

Our Community Matters

September 2024
Issue 21



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



#catschools/#schoolscat

Editor: Michelle Borders

communications@catschools.uk

www.thecat institute.org

INSIDE

Message from
Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO

Headspace

Join us in welcoming
Millfield Primary School to
our Trust

Ensuring Excellence

Snapshots of School life
across our trust

Introducing

Simon Kelly, Headteacher,
Millfield Primary School

Education Matters

Disciplinary Literacy, by
Alex Quigley

**CAT Institute of
Education Matters**

Message from Director Of
IoE, Alexis Rickus

**Expert/Network Group
News**

Events, competitions,
workshops and review of
CATalyst24!

Dearest Gentle Readers,

It has come to this author's attention that the allure of Bridgerton has ensnared many of you into a binge-watching frenzy, me included. Such indulgence on my part in particular has led to this issue being prefaced in a style à la Whistledown. In my defense, it's been a miserable July, not all of us are enamoured of football, (perish the thought), and there's been nothing to watch on the television.

In matters of more serious import, the summer holidays have witnessed a flurry of activity within our esteemed trust. We have bid a fond farewell to cherished friends while simultaneously opening our arms to a delightful new member.

Let us extend a warm welcome to Millfield Primary School of Tamworth, which, as fate would have it, is conveniently situated next to Drayton Manor Park. One imagines this proves most advantageous for Biology field trips.

Our hearts swell with pride at the triumph of CATalyst24. The feedback arising from the workshop activities that ensued for our colleagues was nothing short of extraordinary, as you shall soon discover within these pages.

And, my dear readers, do stay vigilant for the forthcoming CATalyst25. The plans are already afoot, and this author assures you, it promises to be even more splendid.

Yours Truly,

Lady Whistledown

aka

Michelle Borders
Editor





Message from Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



A happy new academic year to you and a very warm welcome back. I especially welcome new staff and pupils - you are joining a wonderful professional staff team in your school and the wider family of over 1100 staff and 7500 pupils who work and learn across our 17 schools. A particular warm welcome to the staff and pupils at Millfield Primary in Tamworth who joined our trust on 1st July.

My personal thanks to the staff who have managed and led the work that has continued in our schools throughout the summer - there has been a lot going on, including significant capital projects and mountains of maintenance alongside the routine and crucially important day to day management of our sites.

In late July and August schools and pupils received examination results with so many individual success stories and achievements. These achievements have enabled successful progression into secondary schools, Post 16 education, higher education and the world of employment and apprenticeships. This is the result of a significant and wonderful collective effort from you all - congratulations.

As we all embark on this new school year, it is always important to remind ourselves of the importance of the work you do whether it be pupil facing or behind the scenes. Your work makes a difference for young people, literally influencing and changing young lives for the better. You make sure they learn and achieve academically, you make sure they build confidence and self-esteem, learn to make and sustain friendships and develop maturity and resilience in their emotions so they can really achieve socially, and you make sure they have every opportunity to build on their talents so that they can live lives enriched by the arts and by sport by going that extra mile beyond the taught curriculum. These are amazing, important things and it's why what you do is so crucial.

I look forward to meeting you all during this autumn term when I come to your school to discuss how things are there and also to consult with you about some exciting new proposals aimed specifically at making your working lives richer and excellence in your work even more achievable.

This week provides our most significant opportunity in the year to make the most of that new start feel, and to deliver on the planning and policy developments in your school and across our trust, many of which have been lined up to launch today. Thank you for all you do and for the energy I know you will give to the days, weeks and months ahead.

Very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



This June has been an exceptionally busy month at Millfield with a number of events and visits taking place.

At the beginning of the month our EYFS pupils visited Kenilworth Castle as part of their history learning whilst our Year 1 pupils visited Twycross Zoo as part of their science learning about animals. The Year 1 pupils learnt lots about different animals and their habitats. They also compared and contrasted animals at first hand on their visit describing how they would identify and group them and grouping animals according to what they eat.

"I liked seeing all the animals and especially watching the penguins get fed."
Willow

"I liked the habitat game in the workshop- we had to put the animal where we thought it lived." Penelope

"We saw different animals from the different animal groups, like reptiles and mammals." Reggie



Also this month our Year 3 pupils visited Bosworth Battlefield to extend their knowledge and understanding of an important local historical site. They spent the day immersed in history taking on the role of archaeologists to investigate history at this site.

On the 19th June our Key Stage 2 athletes took part in the Tamworth Schools Athletics Competition competing in a range of track and field events at the Tamworth Sports Stadium. This was a fantastic competition that enabled our pupils to race on a proper athletics track

similar to the athletes in the forthcoming Paris Olympics.



Finally, towards the end of this month our parent and staff volunteers who form FOMS (Friends of Millfield School) organized our very popular annual summer fair which took place on our school field. The sun shone and everyone had a great time with all funds raised going towards the school.

There have also been other visits to The Wolseley Centre, walks in our local area and visits from firefighters from Tamworth Fire Station following on from our career's week last month.

As we approach the end of the school year, we are looking forward to preparing all our pupils for the next stage of their education either here at Millfield or at their new secondary schools.



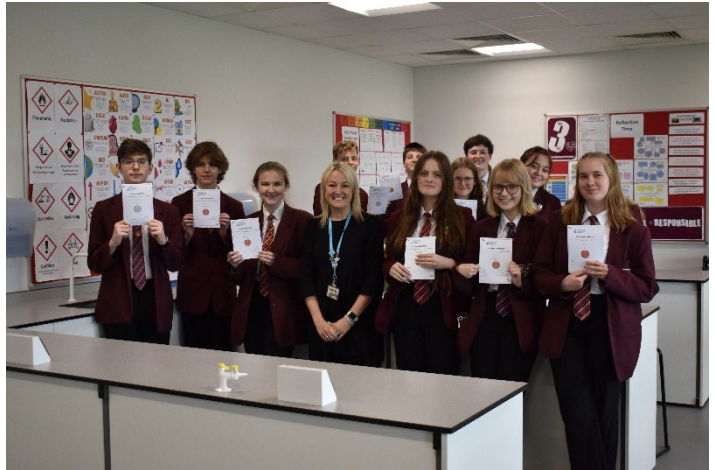
Ensuring Excellence

Snapshots of what our schools have been up to this half term.

The Polesworth School, Y10 Science Students Sweep the STEM Board

By Emily Powell

In a groundbreaking initiative, 57 Year 10 students recently participated in the prestigious 'National Scientific Thinking Challenge' for the very first time. This competition, developed by professors from leading universities, aims to cultivate critical thinking skills within the realm of STEM subjects.



The results of the challenge were nothing short of impressive, with 8 students earning silver awards for ranking in the top 25% nationwide, and an additional 11 students receiving bronze awards for placing in the top 40%. This outstanding achievement is a testament to the dedication and talent of Polesworth's students.

Moving forward, we are thrilled to announce that the 'National Scientific Thinking Challenge' will become a recurring event, with Year 10 students enrolled in triple science courses being automatically entered each year. This commitment to fostering academic excellence and intellectual growth is a testament to our school's dedication to nurturing the next generation of scientific minds.

Congratulations to all the students who participated in this year's challenge. Your hard work and commitment have not gone unnoticed, and we look forward to seeing even more remarkable achievements in the years to come.

Have you joined Vivup?

Your lifestyle rewards scheme has just got better! As if a huge range of discounts to benefit from isn't enough, keep an eye on your inbox for even more exciting benefits. These include home and electronics savings with top retailers like Currys and John Lewis, discounted gym memberships at over 3000 locations nationwide, and the opportunity to participate in our electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme in partnership with Tusker. If you haven't signed up yet, why not?



OCM Issue 21 September 2024

Chadsmead's Got Talent by Mrs Miles

For lots of people, staff, and parents alike, the "Chadsmead's Got Talent" evening is honestly one of the highlights of our year.

It is incredible to see the confidence of our pupils as they stand on the stage and perform to a full hall.

From our youngest pupils in Y1 to the eldest in Y6, we really did witness a range of superb talents. There were twenty-seven acts across the school which included singing, dancing, comedy, guitar, Makaton signing and piano. Four of our Y6 pupils did a wonderful job of introducing the acts throughout the evening and twenty-one of our Y6s performed "Dancing Through the Decades", which had the audience singing along!

As a regular performer at "Chadsmead's Got Talent", Mr Budge involved the audience with his guitar and singing of "Green, Green Grass" and a number of our staff had worked hard to prepare a fantastic "Barbie" dance which ended the evening on a high!

We are extremely proud of all those who took part, whatever their role. Chadsmead really is about so much more than academic achievement and this event continues to provide an excellent opportunity for our pupils to show what they are capable of. This evening managed to raise £660 towards music and equipment, so a huge well done to everyone.



Polesworth Y10 art students shine in National Art Competition

By Mr Atkins and Miss Thompson

Avid readers of the OCM will remember that the last issue featured Y10s from The Polesworth School engaging in a national art competition being run by the Gallery of Living History. This national competition,

founded by BAFTA award-winning actor Andy Serkis, was a hard-fought battle, with the talented Polesworth pupils coming in a very well deserved second place.

It was very close between Polesworth and the winning team and the students were on a panel with the University students to talk about their work in front of the gallery founder Margaret Casely-Hayford and Andy Serkis, and they presented a surprise award to Shirley King for all of her outstanding work as our unsung hero!

Please scan the QR code with your phone to open the augmented reality work that Polesworth's two Teams entered.





The Wilnecote School partners with HS2 to deliver Epic Engineers Workshop

by Carl Savage
On the 3rd of June 60 of the highest achieving year 7, 8's and 9's took part in an Epic Engineers workshop in partnership with HS2. This was dedicated to STEM learning and based around transport infrastructure.

The year groups were all mixed up and put into teams, they all worked incredibly well together on various design activities. The tasks were designed with a focus on problem solving design and teamwork as well as giving pupils the chance to communicate effectively with people they would not normally work with.

Each team was given the task of designing 'The station of the future' with a focus on the environmental impact. Pupils were asked to consider using sustainable materials as well as thinking about how a train station of the future might be powered. Each group was then asked to present their ideas to 3 other teams explaining why they had made certain choices.

The final activity - which pupils seemed to enjoy the most- was to design and build a tunnel structure which could carry a weight of 800g. Teamwork, communication and aiming high were essential to achieve this. Each team were given the same equipment and the lightest tunnel design which could support the weight given won. There were some excellent designs and all teams thrived to be the best.

The day was a success and the presenter commented on how well behaved all pupils were, he was also impressed with their critical thinking and design ideas. Pupils came away positive and appreciative to have been given the opportunity to take part. We already have another day booked for the same time next year.



Art & Photography Exhibition, GCSE, Year 11 & A-Level, Year 12 & Year 13

Part of The Polesworth School's Rossetti building was transformed into a gallery space including a new addition of a video art room. Also new was the **GCSE Photography** students' work, which took centre stage of the **GCSE Fine Artists** display.

The official opening night of the exhibition was reserved for parents/carers, students, Polesworth staff and VIP guests which included local councillors and school governors. Mrs Favell, Headteacher at The Polesworth School, officially opened the evening with a speech and cutting of the ribbon.



What a splashtastic summer term at Stoneydelph Primary School by Mrs Esther Parsons

Pupils at Stoneydelph Primary School have been having a 'splashing' time in our pop-up pool this half term. Every child from Reception to Year 6 has taken part in an intensive course of 10 swimming lessons with a qualified swimming teacher in the pool for every lesson.

The pupils have learned water confidence, stroke techniques and life-saving skills. We have also been training our most able swimmers in time trials for the next Tamworth swimming gala.

After school swimming lessons have been really popular and those pupils in Year 6 who haven't yet met the expectation to swim 25 metres, have also been taking part in extra booster lessons.

Our final week culminates in a fun, water play week and our Year 6 leavers 'Pool Party', complete with inflatables and a Hawaiian tiki bar.

The pupils have made so much progress in their swimming skills and they absolutely love the opportunity to have fun in the water. We are really pleased to have this facility and all of the other sporting enrichment that is on offer at Stoneydelph, which has contributed to our second consecutive year of the Gold School Sports Mark.





Introducing....

Simon Kelly, Head teacher of Millfield Primary School, based in Tamworth. Simon talks to us about life at Millfield and their decision to join the Community Academies Trust.

As head teacher of Millfield Primary School, I am extremely proud of the role and responsibility I have of leading and managing the school and I am, alongside our whole school community, very excited to be joining the Community Academies Trust.

Millfield Primary School is located in Fazeley on Coleshill Street in Tamworth - we sit opposite the old Fazeley Mill (which has recently been turned into housing) and right by the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal. Our school is also just a ten-minute walk from Drayton Manor Park.

Joining the Community Academies Trust was an easy decision for our governors, as after much research, it was clear that the trust shared the same vision and values as Millfield and could provide the help, support, and professional development to help us make our good school even better.

I have been head teacher at Millfield since September 2014 and prior to this, I was head teacher at schools in Lichfield and Burton. In total I have been a head teacher for 16 years and working in education as a teacher / deputy head teacher for almost 35 years.

I was born and brought up in London and am a lifelong West Ham United fan attending my first match in September 1978. I still drag myself out running every week and have completed a number of running events and still - just about - enjoy doing this!

I have two daughters - one of whom has just completed her GCSEs and the other who is just finishing a year out before going off to university to study medicine.

I still enjoy working in school and making a difference to children's future lives.

Being a head teacher is very challenging but rewarding - however, working with pupils is still what it is all about and the highlight of my year is always a week out of my office on the Year 6 residential visit!

Education Matters



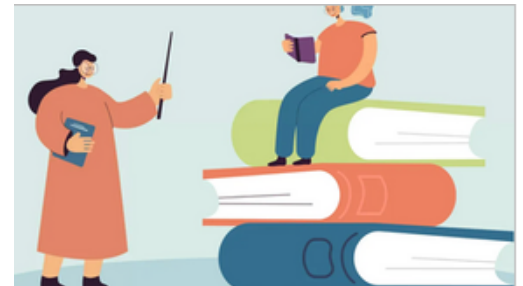
If you would like to submit an article, we would love to hear from you. Email: communications@catschools.uk

Disciplinary Literacy

Understanding disciplinary literacy is crucial for students as it enables them to engage deeply with subject content, enhancing comprehension and critical thinking.

Alex Quigley, a leading advocate for disciplinary literacy, emphasizes its role in bridging the gap between surface learning and deep, meaningful engagement with content. His insights help teachers develop strategies that support students in becoming more adept in their disciplines, fostering a richer, more nuanced educational experience.

In this blog, he explores various aspects of disciplinary literacy, guided by Quigley's expertise, to help educators and students alike navigate the complexities of subject-specific learning.



Alex Quigley 
5 minutes ago · 3 min



How to do Disciplinary Literacy by Alex Quigley



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

The Summer Term at the Institute of Education (IoE) has been an enriching and vibrant period, filled with activities designed to foster growth, innovation, and community engagement. The key highlights included the much-anticipated CATalyst24 Conference, our inaugural conference event, a mix of face to face and online workshops.

CATalyst24 brought together teachers from across the trust for a series of impactful workshops.

The sessions received great feedback, highlighting their usefulness and the high-quality resources provided. Attendees left with great ideas, practical skills and innovative approaches to enhance their own teaching. This event proved to be a real sharing of expertise that could be implemented in schools, reflecting the IoE's commitment to professional growth and continuous learning.

Alongside CATalyst24 the summer term featured several exciting pupil enrichment activities, celebrating major events such as the Euros and the Olympics. Additionally, a trust-wide Bake Off was held. All of these events fostered a great sense of community and highlighted the power of our networks. These activities not only engaged students but also showcased the importance of collaborative and extracurricular learning experiences.

The next few pages of the OCM feature feedback on some of the workshop sessions together with some pictures from the fantastic pupil enrichment sessions.

From the successful CATalyst24 conference to engaging pupil activities, this summer term has been filled with dynamic initiatives that have underscored the IoE's commitment to excellence in education.

As we look forward to this new academic year and to the exciting plans for CATalyst25, the IoE remains dedicated to fostering growth, innovation, and collaboration within our trust family of schools.

Alexis Rickus
Director, CAT Institute of Education



Network and Expert Group News

Joining Link for the next Curriculum Groups' Meeting on Wednesday 25 September 2024 at 3.40pm is [here](#). Please register, then join your session.

Network Groups Update by Neil Coleman

Professional Networks

As a reminder, from September 2024, the network groups and expert groups will come together and will be known collectively as the Community Academies Trust Professional Networks.

Each of the Networks will aim to meet remotely once a term to discuss and share new research, updates and relevant issues, share good practice, analyse improvement priorities and promote continuous improvement in their areas. At the end of the school year, each of the networks will have the opportunity to organise specialist CPD, meeting face to face in planned workshops as part of our Trust Day.

The Professional Networks have been split into two sectors: Curriculum Network Groups and Specialist Network Groups. Curriculum Network Groups will meet in the first half of each term. These cover all National Curriculum subject areas. The Specialist Network Groups will meet in the second half of each term. These cover generic areas such as assessment, SEND, EYFS. Please see below the planned dates for next year's Professional Network meetings:

Curriculum Network Meetings: 3.40 - 4.40pm

Autumn 1 Curriculum Network meeting - Wednesday 25th September 2024

Spring 1 Curriculum Network meeting - Wednesday 29th January 2025

Summer 1 Curriculum Network meeting - Wednesday 21st May 2025

Specialist Network Meetings: 3.40 - 4.40pm

Autumn 2 Specialist Network meeting - Wednesday 27th November 2024

Spring 2 Specialist Network meeting - Wednesday 19th March 2025

Summer 2 Specialist Network meeting - Wednesday 25th June 2025



The aim of holding the curriculum and specialist network meetings separately is to support staff to attend other areas that they have a responsibility or an interest.

Due to a restructure and change in focus, we would like to welcome:

- **Attendance Specialist Network Chair:** Gemma Grainger, Chadsmead Primary Academy
- **Pupil Premium Specialist Network Chair,** Debbie Cambridge, Windmill Primary School
- **Science (Primary) Curriculum Network Chair,** Emma Haynes, Birchwood Primary School
- **English (Primary) Curriculum Network Chair,** Ashleigh Chamberlain and Rhianna Lowe, Birchwood Primary School.

Congratulations to all of the above who start their new roles this term..

'Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success' - Henry Ford



CATalyst24: A day of networking, workshops, and conferences

The **Early Years Network Group** discussed the importance of play, relationships and communication. Ness Smith, the group Lead, hosted the session at Birchwood Primary School, and provided delegates with much food for thought, including EEF research regarding the importance of the vagus nerve and how it is activated in children through play. There were many comments on the videos shared by Ness and many people present, said that they intended to use them, and would be taking some of the ideas from this workshop into the Year 1 classroom. Most people commented on how useful it had been to meet, share ideas with each other, particularly with people from other settings. People left the session feeling more positive and inspired than when they arrived.

The **RE Network Group**, which was hosted by Chadsmead Primary Academy, used their session for planning, sharing resources, and looking at the curriculum requirements for each year group. The day was spent sharing knowledge and experiences of teaching RE from different viewpoints, including trips and alternatives that could be used instead of trips. Delegates found it extremely informative and thought provoking and took away plenty of ideas for books to use and different resources to enhance learning opportunities.



The **History Network** saw leaders, teachers and support staff come together to consider how our young people can access their history curricula through the lens of local history. Using examples from the locality of the areas from which our schools in the Trust are drawn, colleagues assessed where stories can be used by students to create enquiry questions and how we can use local examples of those such as 'Little Jim' in Polesworth or Captain Matthew Webb from Dawley to further engage them in the past.

As well as assessing the rationale and benefit behind utilising local history and providing a 'golden thread' through schema, colleagues were also toured through the local environment stopping in Polesworth Abbey with the aid of local priest and expert Father Philip. It allowed members of the Network to see the way physical sites can be part of the learning process for students and how to 'read' sites to make connections. In addition, local historian Margaret Henley also joined the session to illustrate how to research local areas and explain the heritage of Polesworth.

CURRICULUM GROUPS PUPIL ENRICHMENT

Battle of the Bakers: School Edition

The ultimate baking showdown happened at The Polesworth School on Friday, 28th June. Competition was fierce with teams from Polesworth, Stoneydelph, Chadsmead and Birchwood, all donned their aprons and produced some amazing cake. **Alexis Rickus and Michelle Borders had the unenviable task of judging the gourmet masterpieces.**

The rules were that cakes had to include biscuit and represent their schools. Stoneydelph's decoration of their cake was incredibly intricate and depicted their school logo, the ginger biscuits baked by Birchwood school were amazing and using ingredients grown in their school garden was inspired. However, it was in the end a tasting competition, and there could only be one winner - Chadsmead Primary Academy! Their combination of decoration with the lemon of a perfectly baked sponge was the winner of a trophy, a medal and a cookbook each.



Inspired by the upcoming 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France, the Art network launched the CAT Art Competition. This was a fantastic opportunity for pupils to showcase their creativity and artistic skills.

Entries were varied and of really high standards. Schools from across the trust entered and competition was fierce.

The winners were selected by representatives across our trust during the art network meeting held on 3rd July. Congratulations to Chadsmead Primary Academy. The winners won an Olympic plush mascot, art supplies and sketching pens.



Congratulations to all participants!

KS1 1st place: Windmill Primary School

KS2 1st place: Chadsmead Primary School



Windmill Primary School



Chadsmead Primary Academy

CAT Challenge Cup Football Tournament Year 5/6 - Telford AFC



On Wednesday, 5th May, the inaugural Cat Challenge Cup football tournament was held at AFC Telford United.

The event saw the participation of five CAT schools and 76 children. This was the first time our schools had come together as a Trust to take part in a shared sporting event. The children were all brilliantly behaved and



really enjoyed their day out. Congratulations to Grange Park School, which won the Boys' competition by narrowly beating Birchwood Primary School on goal difference. Grange Park also did the double by winning the Girls' competition without losing a game. A big thank you to AFC Telford for hosting the event. The children were able to eat lunch inside the stadium and had the use of three astroturf cages to play their games.

Thanks also to Lee James of Grange Park Primary for arranging and organising the whole event so expertly.

CAT Challenge Cup Football Tournament Year 3/4 – Aston Villa Academy



Hot off the success of the first Cat Challenge Cup in Telford, on Friday, 14th June, the first Year 3/4 tournament was held at Aston Villa's Inner City Academy. The event saw the participation of nine schools and 136 children. Congratulations to the Birchwood Boys B-Team, who won the overall Boys' tournament by beating Grange Park 3-0 in the final. Grange Park did get their revenge with their

Girls' team running out 1-0 winners over Birchwood Girls' Team.

A big thank you goes to all the staff at Aston Villa for allowing us to host the event at their academy building and for making us feel so welcome. A huge thank you also to Jack Johnson who did a brilliant job organising and running the whole event.





Bookings Now Open

Tuesday 12 November 2024

Dordon Primary School

SEND Law, Funding and Myths

With Garry Freeman

If you are working with children with additional needs, and they are reliant on receiving effective additional provision and support, this training is a must. Understanding SEND law is vital to ensuring your SEND children and families receive all they need to make progress and thrive.



Garry is a SEND consultant with a significant number of years' experience, both as a school leader but also on a national level, working alongside the DFE and NASEN.

The aim of the session is to promote:

1. An understanding of what SEND Myths are and why they are an issue.
2. A working understanding of the main aspects of SEND law on funding and EHCP process as it applies in England.
3. Confidence and insight to discuss these aspects and challenge LAs/professionals where appropriate.
4. The knowledge and references to inform work done by parents/professionals.

Essentially, Garry will share a wealth of knowledge about how SEND law can support schools, parents, children, and families in ascertaining appropriate levels of funding and provisions for the children and young people you work with.

If you are interested in booking a place, please email via the link below.

Book your place at ioe@catschools.uk

TRAIN TO TEACH



COMMUNITY ACADEMIES TRUST
Institute of Education

Our Half Term in Pictures



And finally.....

Hopefully you found us on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/schoolscat/> (#schoolscat) as well as on Twitter @SchoolsCat (#catschools). Follow us and we'll follow you back. You can also find us on our App via the Wix Spaces, Our Community Matters.

Birchwood Primary School @BirchwoodPrim · Jul 11
Sycamore's 2nd reading tea party of the year! This time, they enjoyed sharing a book read by Mr Coleman and some delicious treats baked by Mrs Fisher. Well done for all meeting your reading target again!



Dordon Primary @DordonPrimary · Jun 10



Millfield Primary School @MillfieldPS · Jun 5
More pictures from Year 6's food workshop...congratulations to the Green Peas team for the best meal!



Polesworth School @PolesworthSchL · 22h
Congratulations to the Year 11 student cohort on their 2024 GCSE examination results today!

We wish you all the best in your future endeavours 😊

#thepolesworthschool #polesworth #GCSEResultsDay #gcse2024



Stratford-Upon-Avon Primary School @StratfordPrim · Jul 2
A few tired children (and dragons) having a quick rest before evening activities - hopefully we'll sleep well tonight!



Stoneydelph Primary School @StoneydelphPS · Jul 8
Well done Luca for winning the KS2 Olympic art competition and Charlie for being our KS1 winner. Luca also came 2nd overall in the @SchoolsCat competition. Well done to all who entered. 🏆



Our Community Matters

