

OUR TRUST

CHILD FIRST, ASPIRE, CHALLENGE, ACHIEVE


DECEMBER 2021 | ISSUE 17



THINKING
SCHOOLS
ACADEMY TRUST



TRANSFORMING LIFE CHANCES

A photograph of a snow-covered road winding through a forest of snow-covered evergreen trees. The road is covered in a thick layer of snow, and the trees are heavily laden with snow. The sky is bright and overcast. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

Where will your
thinking journey
take you?

We transform life chances every day!

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Welcome to Our Trust, the last edition for 2021.

In this edition of Our Trust, we celebrate everything we have achieved together this term. As you read through the pages, you cannot

help but wonder at our staff's commitment, dedication, and inspiration in providing our students with some incredible opportunities and experiences. Thank you to every one of our team who has made such an impact on the lives of our young people.

Our young people really have achieved some amazing things this term – from fundraising and MP visits, to winning national competitions and appearing on television – but behind the scenes is a team of excellent, talented and committed staff who are dedicated to transforming life chances and encouraging our students to aspire, achieve and think about their thinking.

There are many highlights to choose from; however, among them, the TSAT Rocks Times Tables Rockstars Battle stands out for me as an epitome of what we are trying to do together. The competition was a fantastic “We Are One” event with over 1,600 of our students participating from across all our schools. It is also a great illustration of our desire to support our students to achieve “Success through Learning” with all our students engaging with the Times Tables Rockstars software that supports the long-term knowledge acquisition of their times tables. This long-term knowledge acquisition is a vital element of our drive to ensure we are “Teaching to Remember” as part of our drive to embed metacognition and metamemory in our classrooms. The fact that students submitted over one and a quarter million correct answers during the

competition shows how engaged the students were and how successful this initiative was.

As we look ahead into 2022 and beyond, we will continue to balance our focus on ensuring our students fulfil their academic potential as well as having a fantastic range of extra-curricular opportunities, as we aspire to deliver a Total Education experience that will Transform the Life Chances of our young people.

Enjoy this copy of Our Trust, maybe with a cup of cocoa (or something stronger!), and take time to reflect on the past year, prepare for the new and look after yourself.

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year to all.

Stay safe,

Stuart Gardner

Stuart Gardner, MSc, NPQH, NLE
Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to
our community!



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Thinking Schools Academy Trust

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#ProudToBeTSAT #WeAreOne



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Kindness shines a light on anti-bullying

November 2021 saw schools across our Trust celebrating World Kindness Day and Anti-Bullying Week, conducting a range of activities promoting kindness, encouraging appropriate online behaviour and raising awareness of bullying. Our mission to transform life chances stretches much further than the taught curriculum: our Trust embraces all opportunities to enrich our students, help them work together and engage with exciting national events, such as Anti-Bullying Week!

At the beginning of Anti-Bullying Week, colour hit our corridors as staff and students wore odd socks to school in celebration of being different and embracing what makes us unique. Many of our schools also held talks and assemblies, tackling some of the biggest issues around bullying: what to do if you are being bullied, how to support a victim of bullying, and how to recognise bullying online. Students across the Trust were encouraged to reflect on their own behaviour and how they can contribute to a kinder, friendlier society.

1



Rochester Grammar School's approach to World Kindness Day was bold, bright and brilliant. Students created a kindness tree, which was then decorated with messages of kindness and support attached to the tree as its leaves. This special display was an inspiring and comforting addition to the RGS site and a wonderful reminder to students to always be kind.

Goodwin Academy and The Victory Academy both held thought-provoking 'Is it worth it?' talks, delivered by Amelix in partnership with Kent Police, where very real and relevant issues such as cyber-bullying and social media were discussed. In an age where the

internet is a highly influential force in the lives of many young people, we have a responsibility to educate our pupils and keep them safe online; the 'Is it worth it?' talks offered an opportunity for students to think about their online presence and how they interact with their peers from behind a screen.





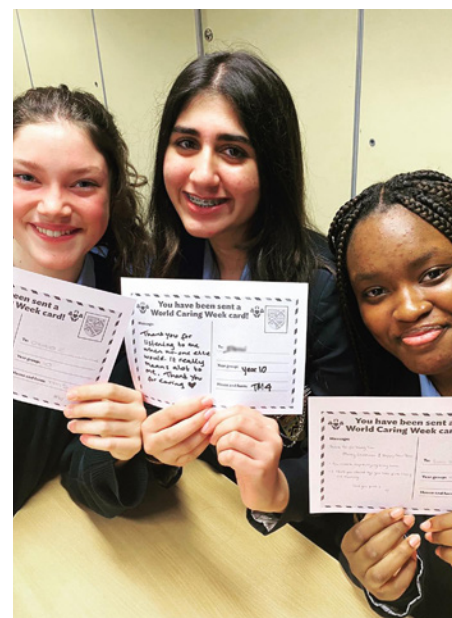
The Portsmouth Academy's Anti-Bullying Week activities were based around The Anti-Bullying Alliance's 'One Kind Word' campaign, which highlighted the ease with which kindness can be spread starting with just one word. Highlights at TPA included PE Teacher Mr Lock delivering a powerful assembly and students putting together an anti-bullying display comprised of hand-drawn posters and messages. Year 7 and 8 students also participated in a '500 Acts of Kindness' challenge – not only did they smash their target, they actually delivered an incredible 2,130 acts of kindness around the school!

Holcombe Grammar School's assemblies looked at Anti-Bullying in conjunction with International Men's Day,

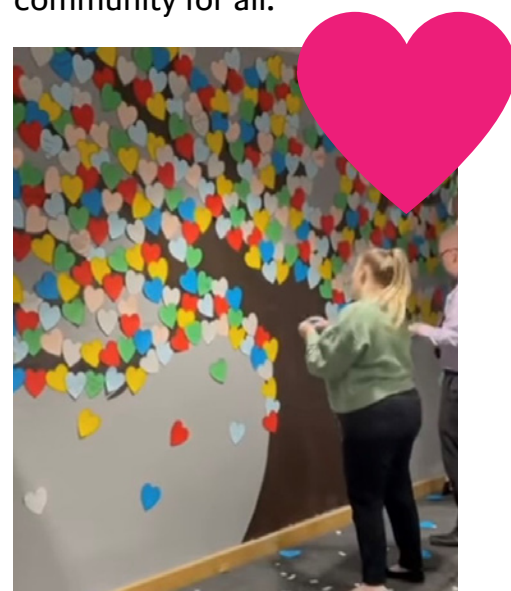
examining the role of toxic masculinity and its relationship with bullying. Some interesting discussions were had between students and staff regarding integration, the definition of 'banter' and how to fight bullying with kindness.

We are proud of the range of talks and activities that took place across our schools for Anti-Bullying Week, and as a Trust we continue to promote kindness and anti-bullying messages across the school year.

“Internet is a highly influential force in the lives of many young people, we have a responsibility to educate our pupils and keep them safe online.”



Kindness can be as easy as smiling at someone in the corridor, asking your friend if they are okay, or wishing someone a good day. We hope that each of our students took something away from Anti-Bullying Week, and will continue being kind, supporting their peers and maintaining a friendly school community for all.



THE VICTORY ACADEMY

We say **NO** to bullying at The Victory Academy

Bullying is **repeated**, negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel **upset, uncomfortable or unsafe.**

If you, or someone you know is experiencing bullying you must report it:

- Speak to a member of staff
- Speak to your Tutor
- Report online using **Report It!** at the top of the website
- Speak to the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.

2



TSAT ROCKS

Times Tables Rockstars Battle

This term, we were incredibly excited to hold our first ever #TSATRocks Times Tables Rockstars battle! Junior school pupils from across the Trust competed for the title of #TSATRocks champion, practising their times tables, and developing their arithmetic skills. The competition took place over four days, and it was great to see our children so enthusiastic and determined to represent their schools.

TT Rockstars is a fun and interactive online tool that helps children learn and practise their times tables. Our junior school pupils each have their own personal logins, which allows them to access the platform at school and at home, to master their times tables while competing with their school friends. The development of Maths skills is fundamental to primary education, and its importance spans secondary school, college, university and into adult life. Solid times tables knowledge is crucial for transforming life chances and enabling our pupils to take their next steps in life. Our TSAT Rocks competition was

designed to relaunch the use of TT Rockstars across our schools and promote times tables learning in a fun, interactive and competitive way that unites primary schools across our Trust.

Congratulations to The Gordon Children's Academy who came top of the leaderboard and were awarded the Trust-wide #TSATRocks trophy! The competition was close, with Cedar Children's Academy taking second place and Meon Junior School coming a close third!

As well as our incredible winning school, we also have our brilliant Hub winners, Portsmouth's Meon Junior

School and The Gordon Children's Academy in Medway! Both schools were awarded certificates for their outstanding efforts – well done!

It was great to see children from across the Trust engaging in this fantastic competition, developing their arithmetic skills, and representing their schools. Over **1,666 children** from **92 classes** across the Trust took part, and an incredible **1,287,318 times tables questions** were answered!

Well done to all our pupils who answered the most questions in their school, you are all TSAT Rockstars!



TIMES TABLES ROCKSTARS

However, a special mention must go to Aryaan from All Faiths Children's Academy, who answered the most questions out of all our participating students across the Trust. Well done Aryann - you did an amazing job!

Our highest-scoring children from each class were also awarded a certificate each. Congratulations to all our winners!

Jody Murphy, Director of Education, said: "Maths is an absolute passion of mine so being able to create an opportunity for students from both Medway and Portsmouth to improve their times tables through a fun and interactive way is wonderful. It has been a team effort to ensure that our students are able to represent their school. The support from the Maths leaders in our Primary Schools as well as teachers and parents has been fantastic with over 1.2million questions correctly answered in four days! Huge congratulations to everyone who took part - we look forward to the next battle to see who the next TSAT Top of The Rocks' will be."

We are proud of every one of our pupils who participated



in this competition, and of our staff who worked hard to make this event possible. As a Trust, we are constantly thinking of new and innovative ways of engaging our pupils in their learning and bringing our pupils together as a Trust-wide community. The TSAT

"The week was very exciting. I liked seeing my progress with my score going up' 'I'm very proud of myself." - Justice

Rocks competition was a huge success in many ways and was enjoyed by all. Congratulations again to all who participated, and to The Gordon Children's Academy for being crowned TSAT Rocks Champion!

Who will our next winner be?

"It was such a fun week. I got to play games and learn something educational at the same time." - Marcus

- 1st** The Gordon Children's Academy
- 2nd** Cedar Children's Academy
- 3rd** Meon Junior School



All Faiths Children's Academy

"The competition was really fun because you can win lots of coins" - Ioana

"The competition was really good because when other children start beating you, you have to keep improving your score." - Folu



All Faiths Children's Academy



All Faiths Children's Academy



All Faiths Children's Academy



All Faiths Children's Academy



All Faiths Children's Academy



Cedar Children's Academy



Cedar Children's Academy



Cedar Children's Academy



New Horizons Primary School



New Horizons Primary School



New Horizons Primary School



New Horizons Primary School



The Gordon Children's Academy



The Gordon Children's Academy



The Gordon Children's Academy



The Gordon Children's Academy



The Gordon Children's Academy



New Horizons Children's Academy



New Horizons Children's Academy

"I won TTRS of the week in my class for the first time and it feels really good to win." - Flavius

"We feel like we have achieved something great using our persistence habit of mind" - Edward

"I feel elated about it because we have been trying our hardest and not giving up!" - Isabella



New Horizons Children's Academy



New Horizons Children's Academy

“It feels great to come second because we all showed our striving for accuracy habit of mind.” - Taranpreet

“It gives us a boost to try to achieve more because we know that we can do it when we work as a team.” - Millie



Newbridge Junior School



Newbridge Junior School



Newbridge Junior School



Meon Junior School

The Hive - A taste of university at Holcombe



Holcombe Grammar School has recently opened its new and exciting Sixth Form centre, The Hive! This dynamic new space offers students an area in which they can study, relax, collaborate and socialise. Fully equipped with study spaces, IT equipment and comfortable seating areas.

The Hive is designed to enhance students' Sixth Form experience, as well as offer a taste of university life to Holcombe's Sixth Form students, many of whom will be moving on to university after their Sixth Form studies. It's great to see Holcombe's students enjoying their new space!

The area is split into several sections where students can take part in lessons, study and relax during their Sixth Form journey at Holcombe Grammar School.





Meon Junior School gains ‘Thinking School’ status and rated Good by Ofsted

The children and staff at Meon Junior School recently celebrated receiving two impressive accolades.

The school was rated Good by Ofsted in its first inspection since the pandemic began. Inspectors praised the school for its happy and productive atmosphere, and said “pupils learn well across the curriculum” and that “parents thoroughly recommend the school”. The report also highlighted the school’s

strength in English, with leaders described as “ambitious” and staff “all enjoying working” at Meon.

In Term 2, Meon Junior School was awarded the esteemed ‘Thinking School’ status by the University of Exeter’s Cognitive Education Development Unit. The School began work to become a Thinking School in 2017 after joining The Thinking Schools Academy Trust. It has since implemented a range of

initiatives including Thinking Maps. The school has worked hard to demonstrate and evidence their work to support children in their independent and co-operative learning skills. This will continue to lead to higher levels of achievement, enjoyment and satisfaction in learning for all children at Meon Junior School.

Congratulations to all of the staff and children at the school.

Thinking in the classroom

On Tuesday 9th November, the Strood Hub held a Thinking in the Classroom session at Cedar Children's Academy. The event, organised by Ella Martin, Charlotte Venter and Sam Kirk, offered complimentary CPD sessions and a unique networking opportunity to teachers within the Trust and from other local schools. The sessions ran from 4pm to 5pm with two twenty-minute presentations focusing on Thinking Skills in our Trust and Metacognition.

The sessions covered topics such as:

- How to develop meta-cognitive thinking
- How to apply research on memory within the classroom
- The use of thinking tools such as Thinking Hats, Thinking Maps and Thinking Keys
- How to encourage children to think reflectively, creatively and critically



It was wonderful to see so many teaching professionals, both from the Trust and local schools, coming together to think about Thinking and how they can apply this research to their work in the classroom.

The Thinking in the Classroom event was held as part of our schools' Thinking Accreditation. The schools within our Trust who currently hold Thinking School status are: All Faiths Children's Academy, Cedar Children's Academy, Gordon Children's Academy, Holcombe Grammar School, New Horizons Children Academy, Meon Junior School, Newbridge Junior School, Rochester Grammar School, The Victory Academy and The Portsmouth Academy. Other schools within our Trust are currently working towards their Thinking School status and we looking forward to adding them to the list in the new year.



SIX THINKING HATS

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



FEELINGS

How do I feel about this?
What do I like about this?
What don't I like about this?
What are my likes, dislikes, worries or concerns?



STRENGTHS

What are the good points?
Why can this be done?
Why is this a good thing?
What are the strengths?



JUDGEMENT

What is wrong with this?
Will this work?
Is it safe?
Can it be done?



THINKING

What thinking is needed?
Where are we now?
What is the next step?
How far have we come?



INFORMATION

What information do I have?
What are the facts?
What information do I need?
What do I want to know?



CREATIVITY & NEW IDEAS

What new ideas are possible?
What is my suggestion?
Can I create something new?
What are the weaknesses?

THINKING KEYS

Thinking Keys help students to think more flexibly and creatively. Here are some of the keys our students use:



THE REVERSE KEY

Words such as *cannot*, *never* and *not* are placed in sentences.

Name 10 things that you could *not* clean.



THE WHAT IF KEY?

Creative thinking and the use of green hat thinking is encouraged by asking what if questions.

What if the price of sweets was immediately doubled?



THE ALPHABET KEY

Pupils are asked to think of things related to a topic beginning with each of the 26 letters of the alphabet.

e.g. Reading Alphabet: = A = Author



THE VARIATION KEY

Pupils are asked to name and explain as many different ways to use an object or solve a problem.

e.g. How many ways could you use a bucket with a hole in it?



THE BAR KEY

Pupils are asked to improve an object or process by making something *Bigger*, *Adding* something and *Replacing* something.

Bigger, Add, Replace.



THE PREDICTION KEY

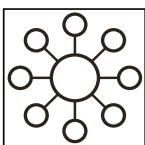
Pupils are asked to make predictions, usually in connection with how something they know and understand might be like in the future.

e.g. What will computers be like in 50 years?

THINKING MAPS

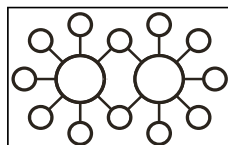
Thinking Maps provide a template to organise students thoughts, and they are regularly used during lessons.

BUBBLE MAP



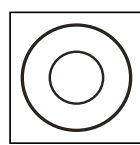
Describing

DOUBLE BUBBLE MAP



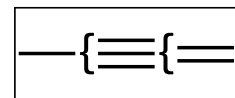
Comparing - Contrasting

CIRCLE MAP



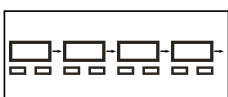
Defining in context

BRACE MAP



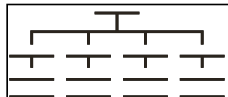
Whole - Parts

FLOW MAP



Sequencing

TREE MAP



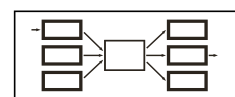
Classifying

BRIDGE MAP



Seeing Analogies

MULTI-FLOW MAP



Cause-Effect

REMEMBRANCE DAY



This Remembrance Day, The Thinking Schools Academy Trust commemorated and honoured the armed forces who gave their lives serving their country during the First World War and in all conflicts since.

Students at all our schools could be seen adorned with their red poppies, and a two-minute silence was observed in respect and reflection for those afflicted during the war and the bravery they showed in the face of adversity.

The Victory Academy held morning service with a prayer and 'The Stand' by John Bailey, read by Amina (Year 7) and Derron (Year 13). The Last Post

was played on trumpet to signal the start of the moment of silence. In a final act of respect, students laid a wreath at the foot of their flagpole in memoriam of those who gave their lives.

TS Temeraire, our Chatham Hub's very own Sea Cadets Unit, went above and beyond with their Remembrance events this year. Following a moving service at Chatham's Historic Dockyard on Thursday, The Medway Victory Sea Cadets continued to pay their respects over Remembrance weekend, starting with the Chatham Town vs Lordswood Royal British Legion Benefit match on Saturday, attended by MP Tracey Crouch. On

Remembrance Sunday, TS Temeraire performed a civic march through Chatham town centre, an honourable ceremony which culminated in an act of Remembrance at the War Memorial in Victory Gardens. This was the first time in many years that Royal Navy No1 uniforms had been seen marching through Chatham, a momentous event for the town and the children who participated.

Goodwin Academy students each created a paper poppy with a written message of gratitude to those who gave their lives. These poppies became part of the remembrance wall at the entrance of the school.





Goodwin students also took part in a Service of Remembrance whilst students who are members of the Combined Cadet Force attended the memorial service in Deal to lay a wreath.

Across our Strood Hub, All Faiths Children's Academy began Remembrance Day with Collective Worship led by Year 6, wherein students had the opportunity to explain the significance of the day and its importance to each other. Students of the Gordon Children's Academy marked the day by creating various displays and artwork, as well as writing poetry and short literature.



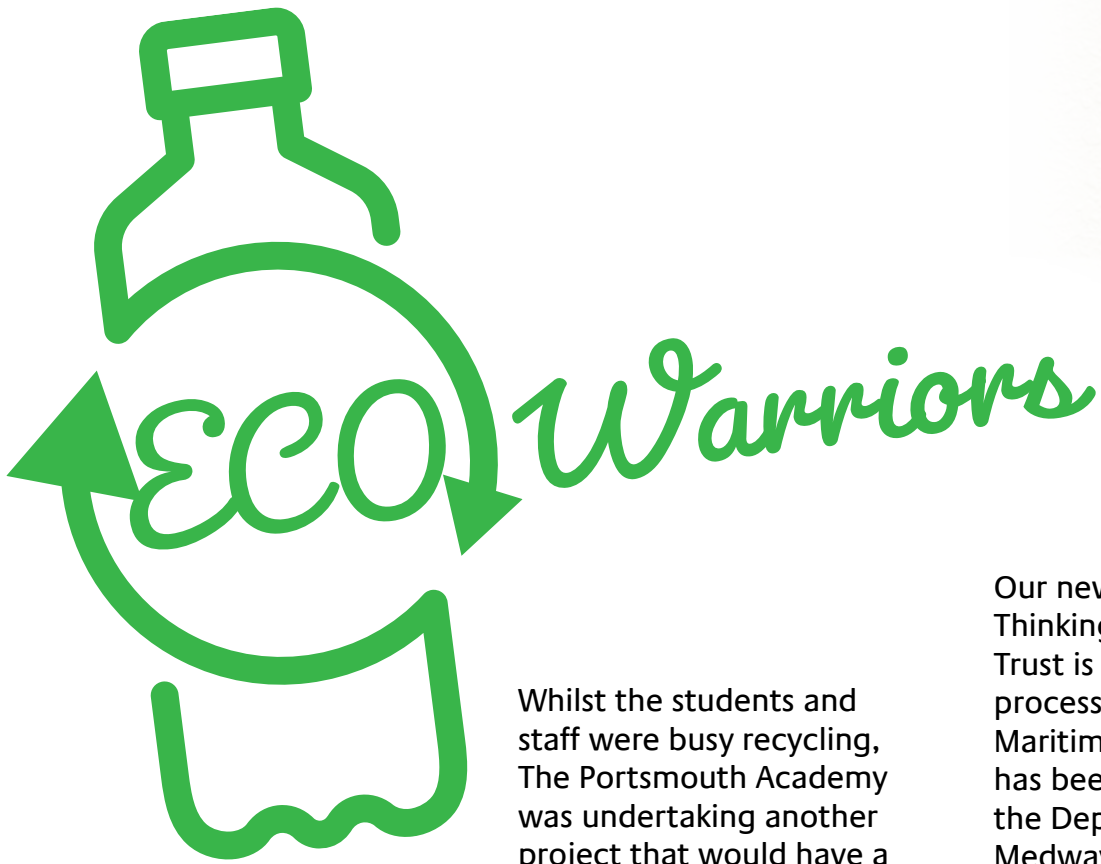
A student from New Horizons Primary attached their handcrafted poppies to letters explaining why Remembrance Day is important them: "because they have given their lives to keep us safe and happy". This encapsulated the significance of this day for all our students and staff beautifully.

Moorings Way Infant School created their own wonderful poppy field on their school grounds in a remarkable feat of consideration and care. During the night, the poppies were lit up so as to remember the shining lights of hope and the bravery that men, women and children prevailed with during the dark times of war.



We are proud of the respect and honour our schools displayed during Remembrance Day, and we are thankful to the courageous soldiers who gave their lives for the freedom of our country during the War.





Climate change and pollution affect us all, and it is up to everyone to do as much as possible to help the environment. Our students and schools recognise this mission, and some fantastic work has been happening across our Hubs.

On the 20th of September, The Portsmouth Academy welcomed Nellie. The giant aluminium fish was installed at the school to encourage students and staff to put more effort into recycling their plastic bottles and aluminium cans. Altogether, the school recycled 1137 bottles and 807 cans, a fantastic effort! Well done to everybody who contributed. The Academy's very own ECO team worked hard to communicate the importance of recycling and would check and empty Nellie daily.

Whilst the students and staff were busy recycling, The Portsmouth Academy was undertaking another project that would have a city-wide effect on the future of its sustainability. The Portsmouth Academy was awarded a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating for its new building extension, making it one of Portsmouth's most sustainable new buildings. The extension features a PV (solar) system on the roof, high levels of thermal insulation, good air quality, and the building is entirely powered by electricity. The construction process was also sustainably managed with a significant waste reduction.

Our newest addition to the Thinking Schools Academy Trust is currently in the process of being built. The Maritime Academy in Medway has been working closely with the Department for Education, Medway Council, and partners from Bowmer & Kirkland to create a school with state-of-the-art facilities, built as sustainably as possible.

The school will be developed to deliver a carbon neutral build by only using LED lights, naturally resourced materials and through ventilation optimisation to naturally stabilise the temperature in the classrooms. The aim is to make sustainability a part of everyday school life, ensuring that as a community, the Maritime works to be responsible and respectful to the environment. The use of single use plastics will be actively reduced, and greener ways to travel to school and recycling will be encouraged.



Many young people hold strong concerns about climate change and the challenges this might present for future generations, which is why, across the first year of the school opening, students will be encouraged to get involved with the school's sustainability planning as part of the student Eco Committee.

Throughout the term, conversations grew around climate change and COP26 sparked one school to make a stand like nothing we have seen before. On Friday 5th November, Plymouth High School for Girls students conducted a silent protest on the school grounds with a message of 'Enough Talking, Time for Action' in support of the COP26 Youth Day. Lessons were put on hold as students from the school's Earth Alliance group insisted the protest took place at the same time that the government met for COP26 in Scotland.

The Strood Hub of schools actively got involved in a range of activities and visits to support COP26. The students at Gordon Children's Academy participated in the Medway Walk a Mile, where their class miles were submitted to the Medway Council. Excitingly, two classes from the academy came away with prizes for their efforts! The school received an educational visit from the Kent Wildlife Trust to learn about local nature and wildlife and an outdoors educational day with the Medway Rangers. Cedar Children's Academy worked with their local CO-OP to collect and recycle soft plastics. The school council led this activity by running collections during lunch time in Key Stage 2.

It is wonderful to see our students getting actively involved in the larger conversation.

After all, our students are who we are building a future for, so what better way than by having them build it with us.





196 victorious students achieve their Bronze Arts Award

The Victory Academy is known and celebrated for its creative strengths: as a Platinum Artsmark School, the Academy is committed to immersing their students in the Arts and transforming the life chances of its students with a plethora of creative opportunities and activities. Adding to its impressive list of creative achievements, The Victory Academy has this year helped 196 of its Year 9 students achieve their Bronze Arts Award!

Over the past couple of years, the Art department at The Victory Academy has worked tirelessly to support its current Year 9 students in working towards their Bronze Arts Award, a Level 1 qualification which marks their engagement with the Arts as well as their creative talents. The Academy's current Year 9 cohort began working on their Arts Award in Year 7. Their project was disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, but this did not deter staff nor students from persevering.

After facing obstacles to their plans and being forced to change the timeline of their projects, the fantastic Arts departments at The Victory Academy and their resilient students finally completed their Arts Award project, which they lovingly named Rooks' Books.

Rooks' Books is a collection of handcrafted mosaic tiles, put together as a memorial plaque on a wall of the school building. Each student designed and created their own ceramic tiles inspired by their favourite books in memory of Sam Rooks, a loved and respected teacher at The Victory Academy who sadly lost his life last year. Beautiful and moving in its significance, Rooks' Books Memorial is a lovely way for students and staff to remember Mr Rooks, as well as a brilliant expression of the school's dedication to the Arts. This fantastic piece of artwork formed the basis of the students' Arts Award project, which also required them to build individual

portfolios demonstrating their artistic interests, experience, research and practice. The Arts Award requires real creativity, commitment and lots of hard work, and the completion of this Award by 196 students at The Victory Academy is a testament to the dedication of its staff and hard work of its students.

Special thanks to Carley Dawkins, Head of Art at The Victory Academy, as well as Phoebe Tan, Charlii Ellis and Brigid Sugar, without whom this phenomenal achievement would not have been possible.

The Victory Academy is dedicated to transforming the life chances of its students, building cultural capital and offering students as many opportunities to achieve, aspire and endeavour as they can. Congratulations to each of the 196 students for receiving their Awards, and to The Victory Academy for their continued dedication to the Arts.

Harvest Festival at All Faiths



This October, All Faiths Children's Academy students came together to celebrate Harvest Festival, their first whole school celebration since the pandemic struck last year. The school held a lovely Harvest assembly, which involved lots of singing and an inspiring talk from Reverend Sue from St Nicholas' Church about the significance of Harvest. The children donated a range of food products to Strood Food Bank, and finished their celebrations with an exciting Harvest disco. All Faiths looks forward to hopefully welcoming parents to their Harvest events next year!

Cooking lessons and tasty gingerbread men



Children at New Horizons Children's Academy have had the opportunity to develop their cookery skills this year! New Horizons has been holding termly cooking courses for Year 1 to 6, run by Chartwells, the excellent team who provide catering services across all schools in our Trust. Last term, the sessions were based on each of the year groups' termly topics; for the Christmas term course, they baked their own gingerbread men! These excellent courses offer great opportunities for students to develop their skills and broaden their horizons; thank you to Chartwells for their hard work in running the courses!

Don't Worry, its Wesley

Key Stage 2 students at Cedar Children's Academy were introduced to Wesley the Worry Monster this term! Children can write their worries and post them into Wesley's mouth for him to eat. Students can choose to do this anonymously, or can add their name to their worry if they would like to speak to staff about their concerns. This is a fantastic way of encouraging children to reflect on their feelings, and of raising awareness of mental health within the school community. Welcome to the Cedar family, Wesley!



Goodwin students show their respect



A group of Goodwin Academy students accompanied Principal, Mr Simon Smith, and Head of Year 8, Miss Jessica Wiles, to the Deal Bandstand Memorial for the Deal Barracks Bombing. They were invited to commemorate those who lost their lives in the IRA attack at the Royal Marines School of Music, 32 years ago.

The Chairman of the Bandstand Memorial Trust explained the importance of remembering what happened and the men who died. Goodwin Academy will continue to attend this annual event and educate their students by including teachings of the incident as part of their history curriculum.



Local author visits The Gordon Children's Academy



In Term 1, pupils at Gordon Children's Academy were visited by the wonderful local author, Maureen Gordon. Maureen is a writer of children's books, and came to speak to students about her work and what it is like to be a writer.

During her visit, Maureen read to Years 1 and 2, who really enjoyed listening to her stories and meeting her characters. Gordon's Librarians – a group of students who help in the library and promote reading across the school – were then invited to interview Maureen about her job, her stories and her background. The children were brilliant interviewers, and came up with some really excellent questions! Fascinated and inspired by meeting Maureen, some children even went away and wrote their own stories, which have since been read by many members of staff who were very impressed!

This was a really great opportunity for students to learn, build their cultural capital, and get excited about reading and writing.

Under the Rainbow Art Exhibition

GCSE and IB Art students from The Rochester Grammar School recently took part in the 'Under the Rainbow' art exhibition at Bluewater Shopping Centre. Their pieces were displayed alongside practising artists and other students from local schools.

The exhibition was created to celebrate local artists and to promote the work they produced over lockdowns.

Ella, an IB Visual Art student from Rochester Grammar, spent a Saturday painting a horse in situ at the exhibition. She said that the experience was a great opportunity to be amongst actual artists and to be able to share her work in a public forum.



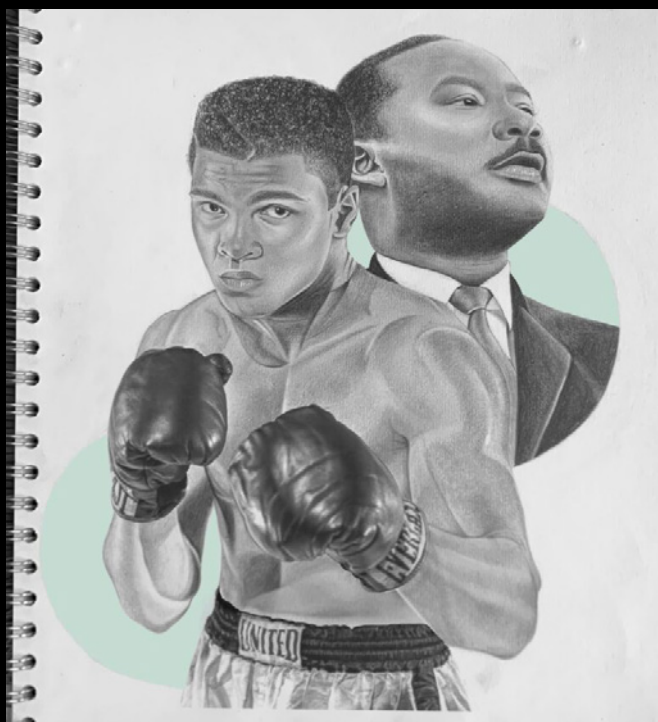
Victory Day 2021

At the end of September, The Victory Academy held their yearly Victory Day to celebrate the sixth anniversary of its official opening! Throughout the day, students took part in a range of fun activities, including team-building exercises hosted by the Army Outreach Group, a Year 7 trip to The Historic Dockyard, and DT and Art workshops. Each activity was designed to develop students' teamwork, communication and creative skills, and students really enjoyed getting involved in the variety of opportunities on offer. This exciting celebration ended with an 'after party' packed with fantastic performances and speeches, where students, parents, carers, staff, guests and partners came together to celebrate the school community. Here's to many more Victory Days!



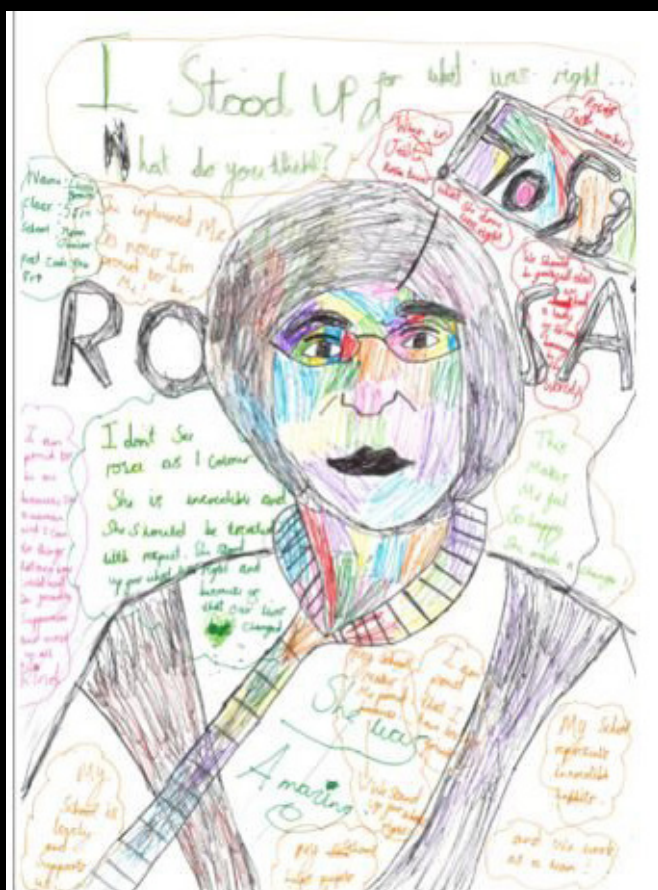
SECONDARY SCHOOLS WINNER

Martin Luther King Jr and Mohammed Ali
Eninla, Year 12, Rochester Grammar School



PRIMARY SCHOOLS WINNER

Proud To Be: Yourself
Lizzie, Meon Junior School



B:IM 2021 Art Competition

In October, we as a Trust came together to celebrate Black History Month: a month of dedicated recognition to Black heritage and movements throughout history. Due to last year's huge success, we decided to bring back the BHM2021 Art Competition.

This year's theme of Black History Month was "Proud to Be", which drew focus around identity, diversity and inclusion. Over the weeks of October, students opened up about what they are proud of, from their communities, families, and upbringing. It was evident our students were proud of what they stand for, and we saw this passion for pride and voice come through in our Trust-wide Art competition. The competition was a huge success this year, with over 170 entries from schools across each Hub submitting entries. We saw amazing role models highlighted, such as history's Rose Parks and present-day Marcus Rashford highlighted as heroes. We also saw students express their struggles around identity and express them through painting, dance videos and poetry.

This year, the judging panel had their work cut out to select a winning design. Due to the overwhelming quality of the students' entry submitted, we decided to run separate competitions for primary and secondary schools. Congratulations to everyone that entered. Each entry was imaginative, educational, diverse and interesting.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS - 2nd Place

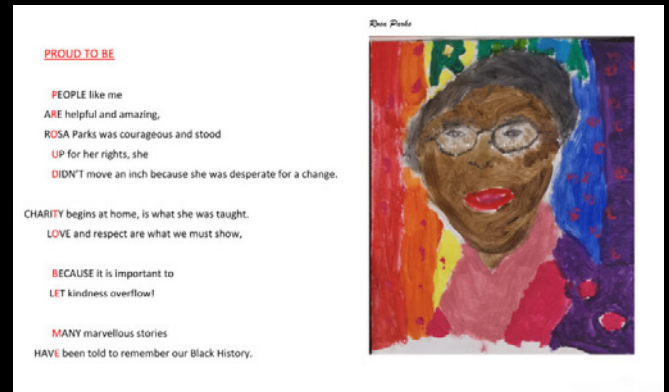
Avini, The Portsmouth Academy



PRIMARY SCHOOLS - 2nd Place

Proud To Be: Me

Charity, Gordon Children's Academy



SECONDARY SCHOOLS - 3rd Place

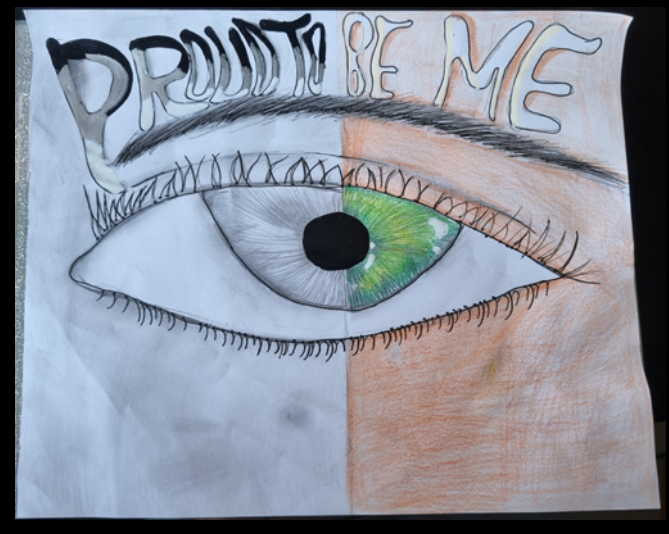
Black History Month and LGBT Communities
Samantha, Year 8, Goodwin Academy



PRIMARY SCHOOLS - 3rd Place

Proud To Be: Me

Lily, Cedar Children's Academy



Take a look at all of the amazing entries in this year's competition on our website at www.tsatrust.org.uk



The Portsmouth Academy celebrates its first Year 7 cohort using one:one devices

For the past three years, The Portsmouth Academy have been piloting the use of laptops for learning in the classroom. 67% of our students agree, or strongly agree, that using devices helps them to learn. In particular, they help them to become more efficient and feel confident they are being taught the skills our future economy needs.

On Monday 6th September, the new cohort of Year 7s were each issued with an HP360 – a device which is both a laptop and a tablet in one, which comes with a stylus pen so students can continue to develop their handwriting skills. The device is fully managed by the school from students own one:one helpdesk situated in library, where students can also go to get help from Digital Champion, Mrs Barnes.

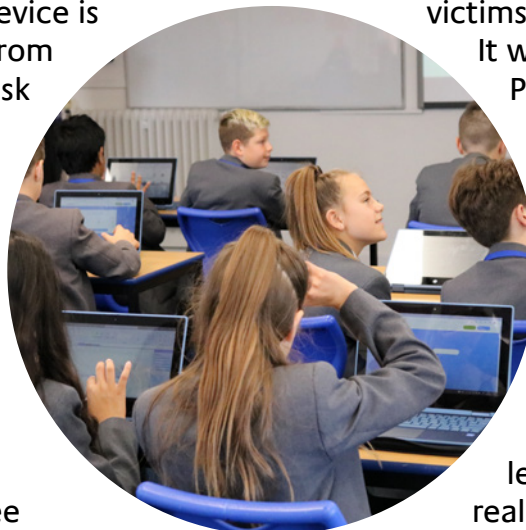
During September, The Portsmouth Academy hosted a visit from local MP Stephen Morgan and Shadow Minister in Education, Peter Kyle. The MPs were keen to see first-hand the impact of technology on students' education. During their visit, they witnessed the Academy's one:one scheme and how advanced technology was enriching

teaching across a range of subjects, including Maths, Geography and Science.

The MPs also saw how using technology in schools give teachers more flexibility in the classroom, freeing them 'from the front' and increasing the amount of individual support they can provide to students, especially effective for those who need additional support.



Stephen Morgan MP, MP for Portsmouth South, said: "The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the inequality and unfairness we see in today's society, with many young people falling through the gaps and becoming victims of the digital divide.



It was a pleasure to visit Portsmouth Academy to hear how they are addressing this, see first-hand how young people are benefiting as a result, and showcase this to the Shadow Schools Minister. I want Portsmouth to be at the forefront of a digital learning revolution. As online learning is becoming a daily reality for children across our city, I will watch with interest to make sure this scheme delivers both for the pupils who need it and struggling local families."



MARITIME ACADEMY UPDATE

Across the last year, we have been sharing with you progress updates for the Maritime Academy, the newest secondary school to be built by the Trust, due to open September 2022.

The Maritime Academy has been a long time in the making, with the initial application being made to the Department for Education almost five years ago. We are delighted to share with you the Maritime has now been given the final green light, as members of Medway Council's Planning Committee granted planning permission. This approval allows the project to progress to the next stage of beginning the build.

Throughout this process, we have continually stood by and proudly promoted our belief that the Maritime will offer much needed secondary school places within our local community and provide an enriching environment for pupils to grow, explore their true potential and become their best selves. The support from the DfE reinforces its confidence in the Maritime project and aptly recognises the work and leadership of our Trust.

We are excited to be taking the next step on the school's journey and to welcome both our founding cohort and future

generations of Medway pupils to the Maritime Academy.

Now that planning has been granted, the main contractor appointed by the DfE, Bowmer + Kirkland, will start work, with the aim of completing the school in the summer of 2023.

Across the last year, our central team have continued to work on promoting the school and preparing for applications to open in September. It was wonderful to open 'our doors' (the Academy borrowed Gordon Children's Academy's hall) to prospective students and their families at our open evenings. Over 350 parents and children joined us to find out more about the school, and joined Jody Murphy, Director of Education (Strood), as she presented her vision for the Maritime Academy and welcomed questions from the parents.

Staff from all departments including the Teaching & Learning team and IT, with their one:one devices, were on hand to provide information and demonstrations. Plus, there were also opportunities to try school dinners along with the chance to meet the architects and ask questions about the excellent facilities. Thank you to everyone involved in making both nights a success.

In September, applications opened and we were thrilled to see the overwhelming support from parents; a huge 250 parents and children applied to join Maritime's founding cohort. It is testament to the work and success of all staff that the Maritime is oversubscribed before a brick has even been laid, and we look forward to students being offered their places on national offer day in March.

Students joining Year 7 in 2022 will be located in a temporary location and we will be working with the DfE to ensure we create a site that will still offer the full secondary experience and uphold the ethos and values of Maritime, whilst providing these students a unique chance to transition into secondary school life in an environment built just for them.

We are excited to embark upon this journey together as a trust; updates will continue to be shared across the year as we approach the launch of Maritime Academy in September 2022.

We're supporting



BBC
Children
in Need

It's time to put our paws together and celebrate each of our schools for their outstanding efforts in raising over £8,000 for Children in Need!

It was wonderful seeing the schools across our Trust getting involved in a range of fundraising activities in aid of the children's charity. From PJ days to Stars in their Eyes talent shows, the level of creativity displayed was impressive.

While all schools took their own inventive approaches to the event, there was a Trust-wide 'Great Pudsey Bake Off' which saw students donning their aprons to bake or decorate cakes and biscuits. These delicious treats were then sold at bake sales to staff, students and parents. We also discovered that we have some Star Bakers within our student body, as many of our secondary students created Pudsey themed Showstoppers to be auctioned off to the highest bidder.

The proceeds were tracked through the TSAT Pudsey'ometres, which all schools within the Trust received. It was wonderful to see the progress photos being shared across schools' social media channels.



In Medway, Gordon Children's Academy raised a phenomenal amount, reaching almost £3,000, with All Faiths Children's Academy coming in close with over £1,500. This is an amazing achievement as a one form school. What's more, a pupil at Tree Tops, All Faiths Children's Academy's Deaf Provision, performed on BBC Children in Need as a member of the Vision Junior Signing Choir. Congratulations Tayah - that was an amazing opportunity!

In Portsmouth, schools held Pudsey raffles, 'Bring and Buy' sales, PJ and Non-uniform days as just some of their fundraising activities, with Penhale Infant School and Newbridge Junior School raising a fantastic £1,205 together! The Portsmouth Academy held a Stars in their Eyes event where students got the chance to witness their favourite teachers singing and dancing. Who would want to miss that? All proceeds made from the ticket sales were added to their fundraising total.



Over in the Kent hub, Rochester Grammar School held a Lip Sync battle which was fun for both students and staff. If you follow them on social media you will have seen a rather entertaining rendition of 'Let It Go' from Disney's Frozen. Goodwin Academy ran a gingerbread competition where students baked and decorated the yummy treats in school with the help of Head of Year 8, Miss Wiles. The bakes were then judged and the winner chosen by The Worshipful Mayor of Deal, Cllr. Chris Turner.



All in all, this was a successful event, with an impressive amount raised through the actions of our schools. We look forward to doing it all again next year!



Our schools have raised over
£8,000
 for Children in Need!

Goodwin Academy receive the Unicef Rights Respecting Schools Bronze Award



Goodwin Academy have had a lot to shout about in recent weeks, from their involvement in the Deal community Remembrance Day service to members of their teaching staff winning at the 'Kent Teacher of the Year Awards'. One of their most recent achievements though is receiving the Unicef Rights Respecting Schools Bronze Award.

This is an incredible achievement to be awarded, and even more so to be the first school in our Trust to receive this award.

What does this mean?

The Bronze award is the first stage of the Rights Respecting Schools Awards (RRSA) programme which focuses on supporting schools across the UK to embed children's human rights in their ethos and culture. In receiving the Bronze award, Goodwin Academy has been recognised as being Rights Committed.

The school started on this journey back in September 2021 with the purpose of developing knowledge, understanding and appreciation of children's and young people's rights, not only within school but around the

world. Assistant Principal, Mrs Bradford led this project with the help of the Junior Leadership Team, who carried out questionnaires and led assemblies to educate and inform the rest of the student body.

With this award, Goodwin Academy is joining a community of other schools in the UK who have reported that the award has many positive impacts, including improved relationships, wellbeing and self-esteem of students that in turn has led to better attendance and improved learning.

Simon Smith, Principal at Goodwin Academy, said: "We are delighted to receive the Bronze award for our work as a Rights Respecting School. We are constantly striving to create the best possible learning environment for our students and to see this recognised is fantastic.

"A huge thank you to our junior leadership team who have done incredible and inspiring work to raise awareness across the Academy over the last term.

"We will continue to work hard to put children's rights at

the heart of Goodwin Academy, enabling students to respect each other and nurture their skills and talents; ultimately, creating a safe and inspiring place to learn. We look forward to working towards our Silver award."

Next, the Academy hopes to work towards the Silver award. This will include ensuring The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) underpins the Academy's values and decision making. The whole Academy will learn about the CRC and respecting the rights of others. Goodwin Academy will also work to empower all students to become active learners and active local and global citizens.



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



LITTLE THINKERS NURSERY & PRE-SCHOOL

OFFICIALLY OPENS IN PORTSMOUTH

In Term 1, our first Little Thinkers Nursery opened up next door to New Horizons Primary School.

After a successful 17 years as Izzies Nursery, a well-known name in the local Portsmouth community, the Nursery took on a massive transformation to become the flagship setting for the Little Thinkers brand. It opened as Little Thinkers at New Horizons in September. The team welcomed Sparky, a fun thinking logo to light the way on the next leg of the team's adventure.

Along the way, the team made changes to their curriculum, adopting the curiosity approach. Plastic single-use toys and resources were donated locally and replaced with natural, homely, recycled resources. This provided an all-round softer aesthetic space, creating a cosy and calm environment.

On opening day, the red carpet was rolled out, and the bubble machine was plugged in. Sparky and the team welcomed all children and parents for a morning of play and to come explore their

new playrooms. Parents commented on the Nursery's new look, wishing they could be kids again to play on the new climbing frames and could not talk highly enough of all the staff at Little Thinkers.

The Nursery is well known to local Portsmouth City residents, and staff have seen generations of families come through their doors. There is a lot of love and learning happening at Little Thinkers, as the team and Sparky prepare the city's future generations for a life of new thinking and new confidence.



The Gordon Children's Academy launch their Pupil Parliament

This September, a new team of MPs were elected to represent their constituents at The Gordon Children's Academy!

Gordon have launched their brand new Pupil Parliament, a new and exciting way for their pupils to take on leadership roles, share their ideas with the school community and make a difference to their school experiences.

At the beginning of the year, all pupils were given the chance to apply for the

position of their class MP. After the application process, in which candidates explained their reasons for applying and what they thought they could bring to the role, children in each class placed their votes and the Members of Parliament were elected.

Since then, this fantastic new team have been working together to make important decisions about the school community. They meet regularly to debate important topics and raise any questions

or concerns that their classmates have. At the end of each meeting, the MPs even hold votes to finalise their decisions, just like those held in the Houses of Parliament!

As part of their roles, some of Gordon's MPs recently visited the Brook Theatre in Chatham for an event organised by Medway City Council. Student representatives from All Faiths Children's Academy and Cedar Children's Academy also attended the event, in which they gave their perspectives on what it is like to live in Medway. This was a fantastic opportunity for all children involved to offer their ideas, reflect on their local community and make their voices heard.

The new Pupil Parliament system at Gordon has proved very successful so far, and has offered opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons and build their cultural capital. Members of





Parliament at Gordon were recently given a virtual tour of the Houses of Parliament; all pupils were incredibly engaged and enthusiastic during this amazing opportunity, and even had the chance to ask questions at the end. Gordon works incredibly hard to encourage its pupils to aim high, aspire and achieve, and fantastic opportunities like this one inspire them to do so.

A fundamental part of transforming life chances is preparing our children for life after school by teaching them about the world around them, including how decisions are made on a national and global scale. Gordon's new Pupil Parliament is a brilliantly innovative way of doing this: the school's new system is a microcosm of Britain's governmental structure, and teaches pupils vital lessons about democracy, society and leadership.



Miss Auer, who has been supporting the Pupil Parliament, says, "It's been inspiring to see how passionately our children have responded to their roles as Pupil MPs. They are bursting with ideas and enthusiasm for making our school and local community the best it can be, for everyone. Through the Pupil Parliament, our MPs have experienced the process of creating a manifesto, running in an election and attending regular meetings in which they represent the views of their own mini constituency – their class! It's been a pleasure to see them grow in confidence and become increasingly empowered as they develop opinions, discover new ways of

using their voice to affect real change and bring all of these experiences back into the classroom to inspire others."

Thank you to Miss Auer for her invaluable help with Pupil Parliament, and for being the Speaker in the MPs' parliament debates! And, of course, well done to all Gordon MPs for representing their peers and working to make Gordon Children's Academy an even better place to go to school!

"They meet regularly to debate important topics and raise any questions or concerns that their classmates have."



Holcombe's creative students honoured with awards

This term, Holcombe Grammar School has been celebrating some outstanding achievements amongst its talented student body. Many of its students have received awards and recognition for their creative talents and academic achievements this term, and we are excited to share some of these successes with you!

November saw Holcombe's very own Markus Sadler (Year 12) crowned Young Medway Musician of the Year 2021! The competition - attended by Principal, Lee Preston - was fierce, and Markus was up against some other very talented Medway musicians, but his two perfect piano performances secured him the trophy. Shortly after this, Markus was also offered a place in the trumpet section of the National Youth Orchestra. Congratulations to Markus for these incredible achievements, and special thanks to Holcombe's Tim Hayward, who, in the words of Markus' father, "was an

inspiration for Markus and guided him through the National Youth Orchestra audition preparations."

Congratulations to Timi Soyinka (Year 11) who has also been recognised for his creative talents this term. Timi was offered a 10-day creative writing experience taking place at Oxford University this summer, the prize for winning an essay-writing competition. This is an incredible opportunity for Timi to develop his skills and learn from the experts at such a prestigious institution.

Holcombe's most recent Principal's Awards went to Lucas Beresford (Year 9) and Alex Novetschi (Year 8) for their exceptional work in languages and RS, respectively. Congratulations to both students on these

achievements, and for putting such hard work into their studies.

We are incredibly proud of Markus, Timi, Lucas and Alex for these incredible



achievements, and to all staff at Holcombe who encourage students to embrace all opportunities open to them, be their best selves and try their best in all that they do.



Nucleus' HEART of the Community

On Saturday 13th November, Nucleus' 'HeART of the Community' store in The Pentagon, Chatham, became a beautiful art gallery full of masterpieces created by New Horizons Children's Academy's very own students!

Many of New Horizons' pupils painted, illustrated and wrote their own Remembrance Day pieces, commemorating those who have sacrificed their lives to serve their country. These impressive pieces were then put on sale to raise money for the Royal British Legion, and many staff, pupils and their families visited the shop to make their purchases.

Our students were very proud to see their artwork on display in the shop, and even more so knowing that all donations made were going to a very honourable cause.

"It is so important to us to give the children context and purpose to their learning and engagement in events. The excitement when the children found out their art could possibly end up in a real art gallery was incredible!" says Miss Huby, who did an excellent job of organising and running the event. "Seeing

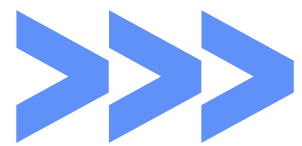
families and members of the public appreciate the talents of what they produced was definitely a highlight, especially when the 'resident artists' joined us and soaked up the public's appreciation for their own work."

Thank you to Miss Huby for her hard work in arranging and running this excellent event, and for giving students at New Horizons Children's Academy the opportunity to showcase their work. As a Trust, we encourage our pupils to think creatively and explore their talents, and are proud of this wonderful event which allowed them to do so in such a unique and rewarding way.





HUMMINGBIRD TAKE TOP SPOT IN THE SOUTHWEST



Plymouth High school are delighted to have run a Formula 24 racing car since 2011. During this time, many students have had the opportunity to be genuinely 'hands-on' with engineering and racing of The Hummingbird race car.

"Ignore the brake signs- just drive faster!" said Annie, Head of Comms, cheerfully down the phone to driver Annabelle as she tore around the next corner. The Hummingbird flew past the checkered flag for the last time this season, with a relieved team high-fiving and celebrating from the sideline.

On Sunday 10th October, Hummingbird took to the track once more at the F24 International Finals at the iconic Goodwood Circuit. It was an exciting day of number-crunching, tire-screaming, nail-biting fun. Enthusiasm and anticipation buzzed throughout the team as they united under one common goal: to get through all four races and achieve the best



possible placement. Without the tireless efforts of everyone on team Hummingbird, including those who unfortunately could not make the race, achieving this goal would not have been possible.

The day started early as the girls arrived at Goodwood, running off of adrenaline more than sleep. The team quickly got to work readying the car and setting up their performance area in the perfect position just metres away from the start line. After each lap, palms got sweaty, and hair turned greyer the faster the car drove around the tarmac.

It was a special day to see the hard work of everyone involved in Hummingbird come to life. The day encapsulated what the team is about: everyone using their strengths and teamwork to create something they are all proud of. As a result, the team achieved 11th position in the final overall, making them the 11th best kit car in the country and number 1 for the Southwest.





New Inclusion Centre opens at Penhale Infant School & Nursery

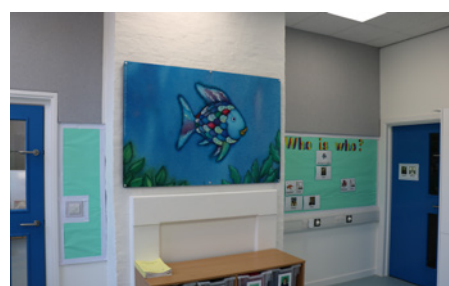
In January 2021, The Thinking School Academy Trust was commissioned to create an inclusion centre at Penhale Infant School & Nursery. It was initially discussed during the consultation phase that this would be for a planned opening of September 2022, giving us plenty of planning time. However, due to the substantial increase in demand across the city, we were asked to deliver this for September 2021 – which required a huge school renovation.

Despite the many challenges, this September we opened our new Inclusion Centre, known as The Rainbow Fish Centre. This 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 & Learning and we have welcomed our first cohort of a mixed Reception and Year 1 class this year. All children attending must have an Education Health and Care Plan.

Since May, the centre has undergone the first phase of a large re-build project to make sure we can meet the needs of the children joining us. The school has undergone a striking transformation and we're extremely lucky to have had a soft-play and sensory room installed to support the needs of the children attending. We are looking to expand further in the next academic year to be able to accommodate a second class within the Rainbow Fish Centre.

Jack Jones, Head of Inclusion Centre, said: "It has been a pleasure to get to know the



children as we started the term. We are thrilled with how they have settled into school life as part of Penhale and how the rest of the school has welcomed them into the community."

The school is now planning the next exciting expansion phase, 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.

Pupils take the lead and contribute to their community



Pupils at Cedar have been settling into their new school roles and responsibilities this term. Cedar offers an impressive array of school roles to which pupils can apply, developing their leadership skills and contributing to the school community.

For this edition of Our Trust, children at Cedar were interviewed about their roles, and were very excited to share their thoughts on what it means to be a Cedar representative and how they contribute to the school community.

At the beginning of the school year, all pupils at Cedar are given the opportunity to apply to one of the many school roles on offer. One of the roles on offer is School Council Representative.

“When I heard about the school council, it sounded like a fun job and I decided to give it a shot. I applied and my class voted for me, so I got the role! Now that I am a School Council representative, I like helping my school make big decisions,” said Idris (Year 6), a member of Cedar’s School Council, during his interview.



School Council - Avery (Year 2), Idris (Year 6), Mardiah (Year 3) and Hayden (Year 5)

The school council meet regularly to discuss what is going on in the school, and can address any concerns or questions raised by their class mates. When asked what it is like to be a School Council representative, Mardiah (Year 3) said, “I like being on the School Council because I can

make the school a better place for people to learn.”

As well as their School Council, Cedar also has a fantastic Drive Team, who attend meetings to discuss how the school can move forward and work with other schools in the Trust to make a difference.



Drive Team - Back row: Flynn (Year 3), Lily (Year 6), Xander (Year 6), William (Year 5). Front row: Aayan (Year 5), Darcy (Year 4), Freddie (Year 2), Harrison (Year 6), Chris (Year 3)



Cedar Helpers – Chesney (Year 5), Freya (Year 6), Martin (Year 6)

The Drive Team have recently been focusing on their Thinking skills, what it means to 'Be Your Best Self', and how these ideas can influence the way that children within the Trust think and learn.

"We help with assemblies where we talk about the Thinking Hats and the Seeds, so that we can help each other learn more and work harder," says Xander (Year 6), a member of the Drive Team at Cedar.

The Drive Team is made up of members from year groups across the school; Freddie (Year 2) says, 'I like the Drive Team because I love to help people.'

We also had the pleasure of talking to the Cedar Helpers, a team of pupils who take pride in offering their support to staff and students around the school. Cedar Helpers' responsibilities include playing with KS1 students at lunchtime, supervising the corridors and keeping the playground free of litter; Cedar Helpers also have the exciting job of handing out Christmas cards at the end of term!

"We get to choose our jobs. My favourite job as a Cedar Helper is going to the Key Stage 1 playground and helping the younger children choose what games to play at lunchtime," said Freya (Year 6), when asked about her role.

Reading Ambassadors at Cedar are responsible for encouraging their peers to read, helping out in the library, reading to Year 1 students and recommending books to other students. When asked what made them apply to become Reading Ambassadors, many of the students described their love for books.

"I like being a Reading Ambassador because I like to read, and even though not everyone loves to read, I can encourage others and help them find the perfect book for them," says Zara (Year 6).

The role of Reading Ambassador has proved very inspiring for some students; Maria (Year 6) has even started thinking about writing her own stories to read to younger students. "I'm good at reading, but I also like writing, so I want to write my own book to read to Key Stage 1 children, which is a project that I'm working on right now."

Well done to each of the Cedar representatives in their various roles, for working to make a difference to the school community, and to all Cedar staff for their support in arranging and leading the pupils' meeting and activities. Introducing young people to leadership roles at such a young age is a fundamental part of transforming life chances and preparing them for life after school.



Reading Ambassadors - Mia (Year 5), Poppy (Year 5), Zara (Year 6), Nico (Year 5), Luca (Year 6), Maria (Year 6)



BSL at the heart of All Faiths Children's Academy

In this edition of Our Trust, we want to celebrate All Faiths Children's Academy's fantastic work in transforming life chances by teaching British Sign Language to all students as a Modern Foreign Language!

British Sign Language is taught throughout the school to all students, and all members of staff at All Faiths can sign to some degree, with many members of staff having achieved their Level 1, 2 or 3 qualifications in British Sign Language.

Students regularly perform whole school songs with sign language, cultivating a school environment that promotes inclusivity, strong communication skills and togetherness. The teaching of BSL across the whole school supports the integration of hearing-impaired children into the school community, and allows all students to communicate with each other successfully and participate in

a range of creative and interactive activities together.

In its most recent report on the school, Ofsted acknowledged All Faiths' brilliant incorporation of BSL into the curriculum and commented on the school's inclusivity:

"Pupils are proud to 'think inclusively' as they approach their learning and their daily lives. They thoroughly enjoy learning British Sign Language (BSL). BSL is taught to all pupils in the school. As a result, pupils are confident to communicate with one another. Pupils who are hearing-impaired and deaf are fully integrated into the life of the school."

All Faiths also has its own special resource provision for deaf and hearing-impaired pupils, Tree Tops. Tree Tops provides pupil-centred teaching, offering a broad and balanced, language-rich curriculum which is differentiated to meet the needs of each individual.

Tree Tops facilitates the development of each individual student into confident and independent learners.

Special shout-out to Tree Tops' very own Tayah Smith, who recently appeared on BBC Children in need as part of the Vision Junior Signing Choir! This was an incredible opportunity for Tayah. We are all very proud of Tayah for her performance and excited to have seen her on television! All Faiths Children's Academy works incredibly hard to equip all pupils with the tools that they need to be their best selves and broaden their horizons. The teaching of BSL to all students and the ability it gives them to communicate with others is just part of All Faiths' commitment to transforming life chances and building their cultural capital.



Rochester Grammar alumnus thanks school after graduating from university

Rochester Grammar School has an impressive alumni, who they love to hear from after they have left. A prime example is past student Annie O'Neill, who recently graduated from the University of Greenwich in London with a First-Class Honours degree in Midwifery.

This is a fantastic accomplishment for Annie, especially as she would've been studying during the height of the pandemic, facing challenges many student midwives wouldn't have had to face before. Annie attributes the education she received and the support from sixth form staff at The Rochester Grammar School as the main reasons for her studying midwifery and, ultimately, obtaining this incredible result.

Clare Brinklow, Principal of Rochester Grammar School, said, "We know Annie well and are all so pleased for her. This is an incredible achievement - she has set a wonderful example for our students."

It has been a difficult time these past two years, so it has been wonderful to see all of the students at The Rochester Grammar rising to the challenge. They excelled in their exam results last summer and continue to work to their fullest potential in the classroom or, at times, remotely.

We are very proud of all our students across the Trust and wish Annie all the best in her new endeavour as she starts work at Medway Hospital.





THINKING SCHOOLS
ACADEMY TRUST
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The Thinking Schools Academy Trust
Park Crescent, Chatham, Kent, ME4 6NR

T: +44 (0) 333 360 2000

E: info@tsatrust.org.uk

www.tsatrust.org.uk

Registered company number: 7359755