

OUR TRUST

TRANSFORMING LIFE CHANCES

SPRING 2024 | ISSUE 22



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Welcome message from our Chief Executive Officer



I am delighted to present the Thinking School Academy Trust's Our Trust publication. We have grown significantly as a leading Multi-Academy Trust, and we are proud of the many successes and achievements across our schools. Over the

course of the year, our partnership grew to include 26 schools, and with the expansion of our central team, we continued our collective school journey to thrive.

I am proud of our achievements and the progress we have made. This is a testament to our school communities' hard work, collaboration, and determination. I'd like to thank our staff, pupils, and families for their ongoing support and commitment to transforming the life chances of our young people for another year.

In January, I was thrilled to share some fantastic news— the Thinking Schools Academy Trust has been officially awarded the prestigious We Invest in People standard accreditation as well as the We Invest in Wellbeing accreditation by Investors in People. This accomplishment marks the first chapter in our journey to continuously shape and improve the culture within our schools and central teams, making them great place to work, learn and thrive.

As you read through these pages, I hope you join me in feeling proud towards the efforts our schools make to ensure equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. My congratulations to all, especially to Lodestar Academy and Curledge Street Academy, who received 'Good' Ofsted grades. I know they have worked tirelessly to keep pupils engaged in their education.

I have witnessed both our pupils and

staff engage in various activities, from art competitions during Black History Month to honouring the fallen on Remembrance Day and embracing the vibrancy of LGBTQ+ History Month. These events have not only raised awareness but have also offered valuable opportunities for our pupils to celebrate their identities and aspirations, bringing our communities closer together.

Within this publication, I trust you will see the remarkable journey each school has been on—from academic celebrations and celebrity accolades to the sharing of case studies on our 'All-through Education Journey,' and ensuring that staff have access to supportive development opportunities to realise their full potential. At the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, our strength lies in unity, as we support one another in delivering educational excellence and providing new opportunities for all.

Our work truly makes a difference to the life chances of others and the communities we serve across the Trust. Our 'Child First' approach underpins everything we do, and our schools will continue to 'Transform Life Chances'.

Stuart Gardner

Stuart Gardner, MSc, NPQH, NLE
Chief Executive Officer



Investors in People

Thinking Schools Academy Trust are accredited with 'Investors in People' and 'Investors in Wellbeing'.

At the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, a firm belief we inspire in our students is to 'Be Your Best Self'; to have high aspirations and work hard to achieve these goals. For our staff, we seek the same. We value all members of our community, and pride ourselves on the framework of professional and personal support we provide to support all on their journey to being their best. We were therefore delighted to have been recognised by Investors in People for our commitment to this.

Investors in People is an international standard for people management, offering accreditations to organisations that uphold best practice and the Investors in People Standard. Thinking Schools' achieving both accreditations at the same time is outstanding,

making us one of the first organisations to do so under the new Investors in People Framework.

This recognition highlights our Trust's commitment to cultivating a workplace culture grounded in principles and practices that empower individuals, fostering continuous improvement and wellbeing.

As evident in the assessment process, 73% of Thinking School staff agreed that they were encouraged to make use of their organisation's health and wellbeing activities, from regular support received from managers to new and improved Wellbeing platforms providing a diverse range of resources.



With a dedication to serving diverse communities, we endeavour to guarantee outstanding learning outcomes for every pupil within its network of academies. To achieve this vision, our Trust is determined in its efforts to expand and integrate collaborative learning and professional development opportunities for all members of our community.

Paul Devoy, CEO of Investors in People, said: “Being accredited with We Invest in People and Wellbeing is a remarkable achievement for any organisation and places the Thinking Schools Academy Trust in fine company with a host of organisations that understand the value of people.”

Stuart Gardner, Chief Executive Officer of Thinking Schools Academy Trust, said: “Receiving both prestigious ‘Investors in People’ & ‘Investors in Wellbeing’ accreditations is a testament to the commitment and collaborative efforts of our dedicated staff at the Thinking Schools Academy Trust.

“This recognition reaffirms our belief in the power of investing in our people and their wellbeing. We are proud to foster a culture of continuous growth, innovation, and excellence, as we strive to create an environment where every member of our community can thrive.

“These accreditations are not just a milestone but a reflection of Thinking School’s dedication

Paul Devoy, CEO of Investors in People, said: ‘Being accredited with We Invest in People and Wellbeing is a remarkable achievement for any organisation and places the Thinking Schools Academy Trust in fine company with a host of organisations that understand the value of people.’

to nurturing a workplace that inspires and empowers individuals to reach their full potential, whilst prioritising wellbeing.”

We firmly believe that the success of any organisation hinges on its people. By enhancing the workplace experience for everyone, our Trust strives to Transform Life Chances and contributes to fostering the strength, health, and happiness of its people.



Three schools celebrate progress in their Artsmark journeys

Holcombe Grammar, The Gordon Children's Academy and Penbridge Junior School within the Thinking Schools Academy Trust have achieved the prestigious Artsmark Award.

Artsmark is the only creative quality standard for schools and education settings accredited by Arts Council England.

Artsmark supports schools to develop and celebrate arts and cultural education, putting creativity and wellbeing at the heart of the curriculum, as well as ensuring every young person can be creative and access a diverse, high-quality cultural education.

In February 2024, both Holcombe Grammar School and The Gordon Children's Academy gained the prestigious Silver Award, the first step of the Artsmark journey.

To achieve their award, Holcombe raised awareness of arts, culture and creativity amongst their students and staff by focusing

on increasing exposure to arts and cultural experiences within the school's daily tutor periods.

This was praised by the Artsmark assessors stating: "this is great as it involves staff from across all departments."

The school recently refurbished their main hall, opened a new drama studio and installed a new professional lighting and sound system, which allowed them to reintroduce Drama at a Key Stage 3 level and for GCSE. These changes have seen an increased number of students taking up drama as an option.

Nichola Miles, one of the staff leads on this campaign, reflected on the experience, saying: "The Artsmark journey has awakened





Holcombe’s creativity and talent. Enabling us to embrace our unique community and culture has been exhilarating.

“Our students have become inspired and motivated to learn artistically, with the freedom to express themselves. The outcomes have far surpassed our expectations.”

Within their report, The Gordon Children’s Academy were praised for “the start of good pupil voice work with Arts Ambassadors” and it was recognised how “Engaging with the arts is having tangible results on pupils, staff and parental connections. Arts and culture feature in school planning, are supported by SLT and newly refined Art, DT, Music and Drama curriculums.”

Meanwhile, in Portsmouth, Penbridge Junior School were praised for their creativity as they were awarded the outstanding Artsmark Gold Award, which the school achieved by developing a broad and ambitious curriculum.

The Artsmark assessor commended the school, saying: “The school use their links with their [Portsmouth] music hub to enhance the music curriculum. They have supported teachers to build their knowledge and confidence in teaching across Key Stage 1 and 2.

“Teacher expertise and confidence has been increased through the new schemes of work and clarity on the progression of skills being taught. In house CPD has been provided in staff meetings and by outside agencies and hubs. Teachers have observed artists working with their classes.”

Claire Young, music lead at Penbridge, said: “This Artsmark Gold award is confirmation of all the good work that we’re doing across the school, really promoting the arts in music and in artwork, dance and drama. Applying for Artsmark has really brought the importance of the Arts to our attention, so we have been focused on achieving this over the last couple of years.”



South West schools celebrate 'Good' Ofsted result in all areas

Two South West schools have been praised by Ofsted for their positive work to offer an ambitious curriculum and benefit the lives of their pupils.

Lodestar Academy and Curledge Street Academy, which are both based in Paignton, Devon, are 'Good' schools following their inspections.

For Lodestar Academy, the first Alternative Provision school within the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, they celebrated an improvement in their Ofsted rating, progressing from 'Requires Improvement' in 2020 to 'Good' across all areas.

Highlights from the report included praise for the academy's warm and welcoming community atmosphere, stating: "The welfare of pupils and their families is at the heart of the Lodestar Academy [...] Pupils get the care and support they need to overcome challenges. They receive individual guidance to help them learn."

Pastoral support was also recognised in the report, which said: "The school offers excellent pastoral support to pupils and their families" and stated that "there is a nurturing environment for pupils to learn."

Ofsted also commended the academy's curriculum, stating: "School leaders ensure the environment is well resourced and looked after [...] This helps pupils have the same learning experiences as those in mainstream schools."

Lodestar Academy was also praised for the career guidance and support given to pupils to ensure they are well prepared for their next steps. "They do not put a ceiling on pupils' aspirations. Pupils successfully go on to college, university, or secure an apprenticeship," said the inspector.

Steven Hulme, Headteacher at Lodestar Academy, said: "We firmly believe in challenging the misconceptions that surround Alternative Provision. Lodestar Academy is not defined by limitations but rather by opportunities, innovation and success. We are so proud that we are defying Alternative Provision stereotypes and empowering our students for future success."

'The welfare of pupils and their families is at the heart of the Lodestar Academy.'



Elsewhere within the same region, Curledge Street Academy was praised for its nurturing culture and high expectations for all pupils.

Within their report, the inspector stated: “This aspirational culture is embedded across the school, and as a result, leaders and teachers work together effectively to teach a broad and ambitious curriculum.”

One of the standout features of the report for Curledge Street Academy is the overwhelming sense of pride expressed by their pupils.

The inspectors noted that the school motto, ‘Be safe, be kind, be ready,’ serves as a guiding principle for pupils, shaping their behaviour and interactions and creating a respectful and harmonious atmosphere throughout the school.

Ofsted also commended the curriculum, adding: “Pupils in the early years get off to a flying start. The school is acutely aware of the importance of developing pupils’ communication and language. As a result, the curriculum in the early years is deliberately designed to enrich children’s knowledge of words.”

‘Aspirational culture is embedded across the school, and as a result, leaders and teachers work together effectively to teach a broad and ambitious curriculum.’

Jessica Humphrey, Executive Headteacher of Curledge Street Academy, said: “This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our incredible staff, the enthusiasm of our pupils, and the unwavering support from our parents, community, and The Thinking Schools Academy Trust. Together, we have created a positive and nurturing environment where learning flourishes.”





LITTLE THINKERS
NURSERY
& PRE-SCHOOL

**Lighting up
learning at Little
Thinkers**

**A place where our
wonders
guide our
adventures...**



**Our Little Thinkers
nursery provision is
expanding.**

**More news
coming soon...**



littlethinkers.org.uk

Our all-through education is Transforming Life Chances

The concept of an all-through education system is gaining increasing recognition and popularity. But what does it actually mean and why does it matter?

An all-through education system, as the name suggests, provides a continuous educational journey for pupils from early years through to secondary education – and in some cases, Sixth Form education - all under one roof.

This means that students remain within the same institution from a young age until they complete their secondary education, typically at the age of 16 or 18.

At the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, we have positive examples of achieving this. In the South of England, children can join our Little Thinkers nursery and pre-school provision with clear progression onto primary school and a neighbouring secondary school.

And within the South East, we have children thriving in primary school and then onto secondary school, and often the Sixth Form units attached to them.

This seamless transition we can offer to thousands of young people across all of our regions reduces the need for students to adapt to new environments, teachers and routines, therefore fostering a sense of continuity and stability throughout their educational journey.

By providing a consistent and supportive learning environment from the formative years of childhood to adolescence, students are empowered to develop not only academically but also socially, emotionally, and morally.

This approach recognises that education goes beyond the confines of textbooks and exams; it encompasses the development of the whole individual, equipping them with the skills, knowledge and values needed to thrive in an ever-changing world.

At the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, we are unique in our focus and delivery of teaching; we share the tools with pupils to become life-long learners, and to develop the best possible habits for success in life.

Our schools, academies and colleges form an educational community that involves both pupils and staff learning how to think reflectively, critically and creatively. By embedding these tools and techniques within an all-through educational journey, we are confident we will shape the success of every pupil.

Across our Trust, we have students, teachers, governors, and parents who believe our all-through education approach promotes a strong sense of community and belonging.

Across our South West region, for example, we have specialist staff sharing their knowledge and expertise with all types of schools and key stages to positively benefit our pupils.

Our firm belief is that an all-through education system holds immense value in shaping the future of our learners. The provision of a continuous and supportive learning environment nurtures personal development, fosters a sense of community and the sense of being stronger together, and promotes collaboration and innovation.

As we strive to prepare pupils for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, we are confident that an all-through education system is a beacon of excellence, equipping pupils with everything they need to succeed in life.



Academies celebrate Thinking Schools accreditation



Moorings Way Infant School and Maritime Academy receive Thinking Schools accreditation for the first time.

Two schools within the Thinking Schools Academy Trust have received their Thinking Schools accreditation for the first time.

The accolade, presented by the University of Exeter, recognises the school's unique and effective approach to learning and education, providing pupils with the skillset and tools needed to think in a variety of ways and become lifelong learners.

The use of 'Thinking Tools' within lessons prepares the pupils for a range of situations that they may face as part of modern society, contributing to the Trust's focus to support every child in being their best selves.

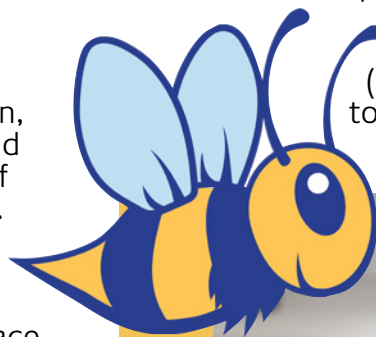
Thinking Schools at Exeter leads the way in research in metacognition, thinking skills, creativity, and dialogue in education, providing a structure for schools to become recognised Thinking Schools.

Both Moorings Way Infant School in Portsmouth and Maritime Academy in Kent were recognised in October 2023, creating a rippling effect of celebration across two of our regions at the time.

For Moorings Way Infant School, they have worked hard to weave the Thinking framework into everyday life at the school, and this was recognised throughout the school's assessment and subsequent accreditation.

The University of Exeter said in their report: "The school has a prominent

and visible thinking culture, and this is due to the excellent organisational structure and visual presentation. Questioning for Enquiry is used daily in order to develop reflective communication skills. The excellent 'Be Your Best Self' (BYBS) reflective journal adds further to the reflection dimension."



‘Thinking Schools at Exeter leads the way in research in metacognition, thinking skills, creativity, and dialogue in education, providing a structure for schools to become recognised Thinking Schools’

“Thinking Hats are also used in order to reflect on behavioural aspects. These reflections are subsequently shared with teachers and parents. This ensures that the thinking partnership between the school and parents is strong. Indeed, parents are fully involved in their children’s thinking successes.”

Sara Paine, Executive Headteacher at Meon Way Federation, said: “I’m delighted Moorings Way Infant School has received their Thinking Schools accreditation, and I’m particularly pleased about the reports praise for our collaboration between all three Meon Way Schools and others from across our Trust.”

Meanwhile, as a new school, Maritime Academy had the unique opportunity to embed Thinking at its core from conception, with a leadership team bringing years of experience of working within Thinking Schools



and “drawing upon years of Thinking School development across the Trust, leading to a seamless transition as the school has become established.”

The report acknowledges that: “The integration with the Trust is exceptional such that it stands as a beacon of educational community provision. Staff and children think deeply about what they do, and levels of collaboration are exceptional.”

The academy was thrilled to be recognised as a Thinking School within just one year of opening, with Assistant Principal Jimmy Carr, saying: “From day one, our vision was to implement thinking and metacognition into the classrooms and community to develop independent, reflective lifelong learners. The staff have been fantastic in embracing our thinking processes and tools to be child first in our approaches.”



Black History Month 2023

Schools across the Thinking Schools Academy Trust unite to honour Black History Month, their first WeAreOne event of the academic year.

In October 2023, schools across the Thinking Schools Academy Trust came together to mark Black History Month (BHM) for our first WeAreOne event of the year. The month provided an opportunity to inspire and empower future generations, while reflecting on the national theme.

Black History Month is a momentous occasion to recognise and celebrate the contributions of black people to society. 'Saluting Our Sisters' was the theme for 2023 and focused on the crucial role black women have played in shaping history, inspiring change, and building communities.

Together, we delved into history, and looked closer at the positive difference historical

moments have made to society.

Last year, our Trust and schools penned pledges and commitments to promote equality and tackle discrimination. 12 months on, we reviewed our progress and planned actions to further support our goals.

We also saw the return of our Black History Month Art Competition. Schools were asked to create a piece in any artistic format, be it illustration, written or video, celebrating the theme of 'Saluting Our Sisters'. We were thrilled to receive just under 300 entries! The winning entry from our primary schools was designed by Lucas from All Faiths Children's Academy in Strood, and was a vibrant piece depicting Josephine Baker, a hero of the French

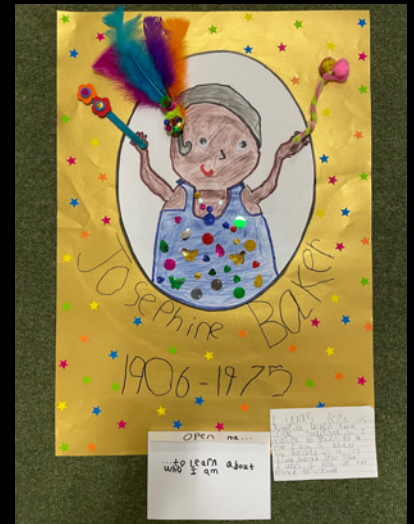




Resistance and a symbol of the beauty and vitality of Black American culture. Our secondary school winner was Sara from Rochester Grammar School for the beautiful portrait of Rosa Parks, a renowned American activist in the civil rights movement, famous for her refusal to give up her seat on a bus.



Working with our catering partners, our schools explored the tastes and flavours of traditional Afro Caribbean snacks and meals.



PRIMARY SCHOOL WINNER:
All Faiths Children's Academy (Year 2)

Artist: Lucas

Art: Josephine Baker - A hero of the French Resistance.



SECONDARY SCHOOL WINNER:
The Rochester Grammar School (Year 12)

Artist: Sara

Art: Rosa Parks - Renowned American activist in the civil right movement.



Remembrance

Schools and staff from across the Thinking Schools Academy Trust united to mark Remembrance Day 2023 on Friday 10th November.

Remembrance Day is a memorial occasion, marked annually on 11th November with a two-minute silence held at 11 o'clock, commemorating the date and time the First World War ended.

This is the first year that we ran Remembrance Day as a WeAreOne event, uniting our schools to honour the fallen together. The schools engaged in a variety of activities to celebrate Remembrance, with students creating vibrant poppy and battlefield displays and discussing why they believe it is important to remember those who “sacrificed their today for our tomorrow”.

Our schools welcomed serving and veteran soldiers into their classrooms to discuss the vital work they do and the importance of remembering the great wars throughout the years. Students sold poppies to support the Royal British Legion and created wreaths, waterfalls, and copious displays to mark the occasion.

Many of our schools maintain connections with local cadets, which our students participate in outside of school hours. These students were permitted to attend the event in their cadet uniforms and take part in local memorial ceremonies. We are extremely proud of how our young people represented their



schools and the Trust when participating in local services and visiting their communities.

Together, following a video recording of the poem “In Flanders Field”, read by our Trust’s Director of Culture and Development, Mandy Gage, we stopped for a two-minute silence at 11 o’clock, honouring those who have given their lives to fight for our freedom. We will remember them.



Colchester Royal shines in Sister Act

Students from Colchester Royal Grammar School came together to produce an energetic performance of Sister Act.

Ella Harvey and Elodie Roper, students from Colchester Royal Grammar School (CRGS), were assigned the roles of co-producing the school's next musical. After much deliberation, it was decided that they would bring 'Sister Act' to the CRGS stage.

To support the production, a creative team was formed, consisting of two stage managers, two choreographers, a production manager, and a marketing manager. Together, with Ella and Elodie, they got to work right away.

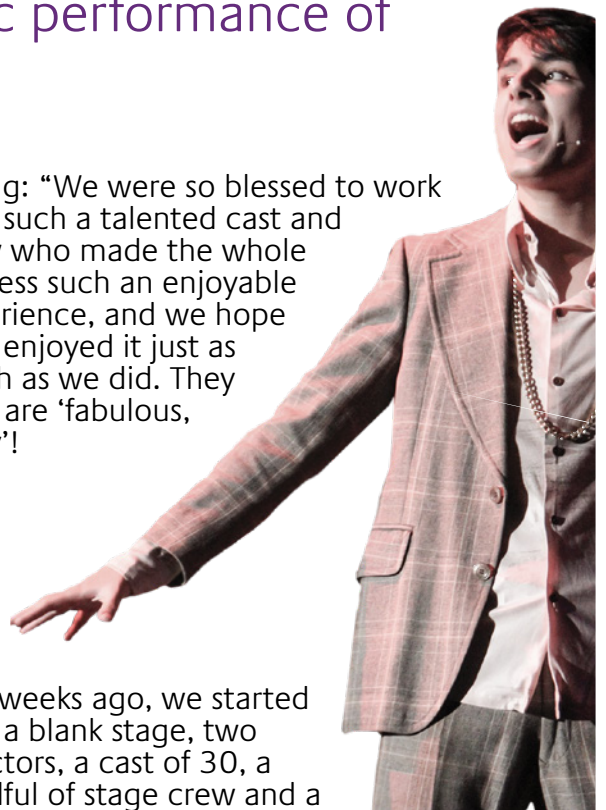
The team worked tirelessly to pull the show together, making executive decisions about staging and costumes. They had found it difficult to source 20 nun costumes, so they had to hire them from a local company in Great Dunmow, Ella commented: "The effect was worth it, and by the end of the dress rehearsal, we were feeling delighted, hopeful, and excited about opening night."

The show was a true hit, with teachers crediting it as "the best show CRGS has produced in the last 25 years."

The co-producers reflected on the experience,

saying: "We were so blessed to work with such a talented cast and crew who made the whole process such an enjoyable experience, and we hope they enjoyed it just as much as we did. They truly are 'fabulous, baby'!"

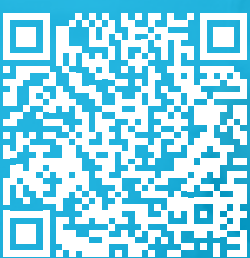
"11 weeks ago, we started with a blank stage, two directors, a cast of 30, a handful of stage crew and a script. Now, we had glitzed up the school hall with a huge mirror disco ball, transformed the space into a church, a bar, an alleyway, and a police station; who knew the school hall could be so versatile!"





Who has the
ability to inspire
young people?
You do.

recruitment@tsatrust.org.uk



Latest opportunities

Trust apprenticeships

Celebrating Continued Professional Development successes across our Trust.

At the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, we are passionate about offering Continued Professional Development (CPD) opportunities to our staff. One of our focuses is to grow great leaders to support our mission in Transforming Life Chances.

To this end, we as a Trust greatly value the impact apprenticeships can have on a person's career progression. Whether it is a tool to support someone take the first step, or as an avenue to develop key skills to enhance their work, we hugely encourage our people to consider courses available.

This year, during National Apprenticeship Week, we thought this was a perfect opportunity to speak to our Apprentices and discuss their journeys. Some of our Apprentices were celebrating graduating from their course, whilst others were closer to the beginning of their journey than the end yet we were enthused to hear the positive reflections they all harboured.

Karen Denton completed a Level 7 Apprenticeship and Masters Degree in Education, Leadership and Management whilst continuing to lead and inspire as Head of School at Penbridge Junior School. Juggling both responsibilities simultaneously could have been a difficult prospect and Karen admitted to feeling initially 'apprehensive', however Karen said the support she received from Executive Headteacher Anna Webb and TSAT helped her take the leap. "My course has allowed me to have a direct impact on how my school operates, with a positive benefit on staff and the children." - Karen Denton

We also spoke with two of our Apprentices beginning their professional journey.

Lacey Andrews is currently completing her Level 3 Laboratory Technician course at The Victory Academy. After overcoming feeling



'quite nervous and like it could've been a long shot'.

Lacey is now flourishing on her course and exclaimed: "My time with The Victory Academy so far has been so positive. Never did I think I could love my job so much, and also be able to work as a part of a team who both respects me and also values the work I put in! Not only do I receive full support from the workplace for my studies, but also loads of support when it has come to personal issues and my wellbeing. I honestly couldn't think of a better way to start my career journey!"



Finding passion and joy for one's work is important in our aspirations for personal and professional success and Lacey's positive sentiment was echoed by Kat King and Ellie Green, who both work within our Thinking Personnel team. Kat, undertaking their Level 3 HR Support course, said they 'enjoyed the challenge' of learning 'always changing HR and organisational theory', whilst Ellie (Level 3

Leadership and Management) summed it up perfectly: "Knowledge is power and you should never stop learning. Don't be your own barrier to success!"

If you are interested in enrolling in an Apprenticeship, a variety of courses and other useful links can be found on our website.



International Women's Day

Plympton Academy raises over £300 for local charity Trevi 'Enough' campaign supporting International Women's Day.

In aid of International Women's Day, Plympton Academy have raised an incredible sum of over £300 for local Plymouth charity, Trevi.

The funds were raised through the sale of merchandise, stickers and bake sales, supporting Trevi's 'Enough' campaign - a vital initiative aimed at raising awareness and advocating for an end to violence towards women and girls, addressing negative social norms in their surroundings.

A highlight of International Women's Day at Plympton Academy was the engaging talks delivered by distinguished guests, Cllr Rebecca Smith, and Mel Sevieri from Trevi House.

Their insightful discussions resonated deeply with Sixth Form students, sparking meaningful conversations about the importance of International Women's Day, and sharing inspirational stories of female empowerment and resilience.

These talks not only provided valuable insights but also served as a catalyst for positive change within the school community. Students were encouraged to reflect on the role they can play in promoting gender equality and standing up against discrimination and violence.

Additionally, Trevi delivered a compelling message about the 'Reclaim the Night' movement, stressing the urgency of addressing gender-based discrimination and violence while highlighting the critical need for safe spaces for women.



Under the guidance of staff, students were encouraged to express themselves through art, with a focus on producing meaningful placards that reflected the spirit of empowerment and advocacy.

These placards serve as powerful visual representations of students' thoughts, beliefs,



and aspirations. Through their artwork, students can amplify their voices and raise awareness about issues that matter to them

Polly Turner, Associate Assistant Principal expressed pride in the students' initiative, stating: "Our students continue to impress us with their creativity and dedication to social causes. Their artwork serves as a powerful reminder that young voices have the power to drive meaningful change."

As these colourful placards decorate the hallway at Plympton Academy, they serve as a testament to the power of youth activism and the importance of artistic expression in creating a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

Amber, a Year 12 student at Plympton said: "International Womens Day is a reminder that every voice matters, and together, we can create positive change. I am happy to contribute to this movement and be part of the change."



In a powerful tribute to women's empowerment and resilience, students concluded the day painting the reception entrance wall with a stunning mural in honour of International Women's Day.

The mural marks a significant moment for Plympton Academy, serving as a reminder of the importance of acknowledging and celebrating the achievements of women. As students, staff, and visitors pass through the reception entrance, they are greeted by this powerful testament to the ongoing struggle for gender equality and the triumphs of women throughout history.

'Under the guidance of staff, students were encouraged to express themselves through art, with a focus on producing meaningful placards that reflected the spirit of empowerment and advocacy.'





THINKING fitness

THE GYM THAT PUTS MONEY BACK INTO EDUCATION

CHATHAM

📍 Holcombe
Grammar School,
Walderslade Road,
ME4 6NR

ROCHESTER

📍 The Rochester
Grammar School,
Maidstone Road,
ME1 3BY

BRIXHAM

📍 Brixham College,
Lytes Rd,
Brixham,
TQ5 9SN

PLYMPTON

📍 Plympton Academy
Moorland Rd,
Plympton,
Plymouth,
PL7 2RS



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timetable suited to a
range of abilities

Profits put back into
education



THINKING SCHOOLS
ACADEMY TRUST



thinking-fitness.com

Brixham College host 'Wonderstruck' event

This three-day extravaganza not only welcomed more than 600 enthusiastic students from local primary schools but in the evenings also opened its doors to the public.

Wonderstruck looks at the history and science of rockets from the discovery of black powder to the most recent exploits of SpaceX and others. The show included a working hybrid rocket motor, a large fireball and some incredibly loud noises.

Children from several local primary schools from across the area came together for the event, including Furzeham Primary School, Kings Ash Academy and Curledge Street

'It was brilliant - I enjoyed the explosives and fire - especially Brixhams most dangerous balloon.'

Academy which are also members of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust. Dedicated Sixth Form students studying A-Level Physics at Brixham College Sixth Form also participated in the event, helping guide the younger children.

The primary objective of Wonderstruck was to ignite the spark of curiosity in young minds. Year 5 students from various local primary schools had the opportunity to immerse themselves in hands-on experiments, captivating demonstrations, and interactive workshops.

Year 5 pupils from Curledge Street Academy had an amazing time at the event.

They said: "It was brilliant - I enjoyed the explosives and fire - especially Brixham's most



dangerous balloon. I liked when he tried to fly and there were flames. I didn't know what gunpowder was before. I didn't know it was a solid."

Mark Eagar, Principal at Brixham College, said: "Welcoming primary children into our halls provided a unique opportunity for our school community to come together. It is a celebration of collaboration, where we are reminded of the incredible strength that arises when we come together. Together, we are shaping a brighter future for all our students."



Rochester Grammar awarded top AfPE Quality Mark

The Rochester Grammar School (RGS) is overjoyed to have been awarded the highest accolade of the Association for Physical Education (AfPE) Quality Mark, gaining a Distinction during their validation visit.

The AfPE Quality Mark is a prestigious award that evidences the strength and quality of Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity (PESSPA) within a school.

With this achievement, RGS becomes the first school in the South-East to receive this award and one of only 17 schools nationally, including fellow Trust school, The Portsmouth Academy.

Leading on the campaign, Rochester Grammar's Curriculum Lead for PE, Vikki Bell, said: "My heart sank when the news headline

came out that there had been a decline in enjoyment in PE for girls. RGS has 1,004 girls aged 11-16-years old with an additional mixed Sixth Form, and the buzz and engagement in PE, Sport, and Physical Activity defies the negative stigma that the media portrays."

Since joining the school two years ago, Vikki has worked with the PE Department to prepare for the rigorous self-review process and to ensure that the school is delivering the highest quality curriculum for all students to access and progress in. The department spent 24 months overhauling and creating a new PE curriculum





with the vision; “To ensure that every student is physically active, knowledge rich, and has a variety of opportunities for healthy participation in PE, Sport and Physical Activity.”

Rochester Grammar believes it is important for students to access the “education” in Physical Education, so designed a curriculum that not only focused on the physical but embedded the knowledge and understanding for students to live happy, healthy futures by being physically active.

Their Student Voice was pivotal in developing the sporting opportunities offered and contributed to 100% of students participating and engaging in PE lessons. Attendance at extracurricular clubs, where students can consolidate their curriculum journey, continues to grow, with over 750 students participating in PE clubs in 2022-2023.

Vikki said: “The student voice meeting left me speechless with goosebumps. The passion and appreciation for PE within the school was clear to see, the positive impact on behaviour, attitudes, self-esteem, wellbeing, attendance and the confidence the students had talking about the subject made me beam with pride.”

Vikki said: ‘The student voice meeting left me speechless with goosebumps.’

Discussing the process, Vikki said: “The Quality Mark process is not for the faint-hearted, it is for those that are willing to showcase what they have on offer and are able to react positively to constructive feedback. I would highly recommend the process to secondary schools, as it validates the hard work and commitment of a PE Department, as well as raises the profile of PE, Sport and Physical Activity.

“I am very proud to say, that we achieved the AfPE Quality Mark with Distinction! Our application was also sent to the Department for Education as a model of good practice – hopefully quashing the myth that girls do not enjoy PE!”



Young Voices

Pupils across our Trust come together to join a choir of over 9,000 children at this year's Young Voices concert in London and Birmingham.

In January, children from our Medway primaries took part in the Young Voices concert at the London O2 Arena.

The children from All Faiths Children's Academy, The Gordon Children's Academy, Cedar Children's Academy and New Horizons Children's Academy had been practising the different songs, medleys and dance moves since last September and finally all came together to make up a choir of 9,027 children singing in unison.

In preparation for the event, a dress rehearsal concert for parents to watch was held at Cedar Children's Academy and included children from all our Strood primaries. The children all showed real confidence and determination as this was the first time they had sung without the lyrics to all the songs and in front of an audience.

On the day, the children arrived for a dress rehearsal where they perfected their numbers and additional lyrics learnt on the day to support the performers. The concert atmosphere was electric! The children sang their hearts out and accompanied a choir led by David Lawrence, who celebrated 25 years conducting for Young Voices, and the artists including, MC Grammar and Natalie Williams. They also danced the night away with performances by Urban Striders and even took part in a dance battle against their parents.

The children thoroughly enjoyed the experience. "This is the best day ever!" said Tolu, while Dominic said: "I have been the last 3 years I am really going to miss it when I go to secondary school" and Nancy said: "When can I sign up for next year!"

Miss Xavier-Cope from New Horizon's

Children's Academy commented: "Another year and another Young Voices and this one did not disappoint! The children had worked so hard preparing for the concert beforehand by attending rehearsals and practising at home that it was good to see their hard work pay off!"

"It was a great experience for the children and adults involved and it is something that will be remembered for a long, long time."



Following on in February, children from Furzeham Primary and Nursery School took part in the Young Voices concert at the Birmingham's Resorts World Arena.

Underneath the dazzling lights, pupils had the incredible opportunity to sing alongside renowned artists. It was a momentous occasion, filled with smiles, music and unforgettable memories.

Leading up to the event, pupils dedicated themselves to rehearsals, meeting weekly after school to fine-tune their vocal skills and master the intricacies of the songs and actions. Their commitment extended beyond the classroom, as they logged in at home to continue learning and perfecting their performances.

Paul Adams, Headteacher at Furzeham Primary School and Nursery expressed pride in the students' achievements, stating: "Young Voices is not just a concert - it's an opportunity for our pupils to showcase their talents, work collaboratively, and be part of something truly special. Their commitment to rehearsals and their enthusiasm on stage are a testament to their hard work and passion for music."

A student who attended commented: "It is an amazing experience."





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Students championing change: Schools unite for Pupil Voice

Primary and secondary schools within The Thinking Schools Academy Trust gathered for the 'Pupil Voice' meeting, marking a significant step towards empowering students to shape their educational experience.

The meeting focused on six key areas: Charity, the school food service, 'Be Your Best Self' school journals, environmental sustainability, anti-bullying, and reading. These themes reflect our dedication to addressing crucial aspects of student life and well-being, enhancing the overall educational experience within our school communities.

Pupils from diverse backgrounds and experiences actively engaged in open discussions and shared their perspectives. Their enthusiasm and creativity were contagious as they discussed innovative ideas and strategies to address the identified areas of focus.

The atmosphere throughout the meeting was characterised by positivity, mutual respect, and a genuine desire to make a difference. Students embraced the opportunity to collaborate with peers from different schools, recognising the collective strength that comes from working together towards common goals.

Amelia, a year 11 pupil at Paignton Academy said they loved their experience saying: "I am so happy to be part of the pupil voice. Our opinions matter and positive changes come from speaking up."

When the meeting concluded, there was a sense of excitement and anticipation for the implementation of the ideas generated. Pupils left inspired and motivated, eager to bring back newfound insights and initiatives to their respective school communities.

The success of our latest Trust-wide student voice meeting highlights the power of collaboration and the transformative impact that can be achieved when we come together



as a community. Together, we are stronger and by harnessing the collective talents, perspectives, and passions of our pupils we can create a brighter future for all.

Simon Underdown, Headteacher at Plymouth High School for Girls, who leads on the Pupil Voice at the multi-academy trust, said: "It is lovely to see the schools within the trust uniting to promote pupil voice. This collective effort underscores the importance we place on listening to our pupils and ensuring their perspectives shape the direction of our educational community. By coming together, we not only strengthen bonds across our schools but also reaffirm our commitment to providing a platform for every student to be heard and valued."

The Portsmouth Academy recognised nationally with ‘Silver: Rights Aware’ award

The Portsmouth Academy received the Rights Respecting School Silver accolade, which is presented by UNICEF UK when a school demonstrates an awareness for putting children’s rights at the heart of school life.

To achieve the ‘Silver: Rights Aware’ status, the academy was assessed by one of UNICEF’s advisors who looks at the whole school’s rights respecting work.

“The language of rights is increasingly being used in daily school life:” the report said.

It added: “It was felt by many that knowledge of rights (at The Portsmouth Academy) was helping to improve safeguarding... pupils talked about the school’s Report It button on the website which helps them to raise any issues, and they felt confident that staff would support them to resolve problems.”

The Portsmouth Academy already held its Rights Respecting Schools Bronze status, but has provided evidence to achieve Silver, which will now be valid for three years as the school strives for Gold.

This award means that The Portsmouth Academy is explicitly embedding the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in its policy, practice and culture, and that there is a plan to reflect this in teaching and learning to positively impact all.

The feedback received also stated: “Pupils spoken with felt that they are listened to at school. They reported that there are regular surveys for pupils and the Senior Student Leadership Team are involved in school improvement.”



The academy is beginning to see the positive impact of these actions - a requirement to achieve Silver - on the children, staff, and on the school’s ethos, practice and environment.

Ryan Lock, Assistant Principal for Personal Development at The Portsmouth Academy, said: “At The Portsmouth Academy, we believe that every child should be recognised, respected and protected, and that’s exactly what the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child embodies.”

‘The Portsmouth Academy already held its Rights Respecting Schools Bronze status, but has provided evidence to achieve Silver, which will now be valid for three years as the school strives for Gold.’

“We believe that everyone is a valuable human being on a unique journey and that by helping our school community in their understanding of this, we develop an environment where everyone has a place to grow, develop and be their best selves.”

“Our mission is to empower young people to meet the world, and we believe that begins with the importance of understanding and promoting respect, which we have been recognised to do.”

Mandy Gage, Director of Culture and

Development, praised the school community for their work towards achieving silver, saying: “The tireless efforts by the students and staff to understand and embed children’s rights within the school culture is admirable. This is a moment of pride for the entire school community, and I look forward to seeing them continue this journey towards Gold, guided by the shared commitment to creating an inclusive and empowering educational space.”



Promoting ambition

Paignton Academy welcomes England Netball Captain to inspire students.

Paignton Academy welcomed England Netball Captain, Francesca Williams, for an exclusive Q and A session with the school's netball teams.

Francesca is an English netballer who currently plays for West Coast Fever in the League. She has also been the captain of the England under-21 team and made her debut for the England national team in November 2018 against Uganda.

The special event not only provided students with a unique opportunity to engage with a sporting icon but also perfectly aligned with the school's motto of **'Believe and Achieve'**. It inspired and motivated the young athletes,

offering them the opportunity to interact with a renowned figure in the world of netball.

During the session, Francesca captivated the audience with stories from her career, emphasising the importance of hard work, teamwork, dedication, and resilience in achieving success both on and off the court.

Students actively participated in a Q and A session, asking insightful questions and gaining valuable insights into the world of elite-level netball. Her inspirational journey resonated deeply with the students, motivating them to dream big and strive for greatness in their own endeavours.



‘During the session, Francesca captivated the audience with stories from her career, emphasising the importance of hard work, teamwork, dedication, and resilience in achieving success both on and off the court.’

David Carpenter, Assistant Principal of Paignton Academy, said: “I am immensely grateful to Lovell Netball for arranging this opportunity for our students. It was an honour to have Fran Williams visit our school and share her wisdom with our students. Her visit not only motivates our netball teams but also reinforces the values of hard work and determination, empowering our students to dream big and strive for excellence in every aspect of their lives.”

“Seeing our students captivated by such a significant encounter reinforces our commitment to providing enriching experiences that ignite passion and drive. Let’s harness this newfound energy and support our netball teams, as they embark on their journey to achieving their goals; I am confident they will continue to make us proud.”



Bella, a Year 7 student at the Academy who had the opportunity to meet Fran, said: “Fran was so upbeat and polite, I was really proud to meet Fran and I would say the visit was life changing.”

Cariad in Year 7 student at the Academy, added: “It was great to have a full insight into being an international player and listening to the lead up of how Fran got to the top.”



Be You

Schools and colleges from across our Trust learnt about and celebrated LGBTQ+ history throughout February.

Pupils within the Trust came together to explore LGBTQ+ rights, while also celebrating the inclusive and safe spaces our schools and community provide and the importance of acknowledging what makes each of us unique and beautiful.

For the second year, we welcomed back the 'Be You' event, a day dedicated to recognising and admiring our differences because no two people are the same, but no matter our interests, preferences, backgrounds, or identities, we are all Be'YOU'tiful and our 'Be You' event provided us with an opportunity to celebrate exactly that.

This year, staff and pupils were encouraged to wear colours they felt represented them the best as part of a non-uniform day and partake in arranged activities that celebrate our differences, which make us unique and beautiful. Any money raised from the non-uniform day was donated to the LGBTQ+ charity, 'Just Like Us' or an alternative charity of our pupils' choice.

Pupils attended assemblies exploring love and the LGBTQ+ community, learning about



different types of families and how similar or different they are. They completed their 'I Am Beautiful' signs during the day, noting the things that they love about themselves, and discussing the importance of learning about the LGBTQ+ community, their history, and their journey to acceptance.

As with all of our WeAreOne events, our catering partners supported us by creating a delicious offering of nutritional, rainbow foods - a feast for the eyes as well as the tummy.





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food
is
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mood

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appetit!

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Yummy



Eco-Schools Green Flag awarded to Maritime

Students at Maritime Academy are ecstatic to have been awarded the coveted Eco-Schools Green Flag.

Maritime Academy earned international accreditation this academic year, recognising students' amazing work in making their school more environmentally friendly and raising eco-awareness among their peers.

Students formed an Eco-Committee with the Head of Science, Ms. Dash, to conduct an environmental review, assessing how eco-friendly their school is. They enthusiastically gathered evidence during their Horizons Sustainability lessons, covering everything from biodiversity within their school grounds to how students and staff travel to school. Building on their findings, students and Ms. Dash then planned a year of action designed to advance their school's green credentials, improve their local environment, and protect our planet.

The Eco-Committee took part in a variety of challenges throughout the year, including Keep Britain Tidy, a plastics challenge, and The Big Battery Hunt, while also growing their own trees and vegetables and learning why it is

important to use peat-free compost.

The committee built a green house on site and began growing a beautiful meadow to improve the level of pollinators visiting the school green areas, supported by the student-made bird houses and bug hotels. Students also provided staff with leaflets outlining ways they can save energy in the classrooms and started a recycling campaign at the school.

Head of School, Matt Evans praised: "We are so proud to have received this recognition for our work to embed sustainability into everyday life here at Maritime while we continue to build a sustainable, carbon neutral school for our students.

"We understand that many young people share concerns about climate change and the challenges it might present in the future, which is why we have ensured that as a community, we work together to be responsible and respectful for where we live and learn."



Pupils surprised with guest appearance

Hollywood actress Dame Emma Thompson DBE surprises pupils at Plymouth High School for Girls.

A Hollywood actress surprised pupils at a grammar school in Plymouth with a message of praise for performers who re-enacted famous scenes from her films.

Plymouth High School for Girls, which has a house system, holds an annual drama festival where each house has representatives to deliver a show based on an assigned theme.

For this academic year, the theme was iconic actors and actresses, where pupils had to pay homage to famous scenes from their films.

There are four houses at the school - Anthony who were given Tom Hanks; Latimer, who re-enacted scenes from films featuring Will Smith; Temple, who had Zendaya Coleman and the winners Kendall, who had the opportunity to perform scenes by Dame Emma Thompson, DBE.

As part of their performance, Kendall House reached out to Dame Emma Thompson, DBE, to ask if she would consider recording a 'Good Luck Kendall' message for them to use in their final piece.

At no point did they think they would get a response, but they were delighted when they received a video from Dame Emma Thompson, DBE, earlier in the term, which they proudly played as part of their final scene.

Emma Thompson said: "Hi everyone, thank you so much for watching Kendall's contribution to the drama festival, first of all, which was based on me. Me, what? Why wasn't I there?"

"I wish I were there and wish I'd seen what you had done. I can't imagine it. Did you sort of re-

enact things like the whole of Nanny McPhee? I don't know. Anyway, I wish I was there with you.

"I was really, really thrilled that I was the subject of such a committed group of students. Lots of love to you all. Have the most wonderful, wonderful time."



The House Festivals, organised by a team of House Captains, are a long-standing tradition at Plymouth High School for Girls, where the students can earn points for their house, which contribute to their efforts to win the house shield at the end of the year.

Simon Underdown, Headteacher at Plymouth High, said: "Each house performance was amazing, with clever links and incredible entertainment.

"It was wonderful to welcome our guest judge, Saja Altamimi, who is a previous Head student at Plymouth High. She studied drama at A-Level and at university, and now works in a theatre with young actors in London. Saja was very impressed with the performances and was honoured to announce the winner of the festival.

"The message from Emma Thompson was such a wonderful surprise to the pupils, and on behalf of all the school, I would like to thank

Dame Emma Thompson DBE for her time in recording this for our students and allowing us to replay this to our whole school community."

The room erupted with cheers as her message was played out to the students. It was the talk of the school and a truly memorable moment in their experience at Plymouth High.



World Book Day 2024

The Thinking Schools Academy Trust celebrated the wonderful world of literature for World Book Day on Thursday 7th and Friday 8th March - because why should books only be celebrated for one day?

World Book Day's mission is to change lives by instilling a love of books and encouraging others to read.

Over the two days, students and staff attended in their brilliant costumes, representing their favourite literary characters, or enjoyed coming in in their PJs to curl up with their favourite

books. The event saw students coming together to read to each other, attend book fairs, and write short stories.

This year, the national World Book Day campaign collaborated with Vivian Truong, an incredible illustrator with a love of character designs and animation. Vivian is a British-born



Chinese comic artist and the illustrator behind the graphic novel series *City of Dragons*, *Cooking with Monsters* and many more.

With the engaging design of the national campaign, we encouraged our young people to explore different mediums of storytelling, including graphic novels and comics. So, this year, our students and staff designed comic strips to represent their school or Trust values for the chance to have them illustrated by our in-house illustrator and published author, Georgina Golding, a member of our Thinking Creative design team. We received more than 170 entries into the competition, with winners selected from the primary, secondary, and staff categories.

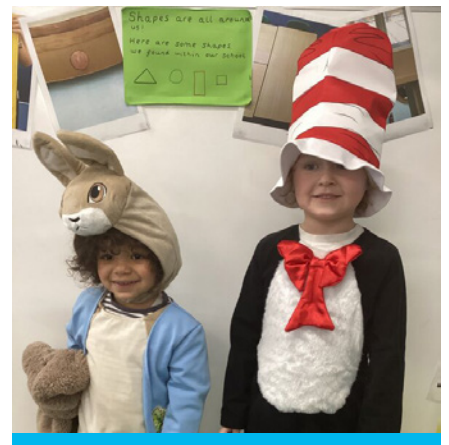
Congratulations to Furzeham Primary and Nursery School, The Portsmouth Academy and The Gordon Children's Academy for their winning entries!

Catering partners who support our schools by providing nutritious meals for our young people kindly donated book prizes to endorse our scrumptious themed menus. Our primaries enjoyed dishes like Room on the Broom sausages, Jack and the Beanstalk beans, and James & the Giant Peach jelly. Students who sampled the menu were entered into a prize draw to win a Supertato book (KS1) or

a children's cookbook (KS2).

Secondary students who ordered either the Brummie Bacon Cake or Carrot Cake, two recipes in the book, from their Grab and Go menus were eligible to win signed Marcus Wareing recipe books.

Everyone went above and beyond to make this event one to remember, and we can't wait for next year!





We strive to be our best selves. We believe every young person deserves to have the best opportunities at life regardless of their individual circumstances.

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Lady Mayoress visits Penbridge School

Children at Penbridge Infant School received a visit from the Lady Mayoress of Portsmouth to talk about her role in the city.

The Lady Mayoress delivered a presentation to inspire children in Year 1 to talk about what it means for her husband to be the Lord Mayor, with her support as Lady Mayoress.

She answered questions about how they became Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, why they wear a chain around their necks, and what clothes they wear for special events.

The children gasped in awe when they learned the Lord Mayor's gown was made from gold thread and dates back to times when Henry VIII was on the throne.

The visit was in support of Aspirations Week, a citywide initiative to encourage pupils to aspire to do what they wish and be their best selves.

Caroline Morris, Head of School at Penbridge Infants, said it was lovely for children and staff to welcome the Lady Mayoress.

She said: "At Penbridge Infant School, we love welcoming different visitors to come and meet children from across our school. We hear about so many inspiring stories which is important for the children to hear. This visit was perfectly timed, as it took place on Aspirations Week, so it was good to hear plenty of questions were asked about the role the Lady Mayoress has.

At Penbridge, we teach our children to show respect, be kind, aim high, be resilient, be independent, and work well with others. The Lady Mayoress is a positive demonstration of showing these values at work in the wider community."



Caroline Morris, Head of School at Penbridge Infants, said: 'It was lovely for children and staff to welcome the Lady Mayoress.'

In Portsmouth, the role of The Lord Mayor and their partner is to visit all aspects of the community during their year in office. From functions to engagements, the local community can invite the Lord Mayor to attend. Before local government reorganisation in 1974, any citizen in the City of Portsmouth could be Lord Mayor, although it was usually a member of the council.

After the reorganisation in 1974, people had to be a serving member of the elected council to serve as Lord Mayor. The Lord Mayor then nominated the Lady Mayoress or Consort.



New Horizons Primary School's Pupil Parliament welcomes MP Penny Mordaunt

A group of children who are aspiring leaders of the future welcomed their MP into their school for a tour, questions about her job and an insight into her role at the King's coronation.

Penny Mordaunt MP was greeted by members of the Pupil Parliament at New Horizons Primary School recently, who showed the MP around the whole school before answering questions from the enthusiastic group.

The visit was led by the school's Pupil Parliament which launched in September. The aim of the group is to promote pupil leadership opportunities, giving the children the chance

to work as a team to develop communication and debating skills while doing good for the community.

Ms Mordaunt was questioned about what she wanted to do when she was younger, her love for walking in the country, and her regular engagements with the King as Leader of the House of Commons and Lord President of the Council.



She said: “When I was younger, I wanted to be a police officer. Someone then suggested that I would be good to do the job of an MP, and here I am today with a brilliant job representing a city I love. I think it’s important that people encourage others to do something, especially if you may have not seen yourself doing that.”

Mrs Hannah Powell, Assistant Headteacher at New Horizons Primary School who is leading the school’s Pupil Parliament, says it was wonderful for the children to meet a significant figure in politics. She said: “We are passionate about encouraging our children to be their best selves and strive to work hard to achieve their aspiration. Many of the children in our Pupil Parliament want to be leaders when they grow up, and loved listening to what Penny had to say about her role, especially the amazing stories about her meetings with the late Queen and regular engagements with the King.

“It was lovely to see the amazement on the faces of the children when they were hearing all about some of the exciting things Penny has done as their local MP, I believe it’s important they get the opportunity to meet important people from the city to show they can achieve anything if they put their heart and mind into it.

“At New Horizons Primary School, our focus is to make a difference, by encouraging and inspiring everyone to be successful learners, responsible citizens and happy, confident individuals. Visits such as this one with Penny allow us to build on that.”

‘Ms Mordaunt was questioned about what she wanted to do when she was younger, her love for walking in the country, and her regular engagements with the King as Leader of the House of Commons and Lord President of the Council.’



Tree planting for Michael Bailey

Holcombe Grammar Schools pay tribute to Board Director Michael Bailey.

Michael Bailey demonstrated unwavering dedication to the Thinking Schools Academy Trust and was a strong advocate for our students and staff. Over many years, he gave his time and support to our Trust, particularly our Kent schools and Holcombe Grammar School, where he began in his governance role. Following his passing, Holcombe took a moment to pay tribute to their long-standing colleague with a tree-planting ceremony in his honour.

The occasion saw Trust CEO Stuart Gardner joined by school Headteacher Lee Preston and

Trust Director of Culture and Development Mandy Gage, who both worked closely with Michael for many years, accompanied by a team of staff from the school to support the tree planting with Michael's wife.

It was a touching moment, setting roots in the memory of Michael at Holcombe.

Michael leaves a legacy of exceptional business acumen and a passion for ensuring that we always put our children at the centre of our decisions to transform the life chances of young people in all our schools.



Michael Bailey





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A close-up portrait of a woman with blonde hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark blue jacket. The background is a blurred outdoor sports field with a goalpost and another person in a red vest. A blue semi-transparent box is overlaid on the bottom right of the image, containing text and a QR code.

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The
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A 'Gold' experience for New Horizons following Olympic athlete visit

Rebecca Adlington, the four-time Olympic medallist, visited New Horizons Children's Academy to talk to pupils about water safety and the importance of knowing how to swim.

The world-renowned swimmer spoke about different water sources and how to act responsibly around them. Rebecca also reflected on her Olympic career, sharing with pupils her journey of how she went from swimming at a young age to performing at a global level, reminiscing about how proud she was to be able to represent Team GB on home soil during the 2012 Olympic games in London.

Four children were chosen from the audience to hold and present Rebecca's gold and bronze medals, which she won at the Beijing and London Olympics in 2008 and 2012, respectively. Pupils loved learning about the medals' designs, materials, and what makes each of them so special.

The visit was organised in support of Swim!, a programme founded by Rebecca Adlington OBE, Steve Parry MBE, and Adrian Turner to deliver swimming classes in premium and family-friendly facilities across the UK.

Swim! opened its twelfth swimming pool in Chatham, with pupils from New Horizons excited for their lessons which started to be held there in the new year.

Rebecca Adlington OBE, founder of Swim!, said: "They're 30-minute with small class sizes to progress and move through the programme quickly so they can be safe around water. It's an important lesson to learn that we teach in a fun and engaging way."



Cormac Murphy, Headteacher at New Horizons Children's Academy, said: "It was an absolute pleasure to welcome Rebecca Adlington and her team to our school. Pupils loved hearing about her experience as an Olympic athlete and were inspired by her stories."

"They also learned about the importance of water safety and knowing how to swim. This is very important to us as we strive to equip all our children with essential life skills, nurture their development and transform their life chances.

"We cannot thank Rebecca and her team enough!"





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