Our Community

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Family Magazine



OCMAT

OUR COMMUNITY MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

EDITION 5, SPRING 2026

COMPASSION | COMMUNITY | INCLUSION

Our Community

Chief Executive Officer

David Whitehead

Our Schools

Borden C of E Primary School

Bredgar C of E Primary School

Dymchurch Primary School

Lydd Primary School

Lynsted & Norton Primary School

Milstead & Frinsted C of E Primary School

Minterne Junior School

The Oaks Infant School

Petham Primary School

Selling C of E Primary School



www.ocmat.org.uk

marketing@ocmat.org.uk

Registered Office:
Our Community Multi Academy Trust
c/o Lynsted & Norton Primary School
Lynsted Lane
Sittingbourne
Kent
ME9 0RL
Company no: 10842747
Registered in England and Wales

IN THIS EDITION

From your CEO 4
Trust Updates 6
- Your Voice, Our Trust Feedback
- Working for Us
- Our Lives News
- Free Breakfast Club Launching at Lydd Primary

Community 10
- Celebrating our PTFAs
- Team Triumphs
- Community in Bloom
- Sittingbourne Football Club
- Young Voices 2026
- World Book Day 2026
- Trust-wide Events Schedule
- Safer Internet Day
- Trust-wide Choir
- Small schools football event
- Trust-wide skipping challenge

Achievements & Highlights 20
- Ofsted at Selling CE Primary School

Parent Zone 21
- Free School Meals
- Smart tips, deals and helpful updates
- Things to do over the Easter period
- Free online courses for parents
- Raising Resilient Children by Mentalk Founder
- Building Understanding & Inclusion: A parent's perspective
- SEND support and wellbeing

School Pages 31
Pupil Reporters 33
Become an OCMAT Ambassador 43
Join our OCMAT Photo Challenge 44
Trust booklet links for our Parents/Carers 45
Term Dates 25/26 and 26/27 46
Support 50



From Mr David Whitehead, CEO

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Spring edition of our Trust's Family Magazine – and how wonderful it is to finally say Spring has arrived! The dark, rainy days of winter are behind us, and we can begin to enjoy brighter mornings, longer evenings, and a renewed sense of energy across our schools.

It is always a pleasure to visit our schools, but even more so at this time of year. Seeing children learning and playing outdoors, surrounded by blossoming trees and emerging wildlife, brings a real sense of joy. Our school environments are truly special, and they come alive in the Spring sunshine.

There has been a huge amount to celebrate across the Trust over the past few months. In this edition, we are delighted to share highlights including the launch of the Free Breakfast Club at Lydd Primary School, sporting successes across our schools, our communities in bloom, and our exciting partnership with Sittingbourne Football Club—complete with a fantastic training session for pupils from our smaller schools. We also look back on our involvement in this year's Young Voices concerts at the O2 (an amazing experience once again!), World Book Day celebrations, Safer Internet Day, and a very special Trust-wide choir performance at the University of Kent. And that's not all—there's also our Trust-wide skipping event and much more! The question is... will we have enough energy left for Terms 5 and 6?!

We are also proud to celebrate the very positive Ofsted report received by Selling CEP School in January, as part of the first round of inspections under the new framework. This is a fantastic achievement, and we are incredibly proud of the whole school community.

Look out for the link to my Easter story, once again created in partnership with our friends at RVP Video, who also produce Our Lives News. After watching the story, why not explore some of our Our Lives News episodes—a fantastic way to see our children sharing their learning and celebrating all that makes their schools so special.

As we approach the Easter break, I would like to wish you and your families a happy and restful holiday. I hope you are able to enjoy some quality time together and make the most of the (hopefully!) lovely Spring weather.

David Whitehead

From your Editor

Dear Families,

I hope you enjoy reading this latest issue of our Family Magazine. We're especially pleased to introduce some new sections, shaped by your feedback – thank you to everyone who took the time to share their thoughts. Your input really does help us make this magazine as engaging and useful as possible for our families.
As we come to the end of term, I wish you all a restful and peaceful Easter.

Warm regards.

Emma

Contributors





David Whitehead, Emma Rannard, Alison Simmonds, Jason Firmager from Mentalk Health, Our wonderful OCMAT pupils and staff

Pupil Journalists / Reporters

Borden CE Primary School: **Livia, Maya, Freya & Harry**
Bredgar CE Primary School: **Kian, Lacie, Anthony, Aubery, Josie & Maya**
Dymchurch Primary School: **Axel, Abigaile, Noella, Stevie, Fliss, Amelia, Lilah & Stanley**
Lydd Primary School: **Charlie, Teddy, Paisly & Ivy**
Lynsted & Norton Primary School: **Skyla, Silvy & Noah**
Milstead & Frinsted CE Primary School: **Penelope, Jasmine, Bella, Darcy, Jasper & Poppy**
Minterne Junior School: **Isla-Rose, Renaye, Fred, Katie, Keira, Bonnie-Blu, Erin & Jack**
The Oaks Infants School: **Arabella, Hughie, Aimee, Primrose, George, Henry & Eliza**
Petham Primary School: **George, Eli & Timmy**
Selling CE Primary School: **Iyla**

Trust Updates

Your Voice, Our Trust - Feedback

Following our recent Your Voice, Our Trust Parent Survey, we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to every parent and carer who took the time to respond.

Your feedback was honest, thoughtful and incredibly valuable. Some families told us they read every issue. Others shared that they rarely see it, find it difficult to access on a phone, or would prefer something shorter and more focused on their own school.

We have listened carefully.
From this issue onwards, you will see some changes:

More Pupil Voice
Some parents asked for more pupil input. In this edition, pupils are reporting on their schools in their own words and pictures — sharing what matters most to them. We are proud to give our young people a platform to celebrate their achievements and experiences.

A Stronger Parent Zone
Families told us they would like more practical information — support for SEND, wellbeing advice, holiday dates, local activities and ways to access help. Our new Parent Zone section will include useful updates, money-saving ideas, local opportunities where possible and clear signposting to support services.

Making It Easier to Access
Several parents told us they weren't sure where to find the magazine or found it difficult to read on a mobile phone. All Family Magazines are saved on our Trust Website here:

- Magazines are still available to read online as a flipbook
- Copies of all Magazines are also available as mobile friendly PDF versions on our website
- Copies are available for printing at your school office on request.

Celebrating Every School
Some families love seeing what other Trust schools are doing. Others would prefer more focus on their own school. We are working to strike the right balance — celebrating the strength of our Trust community, while ensuring each school has meaningful representation along side your school's dedicated weekly newsletters.

Your voice matters. This magazine exists for our families, and we will continue to refine them with you in mind.



Working for Us

At Our Community Multi Academy Trust, we believe that great things happen when passionate people come together. Our Trust is built on collaboration, creativity, and care—with ten unique schools, each with its own personality, united by shared values and a common purpose.

Working with us means joining a community that believes in teamwork, lifelong learning, and making a real difference for children. From the classroom to the playground, from leadership to support roles, every person in our Trust plays a part in helping our pupils thrive.

We're proud to offer opportunities for growth at every stage of your career—through mentoring, training, and collaboration across our schools. You'll be supported, encouraged, and inspired by colleagues who share your passion for education and your belief in the power of community.

If you're looking for more than just a job—if you want to be part of something bigger, where your work truly matters—then we'd love to hear from you.

All vacancies are advertised on the **Kent Teach** website, or you can register your interest **here**.

Together, we're shaping futures, building confidence, and making a lasting impact on the lives of our pupils.

trusthr@ocmat.org.uk

OUR COMMUNITY MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

VOLUNTEER GOVERNORS & TRUSTEES - NOW RECRUITING

Shape what *matters.*

OCMAT
OUR COMMUNITY MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Ten primary schools. Where curious minds flourish, at the heart of the communities that shape them. We're looking for people who want to **make something count**, not just sit on a board.

Trust Director / Trustee

Trust-wide strategy, finance, audit and governance. You see the bigger picture - and you're not afraid to challenge it

LMC Governor

Embedded in a single school. You know the community, care about the detail - safeguarding, curriculum, wellbeing.

SKILLS WE ESPECIALLY NEED RIGHT NOW

- Finance & Audit
- Legal
- HR & People
- Health & Safety
- Estates
- Marketing & Brand
- SEND & Safeguarding
- Data & IT

OUR SCHOOLS

Borden CE Primary School
Bredgar CE Primary School
Dymchurch Primary School
Lydd Primary School
Lynsted & Norton Primary School
Milstead & Frinsted CE Primary School
Minterne Junior School
The Oaks Infant School
Petham Primary School
Selling CE Primary School

A manageable time commitment each term. Full induction and ongoing training provided.
All roles subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Compassion . Community . Inclusion

FIND OUT MORE
clerk@ocmat.org.uk
ocmat.org.uk/Our-People/



Our Lives News

https://www.ourlivestv.co.uk/ocmat/

Our Lives News is a unique online news programme created by pupils from across our Trust schools. Throughout the school year, new episodes will showcase exciting news and features from each of our schools.

This initiative offers numerous benefits for the pupils involved:

- Improves Communication Skills
- Builds Confidence
- Encourages Creativity
- Promotes Teamwork
- Fosters Ownership and Pride

By producing these video reports, pupils not only enhance their learning experience but also develop vital skills for the future. In a world where digital literacy and effective communication are increasingly important, Our Lives News is equipping our young learners with tools to thrive in their next steps.

Look out for Mr Whitehead's Easter story using the link below. Available to watch from Wednesday 1 April!

Watch the latest episodes here! www.ourlivestv.co.uk/ocmat/

Free Breakfast Club Launching at Lydd Primary School

We are delighted to share that from Term 5, Lydd Primary School will be launching a free Breakfast Club for its pupils.

This exciting development follows the successful work of Mr Brundle, Head of School, in securing government funding, enabling the school to offer this valuable provision to its families. We are particularly proud that Lydd Primary School is currently the only school on Romney Marsh offering a free Breakfast Club, marking a significant step in supporting the local community.

The club will provide pupils with a positive start to the day, including a healthy breakfast and a calm, welcoming environment before lessons begin. Research highlighted by The Education Hub shows that access to breakfast clubs can improve attendance, punctuality, wellbeing, and readiness to learn.

We recognise that mornings can be busy for families, and this provision aims to ease that pressure while ensuring every child begins the school day feeling settled, nourished, and ready to succeed.

We look forward to seeing the positive impact this initiative will have for pupils and families at Lydd Primary School.

Community

Supporting Our Schools: The Power of Our PTFAs

Our school PTFAs and Friends groups continue to play a vital role in supporting school life across the Trust, raising funds while creating fun and memorable experiences for children and families.

At Friends of **Borden** CE Primary School, the team have replaced the outdoor little library with support from FM Conway, using raffle funds to purchase new books. They have also organised a Valentine's Treat Sale, Mother's Day Gift Shop, sponsored a wolf at Wingham Wildlife Park (named Frosty!), and are supporting upcoming events including the school disco and Story in a Jar competition.

At Friends of **Bredgar** CE Primary School, recent fundraising activities have included a bake sale raising £184.30 for new outdoor equipment, a fancy dress sale perfect for World Book Day costumes, and a festive wreath-making workshop. Pupils have also enjoyed discos, cake sales, arts and crafts activities and Crazy Hair Day, with planning already underway for the summer fete in June.

At Friends of **Dymchurch** Primary School, the popular Snack Shack opens every Friday after school, raising funds while giving families a chance to enjoy a well-earned treat together. They also held a Mother's Day Gift Sale, giving children the opportunity to shop independently and choose thoughtful gifts for the special people in their lives.

Meanwhile, the **Lydd** Primary School PTFA have hosted Penny Wars, doughnut sales for the Year 6 prom and "Be Yourself Day", collecting chocolate donations for the Spring Fair. The fair combined Mother's Day and Easter festivities, featuring favourites such as the chocolate tombola, lucky dip and a new Human Fruit Machine, alongside a gift station and a larger raffle supported by local businesses.

At **Milstead & Frinsted** CE Primary School PTFA, a popular tuck shop has been running throughout the term. The team have also organised a special Mother's Day activity where every child decorated a flower to take home, alongside a Mother's Day gift shop.

The **Minterne** Junior School PTFA have also had a busy year with discos' (including a February disco raising over £1,200), film nights, Valentine's fundraising, Christmas shops and school calendar sales, as well as fun dress-down events.

At The **Oaks** Infant School PTFA, recent events include "Wear Something You Love" Day and a Mother's Day celebration, with Easter activities still to come. Funds raised have helped provide an African Dance Workshop and an exciting Science Workshop Day for the children.

Finally, the **Selling** CE Primary School PTFA have supported a theatre trip for Maple Class to see The Gruffalo's Child, with further trips and Easter events planned for the end of term.

These are just a few examples of the incredible work happening across our Trust. Every PTFA plays a vital role in bringing communities together and creating special opportunities for our pupils.

Thank you for everything you do — our schools are stronger, warmer and more joyful because of you.



If any parents or carers would like to get involved with their child's PTFA, please speak to the school office to find out more.

Team Triumphs

Celebrating the people who make our Trust shine

Inclusive Practice in Action!

Kirsty Skillen at **Minterne Junior School** is to be highly commended for her exceptional contribution to the planning and delivery of the school's sensory circuits intervention, which takes place every morning at 9.00am. In a very short space of time, Kirsty has redesigned and implemented a range of engaging and purposeful activities that meet the needs of over 40 pupils.

In addition to planning and delivering the sessions, Kirsty has trained fellow Teaching Assistants, ensuring consistency and high-quality practice across the intervention. She has also created a supportive display to help children understand the activities and expectations, further promoting independence and confidence.

Kirsty's initiative, organisation, and commitment has had a clear and positive impact on pupils' regulation, readiness to learn, and overall wellbeing. This work has significantly strengthened inclusive practice within the school and is greatly valued by both staff and pupils.

At the Heart of Selling

A big shout out to **Ruby Clark**, FLO for her unwavering commitment to the pupils and families at **Selling CE Primary School**. She consistently goes above and beyond to support our community, bringing warmth, reassurance, and a calm, nurturing presence to every day. Her knowledge, dedication, and genuine care make an immeasurable difference, and we would truly be lost without her.





Community Connections in Bloom

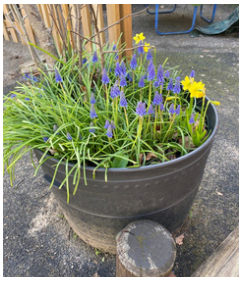











The children at our Sittingbourne schools were delighted to receive a generous donation of spring bulbs from Harrison at **The Range in Sittingbourne**. With trowels at the ready, pupils enjoyed planting the bulbs around their school grounds, learning about nature and how plants grow along the way. It was a wonderful opportunity for the children to spend time outdoors and take pride in caring for their school environment. We are now eagerly watching for the first signs of colour as the bulbs begin to bloom, and we look forward to seeing the bright display of flowers in the weeks ahead and hopefully even next spring!

OCMAT are proud to partner with Sittingbourne Football Club

At Our Community Multi Academy Trust (OCMAT), we believe in the power of strong local partnerships to inspire, support, and broaden the horizons of our children.

We're delighted to be partnering with Sittingbourne FC, a well-established club with deep roots in our local community. This collaboration reflects our shared commitment to offering enriching experiences beyond the classroom and to supporting children's physical health, wellbeing, and sense of belonging through sport.

As a Trust rooted in Compassion, Community, and Inclusion, we're always looking for ways to connect our pupils with real-world opportunities. Together with Sittingbourne FC, we look forward to offering exciting new experiences that promote teamwork, aspiration, and community spirit.

Please take a look at their upcoming fixtures as you may want to go and support a game:
https://www.footballwebpages.co.uk/sittingbourne/fixtures-results

Watch this space — there's lots to look forward to!

Website for Sittingbourne Football Club



Sittingbourne Football Club Advertisement
Easter Camp:
Come and train with the players for a whole week! Have fun, learn new skills, and win cool prizes.

Train with the players
Get better at football
Learn new tricks and game skills
Win fun prizes

Click here for more information and to book

Our Young Voices 2026

















Many of our schools recently took part in an unforgettable trip to Young Voices at the iconic O2 in London. Joining thousands of other pupils from across the country, our children performed as part of one of the largest school choirs in the world — an inspiring experience filled with music, energy and excitement. The atmosphere was electric, and the confidence, teamwork and joy shown by our pupils made us incredibly proud. It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and a wonderful example of our Trust community coming together through the power of music.

World Book Day 2026

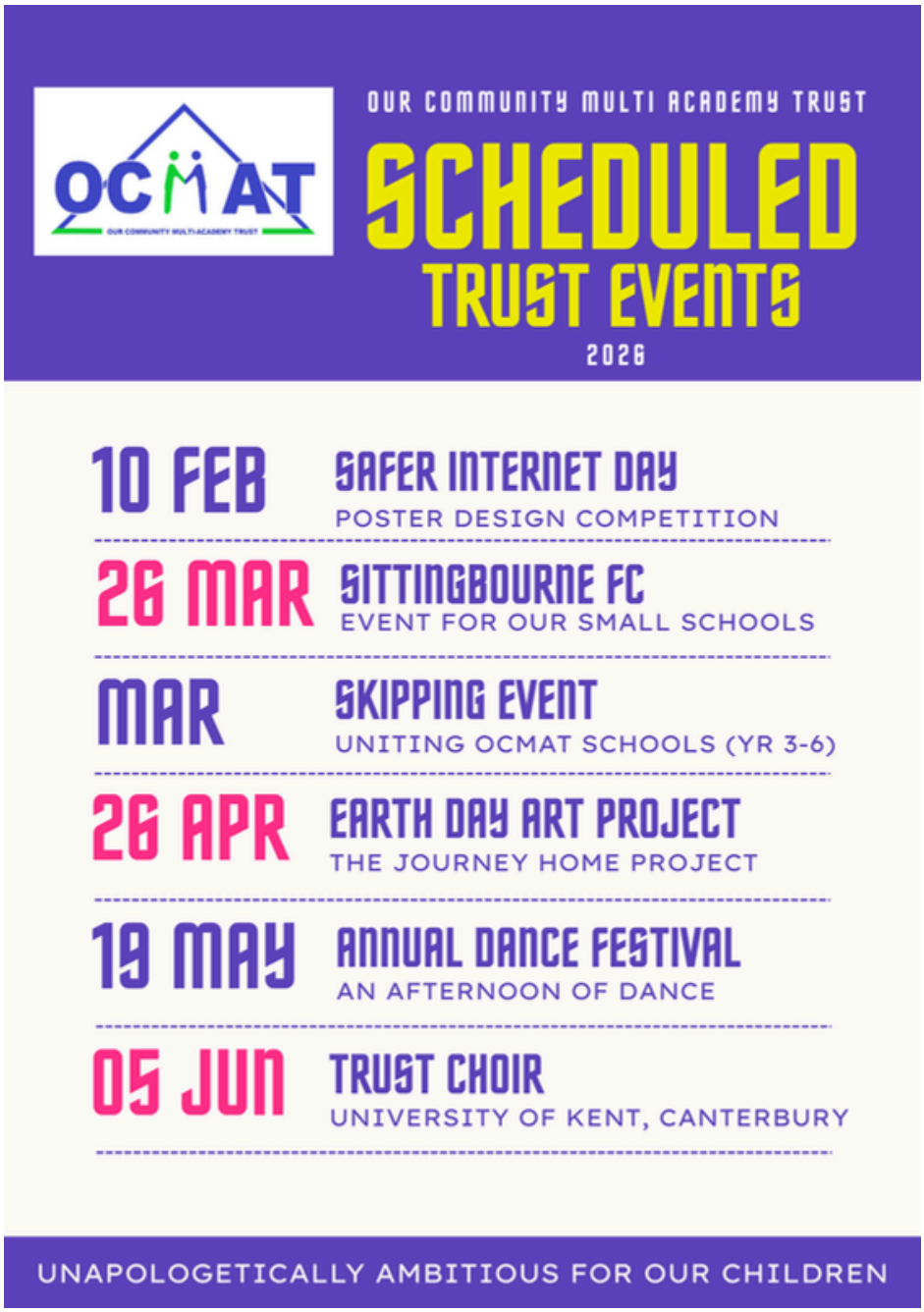
One of the most joyful days in our school calendar each year is **World Book Day**. Across our schools, pupils arrive dressed as their favourite book characters, and the fun doesn't stop there – teachers and staff join in too, creating a wonderful buzz of creativity and excitement.

One school even ran a "Guess the Staff Member" challenge, where pupils had to work out which member of staff matched a table of clues based on objects linked to their personality and the kinds of books they enjoy reading. It was a brilliant way to spark curiosity and conversations about books.

Across the Trust, we believe that reading is one of the very best things a child can do. Books open the door to new worlds of adventure, fantasy and discovery, allowing imaginations to flourish while building knowledge and confidence that will last a lifetime.

We hope you enjoyed spotting all the wonderful costumes in the photos and recognising some favourite characters along the way.

CLICK HERE TO VIEW ALL THE FABULOUS PHOTOS.



Safer Internet Day 2026
Trust-Wide Design a Poster Competition

We were blown away by the amazing entries from our pupils for the Safer Internet Day Design a Poster competition! Every child who took part showed creativity and thoughtfulness, making it really tricky for the judges to pick the top three from each school. The posters highlighted all aspects of staying safe online – and how the internet can have a positive impact on our lives and education. It's so important in today's digital world that children understand how to stay safe, and we're proud to see our pupils embracing this message with such care. Well done to everyone who entered! Winning posters can be seen on the pages below.

BORDEN
1st - Dara
2nd - Rosie
3rd - Lola

LYNSTED
1st - Poppy
2nd -Skyla
3rd - Harry

THE OAKS
1st - Arthur
2nd - Savannah
3rd - Eliza

BREDGAR
1st - Daisy
2nd - Aubrey
3rd - Nancy

MILSTEAD
1st - Anna-Maria
2nd - Holly

PETHAM
1st - Ray
2nd - Ella
3rd - Eddison

LYDD
1st - Bella
2nd - Innes
3rd - Willow

MINTERNE
1st - Isla
2nd - Emily
3rd - Bella

CLICK HERE to see the fantastic winning posters on our Facebook page



OCMAT Trust-Wide Pupil Choir

A Musical Celebration

Earlier this term, selected children from across our schools had the incredible opportunity to take part in a Trust-wide choir project, preparing to perform alongside the internationally renowned Children of Aleppo Choir.

Over several weeks, the children rehearsed incredibly hard, learning the upper lines of the choir parts and working with Kent-based musicians on the harmony sections. They also had the chance to rehearse at the University of Kent and work directly with visiting musical specialists, gaining valuable experience in collaborative performance. This has been a wonderful opportunity for all involved — a true celebration of music, teamwork, and the talent of our young singers. Families can look forward to seeing the children perform as part of the choir at Canterbury Cathedral on 5 June, a special occasion not to be missed.

A huge thank you to Mr Smith, Trust Music Lead, for organising and coordinating this project, and to our school music leads who have supported pupils throughout this remarkable musical experience.















Small Schools, Big Team Spirit
With Sittingbourne FC



There was a real buzz in the air as pupils from across our smaller schools came together for a very special football afternoon at Lynsted & Norton Primary School. With the sun shining and excitement building, around 75 Year 5 and 6 pupils from Borden, Bredgar, Lynsted & Norton, Milstead & Frinsted, and Selling were ready for an unforgettable afternoon.

Led by player Henry Dasofunjo from Sittingbourne FC, the afternoon kicked off with energetic warm-up drills that had everyone moving, laughing, and working together from the very start. It wasn't long before the children were fully immersed in the action, taking part in a series of mini matches where every pupil had the chance to shine.

As the games progressed, teamwork and determination were on full display. Pupils encouraged one another, celebrated successes, and showed fantastic sportsmanship throughout. The excitement built towards a final showdown between the two highest-scoring teams—an energetic and closely fought match that had everyone cheering from the side lines.

More than just football, the afternoon was about bringing pupils together—building friendships, growing confidence, and enjoying being part of something bigger. It was a joy to see so many smiling faces, hear the laughter echo across the field, and watch our pupils support each other every step of the way.

A huge thank you goes to Sittingbourne FC for creating such a memorable experience, and to Lynsted & Norton for hosting. It's safe to say this sunny afternoon will be talked about for a long time to come!

Look out in the KM Online who will be publishing a story on this very soon!

Skip-tacular Showdown: Our Trust-Wide Skipping Challenge!

There was a definite buzz (and quite a lot of bouncing!) across our schools this March as pupils from Years 3 to 6 took on the ultimate Trust-Wide Skipping Challenge. Armed with nothing but a skipping rope, determination, and a very competitive spirit, children had one minute to skip as many times as possible. What followed was a wonderful mix of concentration, laughter, tangled ropes, and some truly impressive footwork!

Across the Trust, playgrounds and halls became arenas of friendly competition as pupils counted, cheered each other on, and tried to beat their personal bests. From speedy skippers who seemed to defy gravity to those mastering the art one jump at a time, every child embraced the challenge with enthusiasm. The top three skippers from each year group at every school have now been entered into a Trust-wide draw to crown our skipping champions... but who will take the title? We'll have to wait until next term to find out—until then, keep practising those jumps!

Thank you to Mr Phillips, Trust PE Lead, for organising such a fun Trust-wide event!

To see more photos, click here







Achievements & Highlights



Selling CE Primary School Shines in First Inspection Under New Ofsted Framework

We're delighted to share that Selling Church of England Primary School received a glowing report from Ofsted following its January 2026 inspection – one of the first 50 schools in the country to be assessed under the new framework!

The inspectors praised the school's welcoming, inclusive environment where pupils feel safe, behave well, and thrive. Pupils' leadership roles were highlighted as having a real impact on school life, clubs, and the wider community. Children act as role models, showing respect, resilience, and empathy – values at the heart of the school's Christian ethos – while celebrating differences and sharing achievements with pride.

Mrs King, Headteacher said: "*We are incredibly proud of our pupils, staff, and families. This report recognises the care, dedication, and Christian values that make Selling CE Primary School such a special place.*"

Well done to everyone in our school community for this fantastic achievement!

Read the full Ofsted Inspection Report here: **Selling CE Primary School Ofsted Report - January 2026**

Read our new booklet here: **Understanding the New Ofsted Inspections - A Guide for Parents and Carers**



Parent Zone

Could your child be eligible for Free School Meals?

Did you know that your child might be eligible for free school meals (FSM)? Applying is quick, easy, and completely confidential.

Why Apply?
Free school meals provide more than just a hot, nutritious meal each day. They also unlock additional funding for your child's school through the Pupil Premium, which is used to support teaching and enrichment activities. By applying, you're not just helping your family but also giving your school vital resources to benefit all pupils.

Who Can Apply?
You could be eligible if you receive certain benefits, such as:

- Universal Credit (if your household income is below the threshold)
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit and an income below the threshold)

To check the full eligibility criteria and apply, visit:
www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals

What If My Child Is in Reception, Year 1, or Year 2?
All children in these year groups automatically receive Universal Infant Free School Meals, but if you meet the FSM criteria, registering your child still ensures their school receives Pupil Premium funding.

How to Apply
The process is simple and only takes a few minutes online. Your application will be handled discreetly, and if eligible, your child will enjoy healthy, delicious meals while you enjoy peace of mind.

Apply today and make a difference for your child and their school community!

Smart Tips, Deals & Helpful Updates



Recycle, Earn and Save at Boots

Did you know you can earn free Boots Advantage Card points by recycling hard-to-recycle packaging at Boots stores? Under the Recycle at Boots scheme, you can:

- Bring in items that can't normally be recycled at home — things like certain beauty items, toothpaste tubes, lotion pumps, contact lens cases and solution bottles and other mixed material packaging — For every 5 approved items you recycle, you get £5 worth of Advantage Card points when you make a £10 spend in store.

This is a great way to declutter while earning points towards future shop savings — and many parents report success recycling things like old wipes packets, nappy packet plastics, baby formula tub lids and more alongside traditional beauty empties.

Points can add up quickly — especially if you do it regularly while restocking essentials! Just download the Boots Recycle app and sign up or log in to your Advantage Card account.

Family Perks with The Parent Hood (M&S Sparks App)

If you're a new parent or expecting, joining The Parent Hood through the M&S Sparks App can bring some lovely perks, including:

- 10% off baby grows and selected baby clothing for up to two years old, helping with the cost of essential outfits.
- Weekly treats – access free cake, pastry or a fruit pot with a purchased hot drink at participating M&S Cafés (normally on Tuesday mornings) when you attend the parent & baby mornings.
- Monthly personalised offers and helpful parenting articles, expert guidance and ideas for family life.

It's free to join — just sign up via the Sparks loyalty app and register in the Parent Hood area.

School Uniforms Just Got Cheaper (From Sept 2026)

New statutory government guidance in England aims to make school uniforms more affordable for families. From September 2026:

- Schools must limit compulsory branded uniform and PE kit items to three or fewer for primary pupils — with up to four allowed at secondary if one is a tie.

This means parents will have more flexibility to buy generic items (like trousers, skirts, shirts) from supermarkets or high-street stores, reducing costs significantly compared to buying every piece from a single specialist supplier.

More Family-Friendly Ideas & Money Savers

Days Out & Activities

- Free museums and galleries: Many UK museums have free entry for children — perfect for wet-weather days.
- Local parks and nature reserves: Britain has a fantastic network of parks and woodland trails ideal for affordable family adventures.
- Community & library events: Check your local library for free story sessions, craft hours and holiday activities.
- IKEA £1 breakfasts are back. Families can enjoy a small cooked breakfast (or vegetarian) for £1 on Saturdays until 11.00am until 28 June 2026 (excludes Brighton, London, Norwich, Chester & Aberdeen branches). IKEA are also offering a meatball sub for 95p until 30 April. Check their deals online now!



PLACES WHERE KIDS EAT FREE (OR FOR £1) EASTER HOLIDAYS 2026

moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free



ANGUS STEAKHOUSE
Kids under 8 eat FREE daily, 12pm to 5pm

ASDA
Kids eat for £1 daily, with no adult spend

ASK ITALIAN
2 Kids eat free from 27th March - 19th April 2026

BELLA ITALIA
Children eat free Sunday - Thursday

BEEFEATER & BREWERS FAYRE
2 Kids Eat Free Breakfast with one paying adult

BILLS
Kids eat free Mon 30th March – Fri 10th April

BREWDOG
Kids eat free 28th March - 12th April 2026

CAFE ROUGE
Kids Eat FREE 12-4pm every day of the week

COCONUT TREE
Kids eat free Mon 30th March - Sun 19th April

CHIQUITO
Kids eat free during all schoool holidays

DOBBIES GARDEN CENTRES
Kids eat for £1 with an adult breakfast or lunch

FARMHOUSE INNS
Kids eat FREE weekdays 30th March – 17th April

FRANKIE & BENNY'S
Kids eat FREE daily from 30th March - 17th April

FUTURE INNS
Under 5s eat for free with any adult meal

GORDON RAMSEY RESTAURANTS
Kids under 10 eat FREE all day, every day

IKEA
Kids get a meal from 95p daily from 11am

LAS IGUANAS
Kids under 12 eat FREE with 'My Las Iguanas' App

MORRISONS
Kids Eat FREE all day, every day with a £5 spend

MARCO PIERRE WHITE
Kids under 12 Eat FREE daily with an adult spend

PAUSA CAFE @ DUNELM
Kids eat FREE with every £4 spend all day

PIZZA HUT
Kids Eat Free Every Day after 3pm

PREMIER INN
2 kids eat for free with 1 adult breakfast

PRETO
Kids up to age 10 eat free with 1 paying adult

PUREZZA
Kids under 10 get free pizza with every adult meal

SA BRAINS PUBS
Kids eat for £1 on Wednesdays

SUBWAY
Kids eat Free from the 6th - 13th April

SIZZLING PUBS
Kids eat for £1, Every Monday to Friday, 3 - 7pm

TABLE TABLE
2 Kids Eat free breakfast daily with 1 paying adult

TGI FRIDAYS
Kids Eat Free with any adult meal (Via App)

THE REAL GREEK
Kids under 12 eat FREE Sundays with £10 spend

TRAVELODGE
2 kids eat for free with 1 adult breakfast

TURTLE BAY
Kids eat free with every £15 adult spend

WHITBREAD INNS
2 kids eat for FREE with 1 adult breakfast

YO! SUSHI
Kids eat free all day (weekdays) in school holidays

Copyright of MONEY SAVING CENTRAL

Looking for things to do this Easter?

Families can explore a wide range of local events and activities taking place over the Easter holidays, from outdoor trails and farm visits to theatre, crafts and family days out.

What's on in Swale - click here
This link covers Sittingbourne, Faversham and the Isle of Sheppey.
It's a great all-round starting point for Easter events, including trails, railways, farms and theatre. The listings are regularly updated and can be filtered to suit your interests.

What's on in Canterbury - click here and click here
Explore a variety of cultural events, workshops and family-friendly activities across the city and surrounding areas.

What's on near New Romney - click here
A useful guide to events across Romney Marsh and the wider local area.



What's on in Kent - click here
For even more ideas across the county, including larger attractions and special Easter events.

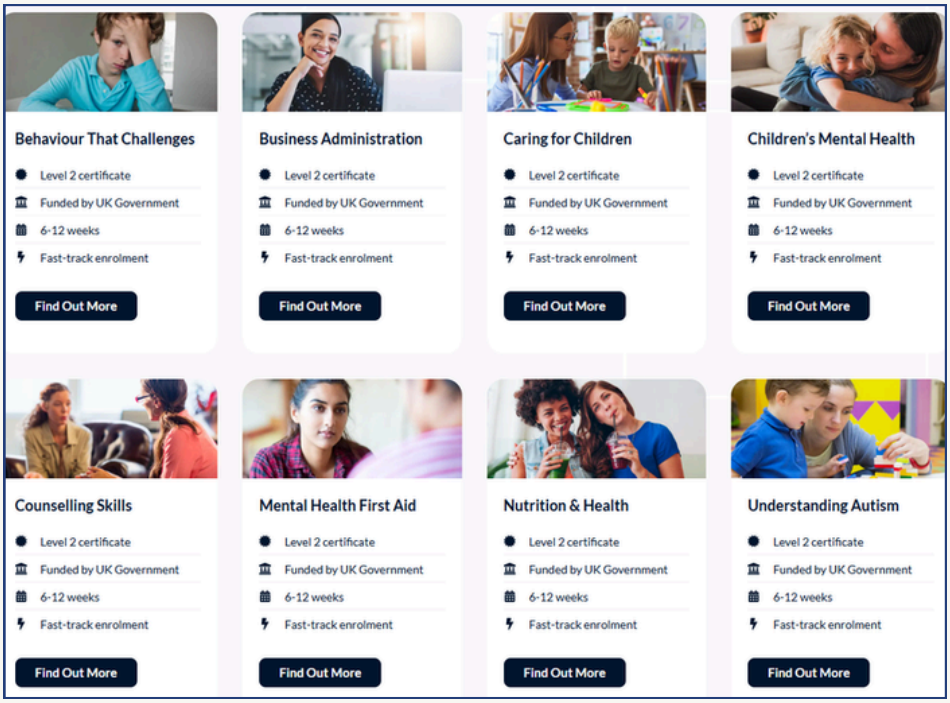
Free online courses for parents

Did you know adults in England can access free online courses with recognised certificates? These flexible courses can be completed at home, in your own time.

With over 70 options available, topics include children's mental health, autism, SEND, nutrition, and mental health first aid, as well as business, digital marketing and coding.

Most courses take 6–12 weeks and lead to a nationally recognised Level 2 certificate—helping build skills, confidence and career opportunities.

Free online courses with certificates UK - Free Courses in England



Courses funded by UK Government
Free Courses in England

Raising Resilient Children: Why Talking Matters



Written for OCMAT families by Jason Firmager – Founder, Mentalk Health

One day your child's childhood will exist only as memories — the question is, what kind of memories are we helping them build today?

Every child is trying to find their place in the world. They are learning who they are, how they fit in, and whether they are accepted for being themselves.

As parents, we naturally want to protect them from struggle. But the reality is that life will bring challenges. Real resilience is not built by avoiding those moments, but by helping children understand their emotions and learn how to talk about them.

Across the UK many boys and men still struggle in silence. From a young age boys can receive messages that they should "be tough" or "just get on with it". Over time this can make it harder for them to open up about what they are feeling.

The foundations of emotional resilience often begin at home through small everyday moments.

It's worth remembering something powerful as parents:
To us it may feel like just another ordinary day, but to a child these days become the memories of their childhood.

Children also learn by watching us. How we deal with stress, setbacks and emotions teaches them far more than what we say. Often what we don't process emotionally ourselves can quietly pass down to the next generation.

Every Child Experiences the World Differently

Not all children process the world in the same way. Some young people — particularly those who are neurodivergent — may find the school day exhausting. Noise, expectations, social interaction and sensory input can drain their energy.

By the time they get home, their social battery may simply be empty.

After a full day of school, stimulation and social interaction, many children simply need quiet time to decompress and regulate their emotions. What may sometimes look like withdrawal can actually be a child restoring their energy.

A helpful way to understand this "Spoon Theory." Imagine everyone begins the day with a number of spoons — each spoon representing a unit of energy.

Continued overleaf

Raising Resilient Children: Why Talking Matters

For one child a social situation may use one spoon. For another it may use five. School, concentration, noise and friendships can quickly use them up. By evening some children simply have very few spoons left.

Understanding this helps us respond with curiosity and patience rather than frustration.

Connection Before Correction

Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, who survived the concentration camps, wrote that even in the most difficult circumstances people can endure extraordinary hardship if they have a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives.

Children are learning how to do this for the first time. When they feel understood and valued, they begin to develop something incredibly powerful — hope.

Sometimes the greatest support we can offer is relatability.

If we park our ego and reflect on our own lives, most adults remember what it felt like to be judged at school, rejected in friendships or relationships, or to change parts of themselves just to fit in. Over time many of us learned to wear masks in order to be accepted.

Children are navigating that world for the first time. When they feel misunderstood or different, they can begin to believe something is wrong with them.

Every now and then it helps to hang the parent hat on the peg and simply connect human-to-human. Reach into your own inner child and remember what it felt like to be unsure or overwhelmed.

When children feel that level of understanding, they no longer feel alone.

Sometimes the most powerful message they can hear is simply:

“You don’t have to face this on your own.”

At Mentalk Health we see every day how connection and conversation can change lives. By encouraging openness, compassion and emotional awareness at home, we help the next generation grow into resilient adults with purpose and hope.

Mentalk Health
Supporting men’s mental health through connection, community and conversation
mentalk-health.org



Building Understanding & Inclusion: A Parent's Perspective

As my son reaches the end of his primary school journey, I've been reflecting on the mixture of pride, anxiety and learning that has shaped our experience. From nursery, it was clear he experienced the world differently. He loved play, but struggled to relate to other children and often used challenging behaviour as a way to seek connection. For him, any attention felt better than feeling left out.

These difficulties continued into school, and many pick-ups came with a quiet word from a teacher. We spent years seeking the right support to help him communicate and manage his emotions. Speaking openly with the school—and remembering that everyone wanted the best for him—helped us stay focused. Shifting away from blame and shame, and refocusing our own emotions, really changed things. As hard as it is, we learned to concentrate on what we could do, rather than what we couldn't change.

The hardest part was seeing him become isolated, with fading friendships and missed invitations. For a child who already struggled socially, this was painful.

Behaviour challenges happen in every school. Those families who offered us friendship and understanding made such a difference. Children learn from other children so they need modelling and connection.

I encourage all to reach out to your class parents as being a parent is not easy. Please let's build a more understanding, compassionate school community which we can only do together.

Written by a parent of a pupil at one of our OCMAT schools

If you would like to share your experiences or write an article for the next magazine to help others, please email Emma: marketing@ocmat.org.uk.



SEND Support and Wellbeing



For this first SEND support feature, we want to share an important resource for parents: the **Mainstream Core Standards, issued by Kent County Council**. This document outlines the provision expected for children and young people with SEND in mainstream schools. It's designed to help schools deliver high-quality support, promote inclusion, and ensure a consistent approach across the local area.

For parents, there is a friendly guide that explains the legal duties of schools and what you can expect in areas such as pastoral support, teaching approaches, and working with families. I always encourage parents to read this — it's a great way to understand how schools support children with additional needs.

You can access the guide here: **Special educational needs: Mainstream Core Standards – Parent Guide**

Alison Simmonds, SENCO

SEND Support and Wellbeing

Supporting your child through
EMOTION COACHING

Emotion Coaching is a natural communication approach that has been proven to support children's social, emotional and mental health, building resilience and self-belief.
It helps children feel heard and understood, with support to cope with big feelings so that they become better at managing these.

1. Notice your child's feelings



The first step is largely non-verbal, the moments when you begin to notice your child's behaviours or emotions. It's about 'tuning in' to your child by trying to understand why they are feeling or behaving in this way. You may adjust your body position, facial expression to communicate to your child that you understand.

2. Label and validate



Label and validate the feeling that your child is experiencing right at this moment.
'I can see that you get angry when that happens. I would feel angry if that happened to me. It's ok to feel angry'.

3. Set limits (if needed)



Emotion Coaching is not about ignoring the fact that some behaviours are not acceptable or are unsafe. After steps 1&2 you need to make clear which behaviours are and are not acceptable or unsafe.
'I understand you're feeling really angry, but one of our rules is about looking after our things, so throwing your bottle isn't okay and someone could get hurt'

4. Problem Solving



When your child is calm, work together to help find a solution. What could they do next time? It can also be a time to further explain why their behaviour was not acceptable. Find solutions for what they did, not for how they felt, remember it is okay to feel emotions.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

CREATIVE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE READING

Reading regularly has a life-long impact, yet recent data from the National Literacy Trust shows a decline in reading for pleasure among 8- to 18-year-olds, with just 32.7% enjoying it in 2025. Despite growing distractions, there are practical ways adults can spark a love of reading. This guide offers strategies and resources to help inspire young readers.

1 VALUE ALL READING

When we think about reading, it's very easy to picture a young person reading a fictional novel; however, reading is so much more than this. To help them understand, why not show them how to create a 24-hour reading diary? Jot down all reading and then discuss this with them. By doing this, you can demonstrate the many ways we turn to reading.

2 WIDEN THE SELECTION

Once we know reading can be varied, we need to think about the selection of reading material they can access. Visit a shop selling magazines, the library and a bookshop, and consider the range of material that is available within them. Then consider how you might broaden their reading choices, so all young people have access to a wide and varied selection.

3 GIFT A BOOK

One simple way to encourage reading is to make books feel special. Gifting a book adds value and shows it's something to be treasured. Whether it's as a reward or for a celebration like a birthday, let the young person choose a title or pick one you know they will enjoy. You could also include a personal note inside.

4 CONNECT WITH AUTHORS

Meeting authors can certainly spark an interest in their reading material. This might be through a live event in a school/bookshop or by using the wealth of online material that is now available. Encourage young people to look at ways to connect with authors using free resources such as Authorly and Just Imagine's Children's Authors Live.

5 BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Access training about reading for pleasure to widen your understanding of this topic and, more importantly, how to develop it. Explore a wide range of free resources that can be found online. The more you know, the better placed you are to inspire a love of reading in others.

6 TALK BOOKS

There are times when we need silence to read and focus on our book; however, we know that reading is a social experience, so we must also factor in discussion time. Reading the same book gives two people a connection and the opportunity to voice their thoughts and questions about it. Why not buy two copies of a book and read it together? Start the connection.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

As well as talking about the content of books, we can share what we are reading or have read recently. This can often act as a trigger for someone else to explore it. How often have you watched a film or series because someone else has recommended it? It's the same with books. If you know the young person well, you can tailor your recommendations and share why you think they'll enjoy it.

8 GO DIGITAL

With the rise in online digital material, we can easily focus on the negatives; however, it also brings a wealth of opportunities. Resources can aid and enhance the reading experience for young people. They can read along with audiobooks, translate, and track their reading goals with resources like Polyfino and apps like Goodreads for older children. Augmented reality books also bring books to life and offer a great way for engagement.

9 RECONNECT

There can come a time when a love of reading seems to disappear. It does not mean it's gone forever; it generally means they have lost the connection. How do we get it back? Find the next piece of reading material that sparks their current interests. The National Year of Reading focus of 'Go All In' captures this well as it is their key theme. As children grow and change, so do their interests. A visit to the local library is a great way to support the reconnection.

10 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Let them see you reading. If you make time to read, you send a strong message to children: reading matters. Share why you enjoy it. Is it to relax, escape the world, learn something new or to be entertained? When children see reading as a normal and valued part of everyday life, they are more likely to adopt it themselves.

Meet Our Expert

Carl Pattison is a literacy advisor and early reading expert at The National College. Through his programmes, he supports schools to enhance reading and writing. In addition to his independent work, he also works for a large academy trust in the East Midlands as the strategic lead for their English Hub and Literacy Excellence Centre.



See full reference list on our website

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 04.03.2026


1848


BREDGAR




LYDD
SCHOOL


LYNSTED AND NORTON
1878
SCHOOL







We hope you've enjoyed these snapshots from your schools, capturing some of the wonderful things that have happened over the last two terms.

On the following pages, you'll find our PUPIL REPORTS. Children have written these pieces themselves, sharing what they most wanted to tell you — trips, learning, events, and more. It's been so special to hear their voices telling their own stories.

A big thank you to the parent who suggested including pupil contributions in our recent Parent Voice survey — what a fantastic idea for celebrating children's perspectives and keeping their voices at the heart of our magazine!





Borden CE Primary School

At Borden, we get the chance to go to Forest School each year. Forest School is at the front of the school under all the really old trees. We go for six weeks of the year and have so much fun. Forest School is the best experience because we learn about nature, make camps, play in the mud kitchen and drink hot chocolate. Sometimes we toast marshmallows! If you don't like mud, don't come to Forest School! We recently learnt about bees and how they pollinate our plants.

Natalie is our Forest School Lead who is a loving and caring person who takes care of everything. This is what Beech Class say about Natalie *'Natalie runs Forest School, she is so nice. At the end of every lesson, you get a sneaky hot chocolate,'* ***Livia***. *'Our Forest School Leader, Natalie, is very kind and she makes sure we are safe and no-one is hurt,'* ***Maya***.

Natalie says *'On Wednesday's we see our Borden Forest School site come alive with the sounds of curious children wanting to immerse themselves in the great outdoors. We explore the different fauna and flora on offer throughout the different seasons (Yes come rain or shine, Forest School is every Wednesday!) and focus on a theme each term.*
We engage in risky play such as whittling with knives, climbing trees, fire lighting as well as cooking on an open fire. These opportunities allow the children to assess and manage challenges safely. As well as learning through play, we aim to build their confidence and resilience and their understanding of how nature works. Thank you as ever Borden children for your enthusiasm and fun you bring to Forest School on a Wednesday.'

We think Forest School is important because *'We get to learn about nature, whilst in it,'* ***Harry***. *'I think Forest School is important because you learn new things and get to build bug hotels.'*

We think Forest School is really important and learning in nature helps us be Agents of Change to help make a better environment.

'Honestly, I love Forest School, it's the best thing in the world,' ***Freya***.





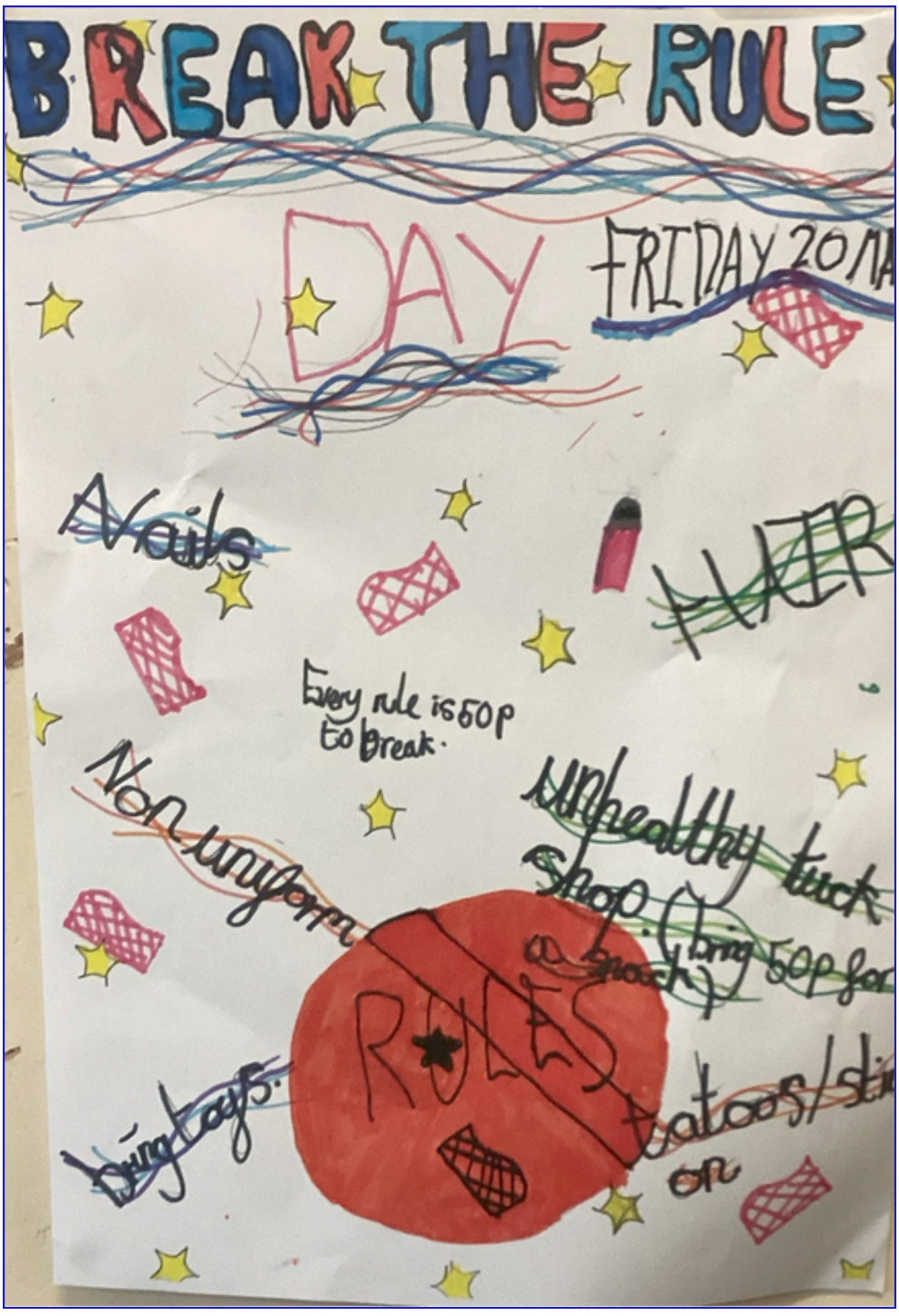

Bredgar CE Primary School

At Bredgar, we were asked, as the School Council Team to organise a 'Break the Rules Day'. This was to raise money for our school playground equipment. We had to think of ways we could break the rules but also not miss out on our learning. It was a tricky task, no wonder the adults asked us to do it! So, we thought up six-rules children could break, and they had to pay 50p for each rule they wanted to break that day. The rules were: non-school uniform, fancy nails (paint or stick), mad hair, tattoos (stick on), bring in a toy and unhealthy tuck shop. We then wrote a letter to the parents, made a presentation in each class and created posters for each classroom. All the planning is now done and we can't wait to tell you about the day itself next issue.

Yours,

The Bredgar School Council

Kian, Lacie, Anthony, Aubery, Josie and Maya



Wildwood – ***written by Axel and Abigaile (Year 3)***
Year 3 visited Wildwood because we were learning about the Stone Age and there is a Stone Age area there. We saw Arctic foxes, wolves and otters. There was a big owl that tweeted back when we made noises! We also had Stone Age markings painted on our faces.

Young Voices – ***written by Noella (Year 5)***
On 19th January we went on an exciting trip to the O2 for Young Voices. Lots of people slept on the bus and there were plenty of jokes and laughter. When we arrived we had to drive around the car park three times before finding a space!

Inside we practised the songs and met lots of new people. Later our parents came in to watch the concert. We performed and then travelled back to school, arriving at midnight. Luckily we were allowed to come in later the next day!

World Book Day – ***written by Stevie (Year 5)***
A few weeks ago we celebrated World Book Day by dressing up as our favourite book characters. We did lots of fun activities like making bookmarks, designing our own books and reading.

In the morning we chose a teacher in the hall to read us a story (Mr Plummer's line was very crowded!). At the end of the day we read books to our parents on the playground. It was a great day!

KIC Theatre – ***written by Fliss (Year 5)***
First we stood in a circle and introduced ourselves. Then we played a game where we had to sit down quickly when we heard an instrument. Our leader Ian was always smiling and made it really fun.

We used drama to pretend to be people from Tudor times like King Henry VII, servants, kings, queens and princesses. It was very funny seeing everyone acting in different roles!

Communi-tea Party – ***written by Amelia and Lilah (Year 6)***
Year 6 held a Communi-tea party for our grandparents and family friends. We asked them questions about what life was like when they were younger while enjoying tea and cake together.

I asked my family friend Barbara some questions and found out she had lots of pets when she was younger. It was really nice to connect with the older generation.

Science Week – ***written by Stanley (Year 5)***
During Science Week we visited different classes to try experiments. In Year 4 we tested which plasticine shapes would float, and a boat shape worked best.

In Year 3 we made paper rockets and launched them using a straw. In Year 5 we made gliders from straws and paper. Finally, in Year 6 we made paper fidget spinners and attached them to a motor so they spun really fast!



Lydd Primary School

LYDD LIBRARIANS

What do we do?

We are the first to see new books, because it is our job to stamp all of the books and put stickers on them so that people know which level or subject they are. When we put them in our school's library, we can borrow the books before anyone else.

Sometimes we have to do jobs outside the library, like on World Book Day – we set up a stall outside to sell books and book marks. People can exchange their tokens for books.

Harry, Sienna and Jacob (Lydd Primary Librarians)



Our amazing librarian team

Book Tok

Book Tok is all about reviewing books that you have been reading. It is kind of like TikTok, but for books. We have chosen some brilliant books, which we have really enjoyed.

Click **HERE** to enjoy our AMAZING Book Toks. Keep checking back as we add more and get our friends to join in too.



Year 3 dancing along to an amazing Zumba session



Year 6 enjoying cricket on our playgroup

Sporting Activities

Here at Lydd Primary School we are lucky to have many enjoyable active activities, including rugby, a mini marathon (at a similar time to the London marathon) and trampettes. The last one was so enjoyable that we bought some of our own. All of these help keep us active and fit as well as improving our Oracy skills because we have to communicate with each other and listen to rules, including how to hold equipment properly.

Everyone when they reach Year 5 gets to travel to Rye for swimming lessons, which we really enjoy and we wish we could go for longer.

When we don't have visitors Mr Southgate and our teachers run football, hockey and dodgeball tournaments – congratulations to first place Leopards and second place Lions in our latest lunch time hockey tournament.

This term, there is an after school cricket club, run by our cricket coach, Tom, which gives some of us an extra opportunity to practise our skills or try out a new sport. Most recently they have been improving their under arm and over arm throwing.

Charlie, Teddy, Paisly and Ivy (Lydd Primary's Journalist)



Our superb journalist team

Swimming

In swimming, all of Year 4 worked really hard and completed a 24 metre swim. We could choose to swim using backstroke or front crawl. On our last session, we had lots of fun playing with floats in the water. It made everyone feel happy and proud of what we achieved.

Science – Electricity

In Science, we learnt about electricity and where it comes from. We also discovered how electricity is used in everyday life. We made our own circuits using wires, a battery, and a bulb to make the light turn on. We also made a circuit to turn on a buzzer. The buzzing sound was very loud. It was exciting to see our circuits work!

Bikeability

In Bikeability, we started practicing riding our bikes on the playground before going on the roads. On the playground we rode our bikes following the yellow lines. We also practiced braking properly and changing gears. On level 2, we were on the road. Quite exciting! We did U-turns and practiced parking on the side of the road as cars approached. Next, we went further in the lanes and did different type of turns.

Young Voices

We went on a big trip to London by coach for Young Voices. The event took place at the O2 Arena. We ate our lunch outside before going in. There were about 8,000 children singing in the choir! We had rehearsals led by David Lawrence, the conductor. Ruti sang "It Must Be Love," which was amazing. Singing with so many people made us feel excited, nervous, and proud at the same time. It was an unforgettable experience.

Forest School

Natalie came into school to lead our Forest School session. She gave us seeds to plant colourful flowers. We learnt which flowers attract different insects. We also made dens for hedgehogs using leaves and sticks. Then we took some quiet time to listen to the birds singing and we said a prayer to thank nature for all it gives us. At the end of the session, we enjoyed a warm cup of hot chocolate, which made us feel cosy and relaxed.

Mini Cadets

In Mini Cadets we learnt about the code of conduct, we traced our hands on a piece of paper We wrote things we thought should be in our code of conduct like perseverance, kindness, respect, independence etc. We also took part in an awesome marshmallow and spaghetti challenge. We had to make a huge tower in small groups of four and at the end we got to eat some marshmallows that were left over. This challenge taught us about how important teamwork is.

We learnt all about first aid and did CPR on a dummy called Jack and went along with the song 'Staying Alive'. We all learnt what to do when someone faints. First, we would ask if they were ok and if they didn't respond we would call the hospital then do CPR.

World Book Day

In March, we had an event, 'World Book Day', We had to dress up as our favourite book characters. Such as Little Red Riding Hood, Matilda, Stick Man and Harry Potter. We also had to bring a jar with a story in it; people had to guess what it was. (Competition)

Our parents were invited into school to hear us read. Mrs Greenwood gave us an activity to do in the afternoon. Designing a book cover and a bookmark. Also having to make a fortune teller. Lots of cutting! Snip Snap! Lots of fun!

Greek Learning

In History we have been learning about the amazing Ancient Greeks. We enjoyed it a lot and read the story of Athena who became Goddess of Athens after winning the competition against the one and only Poseidon. By giving people an olive tree. We tasted some Greek food such as hummas, olives, flatbread, Greek yogurt and feta cheese but some of us thought the cheese was too salty!

Athlete Visit – Courtney Orange

We had a special visit from athlete Courtney Orange, who competed in the Commonwealth Games. He led us in fun activities like spotty dots, squat jumps, shoulder taps and jumping jacks. We had one minute to complete each activity, which was challenging but fun.

He told us about his journey and shared his motto: "I can do it." He also showed us some amazing tricks and even did the moonwalk! We watched Courtney's YouTube channel which also had videos of him doing motivational speeches and performing exercises. Some children helped raise money for school.

Overall, this term has been full of fun, learning and new experiences. All children have worked very hard and should be very proud of everything they have achieved!

Written by Skyla in Year 4, Silvy in Year 5, and Noah in Year 6

Milstead & Frinsted CE Primary School

Belonging at Milstead

At Milstead and Frinsted C of E School the teachers make me and my friends feel like we belong. At our school our Head of School is the best, she looks after us. Here at our school we love our friends, we can help our friends and we also know how to help outside our school such as creating art for the homeless and collecting for the food bank. In worship we all come together and it is peaceful to be all together. Sometimes we sit in a big circle so we can see everyone in our community and it makes us feel like we belong. – ***Penelope, Jasmine, Bella & Darcey***

Our Learning at Milstead

At our school I enjoy doing basketball because I like shooting the ball in the hoop and we have a brilliant sports coach. In English I have been learning to use parenthesis (to add lots of detail to my writing) and it has helped me when writing my persuasive text in English. Miss Wallis makes our learning interesting and fun. She has helped me to understand how to use fractions and decimals and it was so good I now enjoy using these! Our learning is very hands on at Milstead and I particularly enjoy our experiments in science, not only because they are hands on but because we get to debate and there is no wrong answer. We enjoy testing our theories. – ***Jasper***

In PE at Milstead we have a really cool coach called Josh, he teaches us all sorts of skills in football and it has helped me to enjoy my learning. Our learning is tailored to our needs and we get stretched by Miss Wallis in maths. – ***Jasmine***

My teacher supports me through my learning and has helped me with fractions and decimals. In English we are doing a persuasive piece of writing, it is really fun to do as it is about Ernest Shackleton. – ***Poppy***

At Milstead our teacher makes learning fun, they help us when we need it. Our School is different from all the others because we have amazing teachers like Miss Wallis! – ***Penelope***

Our Community at Milstead

We help our community by connecting with the Church. Through our work with Hengist House Care Home we connect with our community. We do fundraisers and food collections that will help people directly in our community. We are excited to continue our work with our community as the School Council would like to set up their own collection point for people that need an extra bit of help in our community. – ***Poppy & Penelope***

Pupil Voice: Our School Council



Minterne Juniors Roving Reporters

Hi! We are the Our Lives News Team from Minterne and we'd like to tell you all about the project that we are doing this year. Our job is to find all the best news that happens both in school and out of school and create a TV news broadcast for everyone at home to watch.

We keep our eyes peeled for the most exciting news that is happening and take photos, film clips and create interviews with the pupils. So far this year we have reported on Steel (real name Zak) the gladiator visiting the school. Did you know he can do a handstand for over a minute and easily beat Mr Angove at an arm wrestle?

We have also reported on Roman and World War II history projects and a real-life rock concert that pupils in our school performed in with Rock Steady. For our next broadcast, you will find us standing on the side-lines of football matches, whatever the weather!

It feels great to be famous! We have shown the whole school our news show in assembly, and parents can watch it at home too. Our parents thought it was really cool! We can take on more than one role as a script writer, journalist and news reporter in front of the camera.

Written by Isla-Rose, Renaye, Fred, Katie, Keira, Bonnie-Blu, Erin & Jack



Teamwork is very important in the project but on more than one occasion we have stitched each other up by giving each other difficult things to say in front of the camera which was really funny. We may look very serious in the final cut but behind the scenes we are always laughing and having fun.

This is a project created by us and not the teachers. They may give us a helping hand, but we write the scripts and create the report ourselves. We may look really intelligent and know what we are talking about, but really, we are reading our scripts off the auto cue. We must smile and sit up straight, no crossed legs. However, we didn't want to smile too much in case we looked creepy! How do you think we did?

When filming the broadcast, all you can see is the massive camera in front of you which is pretty nerve wracking. They also have a massive microphone, and we kept hitting our heads on it. Some of us got camera anxiety and stuttered at first but we managed to get through it. It was strange to see the final broadcast as you can only see us and not the camera.

We can't wait for you to see our next episode. Can you believe that Our Lives News are on Season 8 and we were only about 2 years old when it started! If you want us to report on something interesting, just give us a shout!

The Oaks Infant School

Our trip to Sittingbourne by Arabella, Year 1

Last week all of year 1 went on a walk around Sittingbourne. We had a tick sheet to do and we saw some trees. We saw lots of houses with lamp posts. My partner was Ruby. We stopped at the park and did some sketches. We liked it and had a great time.

Our School trip by Hughie, Year 1

Last week we went on a school trip exploring Sittingbourne. We saw lots of houses and trees and grass. We saw lots of human features. We all loved exploring the town.

A trip in Year 1 by Aimee, Year 1

Last week we went to go on a school trip to see lots of Sittingbourne. The whole of the Year 1s got to go and most of us liked it. We saw some houses and some lamp posts. We saw some lovely flowers and they were wonderful. We were safe all of the time because we were wearing bright Hi-Vis jackets.

Our Science Workshop by Henry, Year 2

Dr Rob came to our school on Friday. I loved his Science experiments. My favourite experiment was when he made the tennis ball transfer energy from a basketball. I am so glad that he came to visit our school.

A visit from a Scientist by George, Year 2

A Scientist came to our school called Rob. Rob made us get in a circle and hold hands. Two of us were holding the electricity stick and it glowed. If we let go of our hands the stick didn't glow. We also saw how high a tennis ball can bounce compared to how high a basketball can. Rob put two bubbles over three of us and when the bubble was really huge it popped. It was really fun!

Courtney Orange Athlete visit by Primrose, Year 2

Courtney Orange is a great athlete and he visited our school. He can do all sorts of tricks like handstands and tricks on the gymnastic bars. He used to do the splits and cartwheels. He helped us do lots of challenges to raise lots of money for our school.

Our Science Day by Eliza, Year 2

On Friday a scientist came to our school and showed us some tricks. These are some of them:

- The Electric Stick: There was a stick that was electric and if you held it with two hands then it would glow yellow, red, blue and green. If you only held it with one hand it would not glow because the circuit was not complete.
- Orange in Water: There was a tub of water and an orange with peel on. If you put it in water it would float but if you took it's peel off then it wouldn't float.
- Bubbles: There was a huge circle of bubble mix and Rob chose some people to stand in the big circle and he held a lever up so a bubble came out of it.







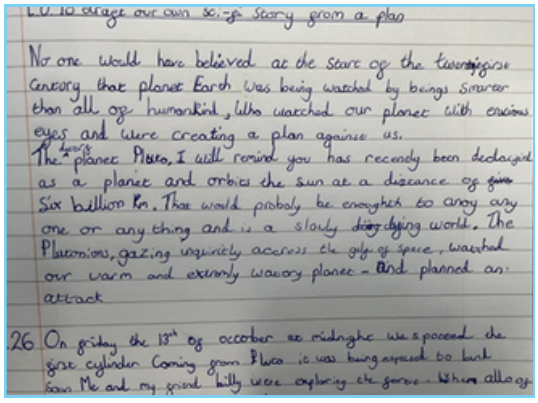
Petham Primary School





We went to see our buddies take part in their own Winter Olympics.
They designed their own medals for the closing ceremony, which were really cool.
They started by doing an opening ceremony and chose a country to represent. My buddy chose Austria. Then they all competed in different sports- figure skating, ski jump, freestyle skiing, downhill skiing, curling, speed skating, bobsleigh, luge/skeleton and snowboarding.
They were amazing athletes and at the end got the medals they designed for the sports they were extra great at.
Well done Robins, we loved coming to be your audience, we hope you enjoyed your Winter Olympics Day!

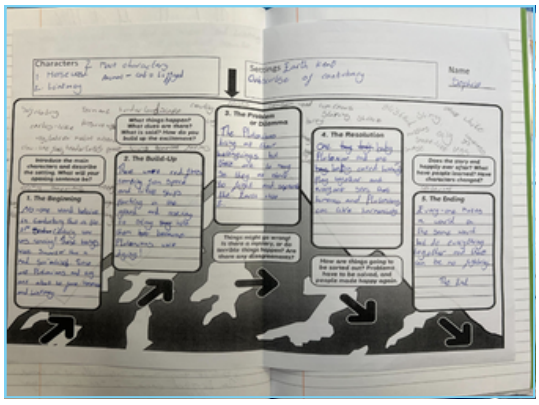
Written by Eli & Timmy - Year 6

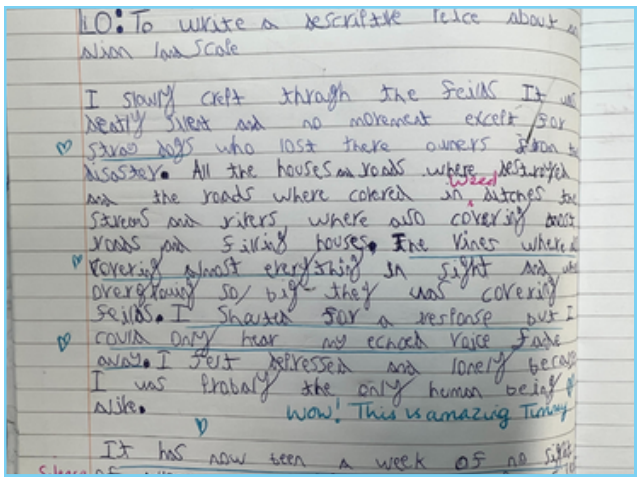


L.O. To stage our own sci-fi story from a plan

No one would have believed at the start of the twentieth century that planet Earth was being watched by beings smarter than all of humankind, who watched our planet with envious eyes and were creating a plan against us.
The planet Pluto, I will remind you has recently been declassified as a planet and orbits the sun at a distance of five Six billion Km. That would probably be enough to annoy any one or anything and is a slowly dying world. The Plutonians, gazing enviously across the gulf of space, watched our warm and extremely watery planet - And planned an attack

26 On friday the 13th of october at midnight we spotted the first cylinder coming from Pluto it was being aimed to hit Me and my friend billy were exploring the forest when all of





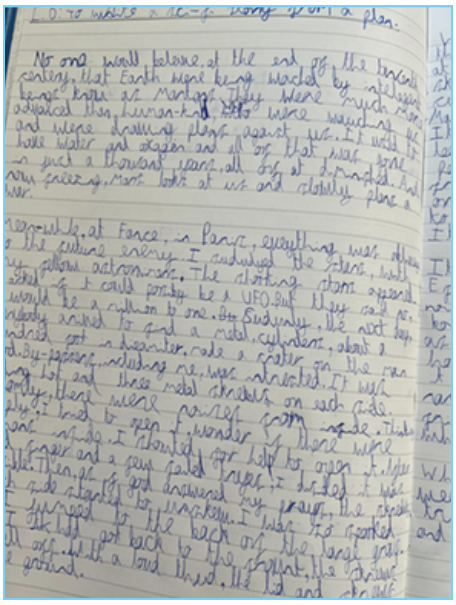
L.O: To write a descriptive letter about a new Sci-fi

I slowly crept through the fields It was really quiet and no movement except for the dogs who lost there owners from the disaster. All the houses and roads where destroyed and the roads where covered in ditches for Weed streets and rivers where also covered with roads and silver houses. The Vines where covering almost everything in sight and was overgrown so big they was covering fields. I Shouted for a response but I could only hear my echoed voice fade away. I felt depressed and lonely because I was probaly the only human being alive.
Wow! This is amazing Timmy
It has now been a week of no sight

We have been reading War of the World in Woodpeckers.
I love this book; I even got my mum to get me my own copy.
In class we have been listening to the radio version and the Jeff Wayne's musical version too. I have also been listening to the music at home. My favourite part of the story is 'The Thunder child'- this part wasn't in our class version, so I listened to it at home. We then planned and started to write our own sci-fi stories - I included the Thunder child - a ship that tries to fight back against the Martian tripods.
I've enjoyed this book so much that I even came dressed as a Martian to World Book Day.

Written by George - Year 6





Selling CE Primary School

For the past few days we have been hatching quail eggs!

A few weeks ago, Mrs King told us that we would be having quails in assembly, they were kept in an incubator in the library so it would be quiet when they hatched. After two weeks, the first quails hatched in the morning. There were two, they were small and fragile, one was brown, the other was yellow. They started running around all the other eggs to say “come out now!” When the first few children came in, they were all fluffy, which means that they had hatched a while ago because they weren’t wet anymore. The person who was looking after them put them in a box to take home and look after for a night to make sure they were healthy and would survive in the big cage with the other chicks because if they were weak it would have probably been hard for them to keep up with the other growing chicks.

There are around 18 baby quails in the big cage now, they are very happy and very cute in there. A few children got to hold them and stroke them very gently so they wouldn’t hurt them. All of the broken egg shells are laid out beside the cage, and we got to pick them up and look on the inside where we saw the part were the chicks got all of their food while they were growing.

Another new addition to the school is Coco!

She is one of the teacher’s dog and she is also the new school dog! She mostly lives in the office and children are allowed to come in and stroke her when they are feeling bad. On the day she first came, she was allowed a run around the field before school and she really liked it, she spent a day exploring the school and getting used to it, and she has settled in very well!

Written by Iyla, Oak class







Help us Spread the Word - Become an Ambassador for your Child's School!

At OCMAT, we believe in the strength of our community and the power of word-of-mouth. Our schools are not just places of learning—they are vibrant, caring environments where every pupil is valued, supported, and encouraged to grow. But we need your help! We're inviting all parents and carers to become ambassadors and advocates for the school you are part of. By sharing your positive experiences and spreading the word about what makes your school special, you can help us welcome new families into our wonderful community.

Each of our 10 schools has its own unique qualities, from outstanding academic achievements to strong values and extracurricular offerings. There is something exceptional happening at every school. By becoming an ambassador for your school, you play a key role in promoting the values that matter most to us—Community, Compassion, and Inclusion. Together, we can grow our school family and ensure that even more children have access to the incredible education and support that OCMAT schools provide.

So, how can you get involved? Start by chatting with friends, family, and neighbours about what makes our schools so special. Encourage them to visit or reach out directly for more information. By sharing your positive experiences, you can help other families discover the outstanding education and support our schools offer, and maybe even help a child find their perfect school!

THANK YOU.





OCMAT Photo Challenge

Reading in Unusual Places!

We are inviting all pupils across our Trust to take part in our first Trust-Wide Photo Challenge!

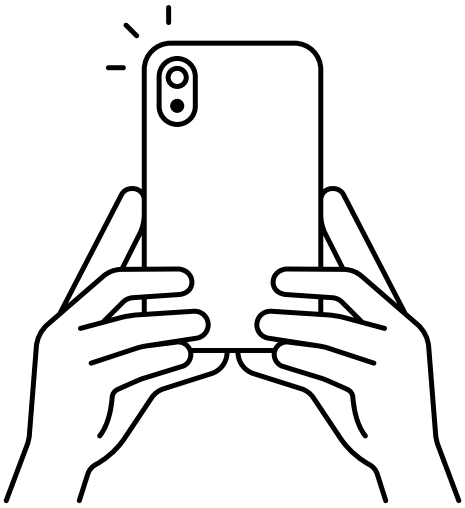
THEME: Reading in Unusual Places

Where is the most interesting, creative or unexpected place you can enjoy a good book?

Could it be:

- In a tree?
- Under a table?
- On a tractor?
- At the beach?
- In a blanket fort?
- In the garden shed?
- At the top of a hill?
- In fancy dress?

We can't wait to see your imagination!



How to Take Part

1. Take a photo of your child reading somewhere unusual.
2. Email it to: marketing@ocmat.org.uk by 30 June 2026.
3. Include your child's name and school.
4. By entering, you give permission for the photo to be shared in the Summer Family Magazine and on our Trust social media.

A selection of photos from across our schools will be featured in the Summer Edition of the OCMAT Family Magazine which will be published at the end of Term 6.

Why We're Doing This

At OCMAT, we believe reading opens doors. This challenge is about celebrating reading for pleasure and showing that books can be enjoyed anywhere, anytime.

Let's see how creative our Trust community can be!











Trust Guides for Families

At Our Community Multi Academy Trust, we believe in working closely with families and being open about how our schools support children to flourish. To help parents and carers understand more about our approach and the wider education landscape, we have created a series of helpful guides available on our website.

Being Part of OCMAT

A parent-friendly guide explaining what a Multi-Academy Trust is and what it means for your child's school to be part of OCMAT, including the benefits for pupils, staff and the wider school community.

True Belonging – Enabling All to Flourish

A guide to how we support and nurture our Church of England schools, helping every child feel valued, included and able to thrive.

Small Schools, Big Impact

Discover how our small schools provide big opportunities for pupils, strong relationships and a real sense of community.

Understanding Mixed-Age Classes

A guide to how mixed-age classes work in our schools, why we use them, and the benefits for pupils' learning, confidence, and wellbeing.

Understanding the New Ofsted Inspections

A guide for parents and carers explaining the changes to Ofsted inspections introduced in November 2025.

You can read all of these guides on the Trust website: **ocmat.org.uk/Our-Core-Documents**

Term Dates: 2025-2026

Term 1
Starts: Monday 1 September 2025
Ends: Friday 17 October 2025
SDD: Monday 1 September and Tuesday 2 September 2025
SDD: Monday 1 September 2025

Term 2
Starts: Monday 27 October 2025
Ends: Friday 19 December 2025
SDD: Monday 27 October 2025
SDD: Monday 27 October, Tuesday 28 October, Wednesday 29 October 2025

Term 3
Starts: Monday 5 January 2026
Ends: Friday 13 February 2026

Term 4
Starts: Monday 23 February 2026
Ends: Thursday 2 April 2026

Term 5
Starts: Monday 20 April 2026
Ends: Friday 22 May 2026
Term Time Bank Holiday: Monday 4 May 2026
SDD: Friday 22 May 2026 (Trust SDD)
SDD: Friday 22 May 2026 (Trust SDD)

Term 6
Starts: Monday 1 June 2026
Ends: Tuesday 21 July 2026
SDD: Monday 1 June 2026



Staff Development Day (SDD) Key:
Borden, Bredgar, Lynsted, Minterne, Milstead, The Oaks, Petham, Selling ONLY
Dymchurch, Lydd ONLY

Important Information About Staff Development Days (SDD) for 2025/2026
Please note that SDDs will not be the same across all schools in our Trust. We have worked to align these dates with other local schools to better support families with children attending multiple schools.

To ensure you are aware of the specific days your child's school will be closed, please refer to the **SDD Key** above.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Term Dates 2025 to 2026

Term Dates: 2026-2027

Term 1
Starts: Tuesday 1 September 2026
Ends: Friday 23 October 2026
SDD: 1, 2 September 2026
SDD: 1 September 2026

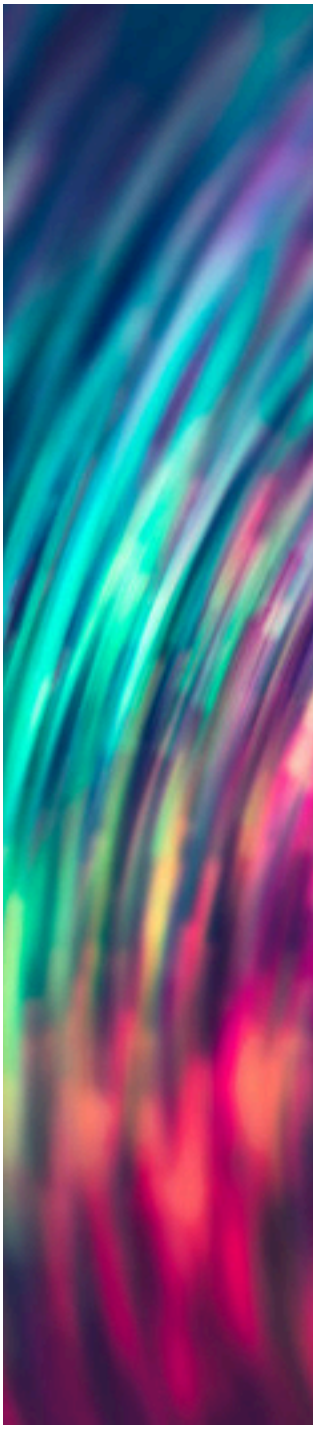
Term 2
Starts: Monday 2 November 2026
Ends: Friday 18 December 2026
SDD: 2 November 2026
SDD: 21, 22, 23 October 2026

Term 3
Starts: Monday 4 January 2027
Ends: Friday 12 February 2027

Term 4
Starts: Monday 22 February 2027
Ends: Thursday 25 March 2027

Term 5
Starts: Monday 12 April 2027
Ends: Friday 28 May 2027
Term Time Bank Holiday: Monday 3 May 2027
SDD: 28 May 2027 (Trust SDD)
SDD: 28 May 2027 (Trust SDD)

Term 6
Starts: Monday 7 June 2027
Ends: Wednesday 21 July 2027
SDD: 7 June 2027



Staff Development Day (SDD) Key:
Borden, Bredgar, Lynsted, Minterne, Milstead, The Oaks, Petham, Selling ONLY
Dymchurch, Lydd ONLY

Important Information About Staff Development Days (SDD) for 2026/2027
Please note that SDDs will not be the same across all schools in our Trust. We have worked to align these dates with other local schools to better support families with children attending multiple schools.

To ensure you are aware of the specific days your child's school will be closed, please refer to the **SDD Key** above.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Term Dates 2026 to 2027



WANT TO STAY INFORMED?

www.ocmat.org.uk

@OurCommunityMultiAcademy

@ourcommunitymultiacademytrust.

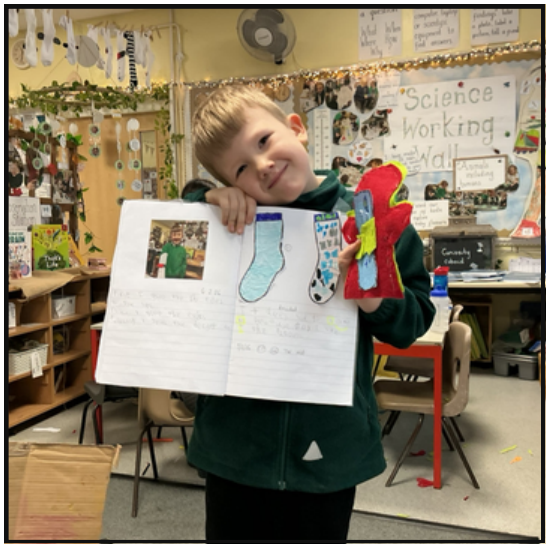
@our-community-multi-academy-trust













We hope you enjoyed this edition of the Family Magazine! We'd love to hear your feedback, so please get in touch if there's something you'd like to see in future editions.
Please contact our Executive Administration and Marketing Officer, Emma Rannard at marketing@ocmat.org.uk

Next edition - Summer 2026

Reaching Out Is the First Step

CALM - 0800 58 58 58

Mind - 0300 102 1234

No Panic - 0844 967 4848

Bereavement - 080 880 81677

PAPYRUS - 0800 068 4141/88247

Samaritans - 116 123

SHOUT - Text SHOUT to 85258

Mentalk Health, Sittingbourne - https://www.mentalk-health.org/#home

Abuse - 0808 200 0247

Refuge - 020 739 57700/0808 2000 247

Porchlight - 0800 567 7699

YoungMinds - 0800 11 11



Confidential Support Lines - When you need to talk, there is always someone to listen. You are never alone.


"Spring adds new life and new joy to all that is" - Jessica Harrelson