

# READING ROUNDUP

## World Book Day 2026!



Virtual School Visit with

**Nathanael Lessore**

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
10.30am-11.15am



World Book Day was bigger and better than ever this year! With it being the National Year of Reading, we had lots going on. An assembly on World Book Day was delivered to all year groups, reminding them of the importance of reading and encouraging them to invest in content of interest to them - a concept linked with the national *Go All In* initiative. There was a live webinar in the Library at break time where Nathanael Lessore spoke about his writing experiences and his book *Against All Odds*. Students received instalments of the short story *All Summer In a Day* at the start of each lesson in their school day. Of course we also had the, now traditional, Book Bake-Off. This year we had 16 entries and the creativity was impressive! Well done to all who participated. The winning cakes were Mia and Poppy with *The Hunger Games*, Eris with *Five Nights at Freddy's* and Violet with *Stranger Things*. Honourable mentions go to Amelie, Elliot and Connie for coming in with votes that were just on the heels of the winners.

## Nathan Parker Visit

2026 kicked off with our first author visit of the new year. Novelist and poet, Nathan Parker visited us in January to meet all of our Year 10 and Year 11 students as well as some of our Year 9s. He gave our students guidance in crafting a piece of narrative writing for the GCSE English Language exam in which students are given the challenging task of writing one piece of creative prose (a short story or personal recount) from a choice of four unseen titles. Our students engaged well with the sessions and were given lots of useful pointers.



## Poetry Live Trip

This February, a group of thirty students from year 10 visited Poetry Live at St George's Hall in Bradford to see some of the poets, whose poems they are studying for English Literature, take to the stage. Amongst others, the students got to hear from our national Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, former Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy and literary legend John Agard.

Róisín said, "It was an interesting and insightful window into the stimuli which inspire poetry". Isla felt it was "an educational day and the passion of the poets and the messages shown in their work definitely inspired me and my peers". We hope it brought another dimension to the poetry they study so extensively for GCSE.

## Reading Champions Quiz

The National Literacy Trust runs a Reading Champions Quiz each year and this is the sixth time HHS has participated. Matilda, Bloss, Aoife, Jamie, Evie and Heidi competed against 23 other schools online and performed very respectably when up against gruelling questions about authors, characters and illustrators. Questions ranged from multiple choice to figuring out titles from Dingbats and unscrambling anagrams. It was challenging but the team had fun whilst showing off their knowledge from books they've read.



## Author Cynthia Murphy's Gift to Superfan Issy!



Issy is a huge fan of the gripping thrillers written by Manchester-based author Cynthia Murphy, who will hopefully be visiting us for our LitFest in June. Whilst negotiating possible dates for the author visit, we happened to mention that we have some voracious readers of her fiction and Cynthia kindly posted us a signed copy of her latest book with a note especially for superfan Issy.

## Year of Reading 2026

We are already very proud of our established culture of reading for pleasure at HHS. The list of initiatives and rewards we have developed to encourage and nurture strong reading habits is long but we welcome a new national initiative: the Year of Reading 2026. This campaign, run by the Department for Education in partnership with the National Literacy Trust, is designed to tackle the decline in reading and reconnect young people to reading through their interests.

Throughout January, in Reading for Pleasure lessons for KS3, students were encouraged to read around their passions and use reading as a way of becoming an expert in their fields of interest. They also got to hear about the reading habits of some of their teachers.

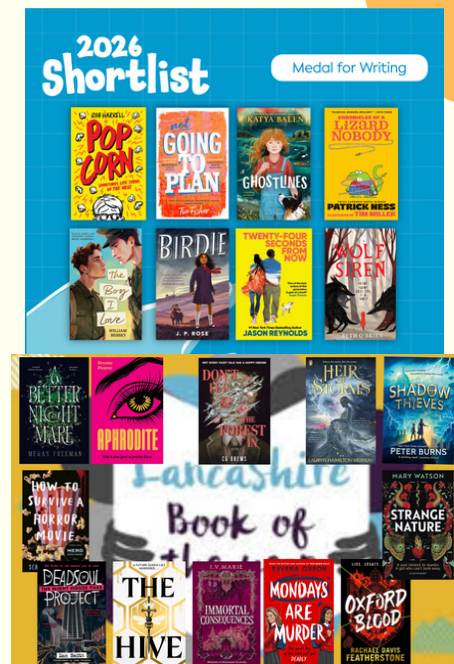
We look forward to seeing what resources and initiatives the campaign will offer us and engaging in this exciting programme of events. For more information, go to: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/about-us/national-year-of-reading-2026/>

## 'Shadowing' Groups for Spring & Summer

We have a group of twenty-six students from Years 7 to 10 taking part in the Carnegie Shadowing Group this year. From March, they will aim to read all eight books shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal for Writing and will vote for their choice of winning book in June. All HHS students can read the selection of books on their iPads as we have free access to the Sora e-reader for a year, alongside the usual Eplatform ebooks that all our students and staff can access.

We will also be 'shadowing' the Lancashire Book of the Year award. An invitation has been sent to all Year 9 students asking them to take part. This will also mean reading as many of the short listed books for this award as possible between March and early June.

Both of these Awards are great springboards for encouraging and challenging our stronger readers or for motivating students whose reading habits have stalled.



## Go for Gold Book Reviews from HHS Students

**Go for Gold is the award scheme we run for KS3 students at Haslingden High. Students are encouraged to read and review books outside of school and homework. They are rewarded with house points, badges, certificates and prizes. Here are a few recommendations from some of our students:**

*The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak is a really sad but amazing story. It's about a girl called Liesel who loses her family and has to live with foster parents in Nazi Germany. At first, she feels really lonely and scared, but she starts learning to read and discovers that books can make her feel better. She even starts stealing them, which becomes her way of coping with all the scary stuff happening around her.

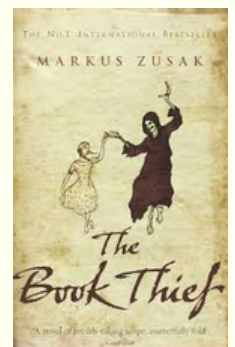
The story is told by Death, which sounds strange, but it actually makes it really interesting. Liesel goes through some really hard and sad times, but she also finds friends, love and courage. Her foster parents and her best friend Rudy help her a lot and make her life feel a little brighter.

One of the best parts of the book is how it shows that words are powerful. Liesel learns that words can hurt people, but they can also give hope and make life better. The story also shows how people make choices—some are good and some are bad—and how those choices can change everything.

Overall, *The Book Thief* is sad and emotional, but it's also about friendship, courage, and hope. It's perfect for kids and teens who like history, interesting characters and stories that make you think. **Bloss - Year 7**

*Bodyguard: Assassin* is the fifth book in the Bodyguard series by Chris Bradford and I really enjoyed it. It is about bodyguard Connor Reeves who is assigned to protect Feliks who is the son of Viktor Malkov (a Russian billionaire and politician). Viktor is trying to fight Russian corruption and has many supporters, but also many haters.

This book is great because things go wrong and there are a lot of action scenes. There is also the appearance of Mr Grey, a strange and mysterious character who crops up in many books in this series. I really enjoyed the big twist at the end and I am looking forward to reading the next book in the series. **Noah - Year 8**



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