

JANUARY 2026 EDITION

HENDON SCHOOL

LIBRARY NEWSLETTER



Year 9 – Young City Poets: Competition Results Announced!

A **HUGE congratulations** to every student who submitted a poem for the Young City Poets competition! Our team was extremely impressed with the **level of writing and creativity** in every piece. Every participant worked very hard and put a lot of effort into the whole preparation process – which made our job of selecting winners incredibly difficult...

We're pleased to announce the following results:

- **5 published poets.**
- **3 performers at Saint Paul's cathedral live event.**
- **4 audience members.**

To mark this achievement, we held a **celebration event** in the Library to announce the exciting results with some well-deserved snacks!

Year 9 – Young City Poets: What's Next?

Saint Paul's Cathedral Live Performance:

On **March 19th**, our Hendon School performers will have the fantastic opportunity to read their poems in front of a live audience at Saint Paul's Cathedral! They will be cheered on by their four peers and our accompanying Senior Librarian.

Hendon School's Young City Poets Anthology:

During the second half-term, each of our Young City Poets will receive a **custom-made anthology book** with every poem they have submitted. We want all of our participants to feel celebrated for their amazing work and to have a nice memory of the experience to hold on to.

Discover their poems at the end of this newsletter! (Pages 6 – 14)



Welcome to 2026: The National Year Of Reading!

GO ALL IN!

The National Year of Reading 2026 is **the biggest reading campaign** in a generation designed to help more people (re)discover the joy of reading and make it part of their everyday lives.

A Department for Education initiative, in collaboration with the National Literacy Trust, the campaign aims to tackle the profound decline in reading enjoyment in the UK and reconnect people of all ages with reading as a **relevant and immediately rewarding activity**.

 **Discover and browse resources on the NYOR website** to find out how you can participate in the National Year of Reading at home!

At Hendon School Library, we are very excited to take part in this initiative! We will have a **multitude of activities, events, author talks, competitions and more** lined up this year.

We want to make sure that all our students feel they can access books they have a genuine interest for in our space.



This year's theme is "Go All In", meaning: **"if you're into it, read into it!"** Whatever our students' interests may be, we'll encourage them to find a book on it!

Part of the National Year of Reading 2026



Year 7 – STEM Reading Challenge Launch



WeWonder: Protect Our Nature

The National Literacy Trust, in partnership with Turner & Townsend, are launching their sixth National STEM Reading Challenge! 🌱

KS2 and KS3 students are tasked with learning about the natural world around us and ***“designing a local green space which people can enjoy and where nature can thrive”***. Exploring a range of information and ideas, this challenge not only encourages reading for pleasure and reading diversely, it supports

disciplinary literacy by increased engagement with non-fiction texts.

In the Library, we **prepared and hosted a launch event** for a group of **Year 7 Science students**, with a fun interactive session, quiz, and group brainstorming activities.

We're looking forward to receiving the students' ideas, and submitting them for the National Competition! 🌱🍄🎨

See resources for this competition on the NLT website.

January 27th – Holocaust Memorial Day

"Bridging Generations".

This is the theme for this year's Holocaust Memorial day. It is a reminder that the responsibility of remembrance doesn't end with the survivors – it lives on through their children, their grandchildren and through all of us. 

In our Library, we wanted to ensure we encouraged our students (and ourselves) to engage actively with the past to carry the knowledge of our history forward.

This is why we had the honour of welcoming a Year 7 form to listen in on a conversation between **Holocaust survivor Ruth Barnet and author Tom Palmer** on January 27th.



Holocaust Memorial Day

Learning from genocide
– for a better future



Learning about our History allows us to remember and reflect on our current challenges. **We don't just preserve memory – we connect it to the present**, to stay informed about human catastrophes happening today.



YEAR 9 YOUNG CITY POETS – DISCOVER THEIR POEMS

“Discrimination - The Battle”

Discrimination,
Happens in every nation.
Yet, no one has the motivation
To take it into consideration.

Every country,
Every road,
Every person the world has ever known.
Silenced by the illusion,
There'll soon be a conclusion.

Voices buried beneath the pain,
Judged by colour, faith or name,
Walls are built from fear and lies,
While justice waits with tired eyes.
The fight for equality may never end,

But as a union we can ascend
As people who have an affiliation,
We can cause a worldwide
transformation.

But change begins with voices raised,
With broken cycles, unlearned ways,
Not in hate, or fear disguised,
But open hearts and open eyes.

It starts when silence meets its end.
When we choose justice, choose to mend.
No label, colour, faith or name
Should ever place us in a chain.

If we stand together, hand in hand,
Rewrite the rules, redraw the sand,
Then generations yet to be,
Will live the truth of equality.

“They All Have A Story”

Everything painting, every picture,
Has a never-ending fixture.
It feels like a loop that lingers around my
finger.
Paintings, some rise in quiet glory,
Some cause the heart worry,
It feels like a never-ending story.
Every paint brush,
Every swipe,
Leaves a trace of life, that feels so light.
Work causes wonder,
Is it a mistake?
Some people wonder why it was made.
All paintings have a story, a meaning.
Paintings don't just come with the art.
It comes with a background, and many
reasons to why it was made.

“One Dream, Right Person, Wrong Place”

Orange spheres against a grey-misted sky,
Where the rhythm of the bounce meets the
city's cry.
No hardwork glitz or bright neon glare,
Just the scent of the Thames biting the air.

From the chain-link courts of Bethnal
Green,
To the Brixton hoop where the greats have
been.
The swish cuts through the distant drone,
Of a double decker heading home.

Hoodies up against the drizzling rain,
Finding the glass to ease the strain.
London's heartbeat, steady and loud,
A concrete dream beneath a London cloud.

YEAR 9 YOUNG CITY POETS – DISCOVER THEIR POEMS

“Rhythm Of Life”

*There is always music to guide you,
even in the darkest of places.*

*It hums beneath my thoughts, a
quiet
rhythm pulling me forward.*

*When the world gets
Quieter the melody takes me
over. Every beat
Untangles my mind, every
note rewrites the noise.*

“The Space Between Moments”

*There is a silence the world forgets,
A thin, trembling place between heartbeats,
Where the soul remembers itself.*

*It's the pause before a truth is spoken,
The breath held when a door is opened,
The soft ache of becoming what you were
always meant to be.*

“Peace At Death”

*No fear, but release, a spirit takes flight,
ascending gently into the endless night.
Stars like diamonds scattered in the sky,
though hearts may ache and tears may freely
fall, remember, love transcends this earthly
call. For each in memory, a flame will ever,
until, that day, we too return.*

YEAR 9 YOUNG CITY POETS – DISCOVER THEIR POEMS

“The Bus”

You might find me
Monday morning, 8 a.m.
the 83 takes me
to Golders Green
window fogged with breath and rain

Everyone is going somewhere else
faces folded into coats
coffees cooling between stops

Why is there traffic
In every street
even when no one looks awake?

London hums anyways
engines, footsteps, sirens
a city clearing its throat

I count red lights like second
watch houses blur into shops
shops into names I'll forget

by the time we move again
I've already arrived
somewhere fired
somewhere familiar
somewhere that keeps going
without asking why?

“The Aftermath!”

Sharp as a knife. Fallen people lose their lives. Souls are shaken. Their life is taken. Boats are shrinking. Time is shrinking. But never stops ticking. Flags are falling. Bodies are dropping. The sky is toppling. Death isn't a word nor a phrase. It is the meaning of lives coming to an end. The war will never stop. Not until the last body drops.

Enemy pilots crave the enemy's defeat. They don't know that a secret team was sent.

The team sneaks through enemy lines. However, it is covered by large mines. These teammates communicate through signs. Ready to course through the territory. Unknown to what could occur. The aftermath is on edge.

YEAR 9 YOUNG CITY POETS – DISCOVER THEIR POEMS

“My Beloved Grandma”

7 years haven't been the same, without you in
the frame.

Wish you were here, to see what I've gained
To see what I've accomplished, to see what I've
made

All the memories that we created,
All the moments that we had,
Will never go away.

Seeing you in pain broke my heart,
Hospital times must've been tough,
One day god said it was enough,
Removing the pain by taking you above.
The agony of realizing, you're not here,
Hugging me, oh so dear,
Really does drop a lot of tears.

Dear grandma, I miss you more each day,
hope you're thriving, up in heaven, pain away.

“Life”

Life is worth living.
Even though it may not hand you a perfect road,
It gives you time to carry your own load.
The road you paved,
would reflect all the good and bad decisions
you've made.

They all shaped who you are now,
In ways you can't explain somehow.
Life tends to leave us with cracks,
so we can let in more light to see through the
endless black.

Healing always awaits in time and silence,
It provides resilience and guidance.
Life gives us memories that can never be erased,
and paints colours in our hearts that can never
be replaced.

Life works in mysterious ways but it's worth
living!

“The Cold Sea”

The sea is blue and bright, it drives away like a
little light.

The sea is cold but also bold. It's the light of the
world that drives the world.

The sea builds a spark when it gets dark.
When the sea is provoked it talks like it's been
poked.

YEAR 9 YOUNG CITY POETS – DISCOVER THEIR POEMS

“Morning Chaos”

I open my eyes, followed by my sighs.
Vision? – C L E A R Smell? – C L E A R.
...Hearing? – C H A O S
The flip flops from my mum’s slippers,
The whirr sound from the washing machine...
Tick, Buzz, Overload. Morning sounds, yes.
JAM-JAM, COT-COT, BEEP, MUNCH, WAAAAA,
CLINK CLANK.

Getting ready for school, although I find it not
that cool.
MIND-MINGKING, BRAIN-CRASHING, EYES-
WONDERING.
Morning sounds? Yes.

Opening the door, and it comes,
BANG, SWOOSH, DINGDONG, RING,
VRoooooom.

Step.
Mixing myself into a chaotic recipe,
Step.
Into sound, into me.
Step.
Part of these chaotic sounds,
And my first take goes like SH UTT.
Just for a second, everything just BL U R S,
Morning Sounds? Yes, it is.
Sound stack, clash, collide.
But I don’t fight it,
I don’t mute it.
I just let it happen
Because this is morning,
and I am alive.

“Barnet”

Barnet is a sanctuary of peace,
a calm lake barely rippled,
even as people move in and out of shops and
buses.

The town breathes softly,
holding on to its tranquillity.

Even on weekdays from 7:50 to 8:30,
when students and staff move like slow
shadows,
tired but chasing the clock,
Barnet stays quiet,
its calm unbroken.

Everything shifts at 3:20,
when school doors burst open
like a dam giving way.

Students pour into the streets,
filling shops and buses,
spreading noise like wildfire.

The streets are alive with sound—
shouting, screaming, smiling, and gossiping,
voices crashing together like waves.
For a short while,
Barnet loses its silence.

By 4 o’clock, the noise drains away.
The streets settle,
like dust after a storm.
People wait at bus stops,
still and patient,
while a few shoppers drift quietly
through open doors.

Once again,
Barnet returns to its calm.

YEAR 9 YOUNG CITY POETS – DISCOVER THEIR POEMS

“My Life At Hendon”

I walk into Hendon most mornings tired
Awake eyes but my thoughts still wired
Teachers call names, chairs scrape the floor
The smell of books fills every door.

Lessons can drag or rush very fast
Pen to paper as time ticks fast
I do my work and try my best,
Even when my brain needs rest.

At lunch we laugh, full of gleam
Making memories that feel like a dream
Those small moments help me see
That school isn't only work for me.

Hendon's where I'm learning to be
Seeing friends, smiles, just want to be me
GCSEs are coming, the pressure is near
I try to stay calm, but stress is clear.

Football after school, boots all muddy
Mr Amauri shouting, “Move it buddy!”
Running drills till my legs feel dead,
But he believes in us, what he said.

He gets loud, yeah, he wants us to win
Tells us discipline starts from within
When we score, he smiles just a bit
Like yeah... you earned it, that was it.

Homework stress, late-night grind,
“Just five more minutes,” I tell my mind.
Teachers say, “It matters a lot”,
I nod my head, but sometimes not.

Still Hendon's more than work and rules,
It's friends, mistakes and breaking tools.
It's growing up without a guide,
Trying to look cool, but scared inside.

“London”

In the heart of England, where the Thames does flow
London calls with a bustling, crowded glow
Beautiful streets alive with endless cheer
Red double-decker busses zooming near

Big Ben stands tall, guarding time
The London eye turns, a circle of rhyme
Tower bridge rises over the stream
Carrying the city's ambition and dream

Airports hum with travels from afar
Heathrow's gates open wide like a crowded bar
Thousand cultures light every space
A blend of tradition strong with grace

From markets, schools to jobs a new-
Opportunities wait for dreams to pursue
A city of hope, where passions take hold-
Where young ideas and future unfold
So here I stand in London's way
Inspired by each passing day
A city, where my goals feel near
And every step is filled with cheer

YEAR 9 YOUNG CITY POETS – DISCOVER THEIR POEMS

“Art of the Museum”

I went to an art gallery,
And oh my it bombarded my phone gallery.
The art on the walls,

The fancy carpet on the floors
It's like walking through expensive malls.

There were extraordinary meanings behind
them all,
But some of the artists took a great big fall
The paintings were speaking to me in their
own language
Some were as dark as goth and some were as
bright as an orange

Next was the imagination activity
You had to imagine the painting coming to life
And yourself living in it
Feeling, smelling, tasting the environment
around you

Last was the non-stop writing task
I was so concentrated and lured into the sheet
and pen
I couldn't stop writing and was unaware of the
ten minute timer!
I felt as free as a bird scribbling (in a good way)
Into the sheet with my fatigue lost of a pencil.

“When In The Dark”

The night air whispers to me
Words I cannot say when the sun is up.
The dark sky spread over me like the soft caress
of a quilt.

The air is still and crisp
There is no noise except for the occasional
whistle of the wind stroking the trees.

The moon gazes at me affectionately like that of
a look from a lost lover
A sudden wave of sorrow creeps up on me and I
start to wonder what could be waiting for me on
the other side of those stars that blink at me so
longingly whilst I sit reminiscing moments I'll
never meet again.

Nostalgia kisses me for a brief moment, when I
open my eyes she's gone.
My eyes are wet and my cheeks are stained with
the bitter taste of salty tears.

I look around again greeted by the shadows
heavy with memory.

A familiar ache imposes upon my heart that I
can't quite place my finger on its overbearing, it
grips hard on my throat threatening to overtake
me.

I mull over the thought of finally being unfeeling
to the inconvenient murmurs of the people
around me and a strong sense of serene washes
over me.

I blink away the thoughts spinning through my
head and take in the warm merciful essence of
the moon as I fall into my deep slumber.

YEAR 9 YOUNG CITY POETS – DISCOVER THEIR POEMS

“It Never Feels Right”

Life isn't something they explain at school.
They just say be strong and learn the rules.
They tell us to live to figure it out even when
we're filled with fear and doubt.

Some people die so others can breathe that
thought weighs heavy... it won't just leave, it
doesn't make sense.
It never feels right, yet the world still turns day
to night.

Life is hard more than it's kind, it puts too much
weight on a growing mind.
It asks us to stand when we want to fall, call on a
strength and expect it all.

Not everyone gets a perfect start, some learn loss
before learning their heart.
Some smiles are worn, like a careful disguise.
Hiding the truth behind tired eyes.

What if the world was simple and fair where
everyone mattered everywhere?
Just people trying not to be ranked high or low.
We are all equal, just so you know.

“Bottled Up”

My thoughts don't stop when I want them to.
They turn small things into something so huge.

I think too much about what I said,
About what I should've done instead.
But really, I just needed to let the words fall free,
Just slip them out of me.
Sometimes it takes over me, I just try to let it be,
Thinking it will go away, but really, it's just
there to stay.

People won't expect this from me,
And I don't let them think this of me.
I'm seen as loud, happy wearing a smile.
But it never lasts for a while.
I am those things just not all the time.

Some days I laugh. Some days I'm mad.
Some days I don't know why I'm sad.
I just am. And that's okay, I think.
Then I realised this is about learning to face my
feelings,
Not to push them down or shut them out.
Learning that crying, laughing, breaking is
exactly what I need.
And that's okay because that's what makes us
feel real.

YEAR 9 YOUNG CITY POETS – DISCOVER THEIR POEMS

“Eden, Reframed”

Rain hits stone,
cold breath stays,
bare trees frame
a softened grey.

Iron rails curl,
paths entwine,
the city blurs
outside their time.

Hands stay locked,
steps stay slow,
umbrellas dip,
no need to show.

No rush, no claim,
no scripted role,
just two aligned
in body and soul.

And I want that love—

not loud, not fast,
not built to burn
or break and crash.

I want the calm
that doesn't chase,
that holds its ground
and knows its place.

I want to be picked
when nothing's new,
when days feel flat
and skies stay blue.
Not loved for sparks,
not held for pain,
but wanted steady,
again and again.

They don't stop rain,
don't curse the cold,
they walk straight through
what life unfolds.

That's Eden then—
not heaven above,
just staying in step
with the one you love