



# Odyssey

## Collaborative Trust



Staff at Cherry Tree Hill School dressed up for World Book Day. See page 7.

### NHS TALKS ABOUT BODY IMAGE AT BEAUFORT

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Earlier this term we welcomed colleagues across the Trust to our annual training day. We had close to 300 colleagues, representing all roles across Odyssey, at Derbyshire County Cricket Club for a day of building connections and professional development. I'm particularly grateful to the colleagues who led sessions sharing their knowledge for the benefits of others. It was a pleasure to announce the Thrive Awards where we mark the amazing contributions colleagues make to helping us realise our aim of helping children, colleagues and the Derby community thrive. Well done to all the winners.

### SOWING THE SEEDS OF HAPPINESS AT ASTERDALE

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There was another annual event this term when we released our [community report](#). This gives highlights from our 2025 accounts (also available on our [website](#)). It was interesting to read in the Government's recent education white paper, a plan for all school trusts to report on the community impact – something we have been doing since 2022. Paper copies are available from each of our schools, if you haven't had a read yet, please do.

### PUPILS ARE IN THE SWIM AT BORROW WOOD

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Children, parents and staff at Springfield will have been watching with interest the development of the expanded Enhanced Resource Facility. While some new pupils started this term, our new purpose built building will be ready for the start of next term. It's set to be a great resource for pupils across Derby with special needs.

Finally, well done to the team at Asterdale for last week's OFSTED inspection. We can't share the results yet, but we look forward to sharing the report with you all when it is available.

**Ian Dewes**

Odyssey Collaborative Trust CEO

# NHS helps support healthy minds and bodies at Beaufort Primary



## OUR CHILDREN THRIVE

Beaufort Primary School recently welcomed visitors from the University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust, who delivered an engaging and thought-provoking session for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils focusing on diet, dental hygiene and body image.

The sessions explored a range of important topics that are increasingly relevant for young people today, particularly with the growing influence of social media.

NHS representatives shared practical advice on maintaining a healthy, balanced diet, the importance of good oral hygiene, and how to develop a positive and realistic understanding of body image.

Pupils were encouraged to think critically about the messages they see online and to consider how these can impact their health, wellbeing and self-esteem.

The sessions also provided a valuable opportunity for children to ask questions, share their thoughts and reflect on their own habits in a supportive and informative environment. Staff were incredibly impressed with how maturely and thoughtfully the pupils engaged with the sessions.

This visit provided a valuable learning experience, helping to equip pupils with the knowledge and confidence to make positive, informed choices as they grow.

# Leading the way on delaying smartphone use



## CHERRY TREE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

We were proud to be able to highlight the fantastic work of Cherry Tree Hill Primary School in encouraging families to delay smartphone use among their children until secondary school.

It is a subject head teacher Paul Appleton is very passionate about and sits on an advisory board in Derby to promote. He was able to talk about the school's work in

the Derbyshire Times as part of an article exploring a proposed mobile phone ban in schools.

His insights also highlighted the importance of strong partnerships between schools and families in helping children navigate an increasingly digital world.

You can read the article [here](#).

### People

**Derbyshire headteachers comment on school mobile phone ban – as MP supports new government policy and calls for social media ban for all under 16s**

# Spotlight on governance: time to celebrate our volunteers

## »»» OUR COLLEAGUES THRIVE

As a Trust, we are extremely grateful for the time, dedication and expertise that our governors and trustees generously give to support our schools and leadership teams.

To recognise their invaluable contribution, we marked National School Governors Week with an online campaign celebrating the many benefits that this vital voluntary role brings to our Trust, our schools and the individuals involved.

The campaign highlighted the impact of strong governance in driving school improvement, supporting strategic leadership and ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils across our family of schools. You can explore the campaign in full on our LinkedIn page.

It was particularly inspiring to see Trustee James Wright share his personal experiences of governance in the Derby Telegraph, offering insight into the rewarding nature of the role and the difference it can make within education. In addition, our CEO, Ian Dewes, shared his expertise on effective governance in a feature with Schools Week, outlining key lessons for building strong and impactful governance structures across schools and trusts.

You can read his article here:

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/three-lessons-to-give-schools-great-governance/>

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Opinion

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IAN DEWES  
CEO, Odyssey Collaborative Trust

### Here are three lessons to give schools great governance

**Experience shows that governors can provide powerful insights into the wider community, while others share their professional strategic know-how, says Ian Dewes**

When academy trusts first emerged, the layers of governance were often misunderstood. Over time, like many trusts, we've refined our approach – learning what genuinely adds value, what strengthens decision-making, and what helps children thrive. Three lessons stand out.

**Parents are the beating heart of our governance structure**  
Parents aren't just stakeholders – they're partners. We have parents involved at every tier: one trust member, two trustees, and typically two parent governors on each local governing board. There's a long-standing myth that parents pursue personal agendas. In reality, we've found the opposite. Parents usually go out of their way not to discuss anything related to their own child to avoid the appearance of bias. What they do bring is a powerful mix of professionalism, community insight and a deep commitment to ensuring every child succeeds.

**Local governance remains essential, because context matters**  
Some trusts have reduced the role of local governing boards, but our experience shows that strong local governance is a major driver of school improvement. A key enabler has been our template for headteacher reports, built around principles from the government's *Understanding your data: A guide for school governors and academy trustees*. The headteacher reports give governors clear national and local comparator data, allowing them to challenge, support, and ask the right questions. This isn't about duplicating scrutiny between the central team and the local board. It's about benefiting from different perspectives. Local governors bring something no dataset can provide: lived experience of the community. Recent examples include:  
• Families taking term-time holidays to see relatives abroad: This has become an increasingly common occurrence, sometimes leaving school leaders unsure whether carrot or stick is the best approach. Governors who reflect the backgrounds of the school community have been helpful in deepening leaders' understanding of the reasons why some of these absences are occurring and this has been a great support for decision making.  
• The ripple effect of a high-profile local safeguarding case: When there were serious issues with a family in the community, governors who lived in the area

gave helpful feedback about the community's thoughts and feelings. This was crucial in helping the headteacher to navigate a very delicate time with timely communications pitched at the appropriate level.  
• In both cases, local governors helped us look beyond the numbers and understand what was really happening for families.  
• That is why local governance matters – and why we continue to invest in it.

**Governance thrives when the right people are in the right roles**  
Governance is not one-size-fits-all. Some volunteers want the hands-on experience of supporting a single school, seeing rapid change and building relationships in one community. Others prefer a strategic role across multiple schools where decisions have a system-wide impact. Having served as both a local governor (REACH2) and a trustee (Coventry Diocese Academy Trust), I've seen the contrast first-hand. Both roles are rewarding, but the focus, responsibility, and skills needed are very different.

For example:  
• Trustees often make financial, strategic, and compliance decisions, which is ideal for those with skills in areas like finance, HR, estates, law, or audit.  
• Local governors offer insight into a school's unique community – best filled by people deeply rooted in the locality.  
• Matching people to the role that fits them best is one of the most important decisions a trust can make. So how do you become a governor or trustee?  
Start with your strengths and your motivations. If you want to make a difference to children in your community and enjoy seeing progress up close, a local governor role is likely the best fit. If you want to shape strategy, use your professional expertise, and influence outcomes for thousands of children, consider becoming a trustee. Either way, governance is one of the most meaningful ways to give back, and our schools need talented, committed people more than ever.

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## Crazy hair and big hearts

### »»» PORTWAY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Portway Junior School went whacky with their hair-dos to raise money for Comic Relief this year.

They invited children to style their hair in the craziest way possible and welcomed a sea of glitter, hairspray, colour and clips to mark the day and raise money for such a worthwhile cause.

As well as having fun, children were reminded of the importance of helping others and contributing to charities that make a real difference to people's lives.

# Making a Difference: Beaufort pupils join national clean-up efforts



## »»» OUR COMMUNITY THRIVES

Year 2 pupils at Beaufort Primary School proudly took part in the Great British Spring Clean 2026, joining communities across the country in helping to care for their local environment.

Armed with litter pickers and a strong sense of responsibility, the children worked together to tidy areas surrounding the school, focusing particularly on the main fence line along Hampshire Road. In teams, they collected a range of litter, including wrappers, bottles and other waste that had built up along the roadside.

The activity not only helped to improve the appearance of the local area but also gave pupils a valuable opportunity to learn about the importance of looking after their environment.

Through the experience, children developed a greater understanding of how small actions can make a big difference, as well as the importance of teamwork and community pride.

Pupils approached the task with enthusiasm and determination, showing great care and respect for their surroundings. Staff were delighted to see how engaged the children were and how seriously they took their role in supporting the wider community.

Headteacher Kate Beecroft said: "We wanted to support the Chaddesden neighbourhood team in keeping the local community clean and tidy, and the children have loved getting involved and making a difference."

The initiative was a fantastic example of pupils putting their values into action and demonstrating how they can contribute positively to the world around them.



**"We wanted to support the Chaddesden neighbourhood team in keeping the local community clean and tidy, and the children have loved getting involved and making a difference." "**

**Kate Beecroft, headteacher of Beaufort Primary School**

# Asterdale pupils thrive through 'Seeds of Happiness' initiative

## ➤➤➤ ASTERDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Asterdale Primary School has been sowing the seeds for healthy habits - both physically and mentally, using Children's Mental Health Week in February as an opportunity to think about 'belonging'.

Head teacher John O'Leary said: "We recognise the importance of prioritising pupils' mental safety and wellbeing alongside their daily learning diet in lessons.

"As part of this, all pupils have dedicated time daily within our school timetable (called 'the seeds of happiness') to keep the focus on pupils' wellbeing at the centre of our thinking and approach.

Children's mental health week provides us an opportunity to celebrate this further with the theme of 'belonging' really deepening our school values for all learners.

"We have ring-fenced focused enrichment time to truly recognise the importance of this week for all learners."

Personal Development lead at the school, Josh Seaman, added: "It has been a pleasure to roll out our new personal development activities in our new teams this half-term. The children have thrived in the changes and it has been so lovely seeing them return to class on a Friday following enrichment time with a smile on their face and a buzz around school."



## Developing future teachers

Our first cohort of PGCE students is due to graduate in July as our school-based postgraduate partnership with the University of Derby marks its first anniversary.

Several of our current trainees, alongside Lead Mentor Zoe Fletcher, recently shared their experiences with FE News, offering insight into the impact of the programme. Their reflections highlighted just how transformative the school-based route can be, with many describing it as a life-changing opportunity that has supported both their personal and professional growth.

As we look ahead to the next academic year, we are now recruiting our next cohort of trainee teachers. You can read more about our trainees' experiences [here](#).

# Making waves: swimming pool boosts confidence across school

## »»» BORROW WOOD SCHOOL

This term, pupils at Borrow Wood School had the exciting opportunity to take part in swimming sessions thanks to a pop-up pool installed on site, which proved to be a fantastic success in building water confidence and developing key swimming skills.

The pool has provided a unique and accessible way for children to engage in daily swimming lessons without leaving the school grounds. Pupils in Year 3, Year 4 and KS2 ERF have had a lesson every day, allowing them to make significant progress in a short space of time.

In addition to curriculum lessons, the school also offered a range of after-school clubs open to pupils across all year groups. These sessions included general swimming as well as the opportunity to try water polo, giving children a fun and active way to further develop their skills and enjoy being in the pool.



# Pupils discover life from Stone Age to Iron Age

## »»» OAKWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Year 3 pupils at Oakwood Junior School took part in an engaging workshop that explored life from around 10,000BC through to 43AD, when the Romans invaded England.

Throughout the session, children participated in a range of hands-on activities linked to this period in history.

During the workshop, pupils experienced flint knapping, ground wheat into flour, used primitive drills to create jewellery, and worked together to build a life-size Iron Age roundhouse. They had lots of fun while bringing this era of history to life and deepening their understanding through practical experiences.



# World Book Day fun at Cherry Tree Hill School



Staff at Cherry Tree Hill Primary School fully embraced the spirit of World Book Day by dressing up as a wide range of much-loved literary characters. From classic storybook favourites to modern heroes, the school was filled with colour, creativity and enthusiasm as staff brought books to life for pupils. Their efforts helped to create a fun and engaging atmosphere, inspiring children to celebrate reading and explore new stories. The day was a fantastic success, with staff playing a key role in promoting a love of books and encouraging pupils to immerse themselves in the joy of reading.

