CUNDALL MANOR SCHOOL

MICHAELMAS TERM ROUNDUP

SEPT - OCT '26

INSIGHTS



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Welcome



The Michaelmas Term has been a busy and rewarding start to the academic year, with pupils embracing new challenges, celebrating individual achievements and making the most of opportunities both in and beyond the classroom. The Whole School Triathlon set the pace for the term, with pupils from Year 3 to Thornton taking on the challenge of swimming, cycling and running. Outdoor adventures continued with Year 10 tackling the Yorkshire Three Peaks and Year 11 completing their Silver Duke of Edinburgh expeditions across the North York Moors.

Sporting success has been a particular highlight this term, with a busy programme of rugby, hockey and netball fixtures providing plenty of opportunities for pupils to represent the school and enjoy competitive sport. Our U13 girls' hockey team finished as Cup runners-up at Loretto, while Cundall's clay shooting team secured fourth place at the ISA National Championships. We also celebrated our debut at the ISA National Sailing Regatta, Toby's qualification for the ISA National Swimming Finals and our U16 girls' hockey team being crowned North Yorkshire County Champions.

Beyond sport, pupils have enjoyed a varied programme of educational visits, from Year 8's French adventure in Normandy to Science at the Life Centre, Stone Age activities at Skelton Grange and art amongst the Himalayan Gardens. Creativity has also been recognised through seven awards at the regional ISA Art Competition, with three entries progressing to the National Finals. Closer to home, Harvest celebrations brought our school community together, with generous donations supporting Thirsk Foodbank. Musical performances and new enrichment opportunities have added to a full and varied half term. This edition of Insights, celebrates just some of the many experiences and achievements of our pupils.

Introducing Our New Heads of School









Meet our new Head Boy and Head Girl, Iestyn and Annie, together with Deputy Heads Will and Georgia, who will represent the pupil body throughout the year. Iestyn and Will hope to give pupils more opportunities to share their ideas about school life. Annie is looking forward to representing Cundall as a U16 hockey goalkeeper and, alongside Georgia, hopes to introduce a 24-hour fundraising challenge for Thornton pupils. All four bring their own interests and ideas to their roles.

Team Challenges to Start the Term

Years 3–6 began the term with a series of team challenges, from hula-hoop races and scavenger hunts to human pyramids and the challenge of creating the longest possible line using themselves and their clothing! There was plenty of discussion, a little trial and error, and some imaginative solutions along the way.

Year 6 also put their engineering skills to the test, using only paper, straws and tape to build the tallest tower capable of supporting a weight and the strongest bridge spanning a 30cm gap. A fun start to the term, with plenty of teamwork and creative problem-solving!













Main School Triathlon

Swimming, cycling and running their way to the finish line, pupils from Year 3 through to Thornton took on one of the first sporting challenges of the school year. Distances increased through the age groups, and there were some tired legs by the finish. For some, the goal was a personal best; for others, completing the course was an achievement in itself. Year 3 experienced the Main School Triathlon for the first time, while older pupils could measure their progress against previous years. Friends and staff offered encouragement along the route and celebrated every finish. Beyond times and positions, the triathlon gave each pupil a challenge of their own.



















Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Thornton (Year 11) pupils have successfully completed both their practice and final assessed Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions across the North York Moors.

The three-day practice expedition saw pupils walking more than ten miles each day, carrying their camping equipment and food. Their instructors also praised the group for their courtesy throughout.

Building on this experience, pupils went on to complete their final assessed expedition, navigating their route independently with full packs.

A significant milestone in their journey towards achieving their Silver Award.

















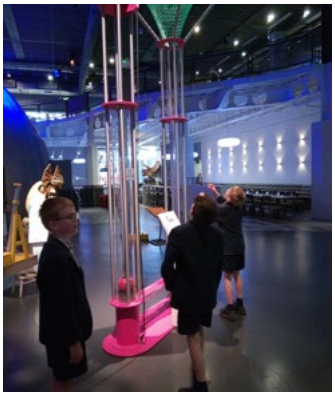
Eldmire Take on the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge

A 5am departure from school marked the beginning of a demanding day for Eldmire (Year 10), as pupils set out to tackle the Yorkshire Three Peaks. The ambitious 23-mile route through the Yorkshire Dales involves more than 1,600 metres of ascent, taking in Whernside, Ingleborough and Pen-y-Ghent. With steep climbs and a long distance to cover, it was a substantial physical and mental challenge, building resilience, determination and a greater understanding of what they are capable of achieving.











Year 6 Explore Science at the Life Centre

Year 6 enjoyed a packed day of discovery at the Life Centre in Newcastle, exploring everything from space and light to chemistry and dinosaurs.

The day began in the Planetarium, where pupils journeyed through the solar system. Eliza described how the experience "felt real" and "felt like we were flying high up into the galaxies", while Rufus said seeing the planets was "very enjoyable".

There was plenty of hands-on science throughout the day. In the Light Workshop, pupils experimented with lenses, mirrors and lasers, challenging themselves to direct a laser through increasingly difficult mazes. They also explored the Space Zone and Wow Zone, trying interactive exhibits and discovering what everyday life is like for astronauts in space.

A visit to the Chemistry Lab was a particular highlight for Rufus. Pupils became scientists themselves, testing a mystery powder with different chemicals to identify it. "We also burnt things on the Bunsen burner... it was cool!" he reported.

The Dino Zone brought another memorable moment, with pupils coming face-to-face with a huge Spinosaurus. There was also time to explore more interactive exhibits before a final visit to the shop.





A Closer Look at the Human Eye

In one of many practical science experiences this term, Year 10 pupils took their study of the human eye beyond the textbook with a dissection in Biology.

By identifying the lens, retina, cornea and optic nerve, pupils were able to examine the structures responsible for sight and gain a clearer understanding of how they work together.

A valuable opportunity to connect GCSE theory with practical scientific investigation.





Reception's First School Trip





There was plenty of excitement as Reception boarded the school minibus for their first school trip, heading to Nunnington Hall to discover more about life in the past.

Exploring the historic house and its collections, the children were particularly fascinated by the intricate dolls' house exhibition, examining the tiny rooms and miniature household objects. A picnic on the lawn brought an unexpected visitor, with a rather inquisitive peacock showing considerable interest in everyone's sandwiches! The visit gave the children an opportunity to compare homes and everyday life in the past with their own experiences, developing their curiosity and understanding of how people lived in different times.

A Day in the Stone Age

Year 3 travelled back in time at Skelton Grange Environment Centre, exploring how our prehistoric ancestors lived and survived.

After learning about the Stone Age timeline, pupils practised tracking, stealth and observation skills, including the challenge of sneaking past their teachers without being spotted! The afternoon was spent creating their own Stone Age settlement, building shelters, making pots and baking bread over an open fire. They even watched a mackerel being prepared before cooking and tasting it.

The experience gave pupils a greater understanding of the skills, resources and ingenuity needed for everyday survival in the Stone Age.









Year 2 Discover Animal Habitats

Year 2 took their learning about habitats and adaptation to Flamingo Land Zoo, where they discovered everything from giraffes and rhinos to red pandas, penguins and flamingos.

Zookeeper Ben shared his knowledge and answered the children's many questions, while a particular highlight was meeting Raymond the tenrec.

It was especially rewarding to hear pupils confidently explaining how different animals have adapted to their environments, drawing on what they had already learnt in the classroom.











Stories Come to Life at Stockeld Park

Year 4 put their imaginations to work during a visit to Stockeld Park, taking part in storytelling workshops using props and story cards to develop their own tales.

The activities encouraged pupils to think creatively, develop characters and storylines, and share ideas. The park's imaginative settings, from the Enchanted Forest to its themed worlds of adventure, provided further inspiration for storytelling and creative thinking.

















Art Amongst the Himalayan Gardens

Year 5 exchanged the art room for the Himalayan Gardens and Sculpture Park, spending the day sketching and exploring art in a natural setting.

With sketchbooks in hand, pupils studied sculptures positioned throughout the gardens, considering shape, texture, scale and how each piece interacted with its surroundings.

The landscape itself provided further inspiration, encouraging pupils to look more closely at the detail around them and develop their observational drawing skills.















Padel Joins the Enrichment Programme

Senior pupils have been trying their hand at one of the UK's fastest-growing sports this term, with weekly padel sessions at Padel Shed in Thirsk now part of Cundall's Enrichment programme.

Combining elements of tennis and squash, this fast-paced racket sport offers pupils a new opportunity to develop their skills, enjoy friendly competition and discover a new sporting interest beyond the classroom.

Introducing Ballet to the timetable at Cundall

Ballet offers pupils the opportunity to develop coordination, balance, musicality and technique while enjoying the discipline and creativity of dance.

As part of the wider enrichment opportunities at Cundall, it provides another way for pupils to explore their interests and develop their confidence beyond the classroom.











Toby Qualifies for ISA National Swimming Finals

Cundall's swimming team travelled to Macclesfield for the ISA regional qualifiers, producing a strong set of performances against schools from across the North of England.

Several pupils finished among the leading swimmers in their heats, with Toby securing first place in the Year 4 Boys' 50m Backstroke. His victory earned him a place at the ISA National Swimming Finals in London, where he will represent the North of England.

Congratulations to Toby and the whole team on their performances.

Fourth Place at National Clay Shooting Championships

Cundall's clay shooting team made an impressive debut at the ISA National Championships at Hartpury, finishing fourth overall.

Competing across ten stands, pupils faced targets travelling at varying speeds, angles and distances, testing their accuracy, concentration and timing.

Hugh finished ninth individually, with Sandy close behind in tenth, contributing to an excellent team result in the school's first appearance at the competition.















Cundall Makes Its National Sailing Debut

Three Cundall sailors, Norine, Julia and Hedley, represented the school for the first time at the ISA National Sailing Regatta at Draycote Water.

Despite sunshine on arrival, gusty winds made for challenging racing conditions, particularly when sailing into the wind.

The pupils completed four races of approximately 40 minutes each, competing in a fleet of 30 boats from schools across the country. All three finished around the halfway mark overall, a strong result for Cundall's first entry.

Their participation reflects the breadth of sporting interests amongst our pupils and the opportunities to pursue them at competitive level.



Celebrating Creativity: ISA Art

From painting and drawing to sculpture and mixed media, Cundall pupils have produced an impressive range of work for this year's ISA Art Competition.

At the regional competition, three entries were awarded first place, securing their progression to the ISA National Art Finals, while a further four achieved second place. The collection showcases the variety of techniques, ideas and individual styles being developed across the school. Congratulations to everyone whose work was selected and exhibited. This success comes alongside further recognition for the department, with Cundall named a finalist in the ISA Awards 2026 for Excellence in Visual Arts and Creative Writing.


ISSY, 2ND


DELIAH, 2ND


MOLLY


GRACE


ALICE, 1ST


LUCY, 1ST

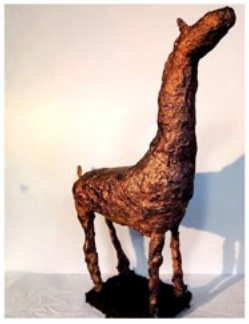

ILANA


RAINIA



MARIKA


HUGO


LAYLA


TILDA



WILLIAM, 2ND


NOELLE, 2ND


ETTA


ROSIE


ELSIE, 1ST

Harvest Festival Pre-Prep

Our youngest pupils gathered in church for their Harvest Festival, led by Reverend Bob Sidgwick, with every year group contributing to the service. Nursery brought plenty of colour with their harvest crowns and vegetable song, while Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 shared seasonal artwork, poetry and singing. Year 2 also reflected on the things they are thankful for, bringing a thoughtful close to the service.

Prep and Senior pupils marked Harvest with a whole-school assembly led by our Senior Prefects. The occasion provided an opportunity to reflect on the importance of gratitude and supporting others, particularly through the school's Harvest collection for Thirsk Foodbank. Thank you to all our families for their generous donations, which will help support people in our local community.



















A Successful Sporting Weekend at Loretto



Cundall's U11 and U13 teams travelled to Scotland for a weekend of hockey and rugby at Loretto, competing against schools and clubs from across the country.

Following a stop at Musselburgh beach, pupils took to the pitches for a competitive festival of sport.



The U13 girls' hockey team enjoyed an excellent tournament, winning four of their five matches, scoring 12 goals and conceding just two to finish as Cup runners-up.

The boys' rugby teams also delivered strong performances across their respective competitions, while Sophie received special recognition from opposing teams as a standout player of the tournament, earning an invitation to return to Loretto.

A memorable weekend of competitive sport and shared experiences for everyone involved.



















From Seed to Plate at Harlow Carr

Year 3 visited RHS Harlow Carr as part of their Science topic on healthy eating, exploring where food comes from and how plants grow.

Pupils investigated the growing process of pea seeds, explored the gardens and planted seeds of their own, connecting their classroom learning with the natural world.



Cundall Supports Hello Yellow

A splash of yellow brightened the school as pupils and staff came together to mark World Mental Health Day in support of YoungMinds' Hello Yellow campaign.

The day encouraged conversations about mental health and the importance of looking out for one another. Thank you to everyone who took part and contributed to the fundraising.





















Year 8's Normandy Adventure

Year 8 spent a week in Normandy, putting their French-speaking skills into practice and experiencing French culture at Château de la Baudonnière, where every interaction with staff was conducted in French, providing constant opportunities to practise the language.

The programme combined canoeing, archery, bread making and a particularly muddy obstacle course with French lessons and a visit to a local market, where pupils tested their language skills with local traders.

Excursions included Mont Saint-Michel, a chocolate museum and visits to Arromanches and Bayeux to explore the region's history. There was even an opportunity to sample snails! A sports tournament and French-themed fancy dress dinner rounded off a busy and memorable week.



















Celebrating European Day of Languages

Cundall celebrated European Day of Languages with a week exploring European languages, food and culture. Miss Castle-Smith opened the celebrations with an assembly on the benefits of learning a foreign language.

Pupils enjoyed European food tasting, an interactive French performance by the Flying Theatre Company and some fantastic entries for the Great MFL Bake Off. A Spanish-inspired lunch of paella and churros, a school-wide scavenger hunt and a European Languages poster competition added to the celebrations.

A fantastic week encouraging pupils to explore different cultures and languages.







Around the World Day

Our Pre-Prep pupils enjoyed a special Around the World Day, travelling to China, Peru, Mexico and Kenya with their paper passports in hand. Each stop introduced them to different cultures, traditions and landmarks, with activities including building the Great Wall of China, creating colourful llama crafts, making Mexican paper decorations and exploring Kenya's wildlife. The day began with some rather unusual visitors too, as Tinu brought in five tortoises for the children to meet and feed. A wonderful day of discovery!











Supporting Our Local Community

Year 7 pupils helped deliver the school's Harvest donations to Thirsk Foodbank, seeing how contributions from Cundall families can support people within the local community.

Run by volunteers, the foodbank supports around 1,200 families throughout the year, including approximately 300 at Christmas.

Through Community Works, families can also access practical advice on budgeting, employment and housing.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the collection. The generosity of our school community is greatly appreciated.









Music in the Library

Ten young musicians, ranging from Year 3 through to Thornton, performed at the first informal concert of the school year, entertaining an audience of parents in the library.

The programme featured cello, guitar, drums, cornet, piano and trombone, with pupils at different stages of their musical development taking to the stage. Cundall holds seven informal concerts throughout the year, giving musicians regular opportunities to perform in a supportive setting, develop their stage presence and gain confidence in front of an audience.

It was particularly rewarding to see younger performers sharing the occasion with more experienced Senior musicians.



























Alfresco Learning

Year 1 and 2 enjoyed a day of outdoor learning with Alfresco Learning, bringing their History topics to life. The morning focused on castles, with pupils working together to construct a large bamboo castle using their knowledge of 2D and 3D shapes. They also created colourful flags using flowers and natural materials.

In the afternoon, pupils explored the Great Fire of London, building traditional wattle and daub walls using sticks and a sticky mixture of their own. They also built miniature bakeries for Thomas Farriner, testing which materials would best keep him dry. A brilliant day of teamwork, creativity and problem-solving!

Eldmire Art and Textiles Visit to Redcar

Eldmire Art and Textiles pupils visited Redcar and the Gare to gather inspiration for their portfolio work. Exploring the area's mix of coastline, industrial heritage and natural landscapes, pupils spent the day sketching, photographing and studying textures, shapes and patterns. They also collected natural materials to investigate back at school.

The trip provided a wealth of first-hand research to inspire their artwork and textile designs.













Year 9 Team Building at Dalby Forest

At the start of term, Year 9 (Leckby) headed to Dalby Forest for a day of team-building challenges. With new form groups for the academic year, it was a great opportunity to strengthen friendships, get to know one another and work together through a range of outdoor activities.





FOCM Halloween Disco

Our Halloween Disco returned in style, with the gym transformed by the Friends of Cundall into a suitably spooky setting for an afternoon of music and dancing.

DJs Amos and Ollie were back behind the decks, joined by Alfie and Caleb, who kept everyone entertained with music, games and competitions. There was a quick break for tea in the Dining Room before pupils headed back to the dance floor, with the tuck shop proving as popular as ever.

The costumes were a highlight, including Wilf's impressive mummy outfit and Tilda and Esme's double act.

A big thank you to our parent volunteers and everyone who helped make the event such an enjoyable end to the half term.

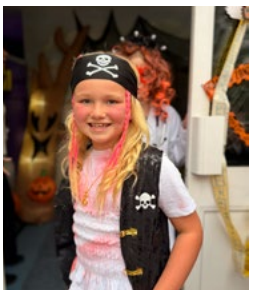














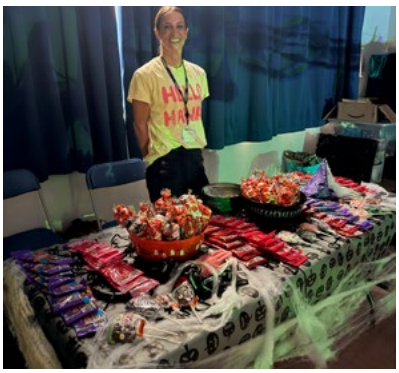












Pumpkin Patch

Our Pre-Prep pupils enjoyed an autumn visit to the pumpkin patch, exploring the fields in search of a pumpkin to take home. With so many shapes and sizes to choose from, selecting just one required some careful consideration! The children enjoyed making their own choices, finding their pumpkins and carrying them back with pride.













Pre-Prep Halloween Disco!

Pre-Prep finished their Halloween Fun Day with an afternoon of music, games and dancing.

Alfie and Caleb took charge of the entertainment, leading games and encouraging everyone onto the dance floor. For some of our youngest children, it was their first school disco and a lovely opportunity to enjoy music and dancing with friends.

Thank you to the parents who helped decorate the gym and make the afternoon so enjoyable.











Pupil Successes





European Bronze Medal for Seb

An outstanding summer for Seb, who represented Great Britain at the FEI European Championships in the Czech Republic, helping his team secure a historic Bronze medal — GB's first-ever European medal in the Children on Horses category. Seb also achieved two personal-best scores, rising to an impressive 13th in the world rankings in his first year of international competition.
His next challenge is the British Dressage National Championships before progressing to the Junior category.

Durham Talent Academy Selection

Congratulations to Isla, who has been selected for the Durham Talent Academy, part of the England Hockey pathway. Isla will train weekly alongside other talented young players, in addition to her school hockey commitments. A well-deserved recognition of her hard work and dedication to the sport.





County Netball Selection

Congratulations to Gracie (Year 8), who has been selected as one of just 20 players for the North Yorkshire U13 Netball Performance Programme.

Run in partnership with Leeds Rhinos, the programme forms part of the England Netball Performance Pathway, with Gracie attending weekly training sessions in Harrogate.

LTA Regional Tennis Camp Selection

Congratulations to Jasper, who was one of just 16 boys selected from across the North of England to attend an LTA Regional Tennis Performance Camp in Bolton.

The five-hour session included fitness training, technical coaching and match play, giving Jasper the opportunity to train alongside some of the region's most promising young players. A well-deserved recognition of his progress in tennis.



U16 Girls County Champions!

Congratulations to our U16 Girls' Hockey team, who won the Tier 3 England Hockey County Round. After topping their pool and winning a dramatic semi-final on penalty shuffles, the girls defeated Queen Mary's 2–0 in the final to claim the County title. A fantastic team achievement!



Ripon Cathedral Choir Selection

Congratulations to Jake, who has been selected to join Ripon Cathedral Choir as a chorister. Following an initial audition at school, Jake was invited to audition before a panel at Ripon Cathedral, where he successfully secured his place.
He will now have the opportunity to sing regularly with the Cathedral Choir, developing his musical skills and performing in one of Yorkshire's most magnificent settings.





Equestrian Success for Fenella

Congratulations to Fenella and her pony, Croiseolyn Cusan, who achieved a fantastic placing in the Winter 138 Final at the Royal International Horse Show at Hickstead. She jumped double clear over a 1.15m course and 1.20m in the jump-off. A fantastic achievement – well done, Fenella.

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