

# OUR TRUST

CHILD FIRST, ASPIRE, CHALLENGE, ACHIEVE



THINKING  
SCHOOLS  
ACADEMY TRUST

SUMMER 2020 | ISSUE 13

# CONNECTIONS NEED TOGETHER TECH AS ONE

TRANSFORMING LIFE CHANCES

**IN TIMES OF  
ADVERSITY  
STRENGTH  
COMES FROM  
UNITY!**



THINKING  
SCHOOLS  
ACADEMY TRUST

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# WELCOME MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Welcome to the Summer 2020 edition of Our Trust.

These last two terms we will always remember deeply. We took ourselves out of our comfort zones

to follow our values - Child First, Aspire, Challenge, Achieve as we ran head first into the journey of our digital transformation.

You will see throughout this publication how through technology our staff found ways to connect with students. Our staff not only provided an excellent education to students attending the schools but also students learning remotely.

Our students have shown resilience with this new way of learning, taking part in activities and projects and sharing their work via email, video, on social media and through the online platforms we have in place.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Thinking Facilities who have worked around the schools to ensure safe distancing was possible. There has been so much feedback from staff grateful for the team making sure staff and students are safe.

Thinking Technology have enhanced our ICT infrastructure so that teachers and students can work together in school and remotely with the tools they need to succeed.

I would also like to thank Thinking Creative who have supplied informative safety posters, infographics and 'we miss you' videos for our schools and helped develop their websites to provide access to remote learning resources.

Thanks also goes out to Thinking Financial, Thinking Personnel and Thinking Fitness who have been working across to board, collaboratively supporting our schools to deliver free school meals, school clubs and so much more.

In fact, I would like to thank every member of staff including catering, teachers, administration staff, Headteachers, central staff, stakeholders and our students, for all coming together to make our lockdown provision as effective and engaging as possible.

We are one, we are united in our ambition to Transform the Life Chances of the young people in our care - thank you!

Stay safe,

*Stuart Gardner*

Stuart Gardner, MSc, NPQH, NLE  
Chief Executive Officer

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# Virtual and Recognition School Games Awards



New Horizons Children's Academy has been awarded both the Virtual and Recognition School Games Awards for 2019–2020. The National Sports Games Mark was paused during the pandemic and therefore schools have retained their 2019 School Games Mark Award, which means New Horizons continues to be a 'Gold' School. However, the School Games Organisers were provided with national 2019–2020 School Games Recognition certificates to award schools who continued to show a strong commitment to the School Games programme during this academic year and New Horizons have achieved both of these awards.

Throughout lockdown, teachers have been providing P.E lessons, personal challenges and encouraging pupils to stay fit and healthy. Through the enrichment section of our website and our newsletter, we have been encouraging families to stay active, get involved in National Sports Week and provided resources for the whole family to use whilst at home. This demonstrates New Horizon's strong commitment to the School Games programme and to ensuring our children are 'Thinking Healthily' all the time.



# The Rochester Grammar School Brings 'The Crucible' to Life

During February, when performances on stage with singing was a normal way of life, students at The Rochester Grammar school performed *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller. Their performances left audiences feeling dazed and stunned at what they had witnessed with pure energy, passion and deliverance of performance that amazed all.

In 1692, in the Puritan New England town of Salem, Massachusetts, a group of girls are caught dancing in the forest by the local minister, Reverend Parris. One of the girls, Parris's daughter Betty, falls into a trance-like state. A crowd gathers in the Parris home while rumours of witchcraft fill the town. Reverend Hale, an expert on witchcraft, is brought in to investigate the strange occurrences in the town. Abigail Williams, the girls' instigator, is questioned about these events that took place in the

the forest and she proceeds to pass the blame to a local slave. In order to save her life, the slave admits to witchcraft and is granted sanctuary by Hale if she gives up the names of the other girls. This is when Abigail realises she can get away with her crimes by blaming innocent people, and then hysteria ensues when the girls take it too far. Local farmer, John Proctor is roped into the mess when his wife Elizabeth is accused of witchcraft, then follows a series of court cases that reveals more twisted truths woven into the town of Salem that goes beyond bewitchment.

The school's cast worked incredibly hard to bring the secrets and tensions that plagued their characters into reality and the audience was in awe as they saw the town of Salem come to life.

Joseph Gallagher who played John Proctor





said: "The Crucible was the first main role that I ever played and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities Rochester Grammar School has given me, with my first taste of what I want to pursue as a career."

Coming in to the final weeks everyone in the cast was so excited to display their hard work; this show was packed with betrayal, secrets, mania and obsession that will leave you relieved you were not alive in Salem.

The simplicity of the set and the incredible use of lighting really helped to build the tense atmosphere that reached a climax at several points through the production, notably the courtroom scene and the heart-wrenching end to the production, with Elizabeth Proctor collapsing on stage as her husband is led to the gallows. The final symbolic image of Danforth tying the empty noose to the tree centre stage as Elizabeth cries for her husband is one that will stay with the audience for a long time!

*Article written by Ellee Ray and Shaan Dhillon, Drama Academic Officers at The Rochester Grammar School.*



# Healthy Nutritional Learning

Healthy eating is all about eating food we need to be healthy not only in body but also in mind. Constantly eating the wrong food types can cause illness, tiredness and long-term health problems.

Our schools all provide information to students on the values of eating healthy and students at The Portsmouth Academy have recently been learning about developing healthy eating habits during their online PSHE lessons.

The Food and Nutrition department held two competitions with the first one being a drawing competition from Aldi to design a bag to encourage others to eat fruits and vegetables. The second competition was a practical cooking competition in which students had to prepare, cook and present a dish that would encourage teenagers to eat more healthily.

Learning to cook food can be fun as well as mastering those culinary skills, and most importantly finding out the health benefits of each food type and how the flavour complement each other.

We look forward to hearing more about how schools have been learning about healthy eating and receiving mouth-watering photos of beautifully prepared food.



# RAISING FUNDS FOR

# SPORT RELIEF

Sport Relief is a biennial event from Comic Relief that brings people together in the world of sports and entertainment to raise money for vulnerable people in the UK and the world's poorest countries.

Members of the public throughout the world rise to the occasion to take part in the Sport Relief Mile, for some their first steps in changing their own lifestyles for a healthier way of living and for others a 'walk in the park'.

On Friday 13th March, Goodwin Academy did its bit for the charity. The day may have been cold but fortunately during the afternoon with not a drop of rain in sight the whole school community came together to support Sport Relief and its relentless work to help those in need.

Students and staff alike put on their running shoes and completed their mile to help raise £383.30 for the amazing charity that was first aired on television back in July 2002.

Well done Gary Dixon, Maths Teacher and Head of House at Goodwin Academy, for organising the event and to all those involved. Your efforts will help make a difference to people's lives!



Gary Dixon



# The Portsmouth Academy Receives Diabetes UK Award



The Portsmouth Academy has been awarded the 'Good Diabetes Care in School' award by Diabetes UK.

The award from the charity, Diabetes UK, commends the excellent work being done by the Academy alongside parents and healthcare professionals to ensure young people with diabetes receive an equal school experience to their peers.

By receiving this award, the Academy has demonstrated that good diabetes care in schools is achievable and stands as an example for all schools.

Supporting children and young people to manage their diabetes effectively is critical in enabling them to maximise their time at school. In the short-term, high or low blood glucose levels can make a child feel very unwell. Receiving good care in school helps them to keep their blood glucose to target levels and have as stable a school life as possible.

Diabetes UK is leading the fight against one of the UK's biggest and growing health crisis. Through sharing knowledge about diabetes, they are bringing people together to help tackle the illness.

The health and wellbeing of students, staff and wider community is paramount to The Portsmouth Academy, part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust. Earlier this year members of staff worked extremely hard to provide local NHS teams with personal protective equipment to help frontline staff in the fight against COVID-19.

## **Rachel Grey, Principal at The Portsmouth Academy said:**

“We are delighted to be awarded the Diabetes UK Good Diabetes Care in School award, and we are especially glad the hard work of Richard Smith, our Welfare Lead, has been recognised. We take our responsibility to provide children with the support and care they need to manage their condition safely in school very seriously.”

**Richard Smith, Welfare Lead at The Portsmouth Academy said:**

“We’ve worked closely with children, parents, healthcare professionals and school staff to ensure that the best possible care is in place for students whilst not interfering with their learning. We have provided staff training opportunities and kept them informed with all essential updates and information throughout the year. This is to ensure that our students with Type 1 diabetes have the same opportunities as their peers.”



**Vicky Maclellan, Lead Nurse at The Portsmouth Paediatric Diabetes Team said:**

“We are delighted that Portsmouth Academy have received this award. The staff, in particular Mr Richard Smith, go above and beyond in their dedicated and exemplary care of the young people with diabetes. We are grateful for their support.”

**A parent of a Year 7 student said:**

“My son and I were both quite anxious about the transition from junior to senior school. Thanks to regular and clear guidance and information from Mr Smith in particular, but also every staff member at Portsmouth Academy, his transition has been as smooth as possible. I am very grateful.”

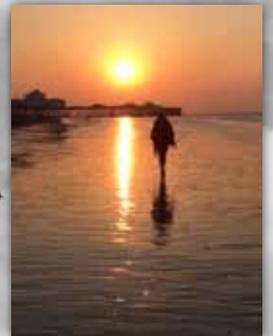
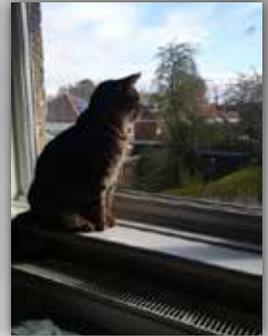


**Diabetes UK is leading the fight against one of the UK's biggest and growing health crisis. Through sharing knowledge about diabetes, they are bringing people together to help tackle the illness.**

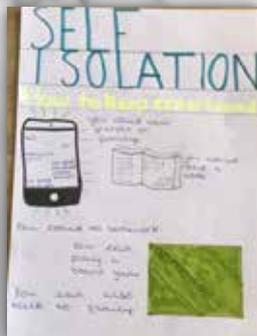
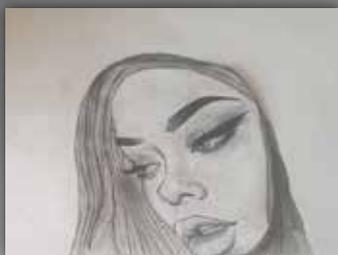


# emotions & thoughts

Students at The Portsmouth Academy were challenged to interpret isolation through art. The entries will be shared on social media and could appear in the new building at the school that is due to open this September.



# (I)solation through art



# Top UKMT Junior Mathematical Challenge Results for RGS

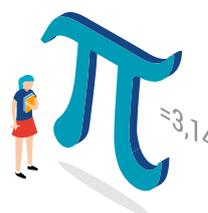
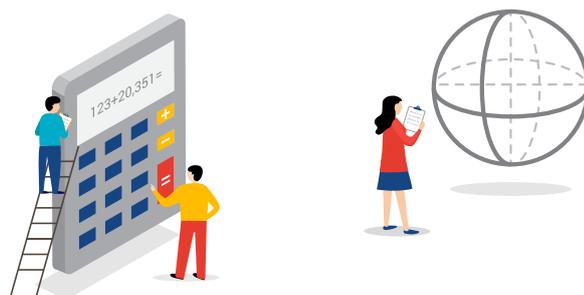


United Kingdom  
Mathematics Trust

At the end of June, despite being in lockdown, Year 7 and 8 students from The Rochester Grammar School achieved amazing results in the nationwide UKMT Junior Mathematical Challenge.

With the inability to come into school, it looked like the students would miss the challenge. However, through the arduous work of the UKMT and coordination from the school's Mathematics department, students were able to sit this year's challenge online.

Aylin Raza top scored in Year 8 was awarded the Gold award in addition to the prestigious 'Best in School' award. Hannah James from Year 7 was also awarded Gold as well as the 'Best in Year' award. The Gold award is considered highly sought after due to it being only awarded to the top 7% of entrants across the country.



Of the 38 students that undertook the challenge, there were 3 Gold awards, 12 Silver awards and 11 Bronze awards. Congratulations go to all those that took part and we look forward to seeing them progress onto both the Intermediate and Senior Mathematical challenges in the future.

For over 20 years the UKMT have been inspiring a love of problem solving through competitions and enrichment activities. Their mathematical challenges are the UK's most popular school mathematics competitions. The Rochester Grammar School have a rich history of pupils achieving impressive results and using this as a springboard onto studying mathematics at higher education.

# MEDWAY VICTORY SEA CADETS



The Sea Cadets have continued to keep very busy during lockdown. They have been making full use of Zoom to meet up.

The cadets parade every Monday, meeting in uniform and performing in colours so that they continue to keep to traditions.

Some of the training they have been taking part in has included Naval battles, fire safety, first aid, knots and many activities that make up the training programme. They have also been taking part in Kahoot quizzes that we have all become accustomed to doing.

Every Thursday they have been learning marching drumming and some cadets have been using the unit's drums to practice during Zoom training. They are working towards having a corps of drums in the near future.

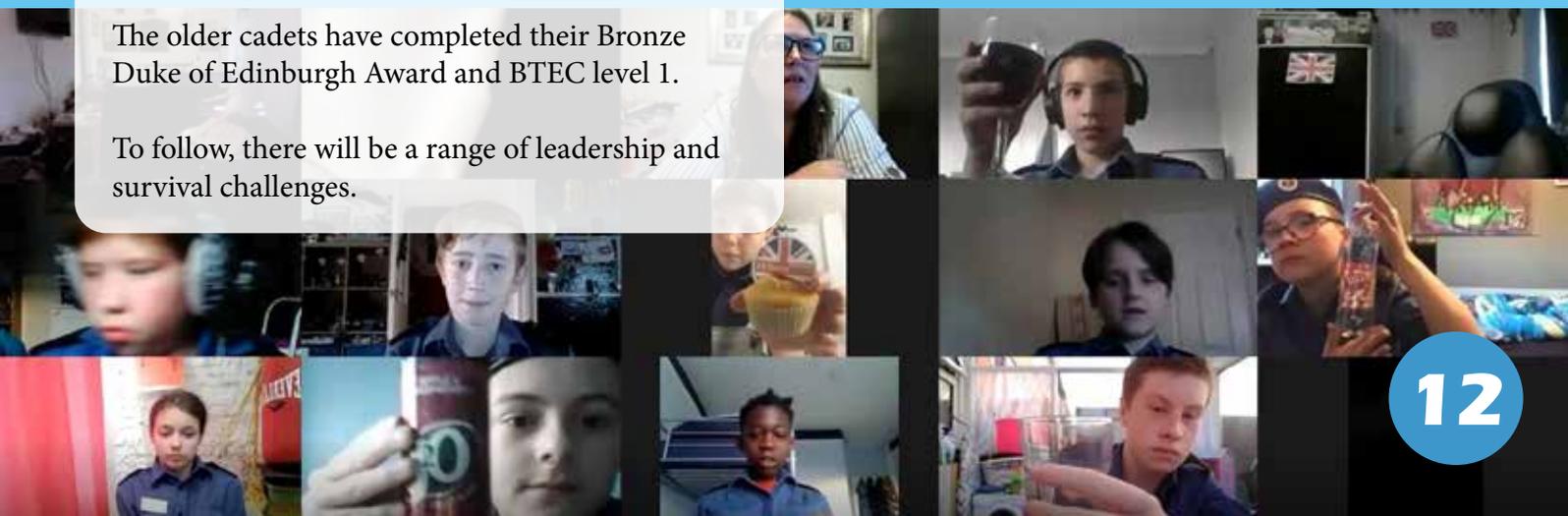
Cadets have linked with the Chatham Historic Dockyard and are taking the Arts Award Bronze level (linked to level 1-3 GCSE).

The group have been out on Thursdays showing their support in uniform for the keyworkers and have raised funds for a fantastic kit to wear when taking part in district competitions.

While lockdown continues, cadets have continued their training in the online RYA Navigation course and a number of other training courses including Learn at Sea.

The older cadets have completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award and BTEC level 1.

To follow, there will be a range of leadership and survival challenges.



# The Rochester Grammar School Founders' Day

The Rochester Grammar School have been accustomed to providing a multitude of activities at their Founders' Days. They have included visits to Rochester Cathedral and in the afternoon students would have had a variety of stalls at their fete to raise money for charity.

This year, as we all know, was going to be different. As expected, they took full advantage of technology to produce an online presentation that presented a masterful group of talented students showing their skilful singing and ability to play musical instruments with precision.

The presentation opened with Annabel Beniston playing Elegy by Bottesini on the Double Bass. Mrs Brinklow followed with a heart-warming speech thanking the support of staff and students and recognising that they have rose to such an academically challenging year. Mrs Brinklow went on to say that she is thankful for the teachers who have providing an excellent remote education so that students

who have worked hard will be in the best possible position when they return in September.

As you watch the SWAY presentation, you have the pleasure of listening to Esther Harris singing She Used To Be Mine (from Waitress the Musical by Sara Bareilles); Emma Beniston playing Fantasia No.7 by Telemann on the violin and Pixie-Fleur Middleton singing Butterfly's Repose by Zabawa; a reading of Strangers by Michaela Wyatt and thank-yous from students at the school. The Reverend Matthew Rushton gave a blessing followed by Catherine Alsey performing Sonata No.2 Op.27 Obsession by Ysaÿe, who closed the presentation.

It just goes to show that in these times of adversity, our staff continue to endeavour to achieve, as do our students.

This year the school will be raising money for the Sickle Cell Society in memory of Tega, who was loved and respected by so many.



# THE BIG SWIM FOR CHARITY

Ms Burton, Data Officer, at The Portsmouth Academy has completed a 32km swim to raise money for charity. That is the same distance as a swim across the English Channel! What an incredible achievement!

Ms Burton has raised over £750 for the Chestnut Tree House Children's Hospice and has featured in the Portsmouth News.

She has always enjoyed swimming and the coastlines have always been a part of her life. An avid swimmer, she swam for her school and local team and has trained every day to reach the 32km. The training has been a challenge with changing weather and currents.

The Chestnut Tree House Children's Hospice is a registered charity based in Sussex that opened their doors in 2003. They currently care for 300 life-limited children and young adults from 0-19 years of age. You can find more information about the charity on their website at [www.chestnut-tree-house.org.uk](http://www.chestnut-tree-house.org.uk).

Congratulations to Ms Burton, for training so hard to raise funds for the charity. We wish her more successes in the future.



# 75 YEARS

8TH  
MAY



Front line and vulnerable children throughout The Thinking Schools Academy Trust find a way to celebrate this defining day that marks the end of World War II.

Trust children stand proud as they celebrate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day.

Isolation during these times has limited so many of coming together to recognise and celebrate VE Day 2020. Therefore, it is wonderful to hear that children attending TSAT schools have taken part in their own social distancing celebrations.

The children have emerged themselves with support from staff and the Trust's catering company, Chartwells, to provide children with a mouth-watering buffet, very much in keeping with the street parties that many would have planned to do this year.

Excitement, energy and laughter filled the schools as children listened to party music, took part in entertainment and stilt walking and watched teachers performing a singalong to Hey Mr Miller.

TSAT has always been at the forefront of make the most of the latest technology to connect children, teacher and schools together throughout the trust and today was no exception with the children coming together as part of their virtual assembly.

VE Day celebrations first started on 8th May 1945, when Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared on the radio at 3pm that the war in Europe was over. For many of us, we can only image the euphoria in the streets and overwhelming emotions of all concerned.

# 4 MAY 2020 VICTORY IN EUROPE



Stuart Gardner, Chief Executive Officer, Thinking Schools Academy Trust, said:

“I’m proud to see our schools coming together to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day. Having had members of my own family being involved in the war and the stories told, it is with great respect that we recognise the challenges so many were subjected to and that we all have a chance to celebrate and show our thanks for the sacrifices made.”



# OUR MEDWAY SCHOOLS JOIN TO RAISE THOUSANDS FOR LITERACY



Schools' students and teachers



Students, Mr Still and Mr Claessens  
(from left to right)

Mr Still and Mr Claessens, teachers from Holcombe Grammar School, decided to set out on an adventure and combine their love of reading with their love of running. The National Literacy Trust had just the event to support them – and our Medway schools had just the right characters to support them in their journey.

On Sunday 15 March, The Trust was well represented at the Where's Wally? fun run. The event that raises money to help transform the life stories of children in some of the most deprived communities across the UK, made its debut at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London.

Students and staff from Holcombe Grammar, Rochester Grammar School and New Horizons Children's Academy joined the 600 children, families, adults and their red and white stripes to run 10 Kilometres on a windy day.

Mr Claessens and Mr Still were frontrunners in the race, with Mr Still being the fastest athlete in the 40 plus category, an inspiration to all no matter their age. However, more pleasingly they also engaged the school community to raise enough money to be in the top 5% of all fundraising teams. The Trust's effort helped to raise an incredible £25,000 to help continue work to change life stories through literacy.

Congratulations to everyone involved for your commitment in raising such a staggering amount of money.

## Face Coverings for Charity



In our last publication, we mentioned about staff at our schools making visors for front line workers, so it is nice to hear that staff are continuing to support in any way they can.

One example is at The Portsmouth Academy where Elaine Bover (Food Tech Assistant) and Dawn Dunsford (DT Technician) have been supporting staff by sewing face masks during lockdown. They have been selling them for a suggested donation of £1 and all money raised will be going to The Rowan's, a local hospice who have seen their funding reduced like so many other charities and hospices during the coronavirus pandemic. So far, they have raised over £140. That is a lot of sewing! - Well done.

## Islands in the Sun



Meon Infant School have organised Islands for their children. The islands are for their Reception Year children and are the same as the bubble groups that have been adopted throughout the schools.

The school has also been working with Thinking Creative, the Trust's marketing and design team, to create a friendly introduction to the school for those children who unable to visit the school at the moment.

Lynda Daish and Ann Simmons came up with the idea to have an animated frog showing children around the school and Thinking Creative 'jumped' at the chance to get involved.

They now have a lovely welcome video where staff introduce themselves to children and the Meon frog joins in.





## Shave to Raise for NHS Charity

Sarah, a student at The Portsmouth Academy, has braved the shave to raise money for the NHS. She has raised a very impressive £1,131.73 (including Gift Aid), smashing the initial target she set of £500.

Many people have found ways to say thank-you to the NHS for the service they provide and Sarah is very brave to have her hair shaved off for such a worthy cause.

Well done Sarah, your school are very proud of you, as are we.



## Pompey in the Community

Lorenzo, a pupil from Meon Junior School, was put forward for the 'Pompey in the Community' award and was absolutely blown away when they turned up with his prize! He was absolutely speechless!

Pompey in the Community is a charitable trust affiliated to Portsmouth Football Club that provide football coaching in to the local community.



## Remote Learning

Students throughout our trust have taken to the new way of learning with determination.

Throughout the schools, they have been connecting by sharing videos from fitness to learning to bedtime stories and students have been sending in their photos of the projects they have been working on.

The schools social media pages are filled with exciting stories, wonderfully

colourful photos and entertaining videos.

Teachers have found their inner entertainer, stepping up to the challenge to keep students engaged during lockdown.

It just goes to show that no matter what obstacles are put in our way, we always find a way to overcome and succeed.

# VIRTUAL SPORTS DAY



Meon Junior School's Virtual Sports Day gave children at home and in school an opportunity to compete and win points for their team. The school also opened the challenge up for family members at home to also take part, competing against each other.

Like so many schools, Meon Junior took full advantage of social media to show what each activity would be and it didn't matter if you had a large or small space to take part, as you could take part in the activities on the spot or in a larger area.

The activities included those primary classics like sprinting, sack jumping; egg and spoon race and welly throwing. The school's video on what to do was entertaining and informative, even

covering what to use if you didn't have an egg or to use rolled up socks for the relay race.

One particular activity, the morning school run, was a genius way to keep fit while having fun. Participants placed different items at different locations and the challenge would be to run to each location, put the item of clothing on and then onto the next location before finally returning to the start.

You can just imagine this becoming the new way to get ready for school in the morning, with children grabbing items of uniform, getting dressed, eating breakfast and then final stop, the front door before going to school.



# Thinking Schools Academy Trust Takes Part in DfE National Press Campaign

The Thinking Schools Academy Trust was chosen to take part in a national press campaign by the DfE.

The national coverage focused on how secondary schools have safely and successfully reopened their doors to students in Years 10 and 12. We are delighted that The Victory Academy agreed to be photographed, interviewed and filmed for the campaign and they really rose to the challenge.

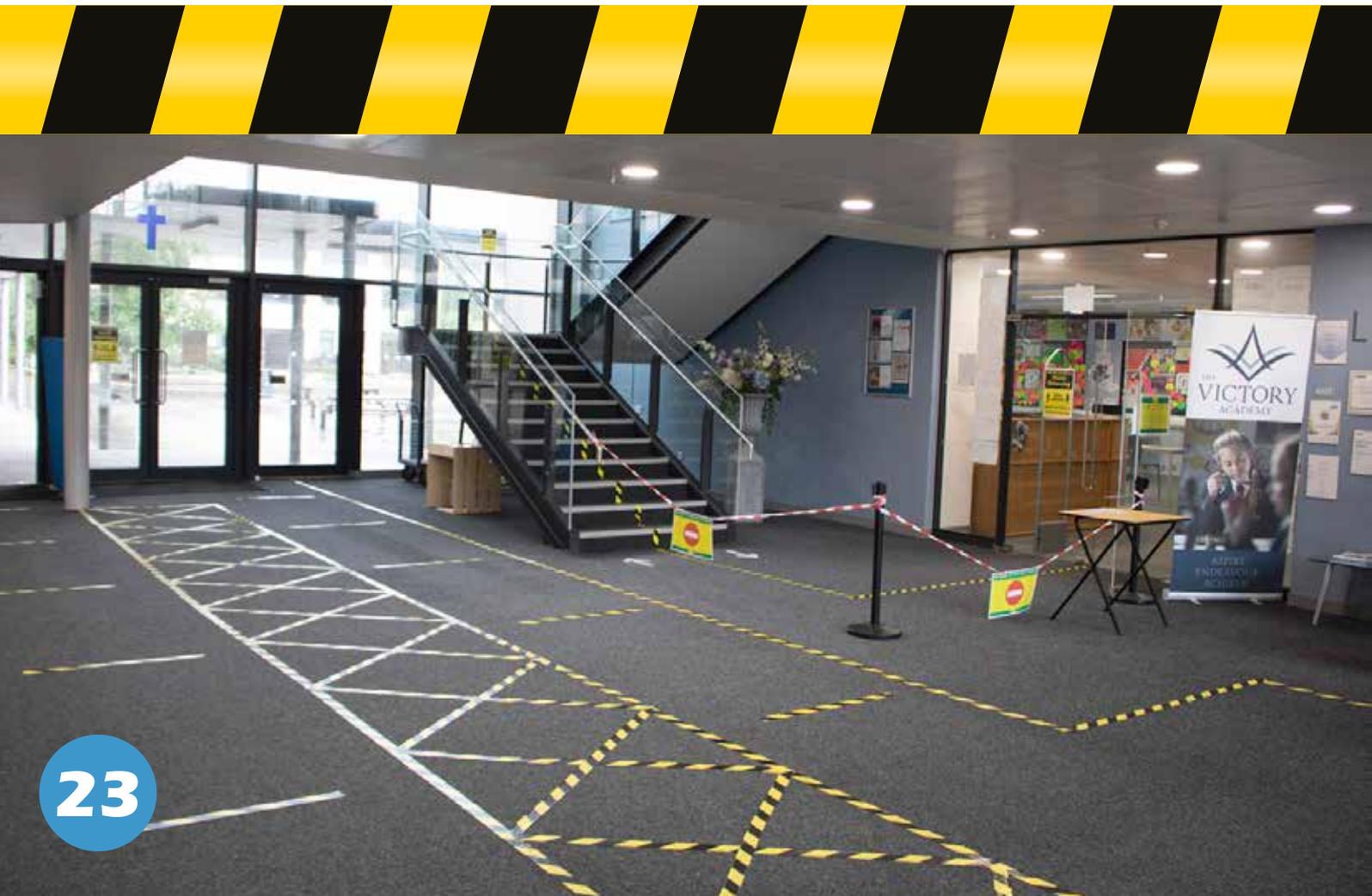
The newspaper article that featured as a double page spread in all national titles and websites, featured Mandy Gage (Director of Education – Chatham) and Elstella (Year 10 student).

We are incredibly proud of Elstella who spoke movingly about the challenges of educating at



home and how pleased she was to be back at school.

As well as the press interviews, students and staff at The Victory Academy were asked to take part in the creation of a social media campaign that has now been published through the DfE channels. The London film crew descended into the school and captured





students and teachers safely continuing their school days in 'bubble' life.

It was a great honour for us all to be a part of this project and thank you to everyone who got involved, from making the school safe and presentable and to the students and staff who agreed to be interviewed.

**Mandy Gage, Director of Education – Chatham, said:**

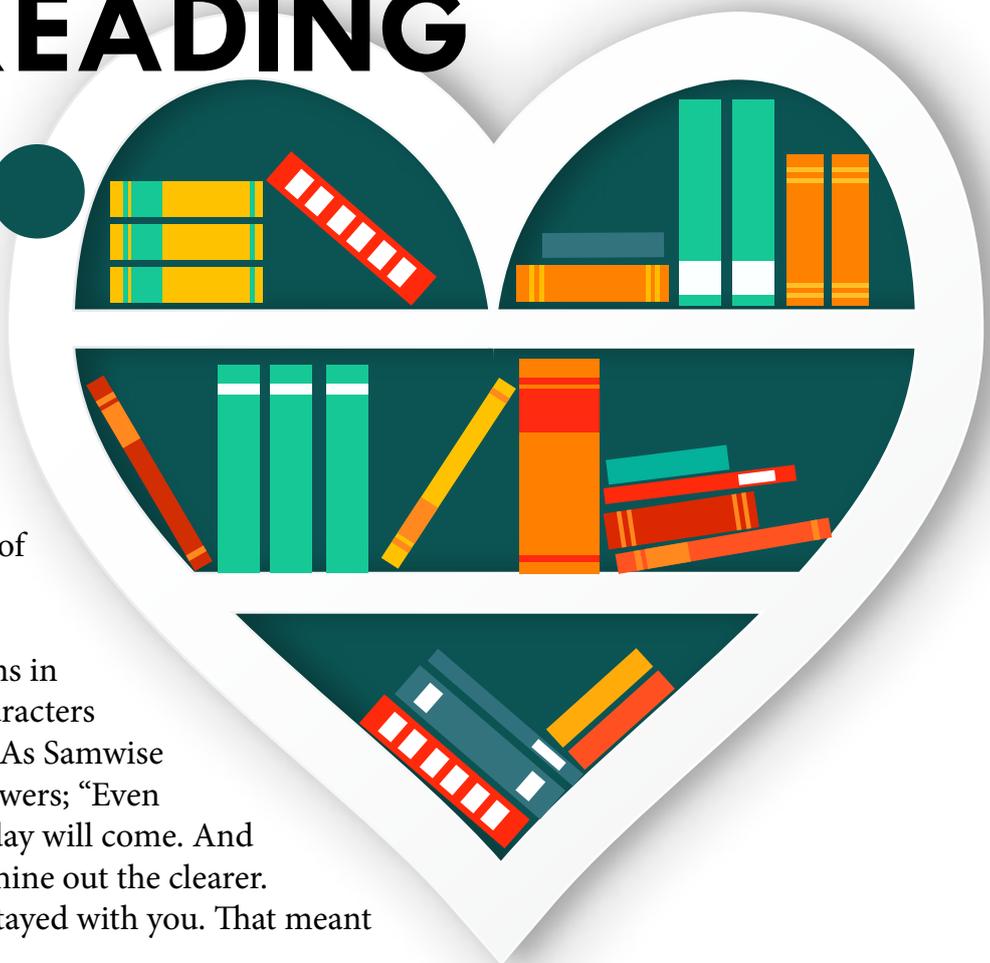
“Thank you to everyone who helped us to take part in this project. It was a wonderful opportunity for our school and well-deserved recognition for the demanding work and robust planning that went into the safe return to school.

“A big shout out to our students who were very brave agreeing to be interviewed. You all spoke honestly and passionately and you did our school proud. I hope you enjoyed the experience.”

This is a great recognition that resonates throughout all of our schools who have delivered safe environments for their students.



# LOVE READING



So what happens when lockdown apparently severs ‘The March Month of Reading’? I guess everyone is forced to give up on celebrating a shared love of reading for pleasure.

Well, that is not what happens in literature – our favourite characters are a little harder than that. As Samwise Gangee put it in *The Two Towers*; “Even darkness must pass. A new day will come. And when the sun shines it will shine out the clearer. Those were the stories that stayed with you. That meant something”.

The readers of the Holcombe Grammar School community are apparently as hardy as hobbits and simply waited until the next alliterative month and ‘The May Month of Reading’ was born. Recommended titles were shared and posted everyday and the usual lunchtime book clubs re-imagined online.

One of the focuses was epistolary writing. Those inspired by literature told through diaries and letters were moved to produce their own daily lockdown diary. There were some excellent entries that included this from Charlie Read of Year 7 (a real flavour of Sue Townsend and the comic notes of *Adrian Mole* are woven into this).

**For dinner, we had slow cooked pork ribs, but I found that I did not want to eat because these ribs were from my uncles’ pigs! The same ones I named and formed bonds with, but they were just too good for morals to stop me from eating them. We spent the evening outside round the chiminea by the firelight I read more *Dracula*. The chiaroscuro of the garden at night brought out the atmosphere of the book as it was a dark night in which you could easily imagine a slender white figure standing behind you the howling of the wolves was truly brought to life as next doors dog panting as it ran round the garden. I am still unsuccessful in getting Tommy (my tortoise) to speak back to me all I have been given was a series of scratches from the sleeping area. I mean to decipher them from Morse code – I shall record my findings.**

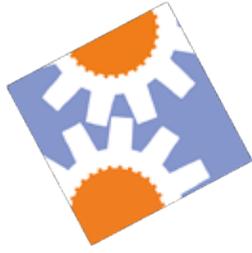
# Bouncing Gardeners

Children at Cedar Children's Academy now have a beautiful garden to play in and learn.

The Reception and Nursery children took part in a sponsored bounce to raise money for their outside area, which during lockdown has taken shape due to hard work from Miss Hollister, Mrs Crick and the team.

The school are looking forward to the children returning so that they can come and visit the wonderful garden and help plant and enjoy the area their sponsored bounce has achieved.





# Isambard Brunel JUNIOR SCHOOL

## Farewell and Hello

As this unusual academic year draws to a close, I have been reflecting on a very challenging yet rewarding few months here at Meredith Infant and Isambard Brunel Junior Schools.

As part of our metacognition teaching, we use learning heroes to promote the dispositions of being a resilient, resourceful, reciprocal and reflective. What has been so apparent is how resilient almost all of the 160 children who have returned to 'Bubble School' have been. Young children's ability to 'bounce back' from adversity will never cease to amaze me. I have the pleasure of welcoming the children at the school gate each morning (whilst dispensing the hand gel, of course!), and what is noticeable is how grateful children are to be allowed back to school. Children are naturally reciprocal.

I knew their friendships were important but seeing the pleasure on their faces as they reunite (albeit from a safe distance) is heart-warming. I am also so proud of each member of staff who has shown a resourceful disposition throughout this pandemic. Our staff have imagined new possibilities for educating children remotely, flexibly managing risks in school and finding alternative ways to meet through TEAMS, Zoom and other apps.

When I reflect on our recent journey with so many changes and uncertainties, many different thoughts and emotions come to mind. As Rob Carpenter reminded me on a recent Curriculum webinar, everyone would have experienced school closure in different ways. Some children have thrived: learning new skills, spending precious

time with their parents and learning from older siblings in a relaxed environment. For others it would have been a lonely, tough time and school will need to prepare to support that recovery in September. Whatever lens you view lockdown 2020 with, for most of us, it has been a time of deep reflection with some positives to reflect on too.

As each of our school Bubbles close for the summer holidays and we wave goodbye for another few weeks, we will also be parting with Meredith Infant School and Isambard Brunel Junior School as we join together to become a Primary setting. Just like the last few months, both schools have had their ups and downs. Although we will be closing at a strange time, we will close on an up! Both schools are 'Good' schools; both are packed with enthusiastic, dedicated staff who strive to make a difference to young children's lives.

I have been very privileged to be the Headteacher of Meredith and Isambard and I will be very privileged to be the Headteacher of the newly formed Horizons Primary School in Portsmouth too. I hope that the new school brings with it a settled, safe start to the new academic year and I am very excited about the new possibilities that can be achieved as a Primary School. I will leave you with the closing poem on the right, written by Year 6, Bubble 3.

Lucy Carroll  
Headteacher at Meredith Infant and Isambard Brunel Junior Schools, soon to be New Horizons Primary School, Portsmouth.



*Making a  
difference together*

The time has come and it's not easy to say,  
That today, for Isambard and Meredith, it is a very bitter sweet day.  
New Horizons open the gate for where you want to be,  
The world has no limits, just like the sea.  
Isambard will never forget you,  
2 schools became 1, the rumours were true!  
The name Isambard will be no more,  
But New Horizon's opens a brand new door.  
Our time may have come to an end,  
But new dreams, memories and opportunities are just around the bend.  
Isambard and I have grown on this journey together,  
I think you'll agree we've both come out better!  
The Isambard sunset is fading away,  
But the New Horizon shines hope and happiness to guide our way.



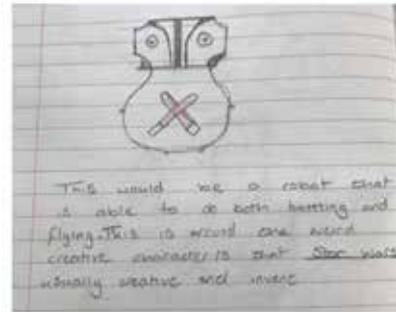
## Virtual Mentor Awards 2020 Subject Mentor (Secondary)

Congratulations to Richard Knott, a member of staff at Goodwin Academy, who has won the Subject Mentor (Secondary) Virtual Mentor Awards 2020. He is always available and supportive throughout staff training. He encourages trying new ideas in the classroom and supports in the development of guiding staff to constantly reflect on their teaching and adapt appropriately. He teaches how to build good relationships with students and has effective behaviour management by always leading by example.

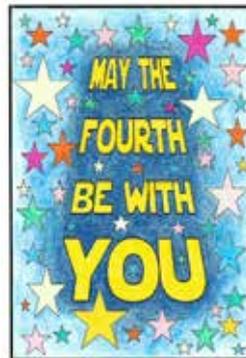
# Lockdown Learning

Throughout lockdown, students across Holcombe have engaged in a variety of form time activities alongside their teachers to help maintain contact and break the boredom this confinement can provide.

7 Hawkins decided to amalgamate their efforts into a lockdown journal that documents their activities and the responses received. The extracts below are just some examples received over the course of lockdown.



Ryder embraced all things droid with his newest creation  
Sounds like a great companion to have in a sticky situation!



Miss Lee added master builder to her resume by finishing her Lego Stormtrooper Helmet



## Celebration is key

<p>I believe this is true as life is about making achievements and celebrating the achievements.</p> <p>Harry A</p>	<p>I have read the quote and I think that is quite inspiring. However, not necessarily in a way that encourages me to usually persevere and try to reach your dreams. But in a more general way. I think it makes me think a bit more about life as a whole. Not just the usual of 'reach for the stars' type of quote.</p> <p>Alex J</p>
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<p>Challenges are what make life <u>interesting</u> and <u>overcoming</u> them is what makes life <u>meaningful</u>.</p>	<p>John Formine work walls</p> <p>Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.</p> <p>I think this means that if you had nothing to overcome or if you had goals that would be boring, but having challenges that you can overcome makes life meaningful as you have a goal to reach and certain things you must do to reach it.</p> <p>Joel</p>
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<p>I think that this is quite a meaningful quote, because life would be so dull if we didn't have anything to challenge us. Everything would've been too easy. But when you overcome those challenges, that makes you feel accomplished and if anything like that problem occurs again, then you know what to do in order to tackle it.</p> <p>Ethan</p>
--

Miss Lee, Year 7 teacher, has thoroughly enjoyed seeing her students engage with the activities, and has loved taking part in them herself as well as sharing their work with each other.

This collaborative approach meant that the students knew that Miss Lee was just as invested in their joint wellbeing as they were, and allowed her students to see her creative side as well.

The teacher's favourite activity has been the 'beat the teacher' reading challenge, where the students have come very close to beating the current running total of 32 reads during lockdown. The task was aimed to get students reading and talking about what they had read to promote the positive reading culture that Holcombe strives for. Miss Lee said, "It began with our Radio Holcombe reading episode and our March month of reading challenge and has simply grown from there."

# PORTSMOUTH RESTORATIVE CITY AWARD



Meon Junior School has been recognised for their contribution towards making the city of Portsmouth a more restorative and peaceful place to live.

At the end of 2019, The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth accepted on behalf of the citizens a Restorative City Award from The Chris Donovan Trust.

It was presented by its founders, Ray and Vi Donovan MBE, both passionate pioneers of Restorative Justice in the United Kingdom and beyond.

This was the first time that The Chris Donovan Trust has recognised a city with an award and is a great tribute to many of our communities who have caught hold of the vision to see Portsmouth become established as a Restorative City.

Ray and Vi pursued Restorative justice after the shocking attack by a gang of youths who attacked and killed their son.

Ray and Vi were “blown away” by at the breadth and depth of the restorative culture that was developing within the various spheres of the city.

The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth was made aware of Meon Junior School’s significant role in helping Portsmouth to win the award. So in return the Lord Mayor gave a specially signed certificate for the school to display and congratulated them on their success in building a restorative school community and thanked them for the positive and transforming difference the school is making to the wellbeing of Portsmouth City.



# CONNECTED TOGETHER AS ONE



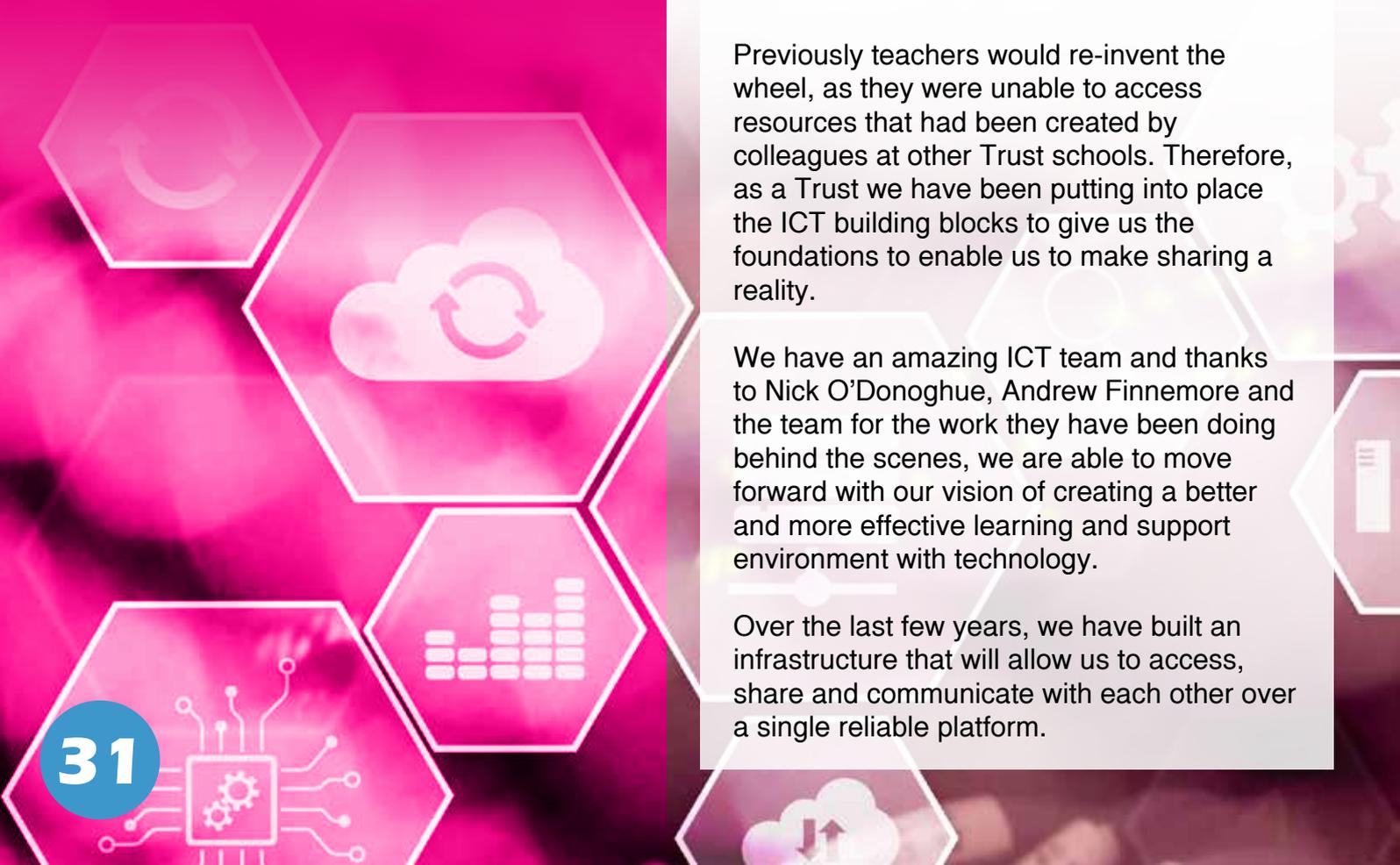
Technology has played a major role in how we communicate and work collaboratively with each other and even more so this year, with lockdown testing and proving our ICT team have provided the technology and infrastructure for us all to work effectively together, within our schools and remotely.

We know the way children and young people engage with content is completely different to previous generations. If we can harness this for the benefit of our students, we can make a huge leap in transforming their life chances.

Previously teachers would re-invent the wheel, as they were unable to access resources that had been created by colleagues at other Trust schools. Therefore, as a Trust we have been putting into place the ICT building blocks to give us the foundations to enable us to make sharing a reality.

We have an amazing ICT team and thanks to Nick O'Donoghue, Andrew Finnemore and the team for the work they have been doing behind the scenes, we are able to move forward with our vision of creating a better and more effective learning and support environment with technology.

Over the last few years, we have built an infrastructure that will allow us to access, share and communicate with each other over a single reliable platform.





When we started this project, some of our schools were running on broadband speeds less than you would be able to have at home. Through increased broadband speeds, we are all now able to move from school to school across the Trust with a single login. This is invaluable in facilitating school-to-school collaboration, support and access to resources.

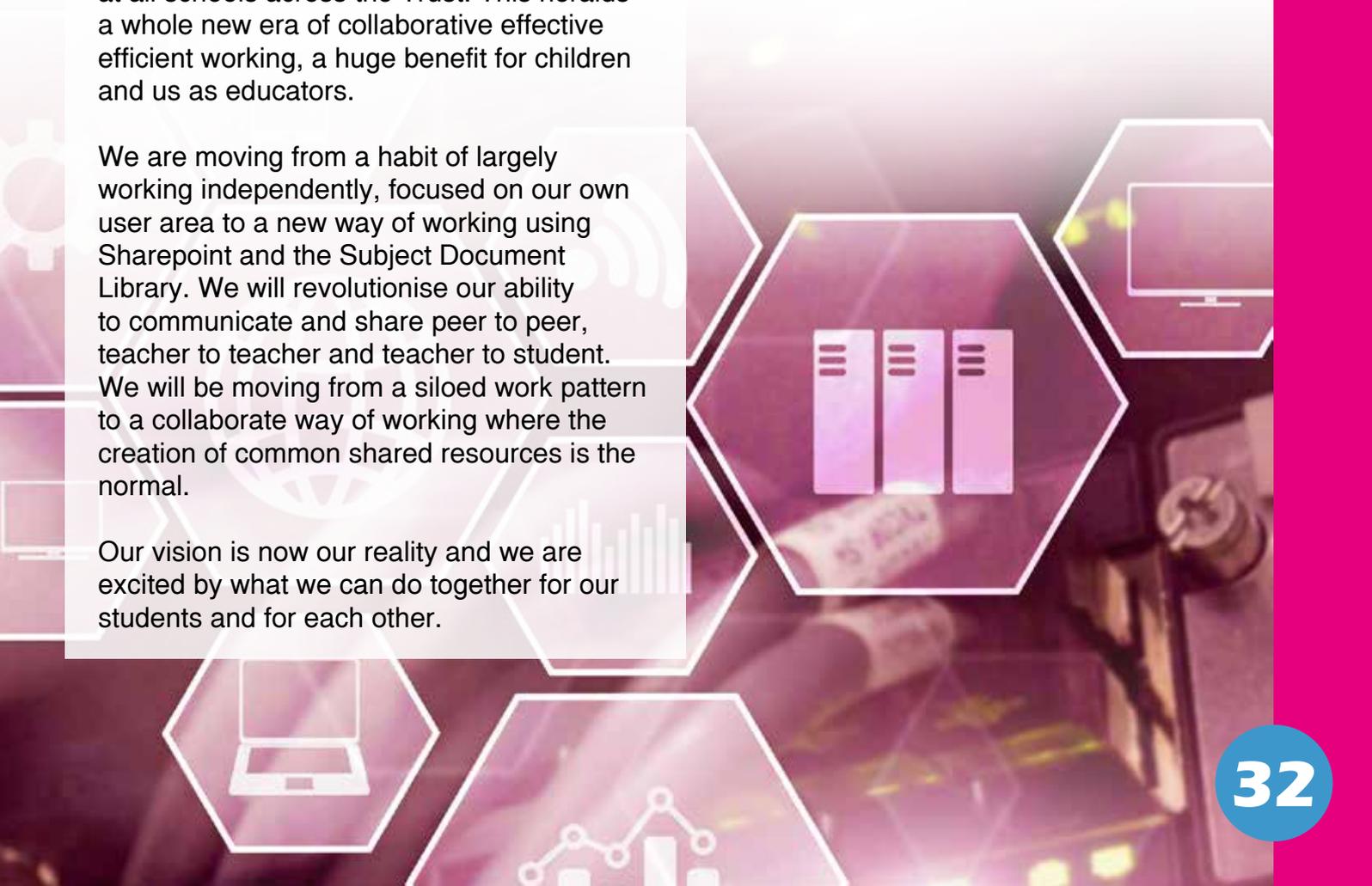
Our schools now all benefit from high speed internet connection, single network access, Office365 and Teams integration and a Thinking Technology service delivery team that are able to work remotely in all Trust schools, sharing knowledge and supporting each other.

The infrastructure is now a robust system with no single points of failure that our previous infrastructure was so vulnerable to. We are now in a position to achieve our vision where students will be able to access their learning 24/7 365 days a year no matter where they live.

Staff will be able to access not only their own resources but will have access to resources at all schools across the Trust. This heralds a whole new era of collaborative effective efficient working, a huge benefit for children and us as educators.

We are moving from a habit of largely working independently, focused on our own user area to a new way of working using Sharepoint and the Subject Document Library. We will revolutionise our ability to communicate and share peer to peer, teacher to teacher and teacher to student. We will be moving from a siloed work pattern to a collaborate way of working where the creation of common shared resources is the normal.

Our vision is now our reality and we are excited by what we can do together for our students and for each other.

- **STUDENTS CAN ACCESS THEIR LEARNING RESOURCES 24/7 365 DAYS A YEAR**
  - **ACCESS ANYTIME AND ANYWHERE**
  - **RESOURCES ARE CREATED COLLABORATIVELY AND SHARED AUTOMATICALLY FOR EVERYONE IN THE DEPARTMENT**
  - **SEARCH FOR RESOURCES CREATED BY COLLEAGUES ACROSS THE TRUST**
  - **INSTANT ACCESS TO RESOURCES FOR NEW COLLEAGUES**
- 

# Writing for pleasure

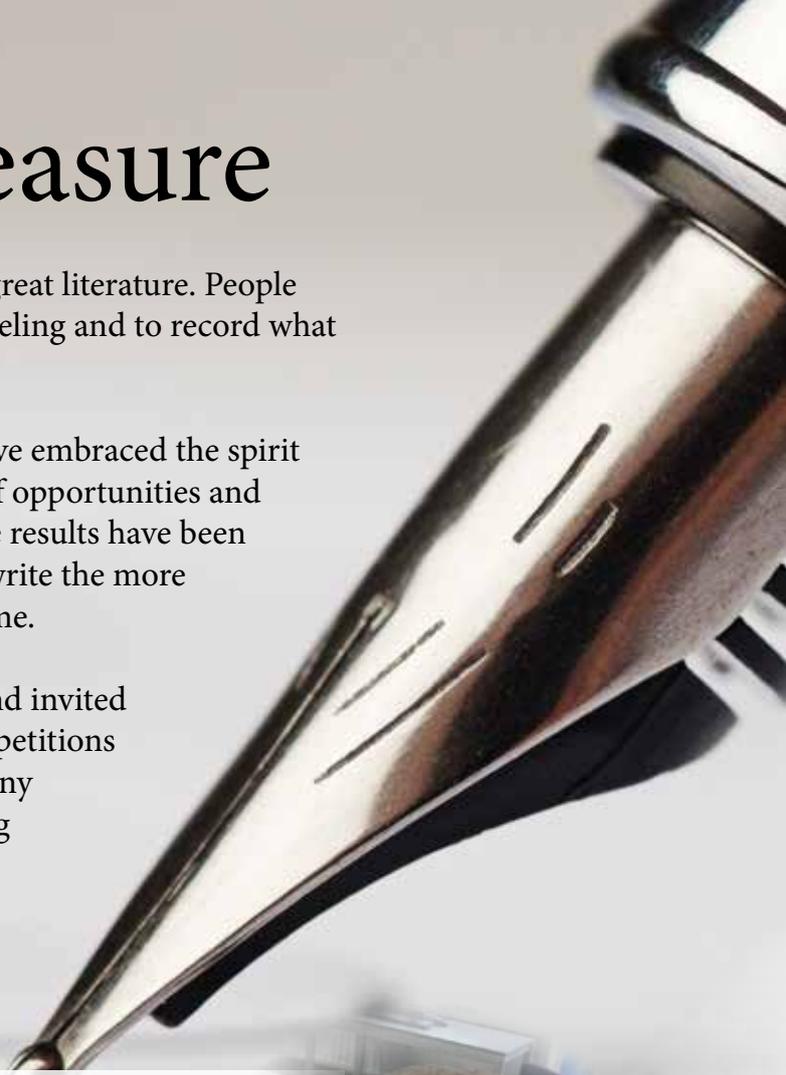
Historically, times of crisis have produced great literature. People use writing to contextualise how they are feeling and to record what they were doing during a poignant period.

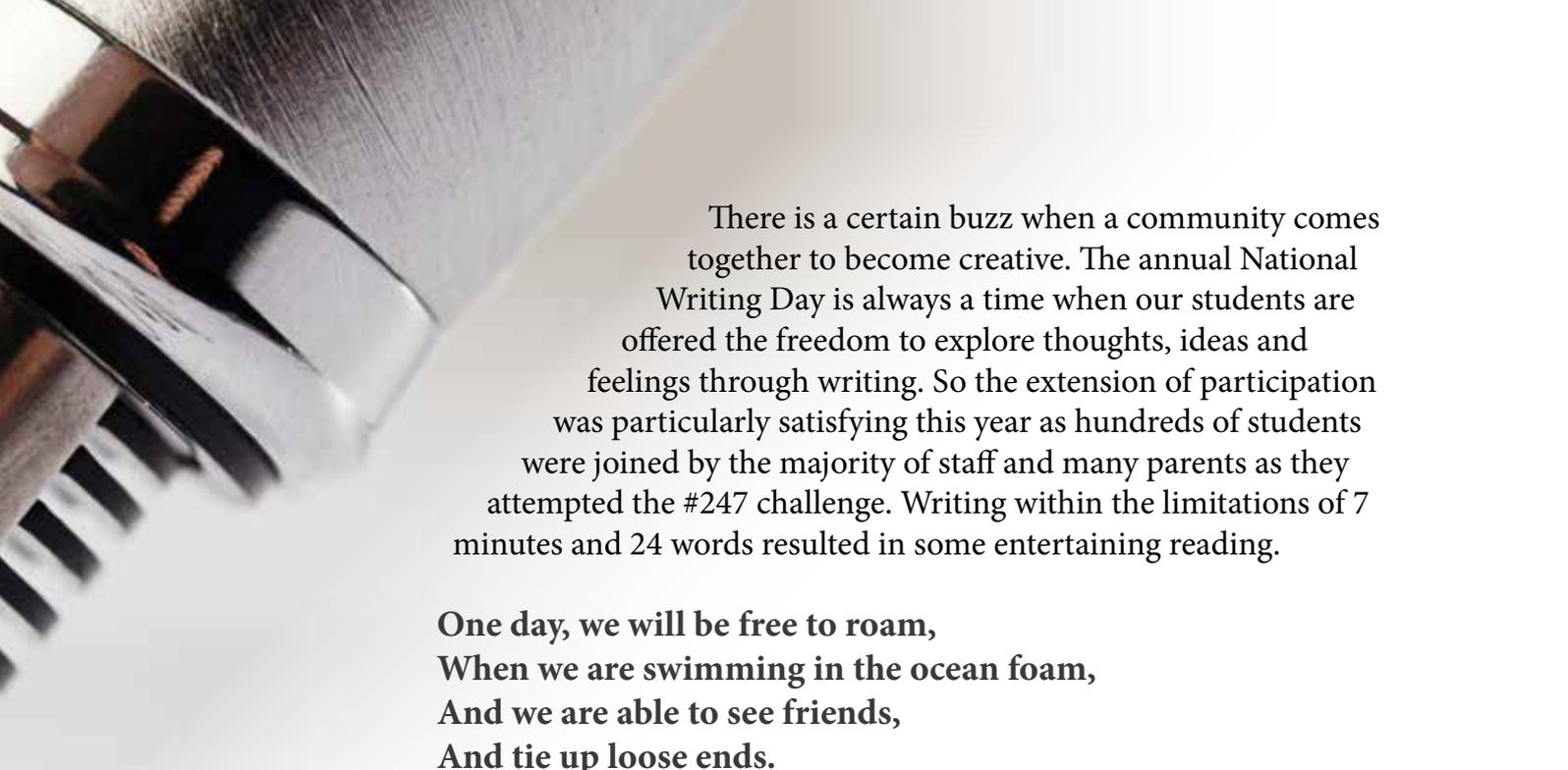
Students at Holcombe Grammar School have embraced the spirit of writing for pleasure through a number of opportunities and competitions during recent months and the results have been truly creative. It seems; the more students write the more articulate and thoughtful their pieces become.

Holcombe students were guided towards and invited to enter into a host of national writing competitions over the course of the last few terms. So many rose to the occasion. One of the outstanding literary memories was this moving poem produced by Matthew Jupp for a 16+ national poetry competition organised by the English and Media Centre.

**Our dearest ones are only seen  
through glitchy connections behind blurred screens,  
that glow and burn,  
oh how I yearn  
to feel  
the warmth of a human being  
and not that of metal machines  
now a focus for our stimulation;  
I cannot hide my detestation  
of this virus we now face  
infecting people case by case.**

**Normality in June, they say.  
They do not know, there is no way  
to predict the end. It ceases to tire,  
contact-spreading like wood on a fire that burns  
endlessly,  
relentlessly,  
spitting its viral embers, the reason we  
have come to be  
prisoners in our own homes;  
no longer free.**





There is a certain buzz when a community comes together to become creative. The annual National Writing Day is always a time when our students are offered the freedom to explore thoughts, ideas and feelings through writing. So the extension of participation was particularly satisfying this year as hundreds of students were joined by the majority of staff and many parents as they attempted the #247 challenge. Writing within the limitations of 7 minutes and 24 words resulted in some entertaining reading.

**One day, we will be free to roam,  
When we are swimming in the ocean foam,  
And we are able to see friends,  
And tie up loose ends.**

## Outstanding Student Award

The Economist Educational Foundation has recognised Rachita and Alexis from Year 6 at New Horizons Children's Academy for their contribution to The Burnet News Club.

The Burnet News Club is an after school club where pupils have the opportunities to debate and discuss current issues with primary and secondary school pupils across the country as well as leading experts in the fields.

They have both been given an Outstanding Student Award for their contributions to the online blog; only 16 students out of the hundreds of students across nearly 90 schools in the UK have been given this award so it's a fantastic achievement for not one but two of our pupils to have been recognised in this way.

Both the girls and their families and some of their teachers will be attending an online award ceremony - which usually takes place in Buckingham Palace - to celebrate their achievements on 2nd July.

# English Literature and Climate Change Webinar with Aberystwyth University

Year 11, 12 and 13 Literature students at Holcombe Grammar School took part in a webinar on English Literature and Climate Change run by Aberystwyth University.

Their belief is that climate change “isn’t just a challenge for scientists”, so they have developed a wide range of climate change-related degrees across diverse subject areas, spanning the Arts/ Humanities and the Sciences. It was billed as ‘a great event’ and it did not disappoint.

Dr Neal Alexander took them through discussion exercises and Q&A, exploring how writers imagine climate change, the language and politics of climate change, literature and the Anthropocene.

Debates initially stemmed from Indian writer Amitav Ghosh’s text, ‘The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable’ and the quotation, “Let us make no mistake: the climate crisis is also a crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination.”

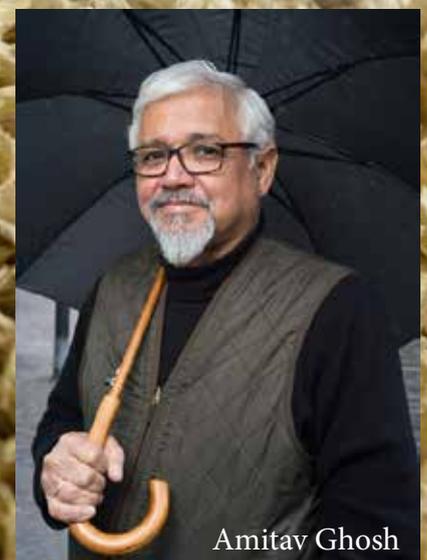
Students were asked to consider difficult questions such as ‘What can the literature of the past tell us about our present conditions?’ and ‘Is only contemporary literature concerned with climate change?’ They were treated to extracts from some extremely moving literature: Sarah Hall’s ‘The Carhullan Army’, Ben Okri’s ‘What the Tapster Saw’ and Jesmyn Ward’s ‘Salvage the Bones’ in order to stimulate their arguments. However, it was Stephen Collis’ ‘Reading Wordsworth in the Tar Sands’ which had the most powerful reaction from the students and you can see why.

## ‘Reading Wordsworth in the Tar Sands’

Up north where woods  
Are wet and moosey  
Except not here not

A single green thing  
In sight the site like  
An abandoned beehive

Broken open its grey  
Papery layers scattered  
Around on the ground



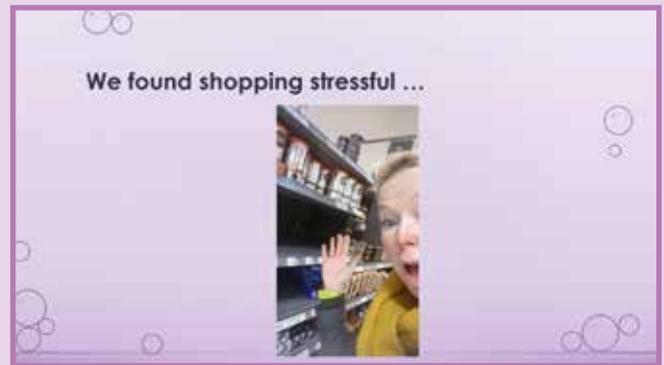
# LOCKDOWN LAUGHTER

Goodwin Academy has had the wellbeing of their staff at the forefront of their minds with Lockdown Laughter since the beginning. Not only ensuring they have access to all they need to work from home, checking in regularly with each other to make sure everyone is well and sending home to staff cards and well wishes to ensure no-one loses touch.

They have also given a platform to laugh, smile, celebrate and reflect, known as the Wellbeing Bulletin. This bulletin has been produced twice a week since the start of lockdown. Lovingly created by Cate Hayes-Watkins, Gary Dixon and Kirsty Gaythwaite, it comprises of advice, video clips, tik toks, recipes, binge watches, quizzes, competitions, book recommendations, quotes, playlists and so much more.



Each edition has a theme that may or may not reflect a current situation or link in with an event that may or may not have happened. A weekly highlight are the “Staff Shout Outs” where staff are invited to send a “Shout Out” to anyone who has helped, supported or just made them smile that week!



It is fantastic to see that even apart we are still very much a team. One particular highlight was taking inspiration from the clip-edited montages that had been created on YouTube by so many people. Staff from Goodwin Academy were invited to send in anything that reflected their experiences during lockdown – a photo, a message or a picture. From these contributions, Gary Dixon created a moving montage to music showing the experiences and thoughts of Goodwin staff. The school said that there has been lots to laugh about too! With fun memes, reflections, clips and the sharing of stories the Wellbeing Bulletin has got them through!



# PEARSONS AWARDS 2020

Pearsons Awards 2020 recognised the great achievements of people in the education sector. It celebrates the hard work and determination of staff who put their time and energy into providing students the best opportunities in life.

We are very proud of every member of staff who provides an experience of learning daily, not only during the lessons but also the work that goes on outside of the classroom.

This year we have had several members of staff nominated for various awards, as you will see below:

## NOMINEES

### The Award for Lifetime Achievement

David Day, The Rochester Grammar School  
Kate Keller, Penhale Infant School & Nursery  
Rahnie Smith, Goodwin Academy, Deal, Kent

### The Award for Making a Difference – Primary School of the Year

New Horizons Children's Academy

### The Award for Outstanding New Teacher of the Year

Shana Kwakye, New Horizons Children's Academy

### The Award for Teacher of the Year in a Primary School

Samantha Jones, Cedar Children's Academy  
Gemma Peachey, Newbridge Junior School

### The Award for Teacher of the Year in a Secondary School

Carley Dawkins, The Victory Academy  
Cate Hayes Watkins, Goodwin Academy  
John Still, Holcombe Grammar School

### The Award for Teaching Assistant of the Year

Vicky Perkiss, Newbridge Junior School

## SHORT LISTED

### The Award for Outstanding New Teacher of the Year

Kirsty Gaythwaite, Goodwin Academy

The Awards of Lifetime Achievement presents us with three members of staff who have worked in education for a number of years, sharing their knowledge to develop schools and learning for students.

David Day has always had a strong moral purpose to help students no matter what. He has supported Trust schools at leadership level, to improve standards of achievement and behaviour while also teaching History.

Kate Keller has dedicated her life to working in challenging schools with deprived communities; in Birmingham, East London, and Havant and Portsmouth. Kate has always insisted on how we as a school can support all pupils, but in particular the disadvantaged pupils in our care to ensure that they make the same progress as other children.



David Day



Carley Dawkins



John Still



Rahnie Smith



Cate Hayes Watkins

Rahnie Smith has supported the professional development of many staff over the past 29 years, from LSAs, trainee teachers to experienced teachers, never too busy to help in whatever capacity is needed, her door is always open. Rahnie has not only had a professional impact but has made a personal impact on many staff.

New Horizons Children's Academy and Shana Kwakye, a member of staff at the school, have received certificates from the Pearsons Awards 2020.

The school received a certificate for Making a Difference - Primary School of the Year and they are incredibly proud that Shana has been rightly recognised for all her dedication and commitment to the children and school, having been nominated she received a certificate for the Outstanding New Teacher of the Year Award. Earlier this year Shana was the Term 2 winner of the Trust ABCD Award and this is another well-deserved recognition of the work Shana does.

Samantha Jones, from Cedar Children's Academy, and Gemma Peachey, from Newbridge Junior School, have both been nominated for the Teacher of the Year in a Primary School. Samantha is Head of Year 5 and a valued part of the team. The school said, "We are very lucky to have her as one of their team." Newbridge Junior said, "Gemma has developed her pedagogy over the years to become a truly outstanding teacher. She leads a team with unfailing enthusiasm and drive to ensure that all children reach their full potential and have an excellent education."

Carley Dawkins received her nomination certificate for Teacher of the Year in a Secondary School, and has also won the Kent Teacher of the Year Award, but the official ceremony has been postponed until a more suitable time. Mandy Gage, Director of Education - Chatham, said: "So proud of Carley, and so well deserved. I know there have been some recent challenges – but my respect and admiration for your passion, creativity and ability as a teacher has never faltered."

Cate Hayes Watkins, another Teacher of the Year in a Secondary School nominee, is at the core of Goodwin Academy, leading the Staff Wellbeing

Team, writing and directing the annual school panto as well as driving the creative outreach programme within the community. Cate's passion and drive for the arts has enabled Goodwin Academy to be awarded the Artmark Silver Award by the Arts Council England.

John Sill is an exceptional teacher and like Carley and Cate, he has been nominated for the Teacher of the Year in a Secondary School. Not only does he provide great support to all those students that he teaches, but he works incredibly hard across the whole school to develop literacy and has been instrumental in the development and expansion of Holcombe Grammar's new school library. In the past few months, John's remote learning support for his students has been equally exemplary.

Vicky Perkiss, a Teaching Assistant at Newbridge, always has a positive impact on the children she works with both holistically and academically. She has a true child-centred approach where the children are at the heart of everything she does.

In our last edition, we mentioned about Kirsty Gaythwaite, a teacher from Goodwin Academy, who had been nominated. She has now been shortlisted for the Outstanding New Teacher of the Year Award, supported by the Department for Education.

Congratulations to our nominees and Kirsty who has been shorted listed. We look forward to hearing more about the Pearsons Awards 2020 and sharing the news with you in the months to come.



Shana Kwakye



Kirsty Gaythwaite



Samantha Jones

# Congratulations

Many students throughout the Trust schools are working towards their Duke of Edinburgh Awards and three students from The Portsmouth Academy have achieved their Bronze Awards.

The DofE bronze award is the first level award, that you can start when you are 14 and takes a minimum of 6 months to complete.

The three specification sections are Voluntary Service, Skills and Physical Education and these are the sections you can choose your activities from. You are also required to complete an Adventurous Journey to gain the Bronze Award.



Richard Smith, Outdoor Learning and Welfare Lead, has received a certificate from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) for participating in outdoor research.

The EEF certificate is centred around the work the school has taken part in. The school participated in the EEF Adventure/Outdoor Learning research trial supported by Sheffield Hallam University.

It looked at the benefits of different outdoor learning models and the longitudinal impact on behaviour and attainment.

The school took 24 students to North Wales Outward Bound Centre for a residential week that included an expedition and adventurous activities.





## Founding Fellowship Status

We are extremely delighted to announce that Gwynn Bassan (Director of Education - Rochester), Laura Gladstone (Head of Teaching, Learning and Assessment for the Chatham Secondaries) and Trina Epsom (Associate Leader for English at The Victory Academy) have been awarded 'Fellow Status' from the Chartered College of Teaching, the highest and most prestigious membership of the College.

This is a great honour for our colleagues as nomination and the award of Fellowship recognises their commitment and achievement within the teaching profession. It is an accolade held by some of the most committed teaching professionals who have shown a significant and sustained contribution to both the profession and their own professional development. Fellows have

attended round-tables, presented papers to the House of Lords and contribute to a standing agenda item at the APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group) for the teaching profession.

This formal recognition is a celebration of their ongoing contribution, skill, achievements and expertise. We are extremely proud of you all.

To become a Fellow, an individual requires at least 10 years teaching experience - we are excited to see what your next 10 years as teachers can deliver! Fellows of the Chartered College play an important role in shaping the future of the profession and supporting future generations of teachers to deliver the best education for young people. This sums up our teachers and our Trust values.

Congratulations to you all!



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