

Trust Newsletter

Term 2 | 2025/26



The Grand Opening of Waterfront UTC's T-Level Suite

– Opened by Lauren Edwards MP

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A Message from our Chief Executive

Dear Parents, Carers, and Colleagues,

As we come to the close of another busy and successful term, I want to take a moment to reflect on the fantastic work happening across our Trust.

Our schools have been alive with learning, creativity, and enrichment. Pupils have been engaging in hands-on Science Focus Weeks, exploring materials, light, shadows, and changing states of matter, designing and building projects, and applying their learning in practical, real-world ways. The Trust Focus Weeks have been a brilliant way to spark curiosity, encourage teamwork and problem-solving.

Students have also enjoyed a wide range of enrichment opportunities. From exploring Chatham Dockyard and the Tower of London to participating in Come Dine With Me cooking challenges, forensic science investigations, and interactive history and outdoor learning sessions, pupils have been learning in engaging and memorable ways. Creative activities have flourished too, from art and music projects to dance, choir performances, and theatre, with pupils shining both in school and on professional stages.

We have celebrated remarkable achievements across the Trust. Pupils have been recognised for their hard work, resilience, and leadership through awards such as the Jack Petchey Achievement Awards and Mini Cadets programmes. Staff have been acknowledged through the Spotlight Award for professionalism and expertise.

This term also saw the opening of the new T-Level suite at Waterfront UTC, officially opened by Lauren Edwards MP. Students showcased their Autodesk Revit projects and employer-led initiatives, highlighting the exceptional opportunities our facilities provide for real-world learning and career preparation.

Our schools have welcomed inspiring visitors who have supported learning and motivated pupils. MPs, Armed Forces personnel, motivational speakers, and performers have engaged with our students, encouraging ambition and resilience.

Pupils have contributed to charity events such as Children in Need, Save the Children and Movember, planted trees and improved outdoor spaces, and connected with the wider community through visits to care homes, spreading kindness and learning beyond the classroom.

All of this is only possible because of the dedication, passion, and professionalism of all our staff. Your commitment ensures that our schools provide inspiring, high-quality education and opportunities for every pupil to thrive. I am incredibly proud of everything our teams and pupils have achieved this term.

On behalf of the Trust, I would like to wish all staff, pupils, and their families a very Merry Christmas and a restful, peaceful New Year. Thank you for your continued hard work and care. You make a real difference every day.

Best wishes,

O McColgan

Owen McColgan
Chief Executive



Central Team News

Sharing Success

Each term, members of the Central Team have the opportunity to nominate a colleague for the Spotlight Award, which recognises outstanding contributions that reflect our core values of being Slick, Professional, and Expert.

This term, the Ops Leadership Group is delighted to announce Robert Thomas as the well-deserved recipient. Rob consistently goes above and beyond in his role and is nominated every single time, which speaks volumes about the impact he has across the Trust.

His commitment, reliability, and proactive approach make a real difference, and his work

is always carried out with professionalism and expertise.

Congratulations to Rob, and thank you for your continued dedication and the positive contribution you make across the Trust.



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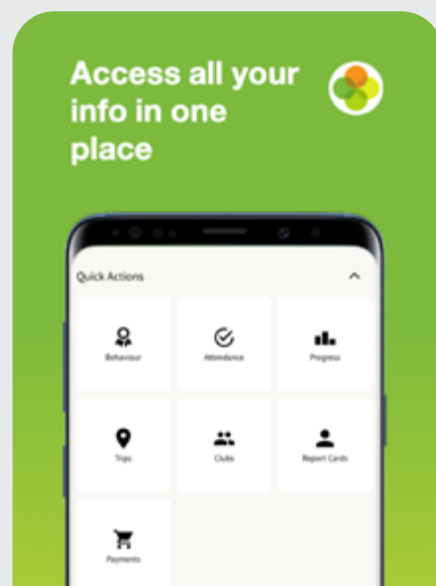
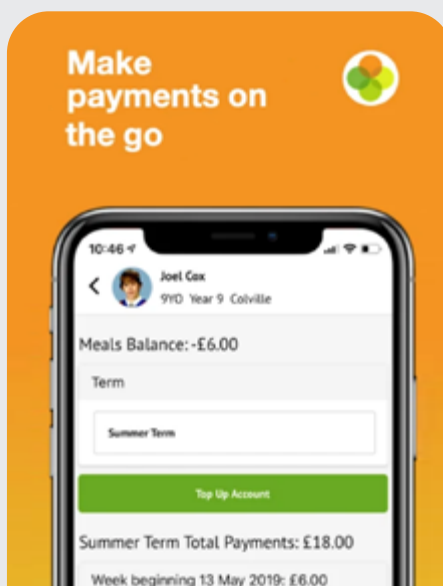
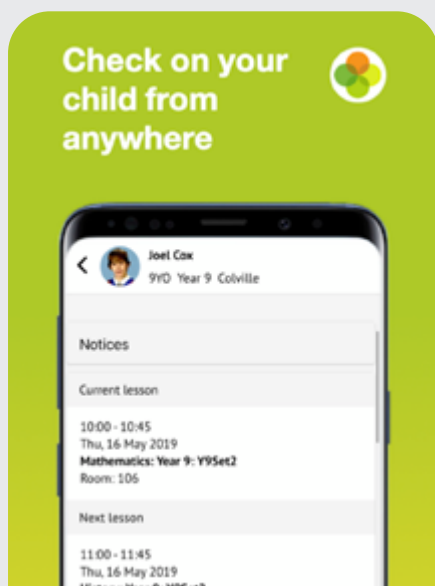
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Primary Phase Term Focus



Celebrating Science Across Our Primary Schools

This academic year marked the launch of our new Trust Focus Weeks – an exciting initiative designed to encourage collaboration and creativity across our schools. Each term, pupils explore a shared theme, showcasing their learning and celebrating their achievements together.

This term, we celebrated Science, giving pupils across our primary schools the chance to explore, experiment, and get creative together.

Children took part in a wide range of hands-on activities that brought scientific concepts to life. They designed and built boats, investigated the properties of different materials, explored light and shadows, and carried out experiments with melting, changing states of matter, and other scientific phenomena.

Pupils worked collaboratively, shared ideas, and applied their learning in practical, real-world ways, developing teamwork, problem-solving, observation skills, and scientific thinking throughout.

The Trust Science Focus Week was a brilliant way to spark curiosity, and celebrate the achievements of our young scientists. It gave pupils the chance to see how learning connects across subjects and beyond the classroom, making science both engaging and memorable across all our schools.





Year 5 Explore History at Kent Life

Year 5 enjoyed an engaging and educational visit to Kent Life, where they took part in two hands-on workshops. The first introduced pupils to the Maya calendar, followed by a collaborative task to build their own Maya temple or sacrifice stage.

During the second workshop, Hawthorn Class met a Conquistador and had the opportunity to practise safe, supervised sword-fighting techniques, bringing their history learning vividly to life. A memorable highlight for both pupils and staff was the tractor ride, which provided a fun end to an immersive day of learning.



Year 5 Mini Cadets

Our Mini Cadets have been working closely with Imma, our Police Community Support Officer, and have shown great enthusiasm throughout their sessions. Recently, the children practised standing to attention, explored police ranks, and elected Callum as their Sergeant for the remainder of the programme. The group also took part in an important session focused on cyber crime and knife crime. Pupils asked thoughtful questions, and gained valuable knowledge to help them stay safe.



KS2 Choir Spreads Christmas Cheer

The final KS2 Choir rehearsal of the term was full of festive fun and Christmas cheer! Pupils sang a variety of seasonal songs and added energetic dance moves, showing off their enthusiasm and talent.

The rehearsal was a lively and joyful way to celebrate the end of term, and by the end, Mrs Wright and Mrs Daffin were thoroughly exhausted, but incredibly proud of the children's dedication, energy, and festive spirit. It was a wonderful way to end the term on a high note!



Oak Class Explore Chatham Dockyard

In their History block, Oak Class have been learning about Chatham Dockyard, exploring life before and after its closure in the 1980s. Pupils researched the types of jobs available then and now and created informative posters based on their findings. Their recent trip to Chatham Dockyard brought their learning to life, providing valuable context and inspiring their classroom work.





Autumn Shines as Matilda

Congratulations to Autumn, who took the lead role of Matilda in her theatre school's performance at the Shaftesbury Theatre. She delivered an outstanding performance, with every dance move precise and every note sung beautifully, captivating the audience throughout.

Her dedication, talent, and hard work truly shone on stage, and she was a fantastic ambassador for her school. Well done, Autumn. We are incredibly proud of your achievement and the inspiration you bring to others!



Year 5 Become Forensic Detectives

Year 5 investigated the mystery of Humpty Dumpty's fall, exploring forces and how air resistance could have affected his landing. Pupils gathered evidence from the "crime scene" and carried out hands-on experiments to better understand air resistance.

This imaginative approach brought science to life, combining problem-solving, observation, and critical thinking in a fun and engaging way.

Gladiator Zack George Inspires Students

We were thrilled to welcome Zack George, Steel from Gladiators, for a visit to the school! He delivered an inspiring assembly on the importance of fitness, health, and resilience in achieving your dreams. All pupils will be taking home a class photo with Zack, a signed picture, and a water bottle as a memento of the day.

Mrs Barton even had a playful moment, thinking she might take on Steel in an arm-wrestling challenge! A big thank you to Zack George for sharing his time, energy, and motivation with our students.



Remembrance Day Assembly

We welcomed Colonel Ankers for an inspiring assembly on the significance of Remembrance Day and the role of the Armed Forces. Pupils listened attentively as he shared his experiences and insights, gaining a deeper understanding of service and sacrifice. They enjoyed having the opportunity to ask questions and engage directly, making the assembly both informative and memorable.



Year 5 Engage with Naushabah Khan MP on Fairtrade and Climate Change

We were delighted to welcome Naushabah Khan MP to visit our Year 5 students, following their thoughtful letters about Fairtrade and tackling climate change.

Ms Khan spoke about the role of an MP, her priorities for the community, and the importance of taking action on global issues. The students asked insightful questions, shared their own ideas, and were fully engaged throughout the visit. Some students were inspired to consider a future in politics!



Year 2 Explore Medieval Life at Leeds Castle

Year 2 enjoyed an engaging trip to Leeds Castle as part of their Term 2 topic, "What was life like in Medieval Britain?" Pupils took part in a monarchy workshop, learning about famous monarchs and even dressing up in medieval costumes.

They also went on a guided tour of the castle, discovering its features and learning how each room was used in medieval times. The children represented the school brilliantly, showing great enthusiasm and excellent manners throughout the day.

Miers Court Fireworks Night

Our first Miers Court Fireworks Night was a fantastic success! Thanks to our PTFA, staff, volunteers, and everyone who attended, the evening was full of excitement and spectacular fireworks. The event raised a generous amount, all of which will go directly back into the school to enhance learning opportunities for our children. Save the date for next year: 7th November 2026!



Special Remembrance Visit

We were delighted to welcome a Band Sergeant Major who played his euphonium during our Remembrance assembly. Pupils were excited and enthusiastic to hear the music, which made the occasion even more memorable.

He also visited Year R, performing familiar tunes that the children loved singing along to. A special thank you to all children who came dressed in their squirrel, rainbow, beaver, brownie, guide, and scout uniforms to mark the event.



Come Dine With Me: Starters Week

Year 6 had a fantastic time taking part in Come Dine With Me! Working in groups, pupils researched, planned, and prepared their own starter dishes, including Stuffed Peppers, Pepper Pinwheels, and Stuffed Sweet Peppers. They developed teamwork and practical cooking skills, chopping, slicing, weighing, measuring, and cooking their creations. Each dish was prepared in two portions, one to taste themselves and one to share with others. Pupils enjoyed trying their finished dishes, and even those hesitant to try something new gave it a go. It was a brilliant effort all round!



Year 2 Explore Reading and Music

Year 2 have been busy developing their skills across the curriculum. In whole-class reading, pupils have been building fluency and exploring expression by taking on the role of conductor in *The Polar Express*, bringing the story to life with different voices.

In computing, they have been creating their own digital music, experimenting with sounds and rhythms. The children have shown great creativity and enthusiasm. At this rate, we might have a few CDs to release!

Children in Need Fundraising

The children had a fantastic time taking part in activities to raise money for Children in Need. Pupils showed off their dancing skills in creative and colourful outfits and enjoyed a delicious selection of cakes. The day was full of energy, fun, and community spirit, creating a memorable experience for everyone involved. Thank you to all the children, staff, and families that took part. Your contributions helped make it a great success while raising money for such an important cause.



Choir Visit Yew Tree Lodge

Our school choir had the wonderful opportunity to perform for the residents of Yew Tree Lodge in Hoo. The pupils sang beautifully, bringing joy and smiles to everyone in attendance.

We were also delighted to have Harley join the visit, adding an extra special touch to the afternoon. Well done to the choir for representing the school so brilliantly and spreading happiness in the community!



Silver Better Medway Schools Award

We are delighted to share that The Rowans AP has been awarded the Silver Better Medway Schools Award. This honour recognises the ongoing work we do to support the health and wellbeing of both pupils and staff.

The award reflects the dedication and commitment of our whole school community in creating a positive, supportive environment where everyone can thrive.



New Sensory Garden at The Rowans Primary

Pupils are enjoying the new sensory garden, a space designed to engage the senses and provide opportunities for creative and calming play. Children have been exploring the sand pit, building tunnels and castles, and learning to work together through teamwork and imagination. The garden offers a range of activities that stimulate sight, sound, touch, and movement, encouraging curiosity and cooperation. The sand pit, in particular, has proven to be a fantastic addition, bringing fun, learning, and collaboration to the heart of the playground.

Thank You for Our Apple Trees

We are very grateful to Grow for their generous donation of apple trees, which will provide our pupils with fresh, healthy fruit for years to come. These trees are a wonderful addition to our school garden, helping to promote healthy eating and giving children the opportunity to learn about growing and caring for plants. A special thank you also goes to Louie for his kindness in planting the trees and helping to bring the garden to life. We can't wait to see the fruits of everyone's efforts as the trees grow and flourish!



Aspen Class Shine in the Classroom

Aspen Class have been true superstars! Pupils visited a secondary setting to showcase their EPIC writing, demonstrating creativity and confidence. In Maths, they used manipulatives to explore concepts hands-on, while in Art, they carefully followed instructions to produce some brilliant pieces. We are very proud of your effort, enthusiasm, and the way you continue to challenge yourselves and support each other in your learning!



Friends of Hurstmere School Quiz Night

The annual Friends of Hurstmere School Quiz Night was a fantastic evening, bringing together families, staff, and friends for a fun and friendly competition. Teams tested their knowledge across a range of topics, and the atmosphere was full of energy, laughter, and teamwork. A huge thank you to everyone who attended, took part, and helped make the event such a success. It was a wonderful opportunity to come together as a community and enjoy a memorable night while supporting our school.



Enrichment Day Brings Learning to Life

Pupils enjoyed an exciting Enrichment Day filled with hands-on activities designed to apply learning in new and meaningful ways. The day included creative art projects, Modern Foreign Languages activities such as ordering ice cream in Italian and Bhangra dancing, and practical cooking sessions making spring rolls and banana fritters. Mathematics came to life through budgeting for homes and dream holidays, while Science activities included Zoolab workshops, chicken foot dissections, and engineering challenges. Alongside many other activities, the day encouraged curiosity, creativity, and real-world problem solving, making learning both engaging and memorable.

Hurstmere Celebrates Jack Petchey Award Winners

Congratulations to all of our Hurstmere students and staff recognised at the Jack Petchey Achievement Awards! Recipients from Year 9 through Year 11, along with our Staff Leader Award winner, have demonstrated outstanding effort, resilience, leadership, and positivity, making a lasting impact on our school community and embodying our Hurstmere values.

The Jack Petchey Foundation celebrates young people who go above and beyond, encouraging them to believe in themselves and take pride in their achievements, values that align closely with life at Hurstmere. We are incredibly proud of all our winners and the contributions they make every day.



Year 7 Enrichment Visit – Tower of London

Year 7 enjoyed an enriching visit to the Tower of London, bringing their classroom learning to life at one of the country's most iconic historic sites. Pupils explored the stories of past monarchs and viewed the Crown Jewels, deepening their understanding of Britain's medieval history. The boys represented Hurstmere exceptionally well, showing enthusiasm, respect, and strong engagement throughout the day. It was a valuable experience that sparked curiosity and enriched their learning beyond the classroom.

Furthering Education and Careers

MP Lauren Edwards Opens Waterfront UTC's new T-Level Suite

Waterfront UTC was pleased to welcome Rochester and Strood MP Lauren Edwards for the official opening of our new T-Level suite. We were also joined by some of our employer partners, Apex Contractors Limited and Willmott Dixon, along with representatives from The Howard Academy Trust.

During the visit, students showcased their Autodesk Revit work and employer-led projects, highlighting how the new facilities support high-quality technical education and real-world learning opportunities.



Year 10 Take Part in Army Leadership Challenge

Waterfront UTC welcomed members of the British Army to deliver a leadership and resilience challenge to our Year 10 students. Pupils attended a presentation on career opportunities within the Army before taking part in practical activities designed to develop leadership and resilience skills.

Our students engaged fantastically and received praise from the instructors for their enthusiasm and teamwork. Well done to Year 10, and thank you to the Army representatives for inspiring and supporting our students.

Waterfront UTC Marks Remembrance Day

Waterfront UTC respectfully marked Remembrance Day, joining students across the country to reflect on the sacrifices of service members past and present. Pupils attended a virtual assembly delivered by The Royal British Legion and The National Literacy Trust.

We are grateful to all students who observed the two-minute silence respectfully, and to those in scouts and cadets uniforms who contributed to the meaningful and respectful tribute.



Students Support Dementia Care Project

Waterfront UTC students are working with Darland House, a care home for patients with advanced dementia, to design a sensory garden with raised flower beds and boxes. As part of a Baker Award challenge, T-Level Design, Surveying, and Planning students are using research and technology, including Matterport scans and Revit drawings, to complete the brief. The Darland House team will provide guidance on dementia-friendly design and feedback on student proposals, giving pupils valuable real-world experience while supporting the community.

Furthering Social Impact and Development

Year 12 Visit Sports Science Labs at CCCU

Twelve Year 12 students recently visited the Sports Science Labs at CCCU for a hands-on introduction to university life. They took part in a range of lab-based performance tests, including VO₂ max, Wingate anaerobic power, and body-composition analysis, while also learning how performance technologies support athletes. The visit linked directly to their BTEC National Sport course and provided inspiration for future study and careers. CCCU staff praised our students' knowledge and attitude, and two more Year 12 groups will be visiting soon.



Year 7 Take Part in Tree-Planting Afternoon

As part of National Tree-Planting Week, 14 students spent a bright Wednesday afternoon planting 150 native British trees on the school field, guided by an expert from Kent County Council. Pupils learned about tree species, staking, and protection, while working together as a team to create a lasting, eco-friendly impact.

Special mention goes to Austen C in Year 7, who also organised a litter pick, helping to make the area even greener. It was a fulfilling afternoon that will benefit future generations as the trees grow and flourish.

Sixth Form Media Workshop with Collaborate Digital

Year 12 and 13 students took part in a media workshop with Collaborate Digital, linked to the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner's violence-reduction programme. They explored online safety, healthy relationships, and positive digital behaviours before planning, scripting, and recording their own mini-podcasts using professional equipment.

Many thanks to Matthew Scott and the Collaborate Digital team for this valuable session and for supporting future opportunities.



Helen Whately MP Visits The Abbey School

The Abbey School was delighted to welcome Helen Whately MP, who spoke to students about her career journey, public service, and the importance of democratic engagement.

Students had the opportunity to ask questions, offering thoughtful perspectives on current issues, and Ms Whately engaged openly, encouraging critical thinking and active interest in public life. The visit provided a valuable, first-hand insight into parliamentary work, and we are grateful for the time she spent with our students.



Celebrating Student Success and Social Impact

Year 9 Belgium Trip

Our students enjoyed an unforgettable history trip to Belgium. Highlights included visits to Tyne Cot Cemetery, former WWI trenches, the Hooze Crater Museum, and the In Flanders Fields Museum, which brought the realities of the Western Front to life. A special moment came during the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate, where three students laid a wreath on behalf of the school. The trip also included some lighter moments, such as a visit to the Leonidas chocolate shop and climbing the Menin Gate for stunning views across Ypres. The group engaged enthusiastically throughout, showing respect, curiosity, and maturity during the experience.



Year 10 and 11 Explore the Western Front

Our Year 10 and 11 history pupils had an incredible opportunity to step back in time and experience life on the Western Front. They explored the harsh realities of WWI, including medical treatments, battlefield injuries, and the weapons and artillery used by soldiers. The highlight of the day was getting up close with authentic artefacts over 100 years old, including guns, artillery pieces, and gas masks. The experience brought history vividly to life, sparking curiosity and providing an engaging way to support their GCSE studies.

Year 10 Students Take on Kayaking

As part of their Cambridge National "Sports Studies" course, students from The Howard School took part in a kayaking session for their Outdoor and Adventurous Activities unit. Pupils learned the basics of kayaking, including paddling forwards and backwards, stopping, and turning. They also explored important water safety topics, such as cold water shock and the RNLI's "Float to Live" message, combining practical skills with essential safety knowledge.



Howard's fundraiser for Prostate Cancer Research

As Movember came to an end, we would like to thank our fantastic staff team for taking part to raise awareness and funds for Prostate Cancer UK and Pancreatic Cancer UK. Their commitment throughout the month helped spark important conversations around men's health and mental wellbeing. Thank you to everyone who supported the campaign through donations and encouragement.

Join Our Team

The Howard Academy Trust's aim and vision is for our member schools to work together to build a community of successful learners, and to deliver an outstanding education for children and young people.

To ensure that we can provide this, we pride ourselves in our ability to deliver the support that you need to progress in your career in a way that best suits you.

We welcome new staff and ECTs into our 9 academies in all subjects and key stages, and provide a community which allows for collaboration and the building of a strong and supportive teaching network.

The Howard Academy Trust values employees who work for our organisation and can offer a variety of support, as well as opportunities to progress in your career with access to Middle and Senior Leadership Courses, role specific training courses for associate staff, and career stage CPD.

We also recognise that your life extends past the workplace and offer an Employee Assistance Programme, flu jabs and health checks at the workplace, subsidised gym membership and regular Mental Health and Wellbeing afternoons.

If you would like to get in touch, to discuss working with us, or how we can support your entry into teaching, you can click the link below. For more information about our ECT offer, visit: mynewterm.com/trust/The-Howard-Academy-Trust



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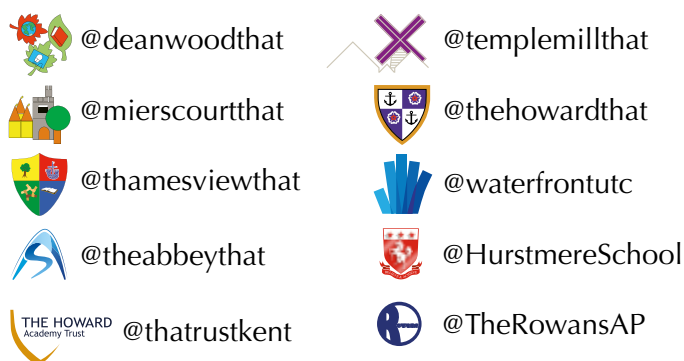


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You can also find THAT on LinkedIn at: www.linkedin.com/company/howardacademytrust





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