

Our Community Matters

November 2025
Issue 28



The latest news, views, and announcements for the
Community Academies Trust



#catschools/#schoolscat

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This issue of *Our Community Matters* is bursting with stories that show just how brilliant our schools are.

From **Windmill Primary's** pupils flipping with elite gymnasts at Lilleshall to **Chadsmead's** young engineers building rescue robots, it's clear our young people are thriving in really creative environments.



Wall Hanging created by Art Network Group
Enrichment session across our schools

Birchwood Primary's national recognition for science teaching shows how deep subject expertise and collaboration can lead to excellence—and inspire others across the Trust.

At **Polesworth**, our debating team made a powerful impression at the KMAT Grand Debate, with standout performances and a semi-finalist finish. Meanwhile, **Wilnecote** students returned from a life-changing expedition to Kenya, full of new skills, global awareness, and unforgettable memories.

And let's not forget the electric atmosphere at Alexander Stadium, where over 200 students competed in our first Trust-wide athletics event. It was a day of pride, sportsmanship, and serious talent.

These achievements aren't just moments—they're milestones. They show what happens when we invest in our pupils, support our staff, and create opportunities that go beyond the classroom.

Here's to more success, more growth, and more stories worth celebrating.

Michelle Borders
Editor



Message from Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



I have enjoyed visiting schools over the last couple of weeks. My visits always include a tour of your school with your Headteacher. I am always struck by the pride Heads display as they showcase all that you do. I have seen purposeful classrooms, great teaching, excellent learning environments and safe and happy children and young people. They are thriving in the environments you create every day.

My expectations around our leadership culture best described by achieving an equal balance of Power and Love in our professional relationships – see below – is also crucial in the classroom.

Power: the drive to achieve one's purpose, to get the job done, to push things to a conclusion	Love: the drive to connect things, to bring people together and to unify
○ Driven ○ Pacey ○ Relentless ○ Indomitable ○ Challenging ○ High Expectation ○ Holding to account ○ Assertiveness ○ Confidence ○ Determination	○ Kind ○ Inclusive Collaborative ○ Positive Relationships ○ Valuing individuals ○ Asking for help ○ Empowering ○ Compassion ○ Humility ○ Empathy

Regardless of our pupils' starting points, we must all be driven to enable them to achieve the highest standards, but we must also put the right support and structures in place to enable those achievements. High expectations alone are not enough. Along the way pupils must also feel our warmth and genuine care for them even in their most challenging moments.

I have seen Power and Love in our professional relationships but, crucially, I have also seen it in the classrooms. This is why so many of our children and young people thrive.

My continued thanks for all you do.

Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO

Ensuring Excellence



Windmill Pupils Inspired by Elite Athletes at British Gymnastics' World Class Training Camp

by Debbie Cambridge,
Assistant Headteacher at Windmill Primary School

An unforgettable day of flips, fun, and future dreams at Lilleshall National Sports Centre

A group of excited pupils from Windmill Primary School had the incredible opportunity to take part in a unique social impact project, hosted by the prestigious British Gymnastics' World Class Training Programme.

Led by Pathway Scientist Mairead Slevin, the project focused on *Mental Health and Wellbeing*, exploring how gymnastics—and sport in general—can play a powerful role in supporting emotional resilience and confidence in young people.

As part of this inspiring initiative, the children travelled to the world-renowned Lilleshall National Sports Centre in Shropshire, where they were warmly welcomed by members of the British Trampoline Gymnastics Team. The awe and excitement were palpable as the elite athletes treated the group to a thrilling display of flips, twists, and gravity-defying trampoline tricks.



After a lively Q&A session and a lunch that was a hit with all the pupils, the children were invited to join in the fun. Following a full warm-up, they were guided by the gymnasts through a series of trampoline skills—many trying out moves they'd never imagined possible!

"The day was amazing—we learned loads of new tricks and we can do so many jumps now!" said one enthusiastic pupil. Another added, *"When I grow up, I want to be a British athlete... maybe on the trampoline, or maybe in something else!"* Of course, the delicious lunch also got a glowing review.

This experience went far beyond learning physical skills. It was about building self-

belief, connecting with inspiring role models, and seeing firsthand how sport can boost wellbeing. We're incredibly grateful to British Gymnastics for making this possible.

With smiles all around and imaginations fired up, it's safe to say the visit left a lasting impression—and perhaps even sparked a few Olympic dreams.





Robots, Coding & Creativity: Chadsmead Pupils Dive into STEM!

On Friday 19th September, pupils in Years 4, 5, and 6 at Chadsmead Primary School were treated to an exciting surprise—a hands-on robotics workshop delivered by Adam from Hyett Education, fully funded and packed with STEM learning.

Over two and a half hours, the children became engineers, coders, and problem-solvers. They began by building robots using diagrammatic instructions, adding working headlights and even designing secure seating systems for Lego passengers. But the real magic happened when they turned their creations into rescue robots!

Each team designed and built Lego hospitals, then programmed their robots to locate and transport Lego characters in need of medical attention. Using coding, maths, and teamwork, pupils tackled a series of evolving challenges that required them to adapt their designs and think critically.

The workshop was a brilliant blend of creativity, collaboration, and computational thinking—and the smiles on the children's faces said it all. It was a fantastic example of how STEM can spark curiosity and confidence in young learners.

Chadsmead's robotics day was a huge success—and a great reminder of the power of surprise, innovation, and hands-on learning.



SAVE the DATE! Safer Recruitment in Education

3 March 2026 and 10 March 2026 (REVISED Dates)

(9-1 both days). Full online training

19 May 2026

(9-1) Refresher Training (Online)

24 June 2026 and 1 July 2026

(9-1 both days). Full face to face training, Dordon Primary School

To book, email jmatthews@catschools.uk



Celebrating Our Science Success at Birchwood Primary School

by Emma Haynes, Assistant Headteacher and Science Lead, Birchwood Primary School

PSQM Outreach

Valid 2025 – 2028

I'm thrilled to share that Birchwood Primary has been awarded the Primary Science Quality Mark (PSQM) Outreach level—a national recognition of the commitment and passion Birchwood puts into science teaching, leadership and curriculum development.

Science is woven into the curriculum at Birchwood, guiding pupils to explore, question, and discover. It's a subject that sparks curiosity, creativity and critical thinking in our pupils, and seeing their excitement and questions every day is what drives our science lessons. Our recent Ofsted science deep dive was a fantastic opportunity to showcase the curriculum we have carefully built and the effective teaching that happens across every class.

Reviewers noted:

"Effective strategies for teaching and learning are well established and consistently applied across the school."

Receiving the PSQM is a huge achievement, but it's also a moment to reflect on the collaborative journey that made it possible. It has been inspiring to see how our work has extended beyond Birchwood. Supporting colleagues across the Trust using our Curriculum Network group, sharing ideas and supporting science in other schools has been an incredibly rewarding part of this journey. PSQM commented:

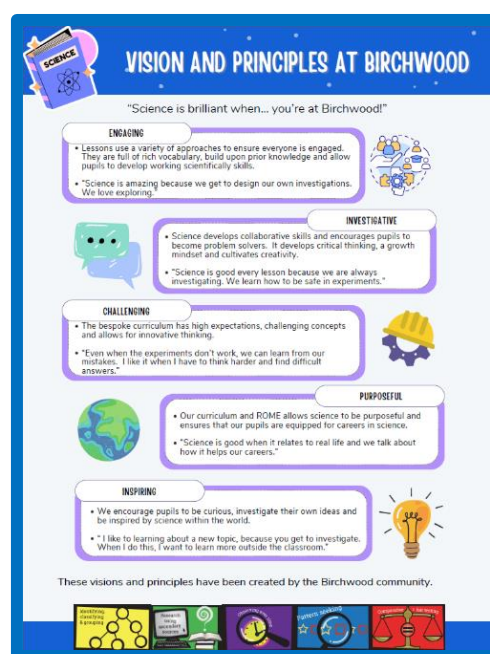
"For curriculum development outreach, the approach has focused on collaboration and community building to empower others to adapt practice towards a shared vision for science."

"The support across the Trust is not only impacting a wider audience but is supporting critical reflection that further improves subject development within the school too. The relationship between providing learning and being a learner appears to be a rich symbiotic one which will exist beyond the PSQM submission."

I'm incredibly proud of what we've achieved at Birchwood, but this award is not just ours alone. It reflects the supportive science community we have built across the Trust - a network of teachers sharing ideas, reflecting together and supporting each other. This collaboration has strengthened our practice, enriched our pupils' learning and made this achievement possible.

Colleagues who would like further information about the PSQM or are interested in participating in the Trust Science Curriculum Network group, are invited to contact Birchwood for further information. The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 26th November**. We look forward to further growing the group, sharing best practice, and supporting the continued development of science leadership and teaching across all schools within the Trust.

The PSQM is a wonderful recognition of our journey so far and a reminder that with strong leadership, collaboration and shared passion, we can continue to make science an exciting and inspiring subject for every child.





Polesworth's Noble Nine Triumph at KMAT Grand Debate!

by Mr Castledine, Co-ordinator for KS3 English, The Polesworth School

Our outstanding debating team lead us to success at the KMAT Grand Debate, hosted by Kenilworth School. Nine students from Year 9 were specially selected for their skills in research and debating. Our team had two weeks to prepare detailed arguments for 5 potential topics. The qualifying round saw our four speakers, Rory White, Ellie Celella, Katelyn Woodward and Ella Tipple

going 1v1 with debaters from 19 other schools. We qualified in 8th place with a total of 23 points from a possible 48. Rory and Ellie were awarded 'stand-out' debaters for this round.

The Grand Final stepped things up a gear, with our team having ten days to prepare for ten potential topics! Our students met regularly at lunch and afterschool to research and practice their debates, you could really start to see the fire of success burning behind their eyes. All four of our speakers debated valiantly in the knockout rounds, Ellie and Ella were awarded 'stand-out' debaters for the Grand Final. Ella Tipple successfully got through to the Round of 16, the Quater-Finals AND the Semi-Finals, eventually being knocked out by Kenilworth School... We are thoroughly impressed with her performance.

I am immensely proud of our noble nine, they have done me proud, Polesworth proud and most importantly themselves proud. I could not have asked any more of them, they gave it their all and have come home champions in their own right!



Wilnecote Students Return Transformed After Kenya Expedition: 'Life Skills Gained Are Vital'

by Carl Savage, The Wilnecote School

A team of determined students from The Wilnecote School has returned from a month-long humanitarian expedition to Kenya, calling it a "once-in-a-lifetime adventure" that

reshaped their view of the world.

Partnering with Camp International, the students worked across four diverse environments—from the Rift Valley highlands to the Indian Ocean coast—engaging in community, conservation, and construction projects. Split into three teams (Lions, Elephants, and Rhinos), they tackled tasks like painting schools, building a mud house, and supporting local wildlife efforts.

Oscar reflected on the experience: ***"The friends, memories and skills gained were worth far more than any number of pounds or Kenyan shillings."*** Daisy added, ***"Seeing the progress of every project was one of the most rewarding moments of my life."***



The trip also offered deep cultural immersion, including meeting the Maasai tribe, learning Swahili, and going on safari. Students adapted to local food and basic living conditions, embracing every challenge with enthusiasm.

Despite the hard work, there was plenty of fun—beach days, swimming, card games, and even a football match (with a memorable own goal from Mr. McDonald!). The journey ended with heartfelt letter exchanges and lasting friendships.

Oscar encouraged future participation: ***“Life skills like communication, dedication and global awareness make the world better.”*** Daisy agreed: ***“It changed how I see the world—and I’ll carry it with me forever.”***

Vivup: Real Benefits for Real Life

Vivup is helping staff across our Trust save money, stay healthy, and feel supported—all through one easy-to-use platform.

What You Can Do with Vivup:

- Get a new bike through the Cycle to Work scheme—perfect for commuting or weekend rides.
- Upgrade your tech with salary sacrifice on laptops, phones, and home appliances—no credit checks.
- Claim cashback on dental, optical, and physio costs with health plans.
- Access 24/7 support with confidential counselling and wellbeing resources.

Real Examples from Our Schools:

- A teaching assistant saved over £300 on a new washing machine using the Home & Electronics scheme.
- A site manager used the Cycle to Work scheme to buy a high-quality bike and now cycles to school daily.
- A teacher claimed back £60 on dental treatment through Vivup’s health cashback plan.



Top Tips to Make the Most of Vivup:

- ✓ Log in monthly - new offers and schemes pop up often.
- ✓ Use filters - quickly find deals that match your needs.
- ✓ Check deadlines - some schemes have cut-off dates.
- ✓ Explore the wellbeing hub - it’s more than just discounts!

Vivup is here to support you—financially, physically, and emotionally. If you haven’t explored it yet, now’s the time to log in and see what’s waiting for you.



A New Chapter Begins for Year 7 at The Wilnecote School

by Carl Savage, The Wilnecote School

The Wilnecote School welcomed its newest cohort of Year 7 students today, marking the start of their secondary education journey. The

students, brimming with a mix of excitement and nerves, spent the day

getting to grips with their new environment, meeting teachers, and making new friends.

Miss Tongue, the Head of Year 7, spoke about the positive atmosphere. *"It was a truly wonderful day,"* she said. *"The students were fantastic; they've all been so keen to get involved and embrace the opportunities ahead of them. We're so proud of how well they've settled in and look forward to watching them grow over the next five years."*

Headteacher Mr Foskett echoed her sentiments, highlighting the significance of this milestone. *"Today marks the beginning of a new and exciting chapter for these young people,"* he commented. *"The Wilnecote School community is here to support them every step of the way, helping them to write their own unique story. We can't wait to see what they achieve."*

The school has a number of support systems in place to ensure a smooth transition from primary school, including a dedicated pastoral team and a comprehensive induction programme. The day concluded with a collective sense of achievement and optimism, as the new students left with a newfound sense of belonging. The Wilnecote School is now ready to embark on another successful academic year with its newest members.

Windmill Primary Recognised Among Shropshire's Best!

We're proud to share that Windmill Primary School has been recognised in The Telegraph's latest primary school league table, placing joint top amongst Telford schools and 10th overall in Shropshire.

With 72% of pupils meeting the expected standard at Key Stage 2 and an average score of 106 in reading, writing and maths, this achievement is a testament to the school's strong culture of care, ambition and teamwork.

This recognition not only celebrates the dedication of Windmill's pupils, staff and families, but also reflects our commitment to provide every child with the very best opportunities to learn, grow and succeed. Congratulations Windmill!





Introducing....

Our Network Groups... This issue shines a light on our Leadership and Coaching Specialist Network Group led by Deputy Headteacher at The Polesworth School, Caroline O'Regan.

From Insight to Impact: Coaching Champions Drive Professional Growth

This year, the Leadership and Coaching Specialist Network Group is focusing on the continued development of the *Growing Great People (GGP)* initiative, with a strong emphasis on building coaching skills across the Trust.

In collaboration with Rebecca Raybould, CUREE Associate and expert leadership coach, a team of Coaching Champions has been established to lead this work.



Centre for the Use of Research and
Evidence In Education

The initiative launched with a dedicated training day at Dordon Primary School in July, bringing together twenty-eight colleagues from across the Trust. The session focused on building a shared understanding of the Coaching Champion role, exploring key definitions of coaching, and refining essential coaching skills. Participants also engaged with practical tools designed to enhance their effectiveness as both coaches and professional learners.

Reflections from a Coaching Champion

"The Coaching Champions training day was an incredibly valuable experience that supported us in developing our coaching skills and equipping us to play a key role in embedding the Growing Great People initiative across our schools.

The training provided us with the tools and confidence to support colleagues in their professional growth, using coaching to unlock potential and encourage reflective practice. The day was practical, thought-provoking, and energising – setting a strong foundation for the positive changes we hope to see within our settings.

One of the most rewarding aspects was the opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the wider Trust. Bringing together staff from different schools and departments created a real sense of shared purpose, and it was inspiring to see such broad commitment to professional development. These new relationships will be key as we continue to embed GGP, enabling collaboration and mutual support in our coaching journeys.

A particularly insightful element of the training was observing real-time modelling of coaching conversations. Seeing the theory brought to life helped us understand what effective coaching looks and feels like in practice. It also clarified the distinction between mentoring and coaching – recognising that coaching facilitates self-discovery and growth rather than providing direct solutions. This shift in mindset has encouraged us to listen deeply and ask powerful, reflective questions.

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We left the training feeling inspired and excited – not only about the future of Growing Great People, but also about our own development as Coaching Champions. The day has sparked genuine enthusiasm for coaching and given us a clear direction for how we can positively impact our schools through meaningful, growth-focused conversations. – Rhi Goodeve, Coaching Champion at The Polesworth School

The collaboration of this group continues through Specialist Network meetings, where coaching skills are further developed alongside the evolving role of the Coaching Champion within our schools. Coaching Champions will also be able to conduct further collaborative and developmental work across the Trust to achieve **CUREE accreditation**.

I am very much looking forward to the year ahead and to working with this dedicated group of Coaching Champions as we continue to strengthen the *Growing Great People* initiative – and, through it, enhance both professional growth and the experiences of the pupils in our care.



Training News....

The Community Academies Trust supports colleagues to develop professionally, creating a community of learners, striving to achieve excellence. To book email: ioe@catschools.uk

Shape the Future: Become a Certified Coach in Education

If you aren't a coaching champion, but want to develop your coaching skills further, we have partnered with Best Practice Network and are offering The Coaching in Education Apprenticeship Level 5 (equivalent to a Foundation Degree!). The Coaching in Education Level 5 is designed for professionals across the education sector who are involved in supporting and developing others and is fully funded by our apprenticeship levy.

So, if you are a senior leader in your setting, an experienced ITT/ECF mentor or a SEND lead wanting to drive development and inclusive practice this programme is relevant if you help colleagues grow through mentoring, guidance, or coaching. The apprenticeship supports those who want to strengthen their coaching skills, lead positive change in their teams, and make a tangible difference within their setting.

By completing the Coaching in Education Apprenticeship Level 5, you will also achieve the **ILM Level 5 Certificate in Effective Coaching and Mentoring**—a nationally recognised award that strengthens your coaching credentials and is valued both within education and beyond. For more information and to apply see <https://www.bestpracticenetwork.co.uk/coaching-education-apprenticeship-level-5>



INTRODUCING: COACHING IN EDUCATION APPRENTICESHIP LEVEL 5

Develop skilled coaching in your school or setting

The **Coaching in Education Apprenticeship Level 5** is designed for members of your team who play a key role in supporting and developing others within your school, trust or Early Years setting.

This programme is ideal for staff who help colleagues grow through mentoring, guidance, or coaching—whether they are established leaders, experienced teachers, room leaders, or practitioners who support others as part of their role.

Apprentices also gain the **ILM Level 5 Certificate in Effective Coaching and Mentoring**. This well-respected qualification demonstrates their coaching knowledge and skills to a nationally recognised standard.

Why support staff to complete this apprenticeship?

- ✓ Strengthen in-house coaching expertise to drive improvement
- ✓ Build a culture of trust, collaboration, and shared professional growth.
- ✓ Enhance staff wellbeing and retention with trained, supportive coaches.
- ✓ Embed inclusive practice and support for SEND across your teams.
- ✓ Maximise the value of your Apprenticeship Levy through impactful staff training and development.

Find out more:
bestpracticenetwork.co.uk/coaching

Get in touch
0117 920 9200 | enquiries@bestpracticenetwork.co.uk



Education Matters

If you would like to submit an article, we would love to hear from you. Email: communications@catschools.uk



For those of you who find yourself using social media and other digital platforms, this article is for you. Written by Carl Savage, he takes you on a journey of discovery into how to make the most of Instagram.

Instagram Content Now Indexed by Google!

For everyone working within our schools, get ready! A significant shift has just occurred in the digital landscape that will profoundly influence how your school is discovered online. Google is now indexing Instagram content, meaning your captions, hashtags, and alt-text – once primarily visible to your followers – are now fair game for Google search. In essence, your school's Instagram grid has become an integral part of your overall Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) footprint.



This presents a tremendous opportunity for schools within the Trust to showcase their vibrant communities and achievements to a much wider audience, but only if you know how to leverage it effectively.

What's Actually Changed?

Historically, Instagram posts largely remained within the app's ecosystem. To genuinely engage with an account's content, you typically needed to be logged in and following them. However, Google's latest update has fundamentally altered this.

Now, public Instagram posts can appear directly in search engine results. Consequently, your school's content could start showing up on Google based on:

- The keywords embedded in your captions.
- The hashtags you utilise.
- The alt-text you've added to your images.
- The engagement and overall context of your content.

This means that whether you're crafting a caption about a Year 5 excursion to the Science Museum or sharing a carousel of images from your latest school fete, your content now has the potential to reach an entirely new audience through search engines.

Why This Matters for Your School

This change will fundamentally redefine our approach to social media. Instagram is no longer just about accumulating likes and comments; it has become a crucial component of your school's organic search strategy.

Here's what this means in practical terms for Community Academies Trust schools:

- **Social Meets Search:** Your school's Instagram profile now serves as an additional entry point for prospective parents, new staff, or community partners to find you via Google.
- **Captions are Your New SEO Copy:** Intentional writing is key. Including relevant keywords, clear phrasing, and useful details in your captions can significantly boost your school's online visibility.
- **Every Post Becomes a Mini Landing Page:** Your school's Instagram content now has an extended shelf life and the potential to reach far beyond your existing follower base, attracting new interest and engagement.

Are you ready to rethink your school's Instagram strategy to maximise its reach and impact?

If you are not currently on Instagram, or wish to explore how social media can benefit your school, please contact Carl via email at csavage@catschools.uk.

From the pen of the ubiquitous Mary Myatt, who looks at Megan Cox Gurdon's new book on the power of reading aloud.

The miraculous power of reading aloud in the age of distraction

These insights come from [The Enchanted Hour by Meghan Cox Gurdon](#).

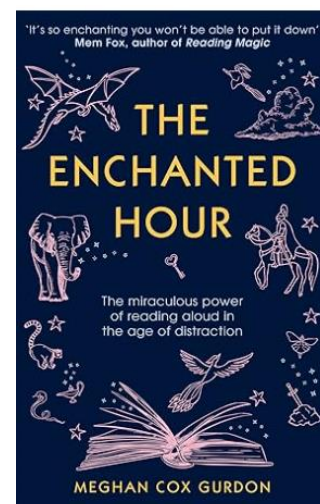
We know that pupils are being read to less frequently at home. There are many reasons for this and it's never a blame game. However, this means that we need to privilege reading in order to fill some of the gaps.

All pupils benefit from being read aloud to; it's not a luxury! This is what Gurdon found:

- Reading aloud strengthens neural pathways and integrates vision, language, and imagination.
- The Goldilocks Effect: audio is "too cold," video "too hot," but reading aloud is "just right."
- Children read to regularly show stronger attention, persistence, and later academic success.
-

Reading aloud from high quality texts is a great way to develop literacy across the curriculum and if you'd like to access [The Teachers' Collection](#), where we've underpinned much of the primary foundation subjects [here's a link to a 14-day free trial](#).

Grounded in the latest neuroscience and behavioural research, and drawing widely from literature, *The Enchanted Hour* explains the dazzling cognitive and social-emotional benefits that await children who are read to, whatever their class, nationality or family background.



CAT Institute of Education Matters

A spotlight on the trust's Centre for Teacher Training, Professional Development and school improvement by Alexis Rickus, Director of Institute of Education



You may have seen me out and about this term as part of the Institute of Education's ongoing work to support professional development across our schools. One of our key focuses has been delivering **Assessment for Learning (AFL)** training in primary settings – and we're excited to continue this journey with the next session being held at **Budbrooke Primary School**, where we'll be exploring the theme of *"checking for understanding"* and *"responding in the moment."* This interactive session will help colleagues:

- Deepen their understanding of what effective checking for understanding looks like – and why it matters.
- Recognise when checking and responding may be less effective, and how to improve.
- Discover practical strategies to use in the classroom to support pupil progress.
- Learn how feedback loops can enhance learning and engagement.

Whether you're new to the Trust or simply in one of our schools in the area and interested, we'd love to welcome you. Please email ioe@catschools.uk for more details or to reserve your place.

If you have any questions or would like to register for either training opportunity, please contact ioe@catschools.uk. We look forward to seeing you there and continuing to grow great practice across our Trust!

Alexis Rickus
Director of the CAT Institute of Education

COMING SOON!



[Courses](#) [Practical Guide](#) [Big Picture Videos](#) [About the Project](#)

Developing AFL with Mike Gershon

Welcome to this collaboration between The CAT Institute of Education and bestselling author and trainer Mike Gershon. Our goal is to give schools across the trust the tools they need to think critically about assessment for learning and to engage in professional development that is firmly rooted in the practical realities of the classroom. Below, you'll find links to all elements of this resource suite. That includes three courses, four big picture videos and one practical guide, all focussed on what we can do in our planning, teaching and assessment to take advantage of the huge benefits effective AFL can bring to every classroom, and every learner.



Trust Network Groups: Connecting Schools, Inspiring Excellence.

Update by Director Network Groups, Neil Coleman

The Importance of Community Engagement and Partnerships for Schools

Community engagement and partnerships are vital for the holistic development of schools and the communities they serve. This collaborative approach not only enhances educational outcomes but also fosters a sense of belonging and support among families. One key aspect is making links within the community; schools that actively reach out to local organisations, businesses, and residents can build a network of resources that considerably enriches the educational experience for students. Through these relationships, schools can gain access to expert knowledge, additional materials, and opportunities for experiential learning.

Additionally, co-locating services positions schools as critical hubs for wider family support. By integrating health services, counselling, and extracurricular activities within the school environment, families can conveniently access essential resources. This accessibility often leads to improved wellbeing for students and their families, ultimately enhancing academic performance and social engagement.

Furthermore, schools serve as positive anchors within their local communities. They are not only places of learning but also venues for community events, parent workshops, and cultural celebrations. This creates an atmosphere of inclusivity, enabling schools to act as focal points for community cohesion, where relationships are built and cultural values are shared.

Schools can assume the role of professional development providers by fostering a culture of continuous learning to support opportunities for their local community. By promoting the concept of 'growing your own,' schools can develop the skills of work experience students and volunteers. This investment in human capital results in a growing workforce that directly benefits students and reinforces the school's role as a central pillar within the educational landscape.

Community engagement and partnerships are essential for schools, leading to enriched educational experiences, enhanced family support systems, and stronger community ties. These collaborations create sustainable benefits that extend well beyond the classroom.

To support this area of schooling, a new Specialist Network – Community Engagement and Partnerships – is being formed. The Network is expected to meet once a term, outside of existing Network meeting dates and times. We would like to extend the invitation to all SLT members who have an interest in this area. Below are the proposed meeting times:

Autumn 2:

Thursday 20th November 2025, 13:30 – 14:30.

Spring 2:

Thursday 19th March 2026, 13:30 – 14:30.

Summer 2:

Thursday 11th June 2026, 13:30 – 14:30

Enrichment Events:



Track and Field Triumph: Community Academies Trust hosts Athletics Competition at iconic Alexander Stadium

The Community Academies Trust has successfully expanded its sporting calendar, building on the popularity of its football tournaments with a major new athletics event held at the iconic Alexander Stadium in Birmingham, home of the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

The idea for the track and field competition was sparked during a serendipitous moment when organisers passed the impressive venue on the motorway while travelling to

the annual CAT Conference. Following swift discussions with Neil Coleman and Richard Thorpe at the conference, the proposal quickly received official approval to become the Trust's latest cross-academy sporting fixture.

The inaugural event, masterminded by Event Organiser Lee James from Grange Park, proved to be a resounding success. It welcomed 13 teams and an impressive total of 208 student participants from across the Trust's schools, providing a fantastic opportunity for young athletes to compete at a world-class facility.

Event Organiser Lee James, from Grange Park, praised the participants' success on the day. *"The atmosphere on the day was electric. Seeing 208 of our students compete with such energy, sportsmanship, and determination on the same track where Commonwealth champions have stood was genuinely inspiring,"* said James. *"This event was all about giving our young people a chance to shine on a big stage, and they absolutely grabbed that opportunity. Their performances, coupled with the phenomenal support from the student officials, made the day an undeniable triumph for the entire Community Academies Trust."*



The smooth running of the day was significantly enhanced by the contributions of 29 dedicated student officials from Telford Langley School, who managed various aspects of the competition. Their coordination was overseen by Charlotte Priestley, who was thanked for her role in their training and preparation.

Further support was provided by adult officials and scorers, including Jess Dolman and Bethany-Anne Burton. Special mention was given to Frankie Williams from Telford Langley, who excelled as the chief scorer and primary announcer for the event.

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Following the positive feedback and smooth execution of the day, organisers expressed their gratitude to the entire Trust leadership for entrusting them with the event's organisation, particularly thanking Neil Coleman and Richard Thorpe.

Looking ahead, the success of the competition has paved the way for it to become a regular fixture in the CAT calendar. The Trust has already approved plans to host another athletics event on **18th September 2026, so save that date.**

Organisers have promised to make "some adjustments to the event lineup to enhance the experience for all students involved," suggesting an even bigger and better competition is on the horizon.



Health Assured: Support When You Need It Most

Life can be challenging—and that's where Health Assured steps in. As the UK's leading Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), it offers free, confidential support to help staff and their families navigate personal and professional issues.

What You Get:

- 24/7 Helpline: Speak to trained counsellors anytime, day or night.
- Counselling: Access short-term, goal-focused therapy sessions.
- Legal & Financial Advice: Get expert guidance on everything from wills to budgeting.
- Wisdom App: Track your wellbeing, access resources, and get support on the go.

health assured

Quick Tips to Make the Most of It:

- **Save the helpline number - you never know when you'll need it. (Ask your Head for this)**
- **Download the Wisdom app - it's packed with wellbeing tools.**
- **Use it early - don't wait until you're overwhelmed.**
- **Your family can access support too.**

Our Half Term in Pictures



And finally.....

Hopefully you found us on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/schoolscat/> (#schoolscat) as well as on X @SchoolsCat (#catschools). Follow us and we'll follow you back.

This half term pictures celebrate our trust's first interschool Athletics competition which took place at the start of September.

Don't forget to put a note in your diary for 18th September 2026

where we'll be at the Alexander Stadium once again and the event will be even bigger!

