

OUR TRUST

CHILD FIRST, ASPIRE, CHALLENGE, ACHIEVE

APRIL 2022 | ISSUE 18



THINKING
SCHOOLS
ACADEMY TRUST

TRANSFORMING LIFE CHANCES

Through reflection, you can become more effective in your future

Self reflection is like looking into a mirror and describing what you see. It is a way of assessing yourself, your ways of working and how you study. To put it simply, 'reflection' means to think about something.



Front and inside cover photos taken at Plympton Academy for the LGBT History Month

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Welcome to the April 2022 edition of Our Trust.

Firstly, I am delighted to welcome everyone associated with Plympton Academy to our Trust. Plympton are the second school in the South West

to join our Trust and is a popular secondary school situated in a suburb of Plymouth, just 15 minutes from our first school Plymouth High School for Girls. It has been a real pleasure spending time at the school during the spring term, especially the week I covered for the Headteacher who, like many of us, was hit by a case of Covid.

Writing this introduction to the latest edition of Our Trust is a fantastic opportunity for me to reflect on the amazing work and activities that are taking place in our schools, and the future of the educational landscape following the recent publication of the Education White Paper.

Looking through the highlights identified in this issue of Our Trust, and previous issues, I am struck by the diverse range of experiences and opportunities our students are able to engage in. We have been reflecting on how to communicate and celebrate this provision in our schools so that we can fully reflect on everything we do. As a result, we are now considering how to capture this “Total Education” journey our students benefit from experiencing in our schools. This is important, for whilst many of our students are now busily preparing for the return of formal assessments in the form of SATs, GCSE’s, A Levels and a host of vocational qualifications, we must hold on to the totality of the experiences and opportunities we provide to help our students become the well-rounded successful young people we all want them to be.

The government’s Education White Paper represents some interesting opportunities and challenges for us as a Trust of schools. The headline aspiration of “Strong Schools with Great Teachers” very much fits into our ethos and aspiration. The fantastic development of Thinking Horizons to ensure that all our staff have the professional development opportunities to be supported to be their best professional selves, and the use of Think Ahead to allow our staff to engage in professional reflection means that I am confident that all our staff have the opportunity to become great in their roles. The commitment to a “fully trust led system” offers clarity on the future structure of our educational landscape and is an exciting opportunity for us to engage further with others and share the benefits of being part of our family of schools. Therefore, as a family of schools united in our belief in the power of metacognition to transform life chances, I am confident that we will continue to flourish in this next phase of educational change.

Stay safe,

Stuart Gardner

Stuart Gardner, MSc, NPQH, NLE
Chief Executive Officer

We’re always keen to hear from our readers, so if you would like to provide feedback on this publication, you can by scanning the QR code below.





Welcome to
our community!

Search for
Thinking Schools Academy Trust

#ProudtobeTSAT #WeAreOne



THINKING
SCHOOLS
ACADEMY TRUST

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Our Strood Hub Schools Celebrate ‘Thinking School’ Reaccreditations

Pupils and staff across our Strood schools are celebrating achieving their esteemed Thinking School accreditations awarded by the University of Exeter. The Gordon Children’s Academy has been reaccredited as a Thinking School, while All Faiths Children’s Academy and Cedar Children’s Academy, have been reaccredited as Advanced Thinking Schools. The Thinking School accreditations are awarded by The University of Exeter’s School of Education, which leads the way in research on Metacognition, Thinking Skills and Creativity and provides a framework for schools to follow to become recognised Thinking Schools.

All Faiths Children’s Academy

The inspector for All Faiths Children’s Academy found that the Academy had a sustained commitment to the Thinking School ethos and Thinking Skills were fully embedded in the school’s culture. The inspector commented, “The school has an explicit thinking strategy running through all they do, which includes new staff training, an extensive programme of CPD, continuous evaluation of tools, assessment of pupil learning and thinking, and strategies to give differentiated support for pupils.”

The Academy’s parental engagement was also found to

have particular strength with the report stating that pupils and parents are fully included within the Thinking School ethos and that the Academy has developed “effective ways of engaging parents using a variety of digital tools, helping to inform and connect with parents and encourage parental support.”

Cedar Children’s Academy

Cedar Children’s Academy’s inspector commended Cedar’s curriculum, stating that it is clearly mapped out and underpinned by research. The report added, “CCA’s curriculum acts to operationalise the school’s mission and include the

recognition of close links between emotional wellbeing and academic achievement, encouragement of ambition, curiosity, positivity and resilience and parental engagement.” The report went on to applaud the Academy’s work to disseminate its learning style and thinking tools to its feeder schools.

The Academy was also commended for its international outlook and effort to develop children as global citizens as well as its inclusive practice and adaptable approach for all pupils, including those with SEND. The report said, “Through thorough and on-going dialogue with pupils, teachers are able to mediate learning such that learning is geared towards the needs of all students at an individual level, regardless of starting point or specific barriers to learning.”

The Gordon Children’s Academy

The University of Exeter found that the Academy “conveys a positive, caring and creative atmosphere” and is “an inspirational example of the drive for holistic educational provision geared towards the development of lifelong learners”, praising the “rich extra-curricular offering designed to build children’s cultural capital.” The report commented on the impact of this, stating “achievement continues to rise across the school with attendance and behaviour being of an excellent standard.”

Commending the Trust more widely, the inspector added “The TSAT family of schools is a good example of how to secure continuity and progression for children as they move through the various phases of provision.”

Jody Murphy, Director of Education for our Thinking Schools Academy Trust’s Strood Hub, said:

“What an amazing achievement for each of our primary schools in the Strood Hub, in gaining their Thinking School reaccreditations, with All Faiths and Cedar Children’s Academies gaining advanced reaccreditation. It is testament to the teachers who have worked exceptionally hard embedding thinking into everyday school life, ensuring that our children are developing into lifelong learners and thinkers.

“The University of Exeter recognised that the Pupil Drive Teams strongly reflects our focus on pupil voice, independence and empowerment and is instrumental in advocating our schools’ thinking ethos.

“As a Trust we are proud of the unique cognitive approach we take to education and truly believe it provides the best start in life for our children, something that will continue within our new secondary school, Maritime Academy, ensuring their journey continues.”

Congratulations to all three of our Strood primary academies for these incredible achievements – it is wonderful to see our Trust’s commitment to providing a unique, rounded education to our young people recognised by such a prestigious institution.



SIX THINKING HATS

Thinking Hats help to see things from different perspectives and to look at situations in different ways.

FEELINGS

STRENGTHS

JUDGEMENT

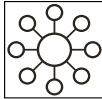
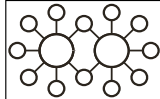
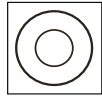
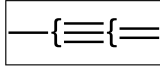
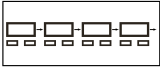

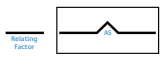
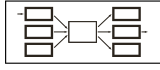
THINKING

INFORMATION

CREATIVITY & NEW IDEAS

THINKING MAPS

Thinking Maps provide a template to organise students thoughts, and they are regularly used during lessons.

<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #00AEEF;">BUBBLE MAP</p>  <p style="font-size: 8px; color: #00AEEF;">Describing</p>	<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #00AEEF;">DOUBLE BUBBLE MAP</p>  <p style="font-size: 8px; color: #00AEEF;">Comparing - Contrasting</p>
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<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #00AEEF;">BRIDGE MAP</p>  <p style="font-size: 8px; color: #00AEEF;">Seeing Analogies</p>	<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #00AEEF;">MULTI-FLOW MAP</p>  <p style="font-size: 8px; color: #00AEEF;">Cause-Effect</p>



TSAT ROCKS

Times Tables Rockstars Battle

This year, junior school students across the Trust have continued to battle it out to be crowned the new TSAT Rocks champions. Times Tables Rockstars is an enjoyable and interactive tool, helping children across the country learn and practice their times tables. Over the last few terms, our junior school students have participated in two Trust-wide TSAT Rocks tournaments, competing against each other to be Top of the Rocks.

In our first ever TSAT Rocks battles last December, The Gordon Children's Academy was triumphant when they took first place, followed by Cedar Children's Academy in second and Meon Junior School in third.

The tables turned in our January battle, when All Faiths Children's Academy claimed the trophy for the first time! Our Term 3 battle was record-breaking, as it saw an incredible 1,583,750 questions answered by our children across the seven schools!

All Faiths kept its champion title when it came top of the leaderboard once again in our



Term 4 TSAT Rocks event! All Faiths is a small, one form entry primary school, making this achievement even more impressive.

Each of our tournaments saw over 1,500 children getting involved across 92 classes in 7 schools: All Faiths Children's Academy, Cedar Children's Academy, The Gordon Children's Academy, New Horizons Primary School, Meon Junior School, Newbridge Junior School and New Horizons Children's Academy.

In each of our battles, the pupil with the highest points scored in each class is awarded a certificate in recognition for their hard work and enthusiasm.

A special congratulations must go to our top-performing student, Rudra from Newbridge Junior School, for answering the highest number of questions in both our Term 3 and Term 4 battles! This is an incredible achievement – keep up the fantastic work, Rudra.



TIMES TABLES ROCKSTARS



Jody Murphy, Director of Education, said: "It's been great once again to see students from both Medway and Portsmouth taking part in the #TSATRocks competition and improving their times tables in a fun and competitive way. As always, this couldn't be possible without the support from the Maths leaders in our Primary Schools as well as teachers and parents. Congratulations to everyone who took part in

our competitions – we look forward to the next battle and records possibly being broken again."

Well done to all of our children who took part and represented their schools; you are all Times Tables Rock Stars!

Keep up the hard work, continue to practice your sums, and we'll see you at the next battle.



TERM 3 TSAT Rocks Leaderboard

- 1st** All Faiths Children's Academy
- 2nd** The Gordon Children's Academy
- 3rd** Newbridge Junior School

TERM 4 TSAT Rocks Leaderboard

- 1st** All Faiths Children's Academy
- 2nd** Newbridge Junior School
- 3rd** Cedar Children's Academy



We don't talk about Bruno

Disney's new animated film, Encanto, has been a hit with children across all of our primary schools; its catchy tunes and feel-good vibe have enthused us all. Inspired by its most popular song, 'We Don't Talk About Bruno', Cedar Children's Academy have created an incredible display in its school halls, linking the successful movie to their mental health and safeguarding strategy.

The colourful artwork, which appeals to pupils' enthusiasm for Encanto, encourages them to reflect on their emotions and any aspects of life that may be impacting how they feel. The iconic windows and doors of Encanto's 'casita', each cut by hand, display safeguarding and mental health posters, and the pink blossoms were made by pupils

at Cedar. The children have responded incredibly well, and their new display has resulted in even more renditions of 'We Don't Talk About Bruno' being performed in the playground at lunchtime!

"I wanted the children to know that they can always talk about their feelings in school, and what better way than to link this with Encanto and Bruno? The children have really related to this and have stopped and taken time to look at the display. This has started conversations around their feelings. We have been able to speak to children and let them know that their feelings are valid. In the windows, it gives them information of services aimed at helping young children including NSPCC and Childline," said George

Randall, Designated Safeguarding Lead at Cedar Children's Academy.

Cedar's innovative display has received a huge amount of praise and attention from staff and parents on social media, attracting over 1,100 likes on Twitter and countless comments and shares on Facebook. Many teachers from other schools outside of our Trust were so impressed that they have shared their plans to replicate the display in their own schools!

We are proud to have such creative, talented staff working within our Trust. Well done to Maria-Kristina Whatling and George Randall for their hard work on this – it's great to see that it has been such a success!

Goodwin TRY'ATHLON

In March, Mrs Cribben completed her first virtual triathlon with her partner, raising an incredible £630 for Macmillian Cancer Support. The event involved the pair undertaking an impressive 1500m swim in the local pool, cycling 40km and then finishing the challenge with a 10km run.

After deciding to step out of her comfort zone and start training earlier in the year, Mrs Cribben devised the idea to invite the students of Goodwin Academy to try something new by introducing the Goodwin Try'athlon!

As part of the Kent-wide School Games Organisers strategy for the legacy of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022, SGOs across the county are organising several Commonwealth Sports events alongside community clubs to ensure "a lasting legacy" of the games.

One of these sports is the triathlon, which was re-named the Goodwin Try'athlon to

coincide with the aim to encourage new participants to have a "try" in this sport. Students were encouraged to sign up and join the Try'athlon, run as a House Competition in a relay format.

Each house completed:
30 lengths in Dover Leisure Swimming pool i.e. 750 metres – 1 pupil from each house/form

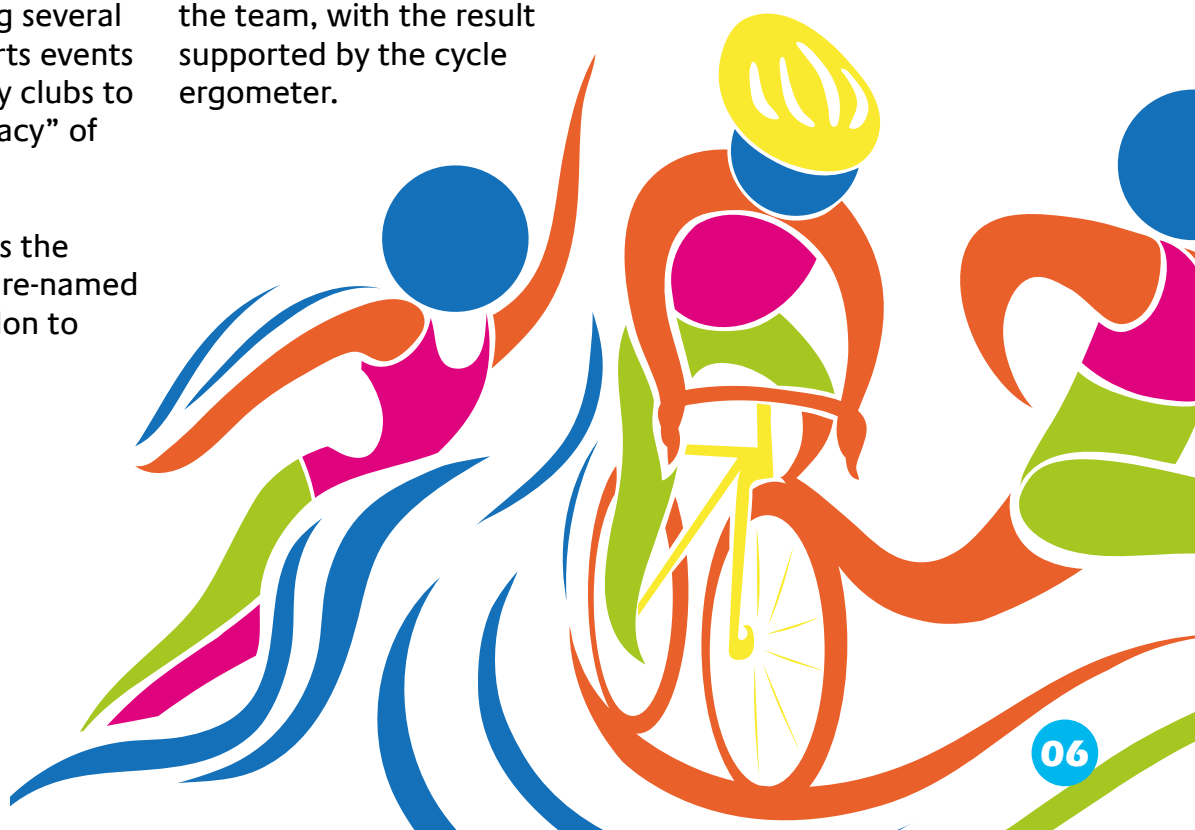
20km Cycling – completed in the fitness suite – 1 or 2 pupils from each house/form

5km Run – around the Goodwin academy field – 1 or 2 pupils from each house/form

Lengths swam and the distance ran were monitored by staff throughout the race. In addition, the cycling distance was observed by the team, with the result supported by the cycle ergometer.

To gain extra house points, students could participate in their own virtual Try'athlon race anytime throughout the month of March via the Virtual Castle Race Series. Anyone who completed the challenge received a medal or had the option to donate the cost to the Macmillian Cancer charity. Additionally, they could sponsor Mrs Cribben in her Triathlon Challenge. This was a fantastically received challenge, encouraging our students to engage in sports in a fun, competitive way while raising money for a great cause.

There is still time to donate!
Visit: bit.ly/GATryathlon
Well done to everyone who has donated and got involved!





Dr Ranj visits The Gordon Children's Academy

Children at The Gordon Children's Academy were beyond excited to welcome celebrity doctor, TV personality and former Gordon pupil, Dr Ranj Singh, to our school last week!

Dr Ranj's visit, the first time he had returned to Gordon since being a pupil here in the 1980s, was a wonderful opportunity for our children, who loved hearing about Dr Ranj's time at Gordon, how his career developed, his new book, and even his time as a Cbeebies presenter! Our Year 3 children listened in awe as Dr Ranj recalled growing up on Gordon Road, and developing from a shy child who didn't know what he wanted to be, into a confident, driven young man at medical school. Dr Ranj also shared an excerpt with our children from his brand new book, *Brain Power*; our pupils were fascinated to hear all about the brain, and to link his ideas about

memory and knowledge to their own Thinking Tools and Habits of Mind. Dr Ranj's talk was truly inspiring, and members of our Pupil Parliament followed his speech with a range of insightful questions, such as 'Who was your idol growing up?' and 'What was your favourite subject in school?'

Our children were given the chance to order a copy of Dr Ranj's *Brain Power*, as well as his 2021 book '*How to Grow Up and Feel Amazing*' and 2020 picture book '*Superhero Like You*', and to have it signed by Dr Ranj himself during his visit! This was such an exciting opportunity for our children, many of whom were utterly star-struck at meeting such an inspiring and high-profile figure.

As if Dr Ranj's visit wasn't exciting enough for our children, the academy was also visited by camera crews

from ITV Meridian and BBC South East, who took footage from the day which later featured on TV! Some of our children were even interviewed, and spoke so brilliantly about the impact Dr Ranj's visit had had on them.

Following his talk and exciting book-signing session, Dr Ranj explored the corridors of our school, reminiscing about his time as a pupil here and admiring our brilliant display boards.

"I'm absolutely honoured to have been invited to my primary school," said Dr Ranj. "It felt so strange to walk through those doors as an adult. I was just a little boy the last time I was there, so to come back as a grown up is something very special indeed."

Special thanks to our Assistant Headteacher, Miss Kemp, for organising Dr Ranj's visit.

“Our children, parents and staff were so excited when we announced Dr Ranj would be coming to speak to our children and sign some copies of his book. As a Thinking School, we value any opportunity to teach our children about the importance of looking after their brains and exploring their full potential. Dr Ranj’s book works well alongside our Thinking philosophy of teaching our children to become lifelong learners and developing their best habits for success in life.

Dr Ranj’s visit to us has been an absolute joy for everyone. He was so inspirational and I know from talking to some of our children following his visit, they want to follow in his footsteps and be successful doctors, authors and television presenters. Thank you Dr Ranj for visiting us to share your experiences and help our children to recognise how amazing they are. It is a day they will never forget, and neither will the staff!” said Miss Kemp.

“Our mission at the Thinking Schools Academy Trust is to ‘Transform Life Chances’ for all of our children through our cognitive approach to education. We use thinking tools to help our students understand how they learn and how to process their thinking which supports them to be their best self and achieve success. Dr Ranj’s visit to our school has been brilliant to highlight both our approach to education but also ensuring that children believe that they can be

whoever they choose to be,” said Jody Murphy, our Director of Education.

Thank you to Dr Ranj and his team for taking time out of their busy schedules to come to our school; his visit was an incredible opportunity for our children, and it was so inspiring for them to hear from an ex-student at Gordon who worked hard and has made a real success of his career. Dr Ranj’s final message to our children was to ‘Dream Big, Work Hard and Be Kind’, a pearl of wisdom we’re sure they will cherish forever.





Aspirations Day



Children at Meon Infant and Junior school celebrated Portsmouth's Aspirations Week. This was a wonderful way to support children to start thinking about what they might want to be in the future and what that path might look like.

fantastic portfolio full of colourful designs and even left Mrs Morey a business card for her to contact her on later with her shopping list.



The children dressed up in costumes that reflect a job they would like to do in the future. We were amazed by the efforts the children went to - we saw pupils aspiring to be great nurses, aspiring teachers and even colourful fashion designers.

Meon Junior school also invited parents in for a morning to talk about their jobs. The school saw a variety of parents talk to children, from a cartoonist, civil engineer, mental health nurse and a data architect. The children were really engaged and asked some amazing questions.



Annabelle showed Mrs Morey her fashion designs for new outfits and accessories. Annabelle put together a

Portsmouth Aspirations Week is one of the ways that schools are supporting Portsmouth City Vision as part of the council's commitment to life-long learning.





ASPIRE



ASPIRE

Holcombe Grammar School appoint their Thinking Ambassadors

As a Trust, our unique, cognitive approach to education underpins our values and approach to teaching and learning: we believe that teaching Thinking Tools to our young people and developing their ability to think both critically and creatively equips them with the skills they need to become lifelong learners. Students at Holcombe Grammar School have been celebrating our approach to Thinking this year, and the school is proud to have appointed a newly established group of Thinking Ambassadors to develop Thinking practices throughout the school.

Recently awarded their badges, the school's new Thinking Ambassadors team is already making a real impact on promoting the Thinking School ethos across the student body. The students meet weekly under the care of Ms Ortega to discuss their use of the Thinking tools, design posters for the wider school and take responsibility for Thinking displays around the

school, whilst actively exploring new ways to further embed Thinking into the school's community.

As part of their ongoing induction into life at Holcombe, Year 7 were involved in Thinking Week at the beginning of the year, designed to allow them to explore and learn more about Holcombe as a Thinking School. Each morning, students spent first period with one of the school's Drive Team teachers learning about Thinking Maps, Thinkers' Keys, Growth Mindset and our Be Your Best Self ethos, as well as Holcombe Habits and the Thinking Hats. Students have since completed online quizzes to reflect on their learning and help the school plan their next steps. With the help of the Thinking Ambassadors and the staff Thinking Drive Team, the school plans on organising Thinking Weeks for Years 8 and 9 during Terms 5 and 6.

Students at Holcombe Grammar School are

encouraged to get involved with extracurricular activities and events, including those based on Thinking. For Thinking Day 2022, Holcombe held a Thinking Day showcase event in the library, where contestants each prepared speeches responding to the question, 'What can Holcombe Grammar School and our local community do to better protect the environment?' Following much deliberation and some excellent, thought-provoking entries, Year 8's Iyanoluwa was announced the winner for his well-written and performed speech. Congratulations, Iyanoluwa!

Well done to all staff and students at Holcombe Grammar School for continually working to promote and celebrate Thinking across the school, and to Aimee Banks, Assistant Principal at Holcombe, for leading the development of the school's Thinking strategy. It is great to see our schools providing our young people with opportunities to reflect on and develop their thinking.



Being Your Best Self

Moorings Way children aim to be their best selves in all they do, and we are pleased that so many of our young children are taking that ethos into their everyday lives and in the community. The children below are four amongst many who have shown how they are being their best selves every day, overcoming challenges, displaying resilience and demonstrating great empathy.



Isaac

This is Isaac, who has been looking after the Moorings Way Infant School's garden. He has been so dedicated and committed, watering the plants every day including during the holidays to care for the fruit and vegetables he has grown. Rain, snow or shine, he has still committed to watering a couple of times a week, and even more so when it hasn't rained.



Ayra

Ayra asked her mum if she could cut her very long hair and donate it to the Little Princess Trust who make wigs for children with illnesses. Ayra said, "I wanted to help others and it just made sense for me to use my hair when I have so much of it and other children don't."



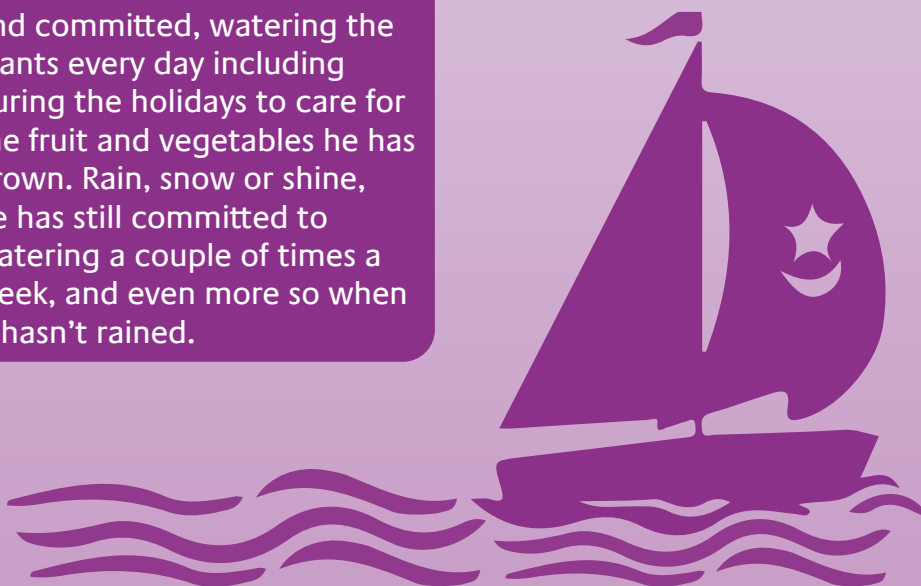
Max

Max has been working hard practising his gymnastics routine in the lead up to his exam. Despite several challenges, illness and the ups and downs that Covid has presented, he bounced back to achieve his level 6 award.



Harry

Harry achieved a personal best scaling the heights of his local climbing centre. Harry has been building up to this attempt after finding heights extremely difficult, but through his own perseverance he managed to get to the top on several climbs.





Lighting up learning with Little Thinkers

We opened the doors to our first Little Thinkers Nursery in September 2021, inviting a new cohort of our own Little Thinkers to New Horizons Primary in Portsmouth. The nursery runs with wrap around hours, being open from 7:30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday and is available to child aged 0 – 5 years.

Being a proud part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, Little Thinkers has created a curriculum that provides our children the best start on their incredible educational journey. Through the Curiosity Approach and a curriculum that is full of wonders, we are creating 'thinkers and doers' by putting our children at the centre

of their own development and education. Over the months since the nursery has opened, modern toys have been removed from the learning environment and replaced with everyday items, ranging from typewriters to jewellery. This encourages children's natural curiosity and eagerness to explore and create.

With the help of our dedicated team of key workers, our children discover their world through multi-sensory experiences, make new friends and become confident, independent learners. We provide a welcoming environment for our children, where they can feel happy, comfortable and safe. They

have year-round access to a fun outdoor play area and benefit from freshly cooked, nutritious meals, made on-site with Eating Well.

We held our first open day event in April, with all families in attendance enjoying what was on offer and signing up to join the school. It is wonderful to see the nursery growing strength to strength and seeing our children continuing to engage and becoming confident, individuals.

To find out more about Little Thinkers and all we have to offer, visit our website at www.littlethinkers.org.uk or contact the team at office@littlethinkers.org.uk.



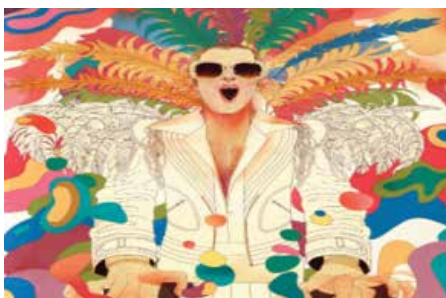


LGBT History Month

LGBTQ+ History Month is the celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender achievements throughout history. As a Trust, we all came together to celebrate and used this opportunity to redouble our efforts to ensure all our young people have the space and support to be their true, authentic selves.

Our hubs celebrated the month by raising awareness through inspiring assemblies and fun activities, and gave our students a voice to speak out about what support and guidance they need to be their best selves in today's world.

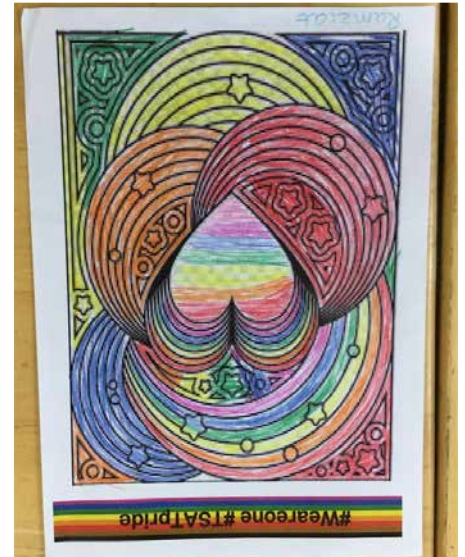
As you read through, you will see a wash of colour, from videos to murals at each school, created by students. Still, the silver string throughout the month remains the same: #WeAreOne, and we will continue to improve the life chances of all our students.



Cedar Children's Academy

From handmade badges to Equalitea's, the Portsmouth Hub planned some fantastic opportunities for students to learn and understand what makes us different, and that the way we love is not always the same. Both Meon Infant and Junior School celebrated True Colours day by wearing bright colours, enjoying brightly iced cakes, and listening to a short film called Love Has No Labels.

The Portsmouth Academy has spent this month providing students with some incredible support, including a wishing wall where students could wish for a change or improvement on themselves or to others, that has now taken over the library wall. This was an important time for the school, as they launched their new value of Respect that has landed exceptionally well. The Portsmouth Academy staff also took some time to dedicate a video to LGBT and why inclusion in school is so important. Scan to watch now.



All Faiths Children's Academy



The Portsmouth Academy



Plymouth High School for Girls

We were delighted to see so many students supporting LGBTQ+ History Month. Plympton Academy created a stunning video filled with colourful interpretations of equality and diversity in young communities. Scan to watch their full video now.



At Plymouth High School, the LGBTQ+ club organised a lunchtime quiz to raise money for the charity, 'Just Like Us'. There were four rounds and a great turnout, with the library space full to capacity. The team raised a massive £401.29 throughout the day for their charity. Here are some of the things our students had to say about the day:

"I believe that we should celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month to remember the heroes within the community who have helped it progress. They need to be supported and to carry on their legacy and further progress within the community," said Lillian, a student at Plymouth High School for Girls.



Moorings Way Infant School



Plympton Academy



Penhale/Newbridge



Meon Infant School



All Faiths Children's Academy



Goodwin Academy



Meon Junior School



The Rochester Grammar School



Holcombe Grammar School



The Gordon Children's Academy

It is important to the Trust and our students that we give everyone a voice and space to learn about inclusion and what makes us all different. So, it was great to see Holcombe Grammar students host their very own LGBTQ+ debate society. Ryan and Timi (Yr 11) led a very thought-provoking discussion with their peers and addressed concerns and initiatives on how they can support LGBTQ+ communities now and in the future.

Rochester Grammar School raised a fabulous £581 during their TAG Day with proceeds of a bake sale still to be counted. Goodwin Academy also raised a fantastic £200 through their True Colours day activities. All donations raised are going to support the LGBTQ+ young people's Charity, "Just Like Us."

The Victory Academy burst into colour with staff and pupils arriving in rainbow clothing and a group of students putting on a brilliant dance performance. You will recognise the song from the musical 'Everybody's Talking About' Jamie, the true story of a boy exploring and embracing his identity and overcoming prejudice.

A big thank you goes out to Chartwells for putting on such a fantastic and colourful lunch for staff and students across the Trust on True Colours Day! From food to decoration, the teams went above and beyond expectation to make lunchtime a lot of fun.



Plympton Academy



Meon Junior School



All Faiths Children's Academy



Meon Infant School



Plymouth High School for Girls



Moorings Way Infant School



The Gordon Children's Academy



Meon Junior School



The Rochester Grammar School



The Rochester Grammar School



Penhale/Newbridge



Plymouth High School for Girls



Cedar Children's Academy



Cedar Children's Academy



Meon Infant School



Penhale/Newbridge



The Portsmouth Academy



The Portsmouth Academy



Plympton Academy



The Gordon Children's Academy

Love is Love

ECO COMMITTEE DRIVE FORWARD ON THEIR GREEN STRATEGY



Just as the children thought the exciting event was coming to an end, Jaimie revealed a wonderful surprise: she had brought one of DPD's electric vehicles with her for the children to look at! The pupils eagerly made their way out to the playground, where the electric van was waiting for them. The children enjoyed learning all about how the vehicle works, how it is charged and DPD's plans to go 100% electric.



Children at New Horizons Children's Academy were delighted to welcome Jaimie Phillips from DPD last term, who came to speak about the company's sustainability projects and 'Green Journey'.

The visit started with a Q&A session with DPD's representative, Jaime, who answered the children's insightful questions about electrical vehicles, the delivery process and DPD's sorting processes at the warehouses. Jaime also shared some exciting videos with the children all about their ReLove project, designed to reduce textile waste across the country.

New Horizons' Eco Committee is a group of elected students passionate about driving forward the school's green strategy, and thinking about what they can do as a community to protect the future of our planet. The school also has a proud Garbage Collection Team – the GCT – who keep the playground and school site clean, tidy and friendly to its wildlife.



Thank you to Jaimie from DPD for visiting and inspiring our Eco Committee and GCT – this was a brilliant opportunity for the children to find out more about large companies' commitment to sustainability. Well done also to New Horizons Children's Academy for working hard on its green initiatives!





Goodwin Academy receives the Kent School Award

Goodwin Academy are thrilled to have received the Kent School Award for Resilience and Emotional Wellbeing.

We work hard to create a safe and positive environment for our students, providing them with guidance and advice, no matter their needs. Promoting wellbeing is very important to us, and we have a dedicated team of staff on hand to help our students cope better with the pressures of everyday life.

The academy implemented a whole-school approach to wellbeing, ensuring that all areas of our school community are nurtured, guided and have access to appropriate support if ever required.

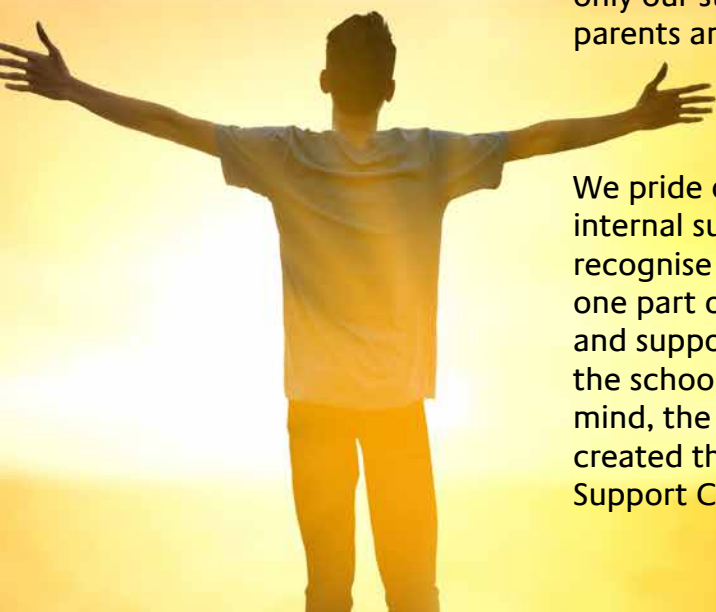
The Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) praised us for our strong leadership and how supportive the ethos and environment running throughout the school is, supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of not only our students but our parents and staff as well.

We pride ourselves on the internal support we offer and recognise that school is only one part of our students' lives and support is needed beyond the school day. With this in mind, the Resilience team created the Resilience and Support Centre on our

website, outlining a curated list of trusted support services for both families and students to access independently in addition to family GP support. In addition, KCHFT complimented Goodwin on the sustained effort from our staff and students to remain focused on improving resilience and emotional wellbeing for all of the Goodwin Academy community.

We are so proud of our staff and students' efforts during this process and look forward to building on our awareness and resilience for wellbeing and mental health.

Visit our Resilience and Support Centre on our website at goodwinacademy.org.uk.



ALL FAITHS' GOES STAR GAZING

Year 6 children at All Faiths Children's Academy were left starry-eyed after the school held an exciting Stargazing Event last term. Designed to encourage and motivate the children in the lead up to their Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) this summer, the fun-filled evening included lots of tasty treats and even an orienteering trail around the school site.

While the sun was still out, the children decorated the school playground with motivational messages and wonderful drawings. Some children even transformed the playground's racetrack into a SATs track, with messages of encouragement leading up to the finish line.

As the sky began to darken, the children prepared for their night-time orienteering adventure. Equipped with flashlights, they scoured the school grounds for the clues. Each clue required pupils to solve a SATs-inspired Maths puzzle in order to move on to the next; the children loved hunting for clues and showing off their Maths skills. One of the clues even led them to a hot-dog stand, where Headteacher Mrs Browning served them hot dogs and orange juice!

To end their wonderful evening, the children enjoyed donuts and hot chocolate whilst gazing at the stars. A

fire pit was also set up for the children to use for toasting marshmallows before they went home.

"We are so proud of our Year 6 children who have been working hard towards their SATs, so we held our Stargazing Event to reward them for their determination and encourage them to keep going. The event was a great success: every Year 6 child attended, and it was brilliant to see the children working together as a team with the right growth mindset, clear pattern of thinking skills and determination to push themselves as far as possible outside their comfort zone. When they did this, they were easily able to find the orienteering clues and identify the constellations," said Marion Browning, Headteacher at All Faiths Children's Academy.

What a wonderful event to give Year 6 pupils a boost and to inspire them to reach for the stars!





Reading Recovery at New Horizons, Portsmouth

Portsmouth South MP Stephen Morgan visited New Horizons Primary School this month to learn more about the Reading Recovery programme that Miss Shore leads within the school.

The literacy scheme is designed for the lowest-achieving children 'aged around six years old' which enables them to reach age-expected levels within 20 weeks. Each school involved can personalise learning, ensuring that the phonics teaching fits with the school's phonics programme.

One of the pupils that read to

Stephen Morgan MP has made accelerated progress since December 2021, from a struggling reluctant reader (reading Level 1 texts, equivalent to pink book band, starter level texts) to now being a confident independent learner (reading Level 14, equivalent green book band texts) and they are expected to successfully exit Reading Recovery at Easter (reading Level 16, equivalent orange book band).

Mr Stephen Morgan said: "It's been really useful to see first-hand at New Horizons Primary School the work Reading

Recovery is doing to support young people with their reading.

Students have faced an unprecedented level of disruption to their learning over the last two years, so it's vital they are able to get the extra support where it's needed to help them catch up'.

If you would like any more information about Reading Recovery or any other literacy intervention training, please contact Bex Shore at New Horizons Primary. R.Shore@tsatrust.org.uk

Cedar PE Ambassadors

Cedar Children's Academy is proud to have appointed its new PE Ambassadors!

One of the many leadership opportunities available to children at Cedar, the school's PE Ambassador positions have been successful in engaging children in exercise and allowing them to grow in confidence.

PE Ambassadors are chosen by class teachers, who select two children from each class to act as PE role models for the rest of the school. The PE Ambassadors attend weekly meetings, in which they discuss the importance and benefits of being active and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Guided by PE Leaders Sue Snowling and Kayley Jarman, the children also put together class warm-ups for their PE lessons, and are responsible for planning and delivering



the warm up sessions. Incorporating Thinking Tools into their roles, the children used a Hat Evaluation in response to their classes' feedback on their warm-ups.

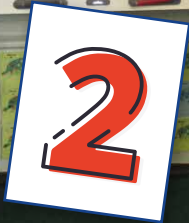
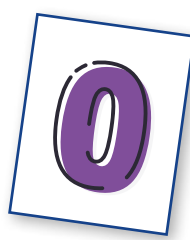
"I have had great feedback from teachers who have stated that the children are taking their roles very seriously, and that their classes are engaging," said Sue

Snowling. "It has been great to see how much they have grown in confidence and to now see such enthusiasm where they are engaging in PE lessons and having fun."

It is fantastic to see Cedar Children's Academy encouraging their children to take on extra responsibility, try out leadership opportunities and promote healthy living!



Numbers Day



NSPCC Number Day is a maths-inspired fundraising day where schools raise money for the NSPCC charity. Down at Newbridge Junior School, a date circled in the maths department calendar and is guaranteed to be full of fun.

Newbridge Junior School raised an impressive £297.29 to donate to NSPCC. The funds raised from Number Day will support vital NSPCC services such as 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' visit to primary schools across the UK to teach students all about the dangers of abuse and what they can do to help.

The children and teachers looked fabulous in their number theme dress up, and this was a great chance to for children to enjoy maths and help them develop their skills in a fun, positive and motivational way.



The Sakura Cherry Tree

The Rochester Grammar School is a part of an ongoing exchange of friendship between Japan and the UK, and the staff and students are honoured to have received the gift of a Cherry Tree from the Sakura Cherry Tree Project, symbolising a lasting bond.

The Sakura Cherry Tree Project was launched by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and former UK Prime Minister Theresa May, with the first sapling of the scheme planted on 27th November 2019 in Regent's Park London. The project sees over six thousand cherry trees planted in parks and schools throughout the UK and celebrates a new era of UK-Japan friendship and cooperation.

On Monday 14th March, Rochester Grammar Sixth Form students studying Japanese and the Japanese club organised a tree-planting ceremony with the school. They marked the occasion with some traditional green tea and cakes, and Anelia, Isobel and Pearl from Year 13 gave a wonderful speech in Japanese. Thank you for your

fantastic effort and to everyone who participated and came along for the event.

The newly placed cherry tree will continue to grow and bloom year on year and will be a symbol for the start of Spring and new beginnings at Rochester Grammar. Students will be able to enjoy the ancient tradition of Hanami, a Japanese Spring festival, by celebrating the beautiful but fleeting blossoms of the tree and appreciating the temporal beauty of nature.

What's more, starting October 2022, Rochester Grammar School, in collaboration with Holcombe Grammar School, will be running an annual visit to Japan. Students will have the opportunity to travel to either Ito or Yokosuka, towns that 'twin' with Medway and visit their partner school, Kobe High School.

The exchange is a magnificent connection of cultures that has been established and will continue to grow, just as the tree will, for many years to come.



Becoming an accredited Forest School



New Horizons Children's Academy has started its journey to becoming an accredited Forest School. Natasha Edwards, Nursery Nurse at New Horizons Children's Academy, is in the process of completing her Level 3 Forest School training, which involves spending time in the forest and developing a number of practical skills. Natasha's first four sessions covered cooking, including making drop scones and mini pizzas, as well as starting fires and thinking about the use of different tools and types of woods. So far, she has also been given training on tying a range of knots and using them to create shelter.

The Forest School course will equip Natasha with the skills and knowledge the school needs to become an accredited Forest School, described by the Forest School Association as a 'program that supports play, exploration and supported risk-taking', while 'developing confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting' (www.forestschoolassociation.org). Being awarded their Forest School accreditation will be an excellent achievement for the school, who will then be equipped to deliver an EYFS provision even more diverse

and enriching than it already is.

In a world where technology is developing at a rapid rate and so much of what we do and see is through screens, it is excellent to see our schools working to expand children's opportunities to engage with and enjoy the outdoors, develop a curiosity for nature and develop important practical skills. Well done and good luck to Natasha and New Horizons Children's Academy on the rest of their journey to becoming an accredited Forest School!





The Gordon Children's Academy's Immersion Days

The Gordon Children's Academy starts every academic term with its unique Immersion Days, which provide unique opportunities for children across all year groups to engage with their new topics for the term. From cookery and art activities to dress-up and role play, Gordon's Immersion Days are designed to provide a fun introduction to pupils' new topics, and start the term in an engaging and memorable way that leaves the children excited to learn more and delve deeper into their topic.

The broad scope of the topic areas in the Academy's curriculum allows teachers to plan Immersion Days which really open our children's minds to different areas of history, science, culture, art and humanities; Immersion

Days are really valuable tools in building the pupils' cultural capital and offering them new experiences, perspectives and ways of using their Thinking Tools. Most importantly, children love getting involved and are really enthusiastic about their Immersion Days – they are a real highlight of life at Gordon!

We are delighted to share with you some highlights from Gordon's Term 3 Immersion Days.

Reception's Immersion Day kick-started their new and exciting topic, 'Will you read me a story?' This topic is all about fairy tales, so the children enjoyed the chance to come into school dressed as their favourite fairy tale characters! From Goldilocks and Little Red Riding Hood



to Jack and the Beanstalk and Robin Hood, the children looked wonderful in their costumes, and spent the day thinking about features of a fairy tale and even making some porridge as they started to explore the *Goldilocks and the Three Little Bears* story.

A team of amazing superheroes flew into Gordon on Year 1's Immersion Day, as children dressed up to start their 'Superheroes' topic. Year 1 pupils enjoyed hunting for superheroes around the playground, before thinking about their favourite superheroes and how we can describe them. Ending the day



using their creative green Thinking Hats, Year 1 children created their very own superhero puppets and performed puppet shows!

Year 2 children enjoyed getting messy in their 'Muck, Mess and Mixtures' Immersion Day activities. In the morning, the children experimented with vinegar and bicarbonate of soda, mixing them together and watching the exciting reaction. Things got even messier in the afternoon, as the children made their own messy masterpieces by flicking around paint to make abstract art. This is an excellent example of a practical Immersion Day which encourages pupils to learn kinetically.



Gordon's Year 5 pupils travelled back in time for their Immersion Day...right back to the Victorian Era! The children arrived at school dressed up as key characters and figures from Victorian history, and spent the day as Victorian pupils. The children loved learning about Victorian school life and engaging in Victorian-style lessons and even following Victorian school rules. What better way to learn about an era of history than living a day in it yourself?



Well done to staff at The Gordon Children's Academy for the clear planning, effort and passion that goes into planning their Immersion Days and offering the best opportunities to their children.

STEPHEN MORGAN MP VISITS THE RAINBOW FISH CENTRE

In January The Rainbow Fish Centre welcomed Stephen Morgan MP to come along and meet the first intake of children at the centre.

“The Rainbow Fish Centre is delivering critical work to help Portsmouth’s young people get the specialist learning support they need, and I want to thank all the incredible staff for their efforts.” - Stephen Morgan, Shadow Minister for Schools.

The £1.1m inclusion centre is part of Penhale Infant School, and is a resource provision that has been set up in partnership with Portsmouth City Council for children with complex Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. The prime area of need of the children attending is cognition and learning, and the centre welcomed their first cohort of a mixed Reception and Year 1 class earlier this year.

The school is planning their next exciting expansion phase by opening one more class at Penhale (bringing the total spaces to 16) and the first stage of a phased opening at The Portsmouth Academy.

The aim is to enable Portsmouth to have an all-through special education model that allows pupils with SEND to be with us from Reception to Year 11.



The Rochester Grammar Sports Summary



The students at The Rochester Grammar School have taken part in a number of sports tournaments over the last few months, coming away with some fantastic achievements.

The Under 14 football team performed amazingly well in the Kent Cup, making it to the final match against Towers School. It was a challenging game with adverse weather conditions and tough opposition, but the team came together well. Although they didn't receive the result they wanted, their hard work and impressive performances throughout the tournament is something they can be proud of. Well done team!

In March, a newly formed team of Year 7 students participated in the Medway Secondary School Games Dodgeball competition. The team won all but two games throughout the competition, placing third overall and finished as the top-ranked Grammar School. The power shots executed and the skills displayed were incredible and an indication that this is just the beginning for this team.

A team of Year 8 students became the first rugby team from The Rochester Grammar to compete at an event in March as they participated in the Medway Secondary School Games Rugby Union competition. This was the first time the students had played together, but they dominated the competition, winning all of their games! Following this result, The Rochester Grammar School is now the current Medway School Champions!

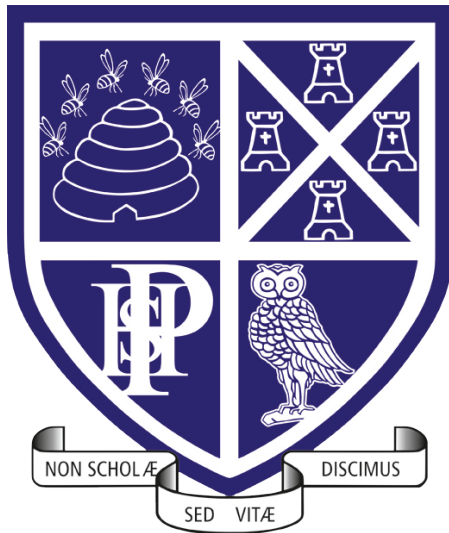
The PE Department took the Year 12 IB Sports, Exercise and Health Science students to Medway Park for the Medway Sport, Break the Bias, International Women's Day event. Throughout the afternoon, the students had the opportunity to liaise with various sports clubs from across Medway, meet and greet sports stars, and participate in sports such as netball, football, handball, and korfball. The event was an excellent opportunity to celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness against bias in sports and other areas, and act for equality.



We are incredibly proud of our students for their hard work and achievements in sports, and we look forward to seeing them grow and progress in the future. Well done!



Plymouth High Schools for Girls students accepted for Oxford and Cambridge



We are delighted to announce that Elizabeth and Lauren have received invitations from Oxford and Cambridge. We spoke with them to capture their story and their personal experience of the processes that they went through.

For Life Not School We Learn



Elizabeth: Invitation to study Earth Sciences at Oxford

'I have always been encouraged by my family and school teachers to aim high. I had no idea what I wanted to study until I was in Year 12, which is when I found Earth Sciences.

The application deadline for Cambridge is much earlier than other universities. I used the summer holidays to prepare my Personal Statement and revised / redrafted it over and over. Mrs Eales-white was a great support and was able to recommend extra course materials and books to read to expand my understanding of the subject. This was based more on current affairs, and she helped me take the subject and apply it to society and the politics that are associated with it.

There is no admissions test with the subject I chose, only the interviews. I practiced with online mentors and used 'unipear' to help me with my personal statement. I had two 30 minute interviews with different academics. One was field work based and the other problem based. I felt much more confident in my first interview, which focused on opinions and thoughts compared to the second, which was fact based, so I was really unsure whether I have done well or not.

The interviews took place in December and the results released one month later, in January. The results are published on the UCAS website. I was at home on the day the results were published. I was with my mum and kept refreshing the screen and reading the comments in the student rooms throughout the morning. The moment I read my acceptance was so surreal; I felt so excited and rushed into the kitchen to tell my mum.

If I could go back to the beginning and give myself advice, I would tell myself not to put so much pressure on myself with the reading materials. I found some of the extra reading quite difficult and heavy'.



Lauren, Invitation to study Law LLB at Downing College, Cambridge.

The school Liaison Officer came into school when I was in Year 10 and spoke about Downing College, and I knew from this moment that I loved the thought of going to this college. I didn't really realise at the time that I had the potential to apply. I have always aspired to aim for higher or more than I think I can achieve, so I just went for it. I applied with a healthy mindset and researched and shortlisted a few universities that I was interested in.

I signed up for the university's mailing list, which I recommend to all students who are interested in applying to any university. Off the back of this, I heard about a residential offer which I applied for and succeeded in securing a placement for. I spent a night at the university and got to speak directly to the admission team and fellow students who were

studying the subject that I was interested in. They were able to give me invaluable advice in where to direct my studies and were able to explain the application process in detail which made me feel at ease and built my confidence. I was able to 'see who I would be' at Cambridge, both personally and educationally which made me comfortable and assured when going through the application process.

I received my invitation for interview during my Maths lesson! I was so distracted and Miss Roughton was the first to congratulate me. I signed up to a company called 'Zero Gravity' who were able to help me with my interview prep, which was brilliant and gave me lots of tips and pointers which I wouldn't have considered without them.

The offer letter came through the mail, and I was at home with mum and dad at the time.

I was too nervous to open it, so my mum opened it for me. When she opened it she just started crying, I wasn't sure if the were good tears or bad tears! But she clarified when she came over and gave me the biggest hug. My family were so happy and will tell anyone who will listen about how proud they are, which is the best feeling. Now it's all about getting the grades!

Looking back, it was the personal statement that I was most worried and nervous about. In the interview, you do not have much control: you can't choose the questions, so you just speak and be true to yourself, and they will either like you or they won't. The personal statement is 4000 words that you write about yourself. It's 100% on me which was the scary part. It was difficult to know what bits to talk about, what bits to leave out and also in what order. My family played a large part in helping me with this and were also very invested in this process. I must have had around 11 drafts where I would fiddle about with sentence orders and wording. My family helped by having blind votes on different versions and supported in helping me portray the best version of myself.

My advice to other students thinking of applying to university is 'Do it for you, not for others and show what you want to show, not what you think others want to see'.

FEARFUL FRONTIERS - DYSTOPIAN DAYS

Year 9 students at Plympton Academy have delved into a range of dystopian fiction during term three, reading extracts from classic dystopian stories such as George Orwell's '1984' and Ray Bradbury's 'Fahrenheit 451', alongside the well-known young adult dystopia 'The Hunger Games.'

Students have enjoyed exploring the power of language as writers captivate us with descriptions of post-apocalyptic worlds; they have been immersed in discussions of government control, totalitarian regimes and the use of surveillance and propaganda. The most thought-provoking conversations were around how close to our world these dystopian narratives are, highlighting the real possibilities of our future. Our students have really engaged with this topic as one of our new units of study, as you can see from the creative writing in this article.

Acid Water

No one knew what had happened to make the river poisoned but it happened straight after the war. Bombs were let of nearly every day and one day a bomb landed right in the river. It didn't explode immediately and gave the bomb team just under a minute to get it out of our towns only source of water. They managed it but traces of toxins were still left in the water. So I guess that's how it got poisoned but some say that the opposing government set out to destroy all of the water sources and food sources in our part of the country in hopes to kill us all off. It didn't work but they did manage to destroy a significant amount of resources before we could do anything about it.

Even though the river was poisoned, wildlife still grew around it. Grass patches sprung up every now and then and sometimes you would see the odd flower but that was it. In fact, it was the most colour our town got. All of the other buildings were built with grey bricks and bright white lighting that almost blinded you. The government gave us our food through deliveries that were made every morning through a metal boat that travelled up through the river and dropped off food for every house. We had no control over what food was given and the

government didn't care about allergies or special dietary needs. If we were given any food, that was good enough for them and I guess good enough for us.

It was a normal day however that everything changed, for the better or for the good I still don't know. I do know, however, that life would never go back to the way it was after this day. That morning, it was my turn to collect the food from the boat that brought it around. I stepped outside wearing my usual grey pinafore and white shirt. The morning breeze hit my face as I walked down the steps of my house. I saw many others doing the same thing.

Boys in their white shirts and grey shorts went to the slowly growing school where some government administrator taught them everything they needed to know. Girls in the same clothes as I was wearing went out to pick up the day's food. Fathers in their suits filed into the plane which took them to the government building where they worked. Finally, mothers in their aprons and maids' dresses carrying out the grey and white clothing and formally hanging them up to dry.

I picked up the box in which was today's food. My hands were hurting by the time I placed it down on the shiny

metal table in our house. I opened up the box. Like I thought, it contained boring meals. No colour to them whatsoever, just grey fish and brown bread that looked like it went out of date in the 15th century. Under the food, there were the same four bottles of warm water which were so familiar. I picked one up and drank from it. I regretted it as soon as I did it and would have spat it out if I hadn't of stood right in front of the camera which another government official had installed when I was born. Once the food was put in front of the seats ready for lunch, I went outside to see my mother just finishing hanging the washing. The next task of today, like every other day, was to walk the mile to the source of the river. It was the job of all the girls aged below 18 to help make the river fresh again. We did this by pouring 100 litres of water into the source of the river to try and increase the proportion of fresh river water.

Emily Fear Year 9

What would you do?

A dead atmosphere. No signs of life. I know they are here. I just can't see them. Cramped under a desk, I hide trembling with uncertainty and dread. This could be the end for us all. It's funny to think one individual could change hundreds of lives, innocent lives without thinking.

My mind drifts back to summer. The memories flood back clear as those gleaming sunny days. Bathing in the glowing rays, I lay still as a sleeping baby while all around me children play without a care in the world. Their minds were so absorbed in their fantasies. The sweet aroma of ice cream hung in the air. I could almost taste its cleansing lemon bliss...

Guns fire and fill the air with a new atmosphere. Panic. Listening to the collapsing souls brought me back to reality. It hits me hard like the abrupt halt of a train against an unsuspecting body.

After the guns' echoing bellows die down, I leave my guarded haven. I roam the halls and then it hit me. A dead atmosphere. No signs of life. I know they were here; I can no longer see them. Out in the open, I fully appreciate the damage that one individual could do. What would I do?

Gracie Holgate Year 9



Stroud infirmary block from the south-east, 2001.
© Peter Higginbotham.

Did you know...?

All Faith's Children's Academy is built on a site of interesting historical importance!

The site of the now primary school was once home to a workhouse. Erected in 1721, the original parish workhouse stood adjacent to St Nicholas' Churchyard. After many years of use, the workhouse was demolished in 1853, and the new North Aylesford Union workhouse was erected in 1836 on Gun Lane in Stroud, on the same site that All Faiths Children's Academy now occupies! You can see the layout of the workhouse in the map which depicts the site in 1865.

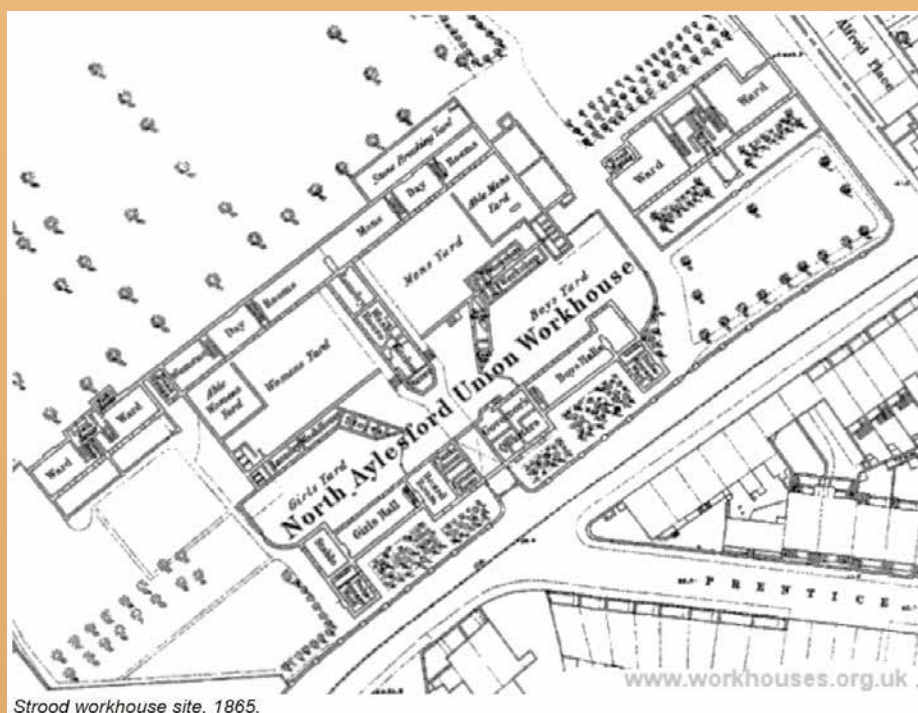
During this time, the workhouse operated as an institution which provided shelter and employment for the poor and ill. Women and men were housed separately

in the building, with women populating the west side of the site and men at the east.

By 1887, the workhouse was big enough to accommodate 521 inmates. The infirmary, built in 1869, is still in use today as The Gun Lane Medical Centre, which stands right

next to All Faiths and is the only remaining part of the workhouse building.

The school's deep history is fascinating for students, particularly when they learn about the Victorian era as part of their history curriculum.



Stroud workhouse site, 1865.



Apprentice versus Dragons Den

Last autumn, fifteen pupils from The Portsmouth Academy took part in a city-wide project, Apprentice vs Dragons Den. Out of forty schools, two teams from The Portsmouth Academy were selected to attend the final. All entrants had to develop an idea for a new product to solve one of modern life's challenges. In addition, each team had to design a product that could be rolled out commercially and build a business case for their concept.

The first team designed a piece of jewellery that had an alarm built-in and could be connected to a friend's phone, allowing an alert to be sent if they were in trouble.

The second team came up with an idea for a vending machine that only dispensed liquid, no packaging, which is more environmentally friendly and promotes reusable cups and bottles rather than disposable ones. The device also gives users the option to

buy a recycled bottle if they need to. Both teams walked away with Best Design and Original Concept award.

Penny Mourdant MP said: "The students were amazing; it was fascinating to see the creativity they were putting in and the incredible research

and how methodically they'd thought through every aspect of the product they were producing"

This is a fantastic example of our innovative thinkers at The Portsmouth Academy and our next generation transforming future generations.



Celebrating the Arts at The Victory Academy

The Victory Academy is renowned for its fantastic creative Art Departments and commitment to offering students a plethora of opportunities to explore different art forms, recognise their talents and build cultural capital. The Academy was awarded its Platinum Artsmark Award in 2018, a phenomenal recognition achieved by very few schools across the UK – the school is currently working towards its reaccreditation. In this edition of Our Trust, we'd like to celebrate all things art at The Victory Academy, and highlight some of the wonderful work of its Art Departments so far this year.

Over the last couple of terms, many students at The Victory Academy have been lucky enough to attend exciting school trips dedicated to the Arts, including a visit to The Lion King musical in the West End and a trip to the Turner Contemporary gallery in Margate for students who receive Pupil Premium funding. This term, Year 9 also visited University for the Creative Arts, a fascinating and inspiring trip which involved a tour of the facilities, careers talks, and even the unique opportunity to participate in an Advertising Photography workshop. The students really enjoyed getting creative with the camera, and even learnt some of the tricks of the trade, such as using mashed potato



instead of ice cream for their shots! You can see some of the wonderful photographs they captured in this article.

The Academy is also proud to invite a range of visitors in to spend time with its young people, teaching them new skills and encouraging them to explore a variety of artistic forms. This term, students had



the chance to take part in multiple workshops, such as lantern-making – students who attended this workshop were then given the exciting opportunity to attend the lantern parade at Medway Light Nights, and showed off their wonderful creations as they marched down Rochester High Street. Year 9 Performing

Arts students also got involved in this event by performing in the 'If Not Now' show at Rochester Castle; they were visited by Icon Theatre, a local theatre company, who choreographed a dance for them to perform to the public. You can see more images of this spectacular event in the Medway Light Nights news article on their website. Other exciting opportunities this term included a jewellery making workshop and a Cyanotype workshop attended by 80 Year 10 students.



As well as creative and visual arts, The Victory Academy also specialises in Performing Arts, and boasts an outstanding faculty headed by Kim Voisey. The Performing Arts are very popular at The Victory Academy, and the school is home to many incredibly talented students. The school is currently rehearsing for its next School Show, Fame JR, which an extraordinary 100 students auditioned for. The Victory Dance Competition Squad is another key part of the Victory community – they recently went through to the regional final of the National Schools' Dance Competition, outperforming older groups and even scoring 100% in some categories!

Though the school is committed to offering the best education and opportunities to its own students, the Art department also goes above and beyond to engage with other schools and organisations in the local community and share its expertise. Carly Dawkins, Head of Art at The Victory Academy, has been working with other schools within our Trust, such as Cedar Children's Academy and New Horizons Children's Academy, to provide opportunities for their children but also for staff, delivering CPD sessions and supporting staff in incorporating creative practices across a range of subjects and curriculum areas. Performing Arts students are also working with New Horizons Children's Academy on their upcoming Around the World event, a dance performance which allows

primary and secondary students to explore a variety of cultures through the medium of dance. Year 9 students recently visited children at New Horizons to help them choreograph their dances: each class will be performing a different style of dance, resulting in a whole show which celebrates culture, but also our Trust community.

The Arts Department at The Victory Academy, as I'm sure you can see, works exceptionally hard to provide a high quality, unique and diverse artistic creative education to its students. In working to achieve this, the school works with its Student Voice and is always keen to respond to feedback and explore opportunities for improvement. In a recent survey, students indicated that they would like to see a wider range of Art subjects offered as elective options at GCSE level; as a result, The Victory Academy is now proud to be introducing GCSE Graphic Communications and GCSE Textiles alongside its existing range of Visual and Performing Arts GCSE courses.

We would like to congratulate and thank Carley Dawkins, Head of Art, and Kim Voisey, Head of Performing Arts, for their continued passion and hard work in developing the impressive creative education offered at The Victory Academy, and to the Art Team's newest member, Art Technician Karen Scudder, whose support is pivotal in ensuring every workshop and Art lesson runs smoothly.

The Portsmouth Academy receives the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Bronze Award

A wonderful end to term 3 as students and staff at The Portsmouth Academy are celebrated receiving the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Bronze Award.

The Portsmouth Academy is part of the award-winning Thinking Schools Academy Trust, and shares a commitment “to providing an outstanding school with an ethos of excellence and high expectations”. It is with this mentality that the school made the decision to embark upon the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) in September.

Their journey started by informing members of staff and parents about their ambitions to become a Rights Respecting School and all that it entails. Cementing their commitment to ‘transforming life chances’, The Portsmouth Academy have begun to embed the language of respect for self and others into the ethos of their school. This enables the young people within their school to have impact upon those in their immediate community and the world as a global village.

The RRSA involves young people and the school community in the learning about children’s rights and how to put them in to practice

daily. Rights Respecting is not only about what children do but also, importantly, what adults do.

With this in mind, a Steering Group of students and staff members was formed to educate the school community about rights. With the delivery of consistent messaging about respect for both personal rights and the rights of others, students are empowered to become active and responsible citizens.

The school’s Principal, Rachel Grey, said; “I am excited about our journey to being recognised as a Rights Respecting School. The ethos behind the award reflects what we aim for at The Portsmouth Academy each day and I am proud that students and staff continue to work hard engaging in this work to ensure everyone in our school community is educated on rights and responsibilities and how we can all play our part as active citizens in Portsmouth and our wider communities.”

The Bronze Award recognises that The Portsmouth Academy is Rights: Committed and, as the first stage of the RRSA, has built a foundation for the school to continue their journey towards Silver: Rights Aware.



To work towards the Silver Award, the school will ensure The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) underpins their values and decision making. The whole school will learn about the CRC and how the articles can be exemplified in all areas by promoting knowledge and understanding of the Convention throughout the school community. The school will empower the young people within their community to see themselves as rights respecting global citizens and will instil advocacy for fairness and children’s rights within the school community, locally and globally.

For more information about Unicef UK’s Rights Respecting Schools Award, please visit www.unicef.org.uk/rrsa



Watch The Portsmouth Academy’s ‘School Values: Respect’ video

Chartwells support our #WeAreOne events

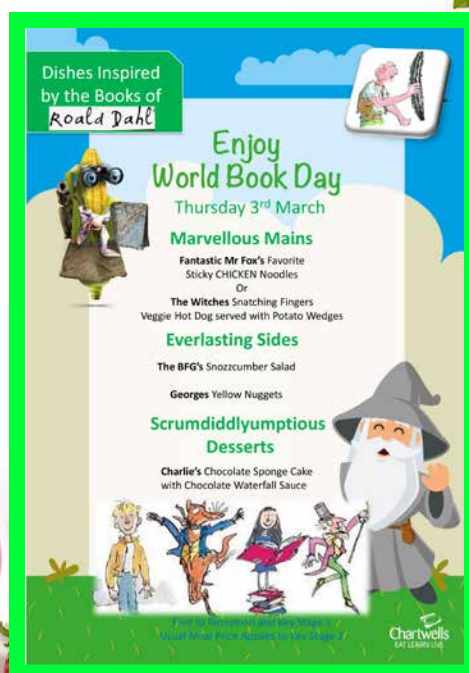
Chartwells is the proud provider of our school's catering, helping those in education build strong bodies, sharp minds and embrace a positive lifestyle and dietary behaviours. On top of catering for our students, Chartwells engage them in our We Are One events by creating fun themed menus and running inter-school competitions.

For World Book Day, schools enjoyed a menu of dishes inspired by the books of Roald Dahl, with a range of Marvellous Mains, Everlasting Sides and Scrumdiddlyumptious Desserts. The Gordon Children's Academy won the 'Best Counter' display kitchen competition with their fantastically creative take on Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.

The Goodwin Academy made a splash during our recent LGBTQ+ History Month True Colours event with their 'Best Counter' win. It's difficult to miss the pride radiating off this display, with its beaming bright colours and rainbows. Both school catering teams won Love2Shop vouchers for their incredible efforts.

Recently, Gordons Children's Academy had a visit from a well-known former student, Dr Ranj Singh. Chartwells provided a range of healthy and delicious treats to mark the occasion; The display was made complete with the accompaniment of miniature Dr Ranj figures.

In addition to their event support, Chartwells has also run several 'Beyond the Chartwells Kitchen' workshops at Gordon Children's Academy, including the Hungary Caterpillar story with their Reception classes and Salad Superheroes with Year 1. This educational programme equips our children with an ever-evolving toolkit based on five key themes: cooking and food, nutrition and health, sports and exercise, mental wellbeing, and sustainability.





The Victory Academy Relaunches Duke of Edinburgh Award

Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) is an award programme designed to encourage young people to grow and develop core life skills, including communication, teamwork, organisation and physical ability. Launched by the late Prince Phillip, DofE qualifications are highly acclaimed and respected by employers across the UK, as they demonstrate a candidate's ability to be independent, use their initiative and commit to a large project.

The Victory Academy is proud to be relaunching the DofE award after its previous programme was disrupted by the pandemic. 30 students from Years 9 and 10 have signed up to work towards

their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award, a record number for the Academy. Coordinated by PE Teacher Owen Doyle, the team have been making plans for their DofE Expedition this June, which involves a two-night orienteering adventure organised and led by the students themselves. The students have been begun working towards the completion of the three sections of their Bronze Awards: Physical, Skill and Volunteering. Each section requires students to source their own placements and assessors, encouraging them to communicate confidently and independently.

Following such a high level of interest in the Bronze Award,

The Victory Academy plans to offer the Silver and Gold Awards from September – this provision will be led by Michelle Smith, Principal at the Academy, who is also a registered DofE Gold supervisor and assessor and International Mountain Leader.



THE DUKE
OF EDINBURGH'S
AWARD

Students from The Victory Academy and Holcombe Grammar School belonging to Chatham Hub's popular Medway Victory Sea Cadet Unit, TS Temeraire, have also been working exceptionally hard towards achieving their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. 27 of the unit's cadets are currently working towards their Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, and have been engaging in their charity and community work as part of their journey. The Cadets can be seen in these brilliant photos preparing for and carrying out their expeditions. The Medway Victory Sea Cadet Unit offers an exceptional opportunity for students across our Chatham Hub to build their practical, team-building and communication skills, and it is excellent to see so many

students also working independently and proactively towards their Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

"The Duke of Edinburgh programme is an invaluable chance for students to step outside of their comfort zones, explore their skills and gain a range of life experiences. The Victory Academy is committed to providing its students with a range of opportunities, particularly those that may not be available to many of our students outside of school. I worked on DofE with students at my previous schools, and am excited to bring my skills and knowledge to our young people from September, as we help them progress from Bronze to Silver," said Michelle, Principal of The Victory Academy.

It is brilliant to see our schools going above and beyond to provide our young people with exciting and diverse opportunities to build transferrable skills and prepare for their futures. Best of luck to all participating students, and thank you to Owen Doyle and Michelle Smith at The Victory Academy for their commitment to this brilliant project.



Chartered Teachers Programme



We are thrilled to have five teachers across our Trust pass the Chartered College of Teaching C-Teach with flying colours. This programme is one of the most challenging for teachers in the country.

The C-Teach programme provides opportunities for teachers to bridge the gap between practice and research so that they can become confident practitioners with strong pedagogical knowledge. Becoming a Chartered Teacher highlights the commitment to developing teaching at any stage in your career and provides opportunities to carry out research, learn about new pedagogical practice areas, and become an expert in your field.

The rigorous assessment process to become a Chartered Teacher includes completing a professional development plan, participation in written discussions, a research-based school improvement project, a portfolio of reflections, individual practice and exams, and focused on the participant's specialist subject or phase.

Congratulations to all of our recently qualified Chartered Teachers who have

successfully taken the next step in their professional growth!

Special thanks go out to our solid mentoring team, including Chris, Laura, Robert, David and Melita, for your highly effective support and guidance and to Chris for your strong leadership of the programme.

James Carr
The Victory Academy
HoD Business and
Teacher of Mathematics
Head of Year 10

“It is difficult to summarise what becoming a Chartered Teacher means to me. I started the programme as I wanted to challenge my thinking and practice; the C-Teach journey has meant that I now think more critically about what I do each day in the classroom and engage with research to support the approaches I use. I am most definitely a better practitioner now than when I started. The assignments, such as the research-based improvement project, has challenged my preconceptions and enabled me to analyse the benefit gained by the strategies I use. Being part of this growing network has benefited the students I teach, my peers and myself as a professional.”

Kate Hayes-Watkins
Goodwin Academy
Head of Performing Arts

“Gaining this qualification means so much to me. I have grown as a professional and have had the opportunity to explore my potential and feed it into my practice. Having to take exams again under timed conditions was probably the most challenging part of the course, as it is something I had not done for quite a while. However, this focused my thinking and raised my aspirations to achieve (I got quite competitive with myself) ... waiting for the results was quite a challenge too! My favourite part of the course was the Research-Based Improvement Project. The Educational Research Matters aspect of the course was informative and fully supported the project I was to embark on. My project gave me the confidence to use research to explore and evolve my practice, and this is something I plan to draw upon and share in my day to day work. Many of the practices I learned through the C-Teach programme have become embedded in my planning, teaching, learning, and development. I am really proud of this achievement, and I am excited for the journey it will take me on in the future.”

Lauren French
The Rochester
Grammar School
Assistant Director of KS4
and Curriculum Leader
for Psychology

“For me, engaging in the C-Teach Programme was an opportunity to get back to why I became a teacher, for my love of learning and my love of understanding how to engage students most effectively in the classroom. The challenging nature of the course has most definitely developed my practice, and the opportunity to stop and engage with pedagogical literature has been a refreshing change to my usual crime-thriller novels! I look forward to seeing how I can use this knowledge to refine and develop my own practice even further in the future and

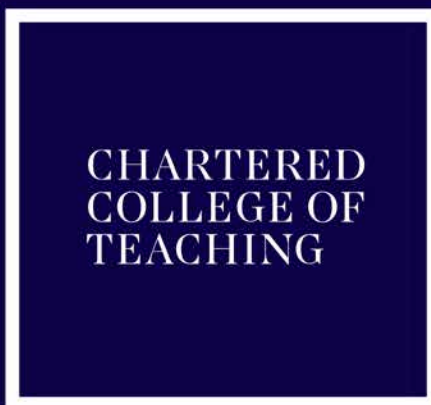
am grateful for the opportunity awarded to me to participate in the programme.”

Nicole Still
The Rochester
Grammar School
Second in Department
for English

“The C-Teach programme has been a career-defining opportunity for me. It has given me the time, space, and resources to explore the intricacies of evidence-informed practice and carefully refine my teaching through cycles of deliberate practice. As a result, I am now confident of the rigour of my classroom practices and know that reading and research will continue to underpin and inform my journey.”

Lara Osmotherly
The Rochester
Grammar School
Assistant Director KS3,
Curriculum Leader Biology,
and Assistant Timetabler

“The process of becoming a Chartered Teacher allowed me to focus on improving the fundamentals of my classroom practice - for example, increasing the effectiveness of explanations. In addition, I have strengthened my skills in developing action research from literature reviews, determining evidenced-based approaches for a specific context with confidence. It was a privilege to concentrate on pedagogy amongst the competing aspects of my role, and I look forward to extending this reflective practice further.”



OLIVER JR

HOLCOMBE GRAMMAR PRODUCTION



Holcombe Grammar School's talented drama students have been hard at work perfecting their performance for the school's Oliver JR production this Spring.

Holcombe has recently reintroduced Drama to its curriculum, and the department, led by Lisa Stocker, has been very popular with students. As part of its Artsmark journey, the school is committed to offering a range of creative opportunities to its students: Oliver JR will be the first production put on by the school in many years, and will showcase the theatrical talent of the school's Year 7, 8, 9 and even Sixth Form students. The incredibly talented Shania Boaitey, Year 13, will be playing Nancy, with the brilliant Sarah Edmonds-Magee, also in Year 13, playing Bet and fulfilling the role of Stage Manager.

The dedicated cast of Oliver JR can often be heard singing their hearts out at after school rehearsals, bringing the school

site alive with the musical's famous tunes such as 'Food Glorious Food' and 'Consider Yourself'. Directed by Lisa Stocker and held at The Victory Academy, the production will be taking place at 6:30pm on 9th and 10th May 2022. Tickets can be purchased on +Pay, or by contacting office@holcombegrgrammar.org.uk.

Special mention to the staff at Holcombe for making this production possible, and working tirelessly to ensure its success! Thank you to Nicola Hayes for working on costumes for the show, to John Zwanzig for supporting the students with singing lessons, to Jade Goddard for her help at rehearsals, and of course to Lisa Stocker for directing and organising the entire production.

We can't wait to see Holcombe Grammar School's production of Oliver JR this May. Tickets are currently on sale – you don't want to miss it!



Medway Light Nights

Schools in our Medway Hub were delighted to be involved in the first ever Medway Light Nights this February!

Medway Light Nights was a brilliant festival of light held in Rochester High Street for the first time this year. The town's iconic historic buildings were lit up and transformed in a beautiful display that saw schools, local organisations and members of the public come together in celebration. Students from The Victory Academy, Cedar Children's Academy, New Horizons Children's Academy, All Faiths Children's Academy and The Gordon Children's Academy all wrapped up warm to represent their schools in a spectacular lantern parade as part of Medway Light Nights.

In preparation for the event, each of the schools was visited by local artists who provided a wonderful lantern-making workshop to our children. Pupils made lovely lanterns in a variety of shapes which they then decorated – we were so impressed with the creative designs they came up with.

Our pupils displayed their lanterns as they marched

up Rochester High Street in the brilliant parade. The street was lit up with fascinating videos and artwork, and the children gazed in awe at the buildings around them. There were also some extraordinary percussion bands who participated in the parade, contributing to the lively atmosphere and making it impossible not to dance! Some pupils from New Horizons Children's Academy could even be seen in a film projected on to the wall by the cathedral, talking about what it's like to be a child in Medway and the opportunities available to them.

Performing Arts pupils from The Victory Academy also featured in an incredible show at Rochester Castle. The performance, named 'If Not Now', explored contemporary opportunities for social change, and involved beautiful light displays projected onto the Castle. Our students performed wonderfully and with such confidence and enthusiasm.

It was truly brilliant to be involved in an event which united the community in such a unique way, and to see our

young people embracing the opportunity to be creative, exhibit their work and have fun! Thank you to the artists who helped our students create their lanterns, to the staff who coordinated our participation in the event, and the children who represented our schools so brilliantly.





Last term, our Medway primary academies held the 'TSAT Spelling Bee final'. Hosted by Cedar Children's Academy, the event saw pupil from Cedar, All Faiths Children's Academy, The Gordon Children's Academy and New Horizons Children's Academy battle it out to win the trophy!

The final consisted of five exciting rounds, each designed to test and challenge participants.

In Round 1, pupils were asked to spell words from the National Curriculum. It was clear to see that the children had practiced for this round, as they all smashed it! Round 2 was a little different: pupils had to unjumble a range of anagrams, racing against the other schools to get to the answer first. Round 3 was tricky, as it required the children to give the correct spelling of homophones when presented to them in a sentence...their/they're/there were some brilliant answers in this round from our pupils at Cedar! A range of very tricky

challenge words made up Round 4; it was brilliant to see the children trying their best and giving the words a good go, even the really difficult ones! The Spelling Bee ended with an intense, exciting 'How many words in a minute?' round, where each school team worked together to spell as many words as they could against the clock.

Congratulations to contestants from each school, who all did a wonderful job and performed brilliantly:

- Mikaela, Deanna, William and Samuel from Cedar Children's Academy
- Mariam, Evie, Elliott and Ekisha from New Horizons Children's Academy
- Finn, Leo, Justice and Jodie from The Gordon Children's Academy
- Nora, Omeed, Lucas and Saule from All Faiths Children's Academy

Huge congratulations to The Gordon Children's Academy who took home the trophy! The Gordon team performed exceptionally well and excelled in each round.





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Our Thinking Fitness gyms are open to our students and the local community, providing access to fitness for all. We are a non-profit service, with all money being recycled back into our Trust, supporting 18 schools across the South of England.

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What's more, all profits made are recycled back into the Trust, supporting all 18 Schools across the South of England.

Visit us at thinking-lettings.co.uk to discover more or reserve a space. Alternatively, simply scan the QR code.



World Book Day

Our Trust theme for World Book Day this year was 'Aspirations.' Children and staff across our Trust did a fantastic job dressing up today as book characters and famous figures they aspire to be like!

As part of our #WeAreOne World Book Day event, we reached out to local heroes to read to our children and tell them a bit about what they do. From Medway NHS nurses to Hampshire Fire Service, our children were amazed to meet some real-life superheroes and ask them questions about their careers and experiences.

You can watch their videos online by scanning the QR code on the right.

All our schools put on a fantastic day to raise reading awareness and sprinkle a little magic into the playgrounds and classrooms with lots of fun activities and games for our children.

Well done to all our students that submitted their World Book Day Bingo sheets into our Trust-wide draw to win family theatre tickets to see a show of their choice. We are delighted to announce the winners are:

- Tilly Hardy - Newbridge Junior School
- Samuel Bliss - Cedar Childrens Academy
- Ivy Spanyol - Goodwin Academy



Real-life Superheroes Videos







TRANSFORMING LIFE CHANCES

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