

OUR TRUST

CHILD FIRST, ASPIRE, CHALLENGE, ACHIEVE



THINKING
SCHOOLS
ACADEMY TRUST

SUMMER 2021 | ISSUE 16

**LONG
SERVICE
AWARDS
2021**

one:one
FUTURE-PROOFING
OUR STUDENTS

**EARTH
ALLIANCE
STUDENT
CONFERENCE**

**MENTAL
HEALTH
AWARENESS
WEEK**

TRANSFORMING LIFE CHANCES



**Learning without reflection is a waste.
Reflection without learning is dangerous.**

Confucius

TRANSFORMING LIFE CHANCES

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WELCOME MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Welcome to the Summer 2021 edition of Our Trust!

This summer rounded off an academic year like no other. However, as you will see throughout the pages of this edition, the pandemic

hasn't stopped us in delivering an amazing educational offer for our students. We are immensely proud of all the fantastic activities that take place in our schools alongside the delivery of high quality cognitively based learning in the classroom. At our leadership Trust conference, we reflected on the extent of our ambition for the experience of the young people in our care and agreed that we should recognise and celebrate this through a stated desire to deliver Total Education.

Within the following pages you will see the breadth and scope of opportunities our students enjoy as part of their educational journey in our schools. Whether it is: racing as part of the Hummingbird Team at Plymouth High School for Girls; or showing off artistic skills in events such as The Festival of School and College Arts; or finding out what it is like to be a barrister in the Bar Mock Trial competition at Holcombe Grammar School or sharing a passion to save our planet during our Earth Alliance Group student conference, it quickly becomes clear that going to a Thinking Schools Academy Trust school is about much more than what is learnt in the classroom. It is about developing the whole person.

Of course, we rightly aspire to support every child achieve their personal best in the classroom as well as beyond it. Our cognitive approach is all about empowering our students to become effective learners with the tools to be successful. Our Year 11 and 13 students were assessed by their teachers, building a portfolio of evidence to support the grade they were awarded. We were delighted in the way our students rose to this challenge and achieved some fantastic outcomes, I can't put it better than the way our students expressed their thoughts: Emily said "I can't believe it, after such a turbulent year these results are better than I could have expected." Markus said "I feel delighted with my results today and I'm extremely thankful to my teachers for giving me so much support both during lockdown and when we returned to school." We also wanted to check that our Primary students had continued to make progress despite the turbulent year and so, whilst there were no official SATs, we decided to set Year 6 students a previous paper. We were delighted with how well the students performed and were very impressed with how students had continued to work and persevere with their learning so that they were ready for secondary school.

It is reflecting on this depth of ambition that has led us to recognise the totality of our vision for the development of young people in our schools, a vision and ambition for Total Education.

Please enjoy this copy of Our Trust.

Stuart Gardner

Stuart Gardner, MSc, NPQH, NLE
Chief Executive Officer

Long Service Awards

“It’s been a while”

Our first ever Long Service Awards come to a close for this year.

The launch of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust’s Long Service Awards was announced earlier this year, an exciting first for an initiative of this kind. The awards were all about recognising contributions and constant commitments to the Thinking Schools Academy Trust that has fast become a well-received and all-round celebrated event.

Stuart Gardner, CEO of Thinking Schools Academy Trust, said: “Our Trust is underpinned by you, our teams. Your efforts reinforce our values and your constant commitment supports our high standards and quality of the experiences students have when they join a Thinking School.”

There were amazing stories that were told during the award ceremonies that took place across the schools.

We celebrated over 530 members of staff who have worked at our Trust from 5 to 25 years!

The Victory Academy

The Victory raised a glass to over 35 members of staff who have remained committed to the school from 5 – 25 years, thanking them all for their hard work and dedication to the students they serve.



The Victory Academy

The Portsmouth Academy

There were 39 members of staff who celebrated their long service with The Portsmouth Academy, with long-time supporter and friend, MP Stephen Morgan, stopping by to hand out the certificates and offer his congratulations to the team. In the past 25 years these amazing long serving members of staff have seen so much, the change from all-girls to co-ed; the Aspire Building finalised and now in full use; the introduction of the one:one devices pilot scheme and so much more to come their way.



The Portsmouth Academy



The Portsmouth Academy

Goodwin Academy

Down in Deal, Goodwin Academy celebrated 63 members of staff, with one of their 25 year-long members of staff going on to retire. Don't worry the Long Service Award pin made it to her just in time!

Rahnie Smith started her career at Goodwin Academy, formally Castle Community School, in November 1991 as a Learning Support Assistant. In 1996 she was employed as an unqualified teacher gaining qualified teacher status through the graduate teacher program in November 2002. Since gaining QTS, Rahnie has had many roles including Teacher of English, Teacher of Health and Social Care, Head of Health and Social Care, Head of Sixth Form and then finally back to Head of Health and Social Care before retiring.

Rahnie's commitment to raising aspirations at Goodwin Academy has spanned two generations, and she is now in the position to be teaching the children whose parents she once cared for. Transforming life chances through developing students' belief in their right to the best future possible is what has made Rahnie an amazing teacher throughout her career.

She will be sorely missed by all staff, students, parents and carers at Goodwin Academy!

New Horizons Primary School

New Horizons Primary rolled out the red carpet and gave their fantastic team the 'Red Carpet Treatment' by means of a thank you for their long service to the school.

Kim Broadbent, Office Manager, said: "The staff thought it would be a normal Wednesday



New Horizons Primary School

morning, but instead were welcomed them through an arch of school-coloured balloons and to the tune of 'Celebrate' by Kool and the Gang, as they went on to strut their stuff on the red carpet!"

All the staff were very surprised and thrilled to be receiving their Long Service Awards, presented to them by Lucy Carroll, Headteacher, and the rest of the Senior Management Team. This was followed by a grab-and-go breakfast of pastries and juice for all staff.

Lucy Carroll said: "It was a fantastic way to start the day and all the staff were thrilled to feel acknowledged for their service and dedication to our wonderful school. Thank you to our Trust for the acknowledgement too, it's appreciated."





Dierdre at Cedar Children's Academy

Cedar Children's Academy

A whopping 43 members of staff have been at Cedar 5 years or more, with three hitting their 25-year milestone. Both Deirdre Hawkins and Linda Hayward, pictured receiving their awards with Headteacher, Kirstie Jones, and CEO, Stuart Gardner, have loved their time at the school.

Linda said: "As a mum who had children at the school, I only came in to read to some of the children. Before I knew it, I was a Teaching Assistant."

Deirdre's story was similar, starting as a Teaching Assistant she went on to focus on language development. Deirdre told us: "Seeing the look on a child's face when they are finally saying what they wanted to say AND they're being understood, is utterly priceless. I love my job. I've worked here so long now that I see the adults I used to teach at the gates, bring their little ones in!"



Linda at Cedar Children's Academy

New Horizons Children's Academy

Staff at New Horizons in Medway enjoyed the warm weather with a hog roast to recognise the dedication of staff that has seen the school grow its cohort of pupils since it first opened September 2014.



New Horizons Children's Academy



New Horizons Children's Academy

NEXT YEAR!

Names of long serving members of staff will be shared with line managers in January 2022, based on the length of service on September 1st 2021. With all of the amazing Long Service Awards taking place in the spring term.

LEAD FROM THE MIDDLE



THINKING HORIZONS MIDDLE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME CELEBRATES FIRST COHORT!

The Rochester Grammar School was proud to hold the Thinking Horizons Middle Leadership Programme Awards Ceremony in Term 6. Stuart Gardner, our Trust's CEO, Gwynn Bassan, Director of Education for the Kent hub and Thinking Horizons, and David Day, Leadership Coach, were all in attendance.

The afternoon was awash with reflection and excitement, fuelled by canapés and beverages. Speeches were given with David Day sharing each person's specific and personal achievement leading up to their award.

We had staff from across our Trust, with our Deal and Portsmouth counterparts celebrating on laptops, due to obvious restrictions.

The Thinking Horizons Middle Leadership programme is comprised of aspiring middle leaders who are the essential cogs in the

system that keep schools ticking over on a daily basis.

They act as the important, well-oiled hinges between senior leaders and classroom teachers, and are 'the engine room of sustainable change', so it is wonderful to see our future pool emerging.

Gwynn Bassan, Director of Education for Kent hub and Thinking Horizons, said: "Our first cohort have demonstrated a wide array of personal qualities, leadership strategies and management skills, and, rather excitingly, many of them have now succeeded at moving into middle leadership positions. Thinking Horizons will be advertising for the next round of Think Middle in the autumn term, so watch this space."



HUMMINGBIRDS TAKE FLIGHT

***THE PHSG TEAM
WORKED SO WELL
TOGETHER AND
THE RESULTS
WERE FLAWLESS***



It was Wednesday 16th June on the Naval airfield, Predannack, and 14 teams from across the southwest were at the racing start line waiting.

Every year the students at Plymouth High School for Girls work on the Hummingbird car getting it ready to race. This year the event was ran by the Greenpower Education Trust, a national charity promoting science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

Mr Thackray, Head of Physics, said: "The Greenpower Formula 24 challenge allows



our students to compete with teams from schools, universities, and businesses from across the UK and around the world - Covid permitting.”

As the Hummingbird team readied themselves, assisted by engineers from nearby RNAS Culdrose, they assessed the weight and shape of their car, deciding on the drivers laying as low as possible to ensure the car remained streamlined and ensuring they drove the car as smooth as possible. “It’s this kind of thinking”, said Mr Thackray, “which means that the girls’ learning extends way beyond the conventional curriculum: not just in science, engineering and mathematics, but in other life skills such as handling pressure, solving problems in a collaborative manner, and building strong interpersonal skills.”

The engineering team were careful to ensure no material was loose, the components were aligned and working correctly and with precision. The conditions of the track were carefully considered and the new drivers, along with the experienced pit and performance team, had to judge how quickly they could go while using the least amount of energy and negotiating the corners in the most efficient way to overtake competitors.

The communication between all the team

members is paramount to Hummingbirds success, and this race was no exception. The team quickly edged themselves into the top three with their biggest competitors. Driver Annabelle, Year 7, said: “I was so nervous to start off with, but it felt amazing and I loved every minute!” Dr Van Es, Science Teacher, added: “We are very proud of the achievements of the students in the 2021 team, who are building on the successes and lessons learned by other students over the past decade. Their commitment to this extracurricular activity is very impressive and all the students who are and have been involved are to be commended highly.”

Hummingbird’s dexterity to race on different surfaces was a key component for this racetrack. This is something that our engineers and design team keep in mind when designing Hummingbird. As a disused airfield, the track was much bumpier than expected giving Hummingbird the edge as they sailed into a well-deserved **SECOND PLACE!**

Driver, Ellen (a Year 7 student), was thrilled to be part of this historic event; “I decided to take part in Hummingbird because it sounded like an absolutely amazing experience, and taking part had been my dream since starting at Plymouth High!”





Oops! They did it again

New Horizons Children's Academy secure impressive re-accreditation!

New Horizons Children's Academy were thrilled to announce their re-accreditation as a 'Thinking School'.

Awarded by the University of Exeter, the school will hold this prestigious status until 2024.

Cormac Murphy, Headteacher at New Horizons Children's Academy, said: "I am thrilled that all the hard work our staff have put into embedding Thinking at the heart of our curriculum has been recognised.

"We have a shared commitment to creating an enduring culture of reflective practice, and we are already planning how we can achieve advanced accreditation next year."

RGS - International Baccalaureate see best results to date!

Students at The Rochester Grammar School celebrate amazing results.

As always, our International Baccalaureate students celebrated their results a month before GCSE and A-level students, and celebrate was the word for our Rochester Grammar students.

The students have achieved one of the best sets of IBDP (International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme) results in the school's history and will progress on to some of the world's leading universities and education institutions this September.

The maximum score you can achieve is 45, and RGS accomplished an average point score of 39. This is an impressively high score compared with the international average of 33.02.

Huge congratulations to all the IB students, they truly excelled despite the challenging circumstances and disruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Clare Brinklow, Principal at Rochester Grammar School, said: "I am always so proud of what our students achieve but especially this year. It is important to remember that the IB grades incorporate predicted grades and externally marked coursework and some subjects were still marked externally in full. Our students have dealt with the challenges of the past year with determination, and it is so special to see them able to go on to fantastic university destinations with confidence. The IB has given them such a strong foundation to succeed, and I could not be more grateful to them for their attitude to learning this year and to our wonderful staff who have moved mountains to support every student."

A whopping 47% of students achieved an average point score of more than 40 and one student, April Wells, attained the highest possible score of 45.

Students who achieve 45 points are among the top 0.5% of students who take the qualification globally, this impressive result will secure April's place at the prestigious Cambridge University.



April Wells, Head Girl at Rochester Grammar School, said: "I am absolutely elated! It has been such a difficult two years for our entire cohort, and yet everyone has done so amazingly well; we should be so proud! A

massive thank you to all my wonderful teachers for their support and guidance. I am going to go and study Law at Cambridge in September, but I will never forget everything RGS has taught me. Thank you!"



Janelle Ojejinmi, a Sixth Form student at Rochester Grammar School, added:

"Although IB was mentally challenging, I feel it pushed me beyond my limits and forced me to develop

my thinking in multiple ways. I now feel fully prepared to enter Warwick and study

Economics and am excited to continue learning in the future."

Individual subjects also saw impressive outcomes, with all medics and vets securing a spot on their courses at university. The IB programme is designed to prepare pupils for university. Students choose three higher subjects and three standard subjects across a range of disciplines, including languages, maths, sciences, humanities and the arts. Pupils also complete a Theory of Knowledge course, an extended essay and 150 hours of non-academic activity. The school offers this course to help transform life chances and offer an internationally recognised education.



We are arty and proud

All schools across our Trust took part in this nationwide initiative.

This year, on Friday 28th May, all of our schools – from Medway to Deal, Portsmouth to Plymouth – proudly took part in the Festival of School and College Arts.

Launched by the AOC (Association of Colleges), The Festival of School and College Arts is to celebrate the vital role of the arts in our schools and colleges, and the fantastic work done by students. This inspiring festival provided a badly needed antidote to the sadness and disruption caused by the Covid pandemic over the past year and to showcase learning and creativity.

Schools across the nation took part simply by posting the artistic achievements of students on their Twitter account, and other social media channels, on the day using the hashtag #EduArtsFest. Our Trust also used #WeAreOne

and #TSATCreativeChampions.

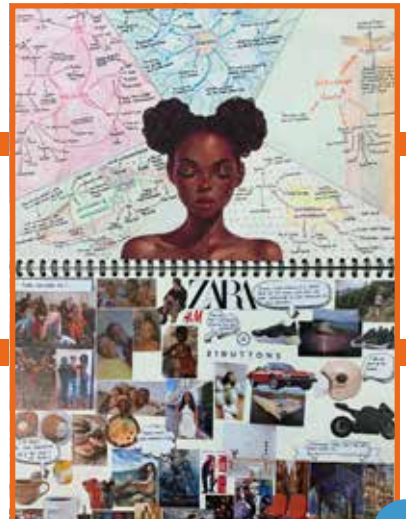
In the spirit of the day our schools shared any and all creative imagery to celebrate the artistic achievements of their students. This day acted as a moment of relief from other pressures, showcasing poems, paintings, and performances that are already happening within or around lessons, we flooded our social media pages with all things Arty and Creative; paintings, musical numbers, photography, drawings and dance recitals, we did it all.

In addition, many of our schools across the Trust took part in our #ProudToBeTSAT video to celebrate our collective creativity in our schools, from our children and young people. We're excited and proud to showcase our talented students, as a Trust we are proud that the arts plays a vital role in our schools and this is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate it.

After over a year of challenge caused by the pandemic, let's get back to the creativity and joy which forms such an important part of education!

Scan to play the 'Proud' video





Outstanding GCSE & A Level Results

This year was like no other for GCSE and A Level results and we, as a Trust, are delighted by the grades achieved by our students. As you know, due to the pandemic, the Government made the decision that this year young people's grades would be determined by teachers based on work they had produced throughout their courses.

These grades reflect the dedication of our staff, who have worked tirelessly to ensure our students are supported and that no stone is left unturned to ensure they reach their potential.

Students at Goodwin Academy, Holcombe Grammar School, The Rochester Grammar School, The Victory Academy, Plymouth High School for Girls and The Portsmouth Academy, following ongoing Covid guidelines, collected their results safely and were provided advice and support in confirming their next steps into Sixth Form, college, university and chosen career paths.

The feelings of excitement and anxiety were palpable as envelopes were opened, and dreams were realised. Our Trust is overjoyed for the students' successes and their futures. Our students have yet again risen to the challenge of their own academic achievements and it has been a real delight to see their smiling faces as



Collecting her A Level results, Goodwin Academy student Emily Vallance said: “I can’t believe it, after such a turbulent year these results are better than I could have expected. I worked so hard and knowing that it has paid off, I am really excited about my future.”



Collecting his GCSE results, Markus Sadler said: “I feel delighted with my results today and I’m extremely thankful to my teachers for giving me so much support both during lockdown and when we returned to school. I am now really excited to be starting my A levels in September.”



Plymouth High School for Girls



The Rochester Grammar School



The Portsmouth Academy

we know that they've also had fun and developed strong friendships along the way.

These strong results are a testament to the fact that our students thrive on the opportunities they have through our curriculum, to develop their independent study in preparation of their next steps. We congratulate every student on their results and wish them every success in their future and thank all of the staff throughout our schools who continue to deliver an education that really does transform life chances.

During the two days that results were given out, it was obvious that students were proud of their achievements and also of the support that teachers have given. Students personally

thanked their schools and individual teachers for their support and determination to prove that everyone can achieve if they put their minds to it and work hard.

These results are a great achievement which has provided life-changing opportunities for many of our students.



Stuart Gardner, Chief Executive Officer at the Trust, said; “As a Trust, it is our passion and priority to transform life chances; to ensure that every student realises their potential, achieving skills for success along the way. We wish all of our students the very best of luck in the next chapter of their life story.”





I OBJECT!

Holcombe Grammar School's mock bar trial was a runaway legal success.

The young, talented and eager law students at Holcombe Grammar School took part in the nationwide Bar Mock Trial competition.

The Bar Mock Trial was held as a virtual competition this year due to Covid-19 and the lockdown which was in place at the time. A group of Holcombe Year 12 students were up against another school in Ireland and performed the trial over two days.

The trial focused on the defendant who committed criminal damage during a protest – very much reflecting real life at the time – and the case rested on proving whether the defendant had a lawful reason to commit the damage or had acted recklessly.

The Year 12 team, consisting of Adam Adebayo, Muhammed Sadiq, Sid Hopkins, Harrison Verall, Liam Coake, Tilly Bucknall, Paulina Zubrzycka, Damilola Thomas, Sophia Benkheira, James Oddy, Riley Gardiner, Jaiden Anaughe, Eren Biner, Ash Chambers, Finley Bass and Jamil Maosa, performed as the defence on the first day of the trial against the other school's prosecution and on the second day Holcombe performed as the prosecution against the other school's defence.



It was a tense war of words and battle of legal wits, helping the Year 12 students to further understand how the law touches every aspect of our lives and gaining an insight into how the legal justice system works.

For most students this Bar Mock Trial is their first experience of the law. There is no better way to introduce them, than in this fun and engaging experience, one which stays with them for life.

Students who take part are encouraged to think critically, build arguments and it boosts their confidence. Through enabling students to interact with legal professionals, the competition helps develop employability skills. The experience also helps students develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the role of law and the justice system in our society.





TSAT THINKING DAY!

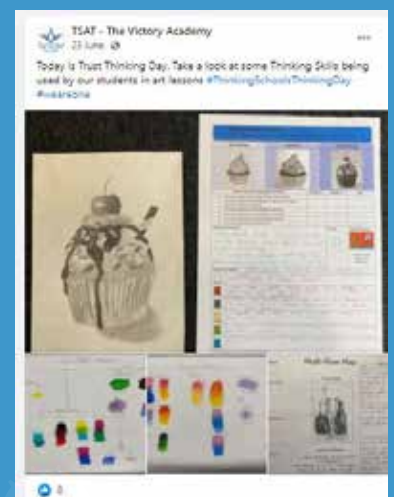
We have claimed June 23rd every year as our very own TSAT Thinking Day.

Our very own day dedicated to Thinking Tools; understanding them, using them, learning with them and sharing them. We will **celebrate** and **educate** in the Thinking Schools way.

Every parent of a child at one of our Thinking Schools will know about Thinking Tools, and understand the term 'Thinking about your thinking', but this day will take it further and show you how – as adults – utilising thinking tools can help in everyday life – helping how you think, how you act and how to reflect.

Learning doesn't stop after school. The term 'every day is a school day' exists for a reason and no matter our age, it's important to understand our own learning style, and how we retain information for future use. Whether that's with critical thinking or metacognitive skills; both are vital areas of the Thinking Tools used across our Trust.

To mark this day, we invited all schools across our Trust to share their Thinking Tools and an informative and interactive SWAY presentation for parents to show them how they can utilise Thinking Tools at home too.





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MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK₂₀₂₁



Throughout our Trust our teams acknowledged Mental Health Awareness Week – don't miss the video!

Mental Health Awareness Week is important every year, but this one there was a more palpable need.

As a Trust we took part in Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW). Becoming more aware of our own mental health and more focused on managing our own wellbeing is so important, more so now post Covid-19, than ever before. Here at our Trust we champion mental health and wellbeing, we encourage open and honest chats in schools and in our teams to reduce stigma.

In acknowledgement of Mental Health Awareness Week, we committed to kicking off 'The Year of Mental Health' in 2022, an exciting initiative to commit to supporting teams across our Trust; to further educate and create an honest and open dialogue around mental health; no matter how that looks to you. It's okay to not be okay.

We also created an engaging and interactive Mental Health Toolkit for our staff, and shared resources to start the mental health conversations in all of our schools. We invited all of our schools to take part in the MHAW 2021 Video, with the green ribbon – the



TSAT Green Ribbon Day Mental Health Awareness Week 2021

national symbol for MHAW – and the children were so inventive with it. Schools also took part in ‘paint a pebble’ with a message on, and left them dotted around their communities – this was a popular one!

Prioritising mental health looks like positive self-talk and connecting to the right-for-you resources. It looks like laughter, breaking toxic habits and tailoring your friendship circle and social media feeds. It looks like people coming together in communities to talk openly and honestly about their struggles.

Reflecting on it, Stuart Gardner (CEO) said: “Focusing on mental health and being aware of the mental health of team members is of paramount importance, it’s as important as physical health. Good, well-rounded mental health and our overall wellbeing are critical to our success in doing what we love.”



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GS6oaaLZQcl>





FAREWELL TO LAST ALL GIRL COHORT

The Portsmouth Academy celebrate as best they can the last all-girl cohort at the school.

It really is the end of an era as the last all-girl cohort bid farewell to The Portsmouth Academy. During September 2017 the secondary school became co-educational, welcoming boys, making this intake the final all-girl year.

While the Covid-19 pandemic put a kybosh on any big farewell celebrations of the 92-strong final all-girl cohort, the girls did get together one final time for cake, goody bags and goodbye inspirational presentations from Principal and Head of Year.

When talking about the day, Rachel Grey, Principal at The Portsmouth Academy, said; "Wow! What a rollercoaster of emotions! We said goodbye to our last ever all-girl cohort here at The Portsmouth Academy. We became a co-educational school in September 2017, and our students took it in their stride, they have continued to work alongside each other every day to always aspire and achieve in all that they do."

And Hellen Piper, Head of Year, couldn't agree more, "I am so proud of this final all-girl cohort! They have persevered, reflected and learned so much during their time here. Watching them grow into the engaging, successful young women they are today has been a privilege, one I have been lucky to have. This past year has been blighted by Covid-19 in so many ways; personally, emotionally, mentally, but they supported each other and showed up day after day. I can't wait to hear what they get up to on the next leg of their amazing journey. Watch out world!"



“I have no doubt that this all-girl year group will go out and conquer whatever they set their minds to.” added Principal Grey. “While we were sad that the events of Covid-19 meant the celebrations we had planned couldn’t happen. The memories made, friendships forged and knowledge gained at Portsmouth Academy stand them in good stead, taking them on to a life filled with happiness and success in all that they do.”

While The Portsmouth Academy has grown in size and buildings, James Fenlon, Head of Estates and Health & Safety at our Trust, remembers the original City of Portsmouth Girls’ School fondly: “I started as a Science Technician in October 2003. I loved all the visits and trips. I’ve had the privilege of taking students to Paris and to the Houses of Parliament to interview astronauts and every year, the science department would take Year 7 students to a local farm during lambing season so they’d understand the lifecycle of these animals. I loved it, I was so involved I’d go into classes and do the demonstrations and experiments to support the teachers during the science classes.”

Throughout their years at The Portsmouth Academy, the students in the all-girl cohort have made some amazing memories for themselves.

Several students shared their thoughts, including Tia Walker who said her favourite memory was when Miss Blackmore gave her an Aloe Vera plant, where as Elizabeth Groom said “meeting my friends” was her highlight. Sadie Hall went on to add that her best memory was “building a connection with some amazing teachers.” When asked what they would miss about school the resounding answers were “the nice teachers” and “friends”.

The values they were taking away from their time varied, from "not to worry about others’ opinions" and "be kind" to “try my best for the things I want to achieve.”

And that’s all we need to remember in life. Be kind and try your best. Farewell to the final all-girl cohort, make your mark on the world.



The future is now

We reveal the additional steps our Trust is taking to set the next generation up for life beyond school.

Future-proofing our students and our schools is a Trust priority and with the ongoing use of smartphones, tablets and laptops, digital platforms are fast becoming a way of life for us all. The next generation doesn't recognise life without them, the stark "you won't have a calculator with you all the time" warnings from Maths teachers no longer apply, thanks to the humble smartphone we do have calculators, banking, music, TV and pretty much everything at our fingertips, and this new digital and instant way of living has impacted us in every way. Everything we want can be accessed digitally, from how we shop and how we move, to how we unwind and how we learn.

Kevin Burns, Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning at The Portsmouth Academy,

couldn't agree more; "We're looking at how we educate for the modern generation, we've been used to educating the same way for the last 30 years. This generation doesn't learn the same way, they have many distractions, and different ways of working that we need to tap into to unlock their potential."

The Portsmouth Academy has taken a step towards unlocking that potential, as one of the first Trust schools to pilot the one:one device scheme. Our one:one devices are state-of-the-art, come pre-installed with the Microsoft Office suite, internet security and are updated regularly to keep children safe online. They can be used as a laptop or tablet with a stylus pen for drawing and writing

notes, to use in class and at home. A device they can call their own, to do their work on, store and refer back to when revising and generally get a feel for, and understanding of, using digital platforms to learn and grow.



Our new one:one device offering is an investment in the future of education and this brand-new initiative, currently being piloted by The Portsmouth Academy, is the start of a new and exciting era for our Trust schools, working towards students taking ownership of their learning and carving out an authentic skillset that will ready them for working life, for jobs that may not even exist yet.

Rachel Grey, Principal at The Portsmouth Academy, said: "In the classrooms that have been trialling the one:one devices, we've seen a difference in the engagement of the children. They're much more in control of their own learning and teachers are able to differentiate their resources for them much more easily." Senior Vice Principal, Lee Dolphin added; "In a few years' time, we'll have students who are fully digitally literate and who have a better opportunity to fit into the wide-world than students have had in the last 10 years."

At our Trust we are committed to creating lifelong learners, and in support of this our one:one promise is to "Making Learning Last". When they fire-up that device children will be choosing a blended approach to education where their device supports their learning as they progress.

Natalie Sheppard, Director of Education in Portsmouth, said; "The reason for us going one:one is for our young people to really feel a sense of ownership over their learning. We really do believe that these devices are going to help make learning last for our students."



The Portsmouth Academy
Microsoft Showcase Video



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-4LjKAQEHk>

All Trust schools were invited to attend the exciting launch of the Trust-wide Earth Alliance Group student conference.

The Earth Alliance Group (EAG) at Plymouth High School for Girls is a climate awareness group created by the students, for the students, to make the school and their community more environmentally aware and friendly.

The EAG have many aims, with the main one to share knowledge and influence the other Trust schools to do more and go greener in all that they do.

In Term 6 the student team at Plymouth High School for Girls kicked off their first ever trust-wide digital student conference welcoming students from across the Thinking Schools Trust to join them for their first ever two-hour long Earth Alliance Conference.

The Collaboration between schools demonstrated our trust's "we are one" ethos; our voice is stronger together and it truly was a great success! Students were excited to be breaking new ground on environmentally friendly action plans. The student-hosted event saw over 25 students from across 9 schools come together to discuss a proposal for action within all Trust schools, designed to lessen our impact on the environment.

Simon Underdown, Principal at Plymouth High School for Girls, said: "We are really excited about hosting the first ever Trust-wide virtual student conference, even more so as it is on a subject that is so close the hearts of many young people. We are delighted to have the support of Dr Tim Daley as our keynote speaker and feel

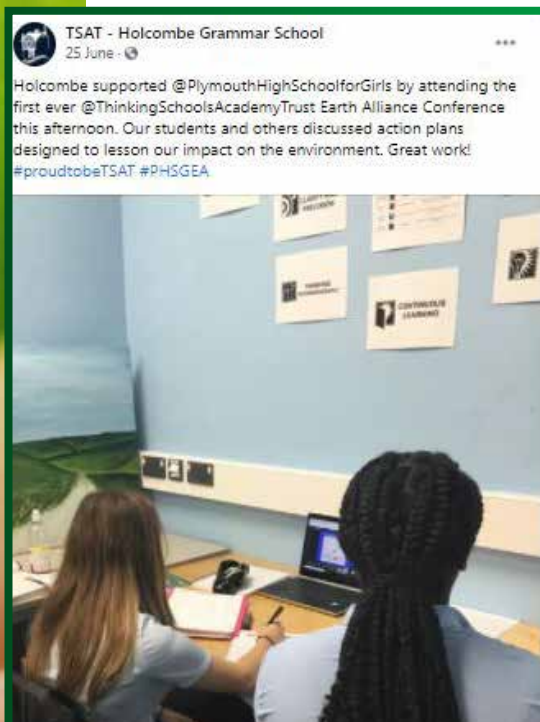


sure that our student delegates will enjoy listening to what he has to say. Plymouth High student leaders will chair discussion groups to get the thoughts of students from across the Trust on how we might lessen our impact on the environment.”

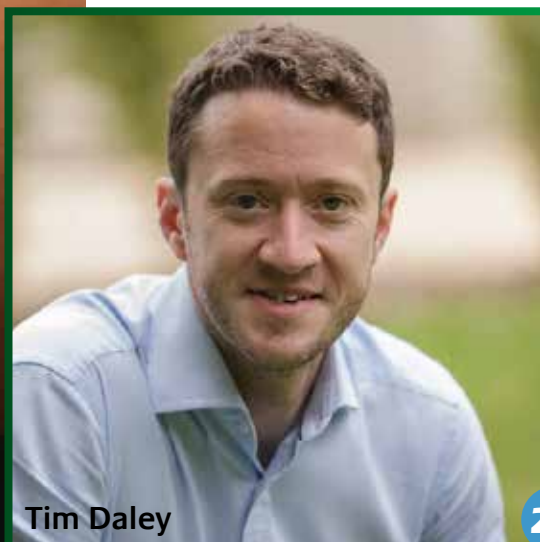
Plymouth High, which is the latest edition to our Trust's family, were thrilled to invite Key Note Speaker, Dr Tim Daley of The University of Plymouth as their special guest.

Dr Tim Daley said: “The Earth Alliance should bring joy to the hearts of all climate and environmental educators and is to be utterly applauded. The group is student-led and the students are standing up for their generation. They want to make a difference to their schools and grow their understanding of how to get on with solutions to the challenges they see both near and far. It is a pleasure to join them at the beginning of their journey and help them (and their peers) to understand why the climate is in crisis and what we might do for action.”

As our Trust continues to prioritise student initiatives and this really was an excellent opportunity to continue to promote and champion student involvement.



Pictured above, students from Plymouth High School for Girls' Earth Alliance Group.



Tim Daley

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NHS MEDWAY!

Rainbows bright brought the celebrations to our Medway schools.

Staff and students from Trust schools across Medway celebrated the 73rd birthday of the NHS by taking part in a Rainbow Day to raise money for The Medway Hospital Charity.

On Friday 9 July, they joined over 60 schools and nurseries who were holding tag days, colourful cake sales, art attacks and crafty activities and donated money to support the wellbeing of staff at Medway Maritime Hospital.

Our primary pupils revelled in a chance to dress just like the rainbow, while our secondary students at The Victory Academy created a rainbow canvas which our students and staff filled with fingerprints. Each print represents a thank you to the NHS. This amazing canvas will be gifted to Medway Hospital.

Plus, Cedar Children's Academy, Gordon Children's Academy and All Faiths Children's Academy were so proud to contribute to the window display of the Strood Community Shop.

Everyone had a great time dressing up and raising money and awareness for an amazing institution – 73 years old and still going. Happy Birthday to the NHS!



ONE DAY, ONE DIARY

WORK LIFE

James Fenlon is our Trust's Head of Estates and Health & Safety. The expert on all things Covid-19-safety in our schools and he is based in Havant, just outside Portsmouth.



My alarm goes off... It's an early start with my phone waking me at 5am, if I haven't hit snooze a few times! Then a quick scan of the BBC news or Guardian with a cuppa and some porridge – an old-fashioned breakfast.

I'm responsible for... The cliché of 'every day is different' really does apply a lot. I manage the sites, whether its caretaking, cleaning, health and safety, it all comes under my remit - it's a broad range of madness! I get a lot of queries a day, by phone and email, mostly about Covid-19 at the moment, a lot of quick-response stuff.

I got the job... I actually started at The Portsmouth Academy in 2003 as a Science Technician (back when it was known as the City of Portsmouth Girls' School). I read Natural Sciences at Cambridge, and went on to do a Masters in Inorganic Chemistry. After that I moved on to do six months as a grave digger followed by a year working in my family's bakery. Less linear more a 'squiggle' of career progression and it really has been invaluable; I've experienced and learned so much from all of it.

My typical day... Kick-starts with a 15-minute train commute reading the latest sci-fi book, followed by a 15-minute walk to the office, which is The Lodge at Newbridge Junior School. I'm usually at my desk for 6:30am. I check in with my Regional Facilities Managers from around the schools, reporting any problems, flooding, etc. that we might have to deal with, or working on any big projects we might have in the pipeline. I love it when a job is done well and delivered. It's hard when I want to help everyone but can't always drop everything to do so. When it comes to lunch, my wife is a phenomenal cook, and she makes amazing lunches for me like prawn Tempura sushi, so I do try to dedicate the time at lunch and have a proper break. I always try to clock off at 5pm.

Right now, I'm feeling... Nervous about the summer, and the amount of work we have planned and hoping that Covid-19 doesn't upset anything. I want to make sure everyone stays safe.

When I'm stressed... I listen to music on Spotify, usually the late 90s, early noughties Indie music. I always go back to bands like, Placebo, The Streets and maybe Blur.

"It's a broad range of madness"

My go-to work snack is... Probably a coke zero, it keeps me going through the day.

My most memorable moment is... Finishing off and delivering on the Aspire Building at The Portsmouth Academy, it was a long project and seeing it come to fruition and the change it made to students was amazing!

My email box is... It's not tidy, my emails are relentless. I try to make sure my inbox is down to zero before I clock off at the end of each day.

After work... I like to cook on the weekends, but I also read a lot. My wife and I are also loving the second season of Lupin on Netflix – a great watch!





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