

# OUR TRUST

CHILDREN FIRST, ASPIRE, CHALLENGE, ACHIEVE



THINKING  
SCHOOLS  
ACADEMY TRUST

SUMMER 2018 | ISSUE 7



WORLD CLASS  
IB RESULTS

GOODWIN ACADEMY  
TO JOIN OUR TRUST

SIGNING AND SINGING CHOIRS  
ACHIEVE IN NATIONAL FINALS

LEADING PARENT PARTNERSHIP  
AWARD, OFSTED SUCCESS AND  
THINKING SCHOOL ACCREDITATIONS

TRANSFORMING LIFE CHANCES



# WELCOME MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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Welcome to the summer edition of “Our Trust”.

You will only have to peruse the pages of this edition to see the amazing work that has taken place in our Trust during the last few months. Whilst academic outcomes are a critical part of our mission to transform life chances, we also know that the wider school experiences children receive play an important role in developing our pupils. Therefore, I am pleased that as a Trust we have already confirmed excellent academic outcomes in our Key Stage 1 and International Baccalaureate results this summer at the same time as celebrating so many extra-curricular activities and successes.

As we finish the academic year we have hit our target of having 10 “Thinking Schools” accredited by Exeter University, representing a third of all accredited “Thinking Schools”. We truly are a sector leader and champion for a metacognitive approach to education.

I am very excited about the work Hanna Miller, Trust Lead for Metacognition and Thinking, is leading next year with several pilot schools involved in a project to personalise our understanding and use of metacognition at an individual level through a “Thinking Mastery” programme. Through this project, we will support all members of our community to become consciously competent cognitions able to think about their thinking, be their best and shape their successes.

Thank-you to all the members of our Trust who make such a difference to the lives of the children in our schools.

*Stuart Gardner*

Stuart Gardner, MSc, NPQH, NLE  
Chief Executive Officer

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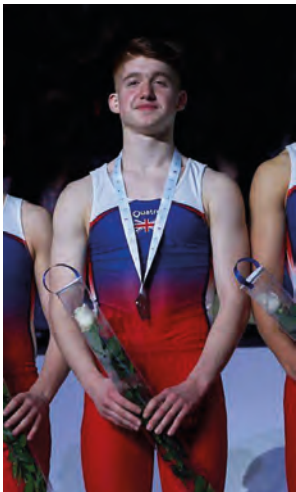
# SPORTING SENSATIONS

## GREAT BRITAIN 2018 TRAMPOLINE EUROPEAN SILVER MEDALLISTS

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Peter, a Holcombe Grammar School pupil, has had a very successful time in Azerbaijan at the 2018 European Championships. The junior men's team secured a team silver at the event for Great Britain, placing them in the top five nations.

In the individual event Peter was one of three gymnasts to help qualify Great Britain a place to this year's Youth Olympic Games.



## 10 PINS TO SUCCESS

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The Holcombe Grammar School continue to support their pupils to achieve in their sporting endeavours.

Joseph, a pupil at the school, has been awarded as a gold medal winner at the Under 18s Inter-Counties Championships, held in Kent, having competed in Torquay previously where he won a gold medal in the doubles.

Previous to that, Joseph has taken part in a competition in Denmark, where despite getting off to a shaky start he managed to finish 12th overall in the singles which was a triumphant result with 90 bowlers competing.



## TSAT PRIMARY GAMES 2018

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Taking part in group sports is a great way to keep fit, build confidence and develop team skills. This was evident when the Trust's primary schools came together at The Victory Academy, during May, as part of the TSAT Primary Games 2018.

Every pupil competed with determination to win the title and take first place for their school, with the overall winners being the pupils at The Gordon Children's Academy.

Spectators, pupils and school staff really enjoyed the event and are looking forward to next year when they return to take on this year's champions.

Congratulations to everyone involved!



# VICTORY STUDENT WINS 'BEST FOOTBALL BLOG' AWARD

Zac Bell, a Year 13 student at The Victory Academy, did the double as his blog 'Anfield Edition' scooped two prizes at the Football Blogging Awards, held at Alexandra Palace this year and sponsored by Sky Sports. The annual ceremony was launched to recognise some of the most creative blogs from around the world.

Nominated in the category 'Best New Football Blog', Zac won both the Fans' Award and the Judges' Award. Zac said, "I was proud to win the Judges' Award in particular, as it was not a result of a public vote and I felt this was a true representation of how far the website has come since I started it in 2016. The only downside was having to tell Neil 'Razor' Ruddock that I had to leave early as Aqib Uddin (my driver) and I both had revision for our A Levels at school the next morning."

Zac's friends, family and the school are very proud of what he has achieved and The Victory Academy feel sure that these are the first awards of many to come.



## HAMPSHIRE SCHOOL GAMES

Meon Junior school have taken part in the largest school sporting event in the county, where over 3,000 pupils took part.

They sent a couple of teams to challenge other schools in the county, taking part in Tri-Golf and Tennis.

With so many pupils taking part, it wasn't going to be easy and they should be proud of their achievements, coming 13th in Tri-Golf and 15th in Tennis overall.



## ALL FAITHS CHILDREN'S ACADEMY RECEIVE SILVER QUALITY MARK AWARD

All Faiths Children's Academy are delighted to announce that they have achieved the 'School Games Silver Quality Mark Award for 2017/18'.

The School Games Mark is a Government led award scheme launched in 2012, facilitated by the Youth Sport Trust to reward schools for their commitment to the development of competition across their school and into the community.



As part of the application, they were asked to fulfil criteria in the areas of participation, competition, workforce and clubs.

They are extremely pleased that all of the hard work and commitment of everyone at the school has been rewarded with the 'School Games Silver Quality Mark'.



## PUPILS LAUNCH DR SEUSS-INSPIRED BOOK AT CEDAR CHILDREN'S ACADEMY

Pupils from Cedar Children's Academy and The Victory Academy have collaborated to launch an exciting story book on thinking skills.

'The 6 Seeds of Cedar', which contains beautiful illustrations and written stories in the rhyming style of American author and poet Dr Seuss, was created by Year 5 pupils at Cedar Children's Academy, having been mentored by their Year 10 colleagues from The Victory Academy.

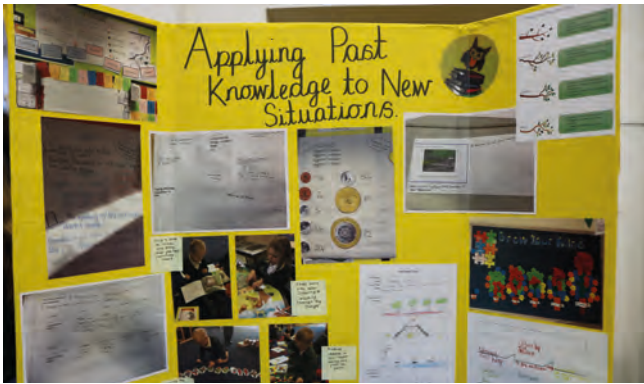
Both schools are part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, which promotes critical thinking and habits of mind as part of its innovative 'Thinking School' approach.

The '6 seeds' in the book represent six habits of mind

which were carefully selected for pupils at Cedar Children's Academy so they could become efficient and effective thinkers.

At the launch, staff and parents spoke with the pupils who had authored and illustrated the book, and pupils from The Victory Academy performed a dance they had choreographed based on Dr Seuss' work. The choir at Cedar Children's Academy then treated guests to songs about different habits of mind.

The Victory Academy's important role in the book coincides with it becoming the Trust's sixth school in the South-East to achieve the prestigious 'Thinking School' accreditation from Exeter University's Cognitive Education Development Unit.



“ Grace Skelton, Assistant Headteacher at Cedar Children’s Academy, said:

We completely underestimated the quality of the finished product our pupils would create, and we now have an amazing book of stories and characters that are meaningful to our school, and will help greatly in the development of habits of mind.

Everyone here really appreciates the hard work and support that The Victory Academy have offered in helping our pupils to foster critical and creative skills.

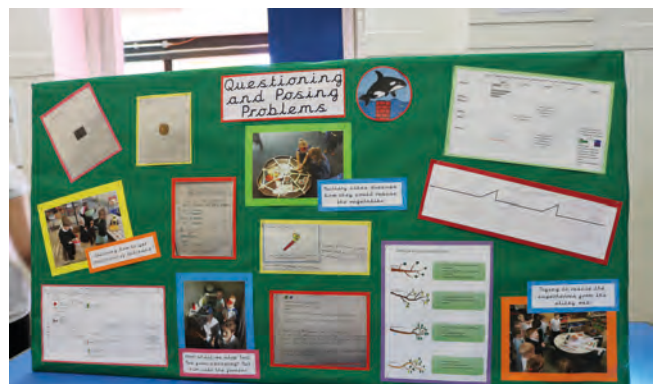
This has been an excellent Trust collaboration that has really benefited both schools involved, and we cannot wait to start using the characters and stories from the book in lessons.”

“ Carley Dawkins, Head of Creative Arts at The Victory Academy, said:

We are so proud of our pupils for the creativity, hard work, and excitement for learning they have shown in the creation of ‘The 6 Seeds of Cedar’.

It was absolutely wonderful to observe our Year 10 pupils helping and supporting younger children from Cedar Children’s Academy, guiding them in the development of their thinking skills.

Working collaboratively across our Trust has allowed pupils and staff to share their great talents with one another, and we are very excited about working together on new projects in future.”



# TRUST SPELLING BEE COMPETITION

It may have been the last week of term for Medway schools, but this didn't stop the spelling teams rising to the challenge to compete against each other in the Spelling Bee Final.

Cedar Children's Academy, The Gordon Children's Academy, All Faiths Children's Academy and New Horizons Children's Academy took to their seats, with each school having four team members except for New Horizons Children's Academy's whose team only had three due to there not being a Year 6 cohort.

The teams poised, ready for each of the five rounds they would undertake. The rounds were: 'National Curriculum Words', 'Anagrams', 'Homophones', 'Challenging Words' and 'How Many Words in a Minute?' As the rounds unfolded the teams demonstrated their excellent ability to spell, solve anagrams and recognise and spell homophone words that have the same pronunciation but with different spellings and meanings.

During each round, it was difficult to work out who would win overall as the points were so close and team positions kept changing. There was a real air of

enjoyment as the audience watched in anticipation as to who would take the glorious trophy.

As the final round came to a close, the points were tallied and the results were announced. The teams were on the edge of their seats as were the staff and audience of children. With only a couple of points between each team, All Faiths Children's Academy were triumphant, taking the prestigious trophy.

All of the pupils taking part were awarded a certificate and badge for their hard work and determination.

The Spelling Bee competition is a great example of pupils in our Trust's schools coming together to compete, showing their knowledge and building in confidence.

Congratulations to everyone who took part and to Rosie Havinden, English Lead at Cedar Children's Academy, and English coordinators from participating schools for arranging this successful competition for the pupils in our Medway primary schools.





# STROOD SCHOOLS RECEIVE ESTEEMED “THINKING SCHOOL” AWARDS

Cedar Children’s Academy and The Gordon Children’s Academy are thrilled to have been accredited as “Thinking Schools” by the University of Exeter.

Exeter University’s Cognitive Education Development Unit has highlighted the shared philosophy championed by our Trust, which sponsors both schools. Central to this philosophy is transforming life chances by actively shaping the minds and habits of young people using cognitive education.

Research has repeatedly demonstrated that when children understand how their brains work, they can achieve better academic and personal outcomes. Cedar and Gordon joined the Thinking Schools Academy Trust in June 2016 and March 2014 respectively, and have embraced the Trust’s innovative cognitive approach.

The reports highlight a wide range of strengths at both schools, including:

- Parents seeing great improvements in their children’s confidence and competence
- Reading, writing and maths improving consistently
- An ethos of excellence and instilling a passion of love for learning
- Pupils are provided with an education giving them the life chances they deserve
- Staff, governing bodies, and the Trust play a pivotal role in pupil development



**“** Sarah Edwards, Headteacher at The Gordon Children’s Academy, said:  
We are all very proud to have been accredited as a ‘Thinking School’.

Staff and pupils at our school use the ‘Thinking’ tools daily to develop cognitive thinking in an enjoyable educational environment.”



**“** Kirstie Jones, Headteacher at Cedar Children’s Academy, said:  
The ‘Thinking School’ accreditation is a wonderful achievement by all involved at Cedar Children’s Academy.

Our pupils are considerate, enthusiastic, determined, assured and resilient thinkers and learners that have benefitted greatly by using ‘Thinking’ tools in their day to day learning.”

**“** Stuart Gardner, Chief Executive of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, said:  
This is a brilliant milestone for Cedar Children’s Academy and The Gordon Children’s Academy – staff and pupils at both schools should be very proud that their hard work has been recognised.

We pride ourselves on using a cognitive approach to education to offer our students the very best opportunities, and this accreditation is testament to that.”



## NATIONAL SIGNING CHOIR COMPETITION WIN FOR ALL FAITHS CHILDREN'S ACADEMY

Pupils at All Faiths Children's Academy are celebrating after taking the top spot at the National Signing Choir Competition – the UK's premier contest for sign language choirs.

The All Faiths Revolutionaries entered their very first competition at professional level – and went on to bring home the title.

'Signing Choirs' are choirs that sing with their hands in British Sign Language (BSL) rather than with their voices, while telling a visual story behind the song they are performing using their hands, body and facial expressions.

The accolade was won with an inspired and energetic

performance of Justin Timberlake's "Can't Stop the Feeling" and a sign language version of "I Believe" by Yolanda Adams. Judges for the competition included Fletch (Jayne Fletcher, the Sign2Sing star), Dr Paul Whittaker OBE, and Mr Andrew Higgins.

With the third National Signing Choir Competition due to take place in March 2019, the Revolutionaries have already started practising two brand new songs, preparing to defend their title as champions.

The group has previously performed in a stage show production with Revolution Signing Choir and Sparks of Creation dance company, and have publicly showcased their Christmas selection, including a unique and original version of the "Twelve Days of Christmas". Established in September 2017, the group was created as a partnership between All Faiths Children's Academy and Revolution.

Parents and carers have highly praised the 'Signing Choir' for providing children an outlet to express themselves.



Cormac Murphy, Headteacher at All Faiths Children's Academy, said:

We are all very proud of the All Faiths Revolutionaries and their hugely well-deserved accolade.

Every day we are privileged to see our pupils take on new opportunities, to persevere and succeed in an ever-changing world.”





Adam Jessup-Smithers, All Faiths Revolutionaries (AFR) leader, said:

There are no words to describe how proud I am of the AFR – their commitment and dedication has been second to none.

The fact that the children preferred to attend lunchtime practices to perfect their performance, rather than run around outside, shows they are truly worthy winners of the title they now hold.”



## DUKE OF EDINBURGH ROYAL VISIT

With our Trust becoming one of the first multi-academy trusts in the country to be given a Duke of Edinburgh’s (DofE) Award licence, it was a natural course of events that Honey, one of Portsmouth Academy’s DofE Bronze pupils and Mr. Smith (BSO and DofE Manager) had the pleasure to go to UTC Portsmouth to attend a DofE Royal visit.

Honey reported on the day and said: “We were asked to come along with other schools that are starting the DofE or restarting.

“When we first got there, we were introduced to everyone as they came in, all of which were lovely and welcoming. When Prince Edward came in, we moved to the tea table and had tea, coffee, and a wide variety of cakes and scones.

“After we stopped for a break, the Prince came over to us and asked questions. He asked me ‘what I was doing in the Duke of Edinburgh awards and why I was doing it?’ I have to say it wasn’t as frightening as I thought it was going to be, he was approachable and very easy to talk to.

“After talking to the Prince, we went into the sports hall and saw what the other schools were already doing in the awards, from watching a snippet performance of *Beauty and the Beast* to seeing a lizard-type creature called Blue, everything was memorable in its own way.

“To conclude, the event is one of the best things I have ever taken part in, and I would jump at the chance to take part in another event like this in the future.”



# TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE: PORTSMOUTH MP WELCOMED BACK AT FORMER SCHOOL

Penhale Infant School celebrated a special moment last week as it welcomed Portsmouth South MP – and former pupil – Stephen Morgan for a visit.

Pupils and staff were delighted to offer their local MP a full tour of the school he used to call his own – after it recently joined our Trust at the beginning of April.

By joining the Trust, Penhale has strengthened its ties with nearby Newbridge Junior School and The Portsmouth Academy, offering parents a clear curriculum pathway to secondary school and benefitting from shared best practice across the Trust. The school, in the heart of Fratton, is rated Good by Ofsted.

The new MP toured his former school and met with pupils to see for himself the positive impact the move to our Trust is having across teaching and learning.

He also met with senior leaders at the school and Trust, including Kate Keller, Headteacher of Penhale Infant School, Stuart Gardner, CEO of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, and Claire Stevens, the Trust’s Director of Primary Education.

They discussed the benefits of Penhale becoming embedded in the ‘Thinking Schools’ philosophy, which enhances the cognitive capacities and learning habits of pupils. Pupils are supported to develop ‘thinking skills’, which help them shape their own cognitive habits to improve learning.



Kate Keller, Principal of Penhale Infant School, said:

It has been a terrific day for us at Penhale Infant School – it is not every day that a former pupil returns as a Member of Parliament. It was wonderful to host Mr Morgan, and the children were delighted to have such an eminent visitor.

We are delighted to embark on the Thinking Schools journey, and to offer Mr Morgan the chance to witness for himself the benefits, including the cognitive approach to learning encouraged by the Trust. We are very excited for the future and look forward to staying in touch with Mr Morgan.”



Stephen Morgan, Member of Parliament for Portsmouth South, said:

It has been a brilliant trip down memory lane re-visiting my former school in Fratton, and I would like to thank the pupils and staff at Penhale for welcoming me back.

It was excellent to see for myself the transformation Penhale is undergoing by joining the Trust, including some of the innovative teaching and learning methods used. I look forward to seeing it go from strength to strength as it serves our community.”



# NCHANT REACH BARNARDOS NATIONAL YOUTH CHOIR FINALS

NChant, Rochester Grammar School’s choir, were delighted to have been chosen to compete in Barnardos National Youth Choir Competition Final 2018 at the Royal Festival Hall, after having sent two recorded songs back in October. They were selected to be in the final with five other senior school choirs, having competed against 400 choirs that had entered the competition.

The choir were in good spirits’ singing some popular music together as a warm up on their journey to the festival. On arrival there was a real buzz around the foyer of the concert hall as other choirs gathered. After a short warm-up session they stepped onto the fantastic stage at the Royal Festival Hall to perform for

the Judges. Nerves and excitement filled the choir, but with professionalism they sang brilliantly.

After a break at a local pizza restaurant, the vocal finalists returned to the Royal Festival Hall for a rehearsal with the other choirs who had also qualified for their place in the finals, to rehearse two joint songs. NChant enjoyed the different experience of singing with other voices especially with male voices!

They all had a really great time singing their hearts out and despite being exhausted afterwards, they had the greatest of pleasure to represent Rochester Grammar School.



# A DAY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

The University of Portsmouth recently opened its doors to the children of Portsmouth for a ‘Mini-University Experience’. Year 6 pupils at Newbridge Junior School spent the day taking part in a mini-lecture based around an academic subject; a tour of the University where the pupils saw a selection of the University’s first-class facilities; and a whole-class graduation ceremony where they wore gowns and mortar board hats and received their own graduation certificates.

The University of Portsmouth’s UP for Juniors team

organise for 1900 children from schools in and around Portsmouth, to visit during the month of June and early July every year. The team aims to encourage children to think about their futures, increase their confidence levels, understand how higher education works and above all, raise their aspirations.

Newbridge’s pupils returned from their trip to the University of Portsmouth, embraced by the experience and feeling inspired and excited about the possibilities that their futures may hold for them.

# RESIDENTIAL ROUND-UP

Thirty of Isambard Brunel Junior School's (IBJS) Year 5 pupils visited Newland Park near Watford for their annual residential trip. They took part in various activities including hover boarding, karting and zorbing, testing their concentration and physical abilities while applying habits of mind. During the residential trip they had time to relax around a camp fire and show of their dance moves at the disco.

Staff were all impressed with how they all took part in the activities and the exceptional way in which the pupils represented the school with excellent behaviour.



Newland Residential Trip, Y5, IBJS

Year 5 pupils at Meon Junior School (MJS) have been to Stubbington Study Centre, situated on the beautiful Hampshire coast, for their residential trip.

The pupils enjoyed a fun packed week studying small animals at the centre's pond, course mapping, building shelters and completing an earthquake course.

Year 6 pupils visited the Safari Village, staying in tents, taking part in various activities including quad biking, arial adventure and an obstacle course.

The residential trips are an important part of developing character, bonding with peers and putting into practice the skills and knowledge they gain in and away from school.



Stubbington Residential Trip, Y5, MJS



Safari Village Residential Trip, Y6, MJS

All Faiths Children's Academy (AFCA) Year 4 pupils went to Kingswood, a residential adventure centre in Ashford.

Learning the benefits of pushing themselves to try new things and the importance of working together as a team.



Kingswood Residential Trip, Y4, AFCA

Year 4 pupils from New Horizons Children's Academy (NHCA) had an amazing time on their Residential trip to Kingswood's Activity Centre, Grosvenor Hall in Ashford.

Once the pupils arrived they had the opportunity to participate in a range of outdoor activities designed to encourage team building and promote physical exercise.

They had so much fun and were really brave trying new and different activities – the same can be said for the adults that went along with them. Having already booked again for next year, their current Year 3s can't wait to rise to the challenge.



Kingswood Residential Trip, Y4, NHCA

The residential trip for Year 6 pupils at The Gordon Children's Academy (GCA) was a fantastic celebration of their habits, but in particular, bravery and collaboration.

The trip took place at Kingswood Activity Centre, where the pupils threw themselves into a variety of physical and mental challenges, using teamwork to support each other. One of the activities involved building a 'sea worthy' raft capable of sailing 12 people across the a lake.

There was also a defining moment of teamwork and bonding when one pupil taught another how to swim and from there on the two having similar interests became friends.



Kingswood Residential Trip, Y6, GCA

Newbridge Junior School (NJS) pupils have had an enjoyable time at Fairthorne for their residential trip, taking part on the zip line, kayaking and parents were invited to sit around the camp fire, eating marshmallows and singing songs.



Fairthorne Residential Trip, Y6, NJS

# ROCK CHALLENGE 2018

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Our schools provide and take part in a multitude of events where their pupils can develop their abilities and grow in confidence. These events can include end of year shows and taking part in musical and dance competitions where pupils dedicate their time to learning lines, songs and working on choreographed dance pieces. This year, The Portsmouth Academy have taken part in the Rock Challenge 2018 competition where anybody can audition, no matter what their abilities are.

Pupils from their Year 10 dance company teach a small motif which the auditionees can then add their own dance moves to. They are then arranged into groups by the staff and dance company depending on their dance style and given the theme for the dance which was 'Scattered Seeds'.

During the weeks leading up to the main event, the groups rehearse their dances choreographed to their choice of music while costumes are designed and made to fit.

The pupils aware that the heats are moving ever closer, polished their dance routines, focusing on perfection and timing. As they returned to school in the final term they were taught the finale dance, choreographed by the dance company.

They were the first to rehearse on the day at the Rock Challenge competition heats with all schools being very supportive and kind. Isabelle, a Year 9 student at The Portsmouth Academy, said: "The whole day's experience was amazing where you got to see other schools do their rehearsals and cheer them on. There were also a lot of times where we could just free dance".

Pupils performed to the best of their abilities that night with visual expression, ensuring their timing and movement was impeccable. They had spent months working on their dance pieces and having changed back into their own clothes they entered the auditorium to hear the winning groups' announcement. They were ecstatic as they had won 13/15 awards, placed second overall and were go to regionals.

Performing at the regional finals, which were very similar to the heats, they were proud with what they had achieved. The dance group were triumphant and received many awards including 'Spirit of Rock Challenge', 'Excellence in Drama', 'Excellence in Set Design and Function' and 'Excellence for Entertainment'. Not expecting to win a place in the final, they were euphoric to be announced as second place winners.

Thank you to Isabelle, Year 9 pupil at The Portsmouth Academy, for her editorial piece on the Rock Challenge 2018 competition.





## READING THROUGH TIME

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Year 5 at New Horizons Children's Academy know that there is narrative to be found in absolutely everything. There is narrative in literature, narrative in history and there is no shortage of narrative at the football World Cup finals. Through a trust collaboration with next door neighbours, Holcombe Grammar School – they have managed to combine them all.

Through the National Literacy Trust, celebrated author Tom Palmer has released a chapter a day of his live World Cup story Defenders: Russia. Pupils have been gripped by the thrilling travel through time to Russia 100 years ago and events in the story hinging on 2018 football results as they happen.



Tom Palmer is no stranger to the intervention group who come in early before school every week to share their reading experiences. As the group have exchanged books by their new favourite authors (from Bali Rai to Mal Preet) and taken part in workshop activities, so they have embraced a shared love of reading for pleasure.

The pupils received certificates, sent by Tom Palmer, as acknowledgment of their dedication.

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## NATIONAL WRITING DAY 2018

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To celebrate National Writing Day, pupils at Holcombe were 'let loose' and encouraged to free write.

Pupils from across the school were given access to images and phrases as possible stimuli to enable them to write purely for pleasure.

The English and Media Centre embraced the work sent to them during the day as young Holcombe writers 'went live'. Pupils were delighted to see pictures of their work shared to the nation with plaudits for their originality and writer's craft.





## THE PORTSMOUTH ACADEMY PUPILS ENLIST LOCAL MP IN PLASTICS CAMPAIGN

Pupils at The Portsmouth Academy (TPA) were excited to share their pioneering efforts to reduce plastics with their MP on Friday.

TPA's Debate Team has spearheaded an impressive drive to reduce plastics at the school – and lead the way on this key environmental issue in Portsmouth.

Pupils aged 12 to 14 at the school, which is part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, have launched a raft of measures, including:

- Joining forces with the school's caterer, ISS, to work towards eliminating all plastics – ISS has led the way on this by ensuring all its packaging is compostable and environmentally safe, and shared their expertise with pupils
- Organising litter picks at school and on the beach
- Presenting to the whole school on the impact of plastic waste and challenging fellow pupils to adopt eco-friendly measures, such as banning all Tetra Pak packaging and developing eco-gardens
- Working with Go 4 Set to design an eco factory
- Working with younger pupils who have studied plastics pollution in Geography
- Sharing their work with other local schools as an example of best practice

Inspired by the plastics challenges faced by their local area – such as litter on Southsea beaches – they seized the opportunity to share their efforts with MP for Portsmouth South Stephen Morgan on Friday 29th June.

After updating him on their work to date, they asked his advice on how to take the campaign to the wider community, and quizzed him on his day-to-day work as a Member of Parliament.

Mr Morgan also visited the school as part of the Vote 100 campaign celebrating the centenary of votes for women. In addition to the plastics campaign, Mr Morgan celebrated equality with an 'Equalitea' afternoon tea – to mark 100 years since the 1918 Representation of the People Act.

“

Natalie Sheppard, Principal of The Portsmouth Academy, said:

I am so proud of the fantastic initiative shown by our pupils on this critical issue – they have single-handedly united the school behind their drive to reduce plastics.

Their inspiring efforts demonstrate what we tell our pupils every day – that every young person has the power to effect change. I cannot wait to see what they will go on to achieve next.

We were very pleased to welcome Stephen Morgan MP and offer him the opportunity to witness our pupils' resourcefulness, and are very grateful to him for making time to visit us.”



“

Stephen Morgan, Member of Parliament for Portsmouth South, said:

I am delighted to have visited The Portsmouth Academy to see how pupils at the school are having a real impact with their important campaign to reduce plastics.

It is a privilege to meet pupils who are so passionate about a cause which benefits the whole community. It was a real joy to hear about their continuing efforts, as well as celebrating the centenary of votes for women – all in all, a brilliant day to see democracy in action.”



## THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST TO BECOME SPONSOR OF GOODWIN ACADEMY

Goodwin Academy will be sponsored by Thinking Schools Academy Trust from September 1st, the Department for Education has announced.

Our Trust which sponsors 14 academies in Medway and in Portsmouth, has a superb track record of ensuring that our schools are secure financially, achieve excellent academic results, and are popular with parents. We are pioneering an innovative “Thinking School” approach to enhance pupils’ cognitive capabilities and learning habits, and are rated by the Government as the leading trust in the country for progress made by pupils in the GCSE performance tables this year. Our Trust has also been short-listed to be education Employer of the Year in the 2018 TES Awards.

Goodwin Academy, a secondary school in Deal, has been transformed in recent years. It has stunning new facilities, while academic standards, teaching and behaviour are all on the up.



**Simon Smith, the Principal of Goodwin Academy, said:**

I am delighted that Thinking Schools Academy Trust is to be the new sponsor. They are an excellent trust and I am looking forward to drawing on their expert support and input as we continue Goodwin Academy’s journey of improvement.

Goodwin Academy has a deserved reputation as a pupil-centred school that gives young people the very best opportunities, provides a broad and balanced curriculum, and helps ensure pupils achieve the best outcomes possible. This vision is strengthened by the news that TSAT will become Goodwin’s sponsor in the autumn.”



**Stuart Gardner, the Chief Executive of Thinking Schools, said:**

The Thinking Schools Academy Trust is a successful trust underpinned by a commitment to transform the life chances of our pupils. We have a strong educational vision of fully integrated thinking schools, outstanding and driven leaders, dedicated teachers and support staff backed by a committed team of governors.

We are looking forward to working with the pupils, staff and parents at Goodwin Academy to build on its solid foundations and continue its ongoing improvement.”



**Angela Barry, Interim Chief Executive of SchoolsCompany Trust since the start of the calendar year, said:**

Over the last few months, our work has focused on stabilising the finances of the school, and the decision by the Department for Education and the Regional Schools Commissioner to appoint Thinking Schools as the new sponsor assures Goodwin Academy’s future. This is a very new, and exciting, chapter for Goodwin Academy.”

# ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

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The last two terms of the academic year are always busy, with tests and exams taking place at primary and secondary schools. Pupils aware that they are approaching the end of the year are wondering what the following year will bring forth and looking forward to a well-deserved break.

Staff at our schools continue to provide an excellent “Thinking” education to their pupils, building valuable relationships and providing support as pupils strive to become all-rounded individuals, defining their own destinies.

Each term we have recognised and celebrated the commitment our staff deliver daily and this has amalgamated to an overall winner for this academic year.

We are grateful to each and every member of staff at our schools and thank them for their continued support in transforming life chances for our pupils.

## TERM 5 WINNER

Kelly Bromley, ELSA at Isambard Brunel Junior School, has worked relentlessly to support pupils with their social and emotional needs. She is most flexible, adapting her work in order to work in partnership with SLT and to adopt new approaches to supporting pupils.



Always open to acquiring new techniques and skills, working innovatively to secure the best outcomes for pupils. Kelly always maintains a calm, positive and approachable manner and is recognised as a role model for young people.

## TERM 6 WINNER

Lorna Dore, Lunchtime Supervisor at Meon Junior School, has taken on extra responsibilities due to the absence of their senior lunchtime supervisor and other staff shortages during the lunchtime period.



Through her hard work and commitment, lunch time routines have not been disrupted. She has arrived early and left late on many occasions and gone above and beyond to ensure lunchtime runs smoothly.

## 2017-2018 WINNER

Kayla White, French and Geography Teacher at The Victory Academy, has worked tirelessly and proactively to support her pupils and colleagues. During the last half-term Kayla created amazing revision resources for her Year 11s and ensured that support was in place to enable additional language pupils sitting their exams to feel prepared and ready.

She has helped out with every initiative, welcoming staff and visitors into her lessons, running additional revision sessions for pupils, and is reinvigorating the teaching of languages in the Academy, ensuring demand is higher than ever.

Kayla's persistent hard work and dedication to her pupils is inspiring. She often goes above and beyond to ensure that her pupils get the best life chances. Kayla is an excellent role model with many turning to her for advice and support. Kayla is a true asset to the department and the school.





## WORLD-CLASS INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE RESULTS ACHIEVED AT THE ROCHESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Students at Rochester Grammar School are celebrating after they achieved world-class results in the International Baccalaureate (IB) this year – enabling them to win places at some of the best universities in the country and prestigious apprenticeships with leading firms.

A third of students achieved an outstanding 39 points or more (eight points above the world average and equivalent to gaining four A\*s at A level), and the majority of students won a place at their first-choice university, including Oxford, UCL, Imperial, Warwick and Durham.

Stand-out results included:

- Two students who will go to Oxford: Philippa Lang will read Linguistics at Oxford University after achieving 42 points and Anna Sharpe will read History at Oxford University after scoring 40 points
- Louisa Bodman, who scored 40 points and secured a highly sought-after apprenticeship with top accountancy firm Ernst and Young
- Kelsey Killick, who achieved 43 points, a score of 43 means Kelsey has numerous options and she is deciding which university at which to study psychology
- Abigail Page, who achieved 43 points, will now go on to study Anthropology at UCL

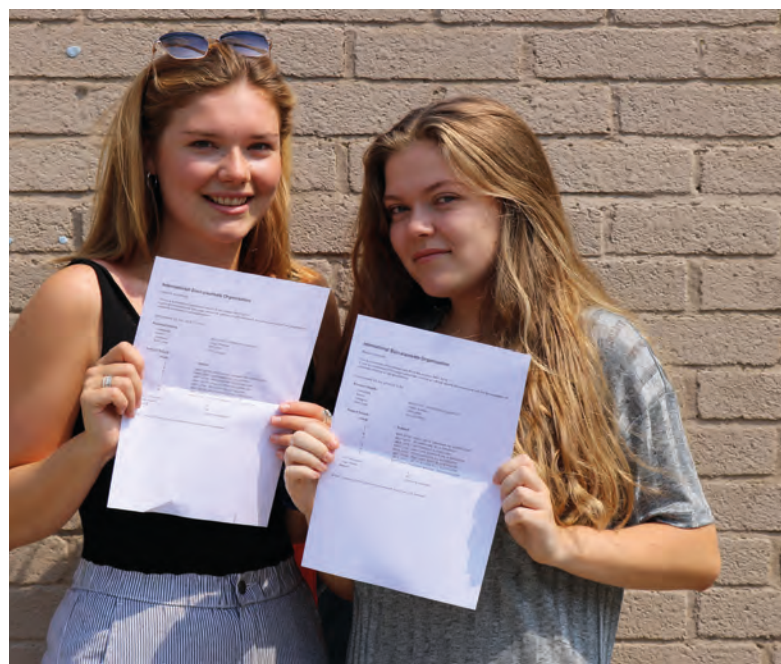
The IB, which this year marks its 50th birthday, is studied in the Sixth Form as an alternative to A levels, and has been offered at RGS for the last 11 years. Students must take six subjects, incorporating both sciences and humanities.



Clare Brinklow, Head of School at Rochester Grammar School, said:

I would like to congratulate our cohort of IB students for achieving such outstanding results in what is a world-leading qualification. They have worked incredibly hard, supported so well by their parents and our staff, and they deserve their success.

The IB encourages students to question issues deeply, and develops learners who have the capacity to engage with university-level material. The university places and apprenticeships that our IB students have secured this year demonstrate how the IB is a qualification which really opens doors for young people and sets them up for success in life. We are all very proud of them.”



# HOLCOMBE GRAMMAR SCHOOL PRAISED BY OFSTED

Pupils and staff at Holcombe Grammar School are celebrating after it was praised by Ofsted for its quality of teaching and learning and rated “Good”.

The report states that the progress and attainment of pupils continues to be “well above national averages”, praises the “culture of high expectations” and “inspiring curriculum” that has been fostered, and highlights the “positive impact” that pupils’ thinking skills are having on their education.

The school, in Letchworth Drive, Chatham, is part of the our Trust, pioneering an innovative “Thinking School” approach to enhance pupils’ cognitive capabilities and learning habits.

The report highlighted a number of other positives about the school:

- Governors, middle leaders, staff, and pupils share the school’s vision, as well as its leaders’ “commitment, dedication, and work ethic”
- Lessons are “engaging and challenging”, and enable pupils to improve as well as “develop their confidence, resilience, and desire to keep learning”
- The curriculum is “adapted to the needs, abilities, and interests of all pupils”, and the specific needs of disadvantaged and higher-attaining pupils are met
- Teachers have “strong subject knowledge” and “examination awareness”
- “Safeguarding is effective”, with pupils feeling “safe and secure” in the school
- A large majority of parents say their children are “happy and well looked after”
- Progress in the sixth form “continues to rise”
- “A range of extra-curricular activities promote personal development and welfare.”
- “Inclusive values” are fostered during form time and assembly, including “democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and an acceptance of different faiths and beliefs”



The glowing report follows the school’s recent academic success. In the Government’s secondary school league tables released in January, Holcombe Grammar School was ranked in the top 12% of schools nationally, achieving a Progress 8 score of 0.48 – which means its students achieve nearly half a GCSE grade better per subject than pupils of a similar ability nationally. Overall, 96% of students achieved the pass grade of Level 4 or above in English and Maths GCSE last year.



Gwynn Bassan, Executive Principal of Holcombe Grammar School, said:

We are very proud to have been rated ‘Good’ by Ofsted and to receive such praise across so many areas of school life.

Holcombe Grammar School’s continued success would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of teachers and pupils, as well as the ongoing support of parents – and I would like to thank everyone for the important part they have played.

We look forward to going from strength to strength over the coming years, and achieving many more successes.”



Stuart Gardner, Chief Executive of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, said:

I would like to congratulate everyone at Holcombe Grammar School for such a wonderful Ofsted report.

Pupils benefit from a vibrant, engaging educational setting in which they are able to flourish and achieve their potential, as shown by the levels of progress and attainment being well above national averages.

We are all very excited to see the school continue on its upward trajectory of success.”



## THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST SHORTLISTED FOR TES EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Thinking Schools Academy Trust, one of the country's leading multi-academy trusts, has been shortlisted to be Employer of the Year in the 2018 Schools Awards run by education magazine TES.

Thinking Schools, has been recognised for the progressive teacher pay structure it has developed alongside the National Education Union (NEU), transforming the way teachers are paid and helping to tackle the national challenge of teacher recruitment and retention.

The Trust attended the awards ceremony on Friday 22nd June at the Grosvenor House Hotel, in London, with an expected attendance of more than 1,000 VIP guests, including Government ministers and the great and good from the education world.

Thinking Schools' innovative pay structure has the following key strengths:

- Newly-qualified teachers are well-remunerated from the start, being guaranteed a minimum starting salary of £25,000 from September 2018 - over £2,000 above the national average
- Teachers only move up the main pay scale as a result of excellent teaching, creating a rewards-based culture
- Teachers at the top of the pay scale are rewarded for high performance through a three per cent non-consolidated pay award
- Bureaucratic barriers to teachers receiving proper awards are removed, and annual incremental increases are introduced, so teachers don't have to wait two years to be rewarded
- Teachers at different stages of their career are given tailored support and guidance, and there is a particular effort to help teachers in the first three years of their career



Stuart Gardner, Chief Executive of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, said:

We are absolutely delighted to have been nominated for Employer of the Year at the 2018 TES Schools Awards.

We put a huge amount of work into supporting our fantastic staff, and central to this has been our development of a new pay structure to transform the way they are paid. It will properly reward teachers for their hard work, and incentivise them to stay in the profession and with us – a simple yet powerful aim.

In fostering a financially secure and motivating environment for teachers, our new pay model directly benefits pupils through the excellent standard of teaching they will receive. And that is ultimately what our model is all about: ensuring students enjoy a classroom experience which enables them to achieve their best.

We are looking forward to continuing to develop our offer to staff to provide them the best platform to use their pupils in our schools, so that our pupils can thrive and achieve their potential.”

The awards, now in their 10th year, celebrate the extraordinary commitment, quality, and innovation shown by teachers and support staff across the UK.



# NEW HORIZONS CHILDREN'S ACADEMY RECEIVES THE LEADING PARENT PARTNERSHIP AWARD

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The New Horizons Children's Academy in Chatham has received the prestigious Leading Parent Partnership Award, having taken the lead in developing a cohesive foundation between the school and parents.

The school recognised by Ofsted as a "Good" school and recently becoming a "Thinking School" by the University of Exeter, has delivered on its commitment to support pupils and parents by understanding and taking on board their points of view to provide an all-round 'Thinking' education where parents are integral to the success of their children.

During the last 18 months their working party has provided parent workshops, introduced induction programmes for new pupils, enhanced communication between the school and parents and developed important links within the local community.

The Leading Parent Partnership gives schools a coherent framework to deliver effective parental engagement from early years to post-16, which can help schools improve pupil progress, punctuality, attendance and behaviour by involving parents in the process.

Parental engagement is one of the fundamental keys to sustaining and improving child wellbeing at and away from school and New Horizons has shown prowess in their commitment to work with parents.

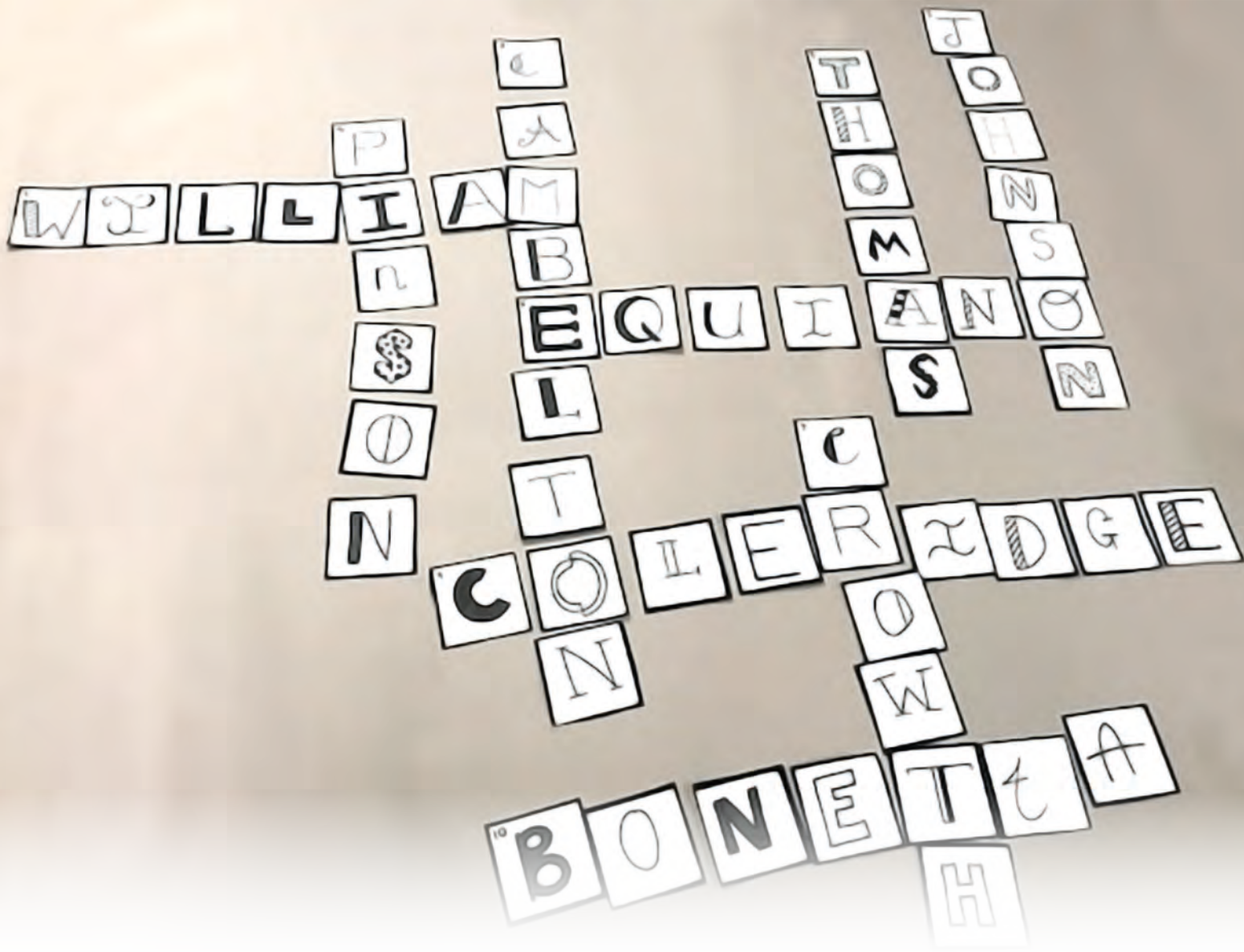


Jody Murphy, Headteacher at New Horizons Children's Academy, said:

It is great to recognise and share this award with our parents who are extremely supportive in the wellbeing and development of their children.

Juanita, working party lead, has worked hard with her team during the last 18 months and this award represents our drive to continue to understand and reflect on the thoughts of our parents.”





## BLACK HISTORY LIVE

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The Rochester Grammar School is thrilled to have continued their work with the Medway African and Caribbean Association and the Historic Dockyard this term on Black History Live.

Three elements of the Black History Live exhibition will be created and supported by the grammar school's pupils. The first is a giant magnetic crossword which will cover a whole wall and will be an interactive part of the exhibition. Pupils have also written historical biographies which will accompany images and some pupils have written and recorded monologues, which they may choose to perform live during the exhibition's run.

The year 8,9 and 10 pupils involved in the project have been enthusiastic and committed throughout and are proud to be part of such an important and ground breaking project in telling the untold stories of influential black people from Medway and Kent.

They are very much look forward to their orchestra and gospel choir performing at the launch of Black History Live and to seeing the exhibition complete and open to the public.

# MAIDSTONE UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB TO LAUNCH FOOTBALL ACADEMY ACROSS TWO TRUST SCHOOLS

The Victory Academy and Holcombe Grammar School are excited to announce a partnership with Maidstone United Football Club.

Maidstone Football Club have partnered with The Victory Academy and Holcombe Grammar School, to create a Medway satellite football academy for the club.

The Victory Academy with its established professional 3G pitch will be joined by Holcombe Grammar School with its new 3G pitch due for completion this September.

In addition to the 3G football pitches, both schools will continue to provide excellent sports facilities and onsite gyms that will provide pupils and the public with the facilities they need to live healthier lifestyles and strengthen community connections.

Students will be provided with professional football coaches and an excellent education while they study for their A Level and BTEC qualifications at two of the top performing schools in the Medway Towns.

This is the first Football Academy of its kind in the South East to be offered at both The Victory Academy and Holcombe Grammar School which is proud to count Chris Smalling, Manchester United Player and Former Maidstone United Player as one of its alumni.

In addition to excellent academic opportunities, students will have access to gain experience training at the club's Gallagher Stadium, gaining match day experience and working behind the scenes.

The partnership will provide students with a "Thinking" education that has a proven record of success for the family of schools within our Trust, while the students train to become England's football players of the future.



## NEW FOOTBALL ACADEMY! STARTS HERE SEPTEMBER 2018

- Maidstone United UEFA 'B' qualified coaches
- State of the art football facilities
- Excellent opportunity to represent Maidstone United Football Club in their National League U19 Alliance
- Progress your studies at two nationally recognised successful schools

Interested? Contact us today at [footballacademy@tsatrust.org.uk](mailto:footballacademy@tsatrust.org.uk)



THINKING  
SCHOOLS  
ACADEMY TRUST

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