across our school community.

Our pupils have been exceptionally active, taking part in over 100 sporting fixtures across football, rugby, netball, rowing and more. These experiences highlight not only their sporting ability, but also their commitment, teamwork and resilience.

I am extremely proud of our Year 10 and Year 11 pupils, who have approached their examinations with focus and determination. Their effort and maturity have been exemplary.

This term has also brought a range of exciting events, from the talent on display at Karaoke Tuesday to the silent disco and cinema experience enjoyed during Rewards Day. A special mention goes to Mr Brown and our weekly staff challenge – congratulations to him for securing a non-uniform day on the last day of term, while revealing some unexpected talents along the way.

We were also privileged to welcome Olympic Gold Medallist Susannah Townsend, whose inspirational visit encouraged pupils to aim high and believe in their potential.

Our Class of 2025 Certificate Evening was another highlight, celebrating last year's record results and welcoming former students back to school.

Transition activities are already underway across several departments, including Geography, Music and History, helping pupils prepare confidently for their next steps.

I am immensely proud of both our pupils and staff, and I thank parents and carers for their continued support.

We are pleased to see clear improvements across the school:

- Attendance up 1% compared to this time last year
- Behaviour significantly improved, with over a 50% reduction in RFI
- Increased participation in Rewards Day and strong engagement with our Rewards Station

Key Dates:

- Students return: 6 January
- Year 10 Parents' Evening: 8 January
- Year 9 Options Information Evening: 15 January

As we approach the festive season, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank you for being part of our school community.

Warm Regards  
Chris Leader  
Principal



## Rewards Update

This term has been a fantastic celebration of student achievement across the Academy. A phenomenal 11,332 Golden Tickets have been awarded in recognition of outstanding behaviour, effort and commitment to our READ values – Resilience, Respect, Enthusiasm, Ambition and Determination.

Staff have continued to recognise students in every lesson for their positive attitudes and hard work. Golden and Platinum Tickets have once again been exchanged at our popular Rewards Station, where students enjoyed choosing from a wide range of exciting prizes as a well-deserved reward for their efforts.

The numbers truly reflect the positive culture across the Academy. This term alone, an incredible 166,590 positive merits have been issued, highlighting the resilience, ambition and determination shown by our students each day.

Attendance has also been a real focus this term, with our festive Attendance Advent Calendar proving extremely popular. It has created real excitement and motivation around coming to school every day – with one very lucky student even winning a brand-new TV!

We are incredibly proud of our students and the effort they continue to put into their learning and behaviour. Well done to everyone who has contributed to making this such a successful term – we look forward to seeing even more achievements as we move forward.





## Aspire Day

Our Year 7–10 students recently took part in a Careers & Enterprise Aspire Day, designed to develop ambition, confidence and future-ready skills.

Year 7 spent the morning designing their own theme parks, with sessions focused on park design, marketing and branding, and financial planning. The day culminated in students presenting their ideas to their peers, providing valuable opportunities to develop oracy, creativity and teamwork.

Meanwhile, students in Years 8, 9 and 10 took part in a range of sessions exploring financial management, future goals and careers of the future. Throughout the day, students were encouraged to reflect on their aspirations and consider the pathways available to them.

Each year group also attended an assembly led by a visitor from Kooth, which focused on positive mental health and wellbeing, reinforcing the importance of looking after both mental and emotional health.



| Enrichment

# aspire

In November, we were thrilled to welcome back our Class of 2025 for a special Certificate Evening to celebrate their achievements with parents and carers.

Students collected their certificates and individual awards, including those recognising our READ values and the prestigious David Pennington and Niall Page awards. It was lovely to catch up with everyone, hear what they're up to now, and celebrate all the amazing things they achieved during their time at ICA.

It was a really enjoyable evening, full of pride and happy memories, and a great chance to reconnect with our former students.



## Certificate Evening



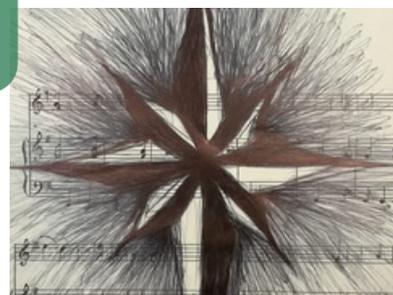
## Christmas Card Competition

The Art Department recently hosted their annual Christmas Card Competition, which once again proved to be extremely popular with students. This year, the competition attracted over 80 entries from students across Key Stages 3 and 4, showcasing a fantastic range of creativity, imagination and artistic skill.

Students explored a variety of styles, techniques and festive themes, making the judging process particularly challenging. After careful consideration, the entries were shortlisted to a final selection of 20 designs. Mr Leader and Mr Rushton then faced the difficult task of selecting the winning artwork from an exceptionally high standard of submissions.

Congratulations to Heidi and Morgan in Year 9, who were named runners-up for their impressive designs, and to Kimberley in Year 10, whose outstanding artwork was chosen as the overall winner. Kimberley's design will be featured as the official ICA Christmas card this year – a fantastic achievement and a real testament to her creativity and talent.

Well done to all students who took part in the competition. The quality of work produced was truly impressive, and the Art Department were delighted with the enthusiasm and effort shown by everyone involved.



## Xmas Talent Show

As always, our Christmas Talent Show didn't disappoint!

Each year group had the chance to enjoy a wide variety of acts, from impressive musical performances to creative and entertaining skits, showcasing the incredible talent within our school community. We are always amazed by the courage and confidence of both students and staff who step up on stage each year, bringing energy and festive cheer to the audience.

And of course, it wouldn't be the ICA Talent Show without our legendary Christmas cards and Christmas crackers, which added extra sparkle and fun to the event. We're already looking forward to next year's show and can't wait to see what new talents will be on display.





## Motivational Speaker



Students at ICA recently had the exciting opportunity to take part in five inspiring assemblies, one for each year group, led by motivational speaker Susannah Townsend. Susannah, a member of the legendary England Women's Hockey Team that won gold at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, shared her experiences and offered valuable insights into achieving success both on and off the field. During each assembly, Susannah delivered a powerful message about setting goals, working effectively as a team, and striving to be the best version of yourself. She encouraged students to embrace challenges, stay determined, and believe in their own potential, using her own journey as an example of what can be achieved with dedication and teamwork.

Each session left students feeling motivated, energised, and inspired to take on new challenges in school, sport, and beyond. It was a fantastic experience that reinforced the importance of ambition, resilience, and working together to achieve personal and collective success.

## Mock Results Day

On 5th December, our Year 11 students experienced Mock Results Day, giving them a real feel for what it will be like to open their GCSE results in August. Other year groups finished school at 2pm, while Year 11 stayed behind for a full day of activities.

The day started with an inspiring talk from a motivational speaker, encouraging students to reflect on their hard work, resilience, and the importance of staying focused as they prepare for their final exams. Then came the moment everyone had been waiting for – collecting their mock results! There were lots of happy faces, a few tears of joy, and plenty of valuable reflections as students thought about where to focus their studies in the coming months.

The day finished on a high note with some well-deserved pizza, a small reward for all their effort and determination. Mock Results Day was a great chance for Year 11 to get a taste of results day, celebrate their achievements, and think about the steps ahead.



## Year 11

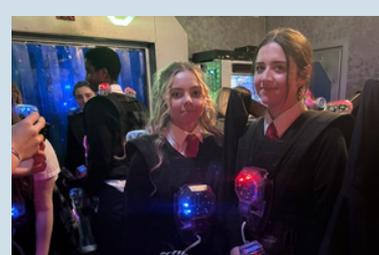
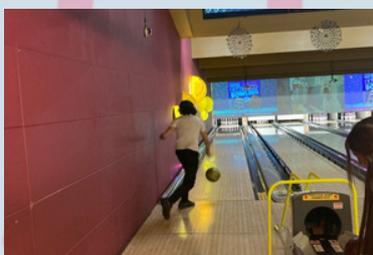
It has been a very busy term for all of our Year 11 students, who have shown an excellent attitude and commitment throughout. Many students made full use of the additional support on offer, maintaining excellent attendance at Breakfast Boosters and English revision sessions held on Saturday mornings. We were delighted with the excellent attendance at the recent Year 11 Parents' Evening, with 83% of parents, guardians, and carers attending. This strong level of engagement highlights the valuable partnership between home and school, which continues to play a key role in supporting our students' success.

Attendance at Extra Period Six (EPS) has been outstanding. The strong turnout reflects the positive work ethic within the year group and shows their dedication to improving themselves, which has not gone unnoticed. In addition, Art and Drama twilight sessions were also extremely well attended, giving students the opportunity to refine their practical work and build confidence ahead of important assessments.

Coursework completion across subjects is progressing well, with students remaining on track against the deadlines set by their teachers. Engineering, Catering, and Drama examinations have now taken place, marking important milestones in the Year 11 assessment calendar and providing students with valuable exam experience.

As a special reward for their effort and hard work, we were delighted to take the students to the Trafford Centre recently, where they took part in bowling, laser tag, and mini-golf. The trip was an amazing success, and we hope the students appreciated this well-deserved recognition for their hard work this term.

As we move into the new year, with March mock examinations already on the horizon, the Year 11 Team would like to thank students, families, and staff for your continued hard work and support. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.





## Remembrance Day

At the beginning of term, we held our whole-school Remembrance Assembly, a much-loved tradition at ICA. It was a meaningful opportunity for our school community to come together to pay our respects to those who gave their lives for our country.

Our Senior Prefects led a moving and dignified assembly, which was beautifully observed by all students and staff. We also took time to reflect on the importance of remembrance through thoughtful artwork created by our talented Art and Textiles students, adding a powerful visual element to this special occasion.



## SEND Excellence Visit

Recently, ICA hosted a SEND Excellence Visit for colleagues from across the United Learning Trust. Led by our SENCO, Mrs Hren, and supported by the Teaching and Learning Team, the visit highlighted the inclusive approaches used at ICA and how curriculum adaptations support all learners.

Visitors had the chance to see classrooms in action, talk through approaches with staff, and share ideas around inclusive practice. Feedback was extremely positive, with colleagues appreciating the opportunity to learn from one another and see how inclusive teaching supports students across the school, reinforcing our commitment to an ambitious and accessible curriculum for every student.



## Karaoke Tuesday

As many of you will have seen, we recently launched Karaoke Tuesdays at ICA – and what a success it has been, both in school and across our social media platforms. Each Tuesday lunchtime, Heller Up is transformed into a karaoke stage, with students and staff from across the school getting involved. The range of talent on show has been incredible, as has the bravery of those who step up to perform in front of the whole school. The atmosphere it brings to the academy is amazing, and Karaoke Tuesdays have quickly become a highlight of the week, bringing the ICA community together as everyone sings along and supports one another.

## STEP UP WORKSHOPS

We were delighted to welcome Year 5 pupils from our local primary schools for a series of festive Step Up workshops at ICA. During the Step Up to Geography session, students took part in an engaging lesson, exploring the concept of food miles and discovering how far different foods travel before reaching our plates. They also investigated the countries of origin for a variety of everyday foods, developing their map skills and global awareness.

In Step Up to Music, 159 Year 5 pupils joined a Big Christmas Music Session hosted by Mr Farrier. The workshop included fun vocal warm-ups, engaging Christmas carols, and a touch of friendly competitive singing. The hall was buzzing with enthusiasm, teamwork, and festive cheer, making it a fantastic way to celebrate the season together.

These workshops offered a wonderful taste of secondary school learning, helping to make a smoother transition to high school when the time comes, and giving our young visitors a memorable and inspiring experience.



## CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

In the run-up to Christmas, staff were challenged within their departments to create a Christmas hamper using just a cardboard box. The level of competition was fierce, with some hampers even featuring lights and other festive touches! During our INSET day, the hampers were independently judged, and the winning creations were then donated to local care homes. Our ICA choir visited the homes to deliver the hampers and sing festive carols, spreading extra Christmas cheer to the residents. A wonderful way to celebrate the season and bring our community together!

## Over 60's Christmas Dinner

We were delighted to host our annual Over 60s Christmas Dinner, welcoming over 100 local residents for a wonderful afternoon of festive celebrations at our school. The event was a fantastic opportunity to bring together our community and celebrate the season in style. Guests were treated to a delicious Christmas dinner, expertly served by our students. Their professionalism, enthusiasm, and warm hospitality were praised by all, highlighting the wonderful skills and dedication of our students.

The afternoon was filled with entertainment and festive cheer. Year 11 student Jonathan wowed the audience with a solo piano performance, while a guest singer added extra sparkle to the event. Attendees enjoyed dancing, a lively quiz, and plenty of laughter.

The Christmas Dinner is not just about the food and entertainment—it is also an important way for the Academy to strengthen connections across generations. It was heartwarming to see students, staff, and local residents come together, share stories, and enjoy each other's company in a relaxed, festive atmosphere.

We would like to thank everyone involved in making the event such a success—from the staff and students who helped prepare and serve the meal, to the performers who provided such fantastic entertainment. We can't wait for our next community event, where we will once again open our doors to celebrate and connect with our local community.





## Football

Football at ICA is going from strength to strength this year, with some fantastic performances across all year groups!

Our Year 7 and Year 8 Girls Football teams made the short trip to Salford City Academy and produced a dominant 6-0 victory – a brilliant way to finish the term. The Salford Schools Competition for the girls will continue in the new year, and we can't wait to see them build on this success.

The Year 7 Boys team had a challenging start in the English Schools Cup, narrowly losing 5-4 on penalties to a strong Alsager side and 3-2 to a Wellacre team featuring several academy players. However, the Salford Schools Cup tells a different story, with the A team topping their group in the first round of fixtures. The boys also enjoyed a trip to Liverpool FC's training ground, where they finished 3rd in a competitive tournament.

Our Year 8 Boys currently sit 2nd in their Salford Schools Cup group and will be looking forward to their quarter-final fixture in the new year.

The Year 9 Boys have topped their group in the Salford Schools Cup and showed their class with an impressive 8-1 victory over Ellesmere Park. They now look ahead to the quarter-finals with confidence.

Year 10 Boys have also topped their group in the Salford Schools Cup and remain active in the Greater Manchester County Cup – a fantastic achievement for the team.

Meanwhile, the Year 11 Boys continue to impress, sitting at the top of their Salford Schools Cup group. They faced a tough English Schools Cup tie against Wright Robinson, showing all our ICA values despite a 3-0 defeat that left the team down to 9 players due to injuries.

Alongside their school fixtures, several students have represented ICA in external teams this half term, including:

- Salford School Boys: Bobby Prescott (Y7), Henry Norman (Y7), Jake Sayed (Y9), Max Stephan (Y9), Ethan White (Y10)
- Manchester United: Reece Aiyegbusi
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Well done to all our football teams for their hard work, determination, and fantastic football this term – the future looks bright for ICA football!



## Rugby

Our Year 7 Boys have continued to develop their love of rugby this half term, gaining valuable experience in the 13-a-side game. They have faced some of the strongest competition in the area, including Saddleworth, Rainford and St Pauls. Despite some challenging score lines, the boys never gave up, earning a well-deserved draw against a very strong Rainford side – a great example of their determination and resilience.

The Year 7 Girls had the opportunity to play at Preston Grasshoppers, one of the best-known clubs in the North-West, and came away as competition winners, with 4 wins, 1 draw and 1 loss. A fantastic sign of what is possible for this talented team!

Our Year 8 Boys have also faced some of the best schools around. After winning the Salford School Competition last year, they have been placed in the North-West Counties Cup. They began the term with a trip to Standish High, making an impressive second-half comeback, and then took on Rainford, a team expected to challenge for the National Trophy this year. Once again, our boys showed great sporting resilience and determination.

The Year 9 Boys have had a similarly strong term. After a narrow defeat to St Ambrose, they bounced back to beat St Peters and St Pauls in fiercely competitive matches, demonstrating skill, teamwork and persistence.

Finally, the Year 8 and Year 9 Girls combined to compete at Preston Grasshoppers, following in the footsteps of the Year 7 team. They returned as tournament victors, winning 4 games and drawing 1 – a fantastic achievement and a real testament to their hard work and commitment.

Well done to all our rugby teams for their dedication, determination, and excellent performances this term!



## Net Ball

Netball has kept Miss Evans busy this half term, with ICA competing in the Netball League against Lowry, St Pats, Ellesmere and Ambrose. All teams have shown excellent progress, with the girls demonstrating focus, teamwork and strong communication on the court.

A standout moment came during the Year 8 fixture away at Lowry, where the girls played both their A and B teams. They delivered fantastic performances, securing a 6-2 win against the A team and an impressive 8-0 victory against the B team.

Netball club continues to be extremely popular, reflecting the girls' dedication to improving their skills and preparing for success in Half Term 3 and the upcoming Salford School Rallies. It has also been wonderful to see some Year 9 students joining the sessions and contributing to training, helping to support and inspire the younger teams.

Well done to all our netballers for their hard work, commitment and excellent performances this term!



## Rowing

We were proud to be the only UL school in the North of England to enter the National Indoor Rowing Competition, showcasing our students' passion for representing ICA!

Four teams took part: Year 7 Boys, Year 7 Girls, Year 8 Boys and Year 8 Girls. All four teams performed brilliantly, winning their qualifying rounds, with the Year 8 Girls emerging as the top ICA team.

A huge well done to all our rowers for their hard work, determination and excellent performances – a fantastic achievement for the Academy!





## Manchester United Foundation

### Eco Reds



On Monday 24th November, a group of ICA students took part in the Manchester United Foundation Eco Reds programme, attending the launch event at Manchester Museum alongside students from other local high schools.

The day was packed with hands-on learning about sustainability, including where our clothes come from, what they are made of, and how we can recycle them to keep them in use for longer. Students then explored creative ways to express these ideas, making pictures with wool and imprinting them onto paper using water and UV light. The visit also included a fascinating tour of the museum, where students delved into Chinese history, saw one of the very first meteorites to hit the Earth, and observed frogs and lizards in the vivariums. Adding to the excitement, special guest Phallon Tullis-Joyce gave a speech and spent time speaking with students, sharing her passion for the environment and inspiring them to take action.



### Sports Medical Trip

Recently, a group of Year 10 Sports Studies students attended a Sports Medical Event at the University of Bolton. The day offered a series of hands-on sessions, giving students a real insight into the science behind sport and athletic performance.

The activities began with a test of nerves and determination, as students attempted to climb a 50ft climbing wall. They then moved on to a session on physiology and rehabilitation, exploring how the body performs and recovers from lactic acid during physical activity.

At the biomechanics station, students measured statistics such as speed and force using jumping and strength tests, and timed their speed over set distances. The day concluded with a session on anatomy and sports support, where students learned how to tape ankles and knees, understanding the purpose of the tape and how to apply it correctly for support and injury prevention.

It was a fantastic and engaging day, giving our students a taste of the practical and scientific knowledge involved in sports medicine and athletic performance.





## #ATTENDANCEMATTERS

### Attendance Round-Up: Building Momentum Into the New Year

Recent research from the Department for Education highlights just how important every single day in school is. Absence can have a real impact on future opportunities, while consistent attendance helps students build knowledge, confidence, and success.

We're proud to report that our attendance this half term continues to improve compared to last year:

- Year 11: +3%
- Year 10: +1.9%
- Year 9: +1.1%
- Year 8: +1.5%
- Year 7: -0.5% (but trending upward and on track to beat last year soon!)

This is a fantastic achievement and a reflection of the commitment of our students and families. Every lesson counts—being in school every day makes a real difference.

Attendance rewards and enrichment activities have been a big part of this success. Super Attendance Week, In to Win, Christmas House Challenges, and the ICA advent have kept spirits high and encouraged regular attendance. A special congratulations to Daisy, who won a Level 4 prize and chose a TV!



Next half term, we're introducing Attendance Streaks, giving students the chance to earn prizes for consistent attendance. Let's keep this momentum going—every day in school matters and brings us closer to a stronger, brighter future.

## #ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

**COLLEGES AND APPRENTICESHIP PROVIDERS WILL TAKE YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE IN YEAR 11 INTO ACCOUNT WHEN CONSIDERING THEIR APPLICATION.**

# THE ICA NEWSLETTER



Iram and Cadishead Academy  
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