



The Trust Times

CDAT's New Home!

We've moved! We have proudly moved into a new and improved office space. This marks an exciting milestone for the Trust.

Celebrating Our Schools

From mental health ambassadors to Fairtrade champions, our pupils are making a difference every day. Scroll down to see their stories!

Coming Together This Christmas

Shared worship, festive performances, and acts of kindness — discover how our schools are spreading joy this season.



FROM THE CEO'S DESK

Thank you for taking the time to read this second edition of our Trust newsletter. It has been great to welcome four new schools into the Trust this term:

St Berteline's in Halton, and Upton Heath, Little Sutton and Clutton – all in Cheshire West & Chester local authority and formally members of the Samara Trust. Welcome to the CDAT family!

The autumn term is always a really busy one in schools – as you will see from all of the news stories from across the Trust. One thing that strikes me is that, although our schools are so diverse – and all unique – the Trust's Christian ethos and principles shine through in so many of the different activities covered in this newsletter.

I was reminded of a well-known Bible verse: *"There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body"* (1 Corinthians 12:12). CDAT has many parts – but we can take strength from being together.



NEIL DIXON

CEO, Chester Diocesan Academies Trust

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." — Nelson Mandela

CDAT'S NEW HOME!

In recent weeks, we have proudly moved into a new and improved office space. This marks an exciting milestone for the Trust, as we now have an official hub where colleagues can come together, whether for meetings, training days, or collaborative work.

The new office provides a welcoming environment for everyone across CDAT, strengthening our sense of community and ensuring we have a dedicated space to support the important work we do.

We are delighted to celebrate this achievement and look forward to all that will be accomplished in our new home.



A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW CDAT SCHOOLS

We're delighted to welcome Clutton, Upton Heath, Little Sutton and St Berteline's Church of England Primary Schools into the CDAT family. Each brings its own unique character, strengths, and community spirit and we're excited to begin this new chapter together.

As we grow, so does our shared commitment to nurturing pupil voice, celebrating achievement, and living out our values across every school. Whether it's through creative learning, environmental action, or inclusive leadership, we know these new additions will enrich our trust and help us continue building something truly special.



SHARED WORSHIP – 16TH DECEMBER

We are delighted to announce that our schools will be coming together for a special Shared Worship on Monday 16th December at 10am. This will be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the season, reflect on our values, and strengthen the sense of community across our cluster.

Speaking roles have been allocated to the schools who attended the recent cluster meeting, and three carols have been chosen to guide our worship. One of these has a particular focus on community, reminding us of the importance of coming together in faith and friendship.



"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you." — B.B. King



ST MARY'S HALTON: SPORTING SUCCESS AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Pupils at St Mary's Halton have had a busy and rewarding start to the year. The school was proud to be crowned winners of their Cluster Football Tournament, with the team showing great skill, determination, and teamwork.

Beyond the competition, the event was a wonderful opportunity for pupils to meet and connect with more children from across the CDAT family of schools, strengthening friendships and trust-wide community.

In addition, members of the School Council demonstrated their commitment to service and compassion by visiting a local food bank during Autumn. They donated food collected from the school's Harvest Service at the local church, ensuring that their efforts supported families in need.

Together, these achievements highlight the values at the heart of St Mary's celebrating success, building community, and living out care for others.



DAWPOOL CELEBRATES NATIONAL ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

On 10th November, Dawpool launched National Anti-Bullying Week with the theme "Power for Good." The initiative encouraged pupils to recognise their ability to make a positive difference in the lives of others, both in school and beyond.

Throughout the week, children engaged in a variety of activities that promoted kindness, empathy, and respect. Role play helped them explore how actions affect others, while songs and poetry inspired them to use their voices to stand up for what is right. Class discussions linked these ideas to Dawpool's Christian values of respect, friendship, and compassion, encouraging pupils to live these values every day.

Odd Socks Day added a splash of colour and fun, celebrating the uniqueness of every individual. Families also joined in through Mrs Barrick's Family Challenge, creating superhero masks with powerful messages about using our "Power for Good." The creativity and commitment shown by children and parents alike highlighted the strength of the Dawpool community.

Reflections from the week captured its spirit beautifully. Flo in Year 1 shared, "I've used my 'Power for Good' by being kind," while Ben in Year 5 reminded us, "We have to think about how people feel because of our actions." Pippa in Year 6 summed it up simply: "We've learnt to always be kind and not hurt others."





WOODCHURCH C OF E STAFF COMPLETE MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING



TRAINING

Woodchurch C of E recently marked a special day as staff came together to complete mental health training. The smiles across the team reflected their enthusiasm and commitment fully engaged, united, and determined to do the very best for the children in their care.

Through collaborative learning, staff strengthened their ability to support every child's emotional wellbeing, ensuring that mental health remains central to the school's ethos. The training highlighted the importance of working together, bringing out the best in one another, and creating a nurturing environment where all children can thrive.

This shared experience was a powerful reminder that when staff are equipped and supported, amazing things happen for the whole school community.



WARMINGHAM HEAD PUPILS: LEADING WITH VOICE AND VISION



For the past three years, pupils in Years 5 and 6 at Warmingham CE Primary School have been at the forefront of research projects linked to the School Development Plan. These pupil-led initiatives have shown the remarkable impact of children's voices when they are given the opportunity to lead, question, and share their ideas. Their insights have not only shaped their own learning but have also influenced how the school continues to grow and improve.

Most recently, our Head Pupils were invited to present their Courageous Advocacy project at the Chester Diocese Senior Leaders Conference. They delivered two presentations to groups of headteachers, speaking with confidence and clarity while responding to unrehearsed questions. Their work demonstrated the lasting influence of pupil-led projects and highlighted how children can drive meaningful change within a school community.

The response from delegates was overwhelmingly positive, with one headteacher describing the workshop as the highlight of her day. Many schools left inspired to begin similar projects in their own settings, recognising the value of empowering children to take the lead.

This achievement stands as a proud moment for Warmingham CE Primary School. It reflects the school's commitment to placing children at the heart of decision-making and celebrates the extraordinary outcomes that can be achieved when young voices are trusted and encouraged.





BUILDING A KINDER FUTURE AT BRERETON CE

Brereton CE Primary School continues to empower pupils through meaningful initiatives that promote empathy, action, and wellbeing.

This term, the school introduced F.I.D.S groups — Feel, Imagine, Do, Share — giving children the opportunity to explore issues that matter to them. The Faith in Action group chose to focus on peace, expressing concern about global conflict. They've created learning opportunities for their peers and written to key figures to ask how peace is being promoted. The group looks forward to welcoming Bishop Sam and Bishop Mark to continue the conversation.

Alongside this, Brereton has launched the KiVa programme a preventative, research-based approach to tackling bullying. Through half-termly lessons, children learn to recognise the difference between conflict and bullying, and understand their role in creating a safe, inclusive environment. Staff and pupils have embraced the programme, with KiVa vests now worn during breaktimes to reinforce the message and show the school's commitment to stopping bullying.

These initiatives reflect Brereton's dedication to nurturing thoughtful, courageous learners who care deeply about their community and the wider world.



CELEBRATING GROWTH AT HUXLEY SCHOOL

We were delighted to mark the official opening of Huxley's new Year 5/6 classroom a milestone that symbolises growth, opportunity, and a shared vision for education.

From just four pupils in 2020 to 63 today (with a waiting list), Huxley's transformation reflects strong community partnerships and its innovative flexi-schooling model, blending home learning with school-based education. Families describe it as "the perfect balance," ensuring children thrive both academically and emotionally.

Headteacher Mrs Gourley said: "We are thrilled to see our vision for growth become reality. This classroom means more children can experience the nurturing, family-like environment that makes Huxley so special." Pupils, known as "Mini Governors," shared their joy, with Oakley calling Huxley "a home from home" and Leo joking, "We keep telling Mrs Gourley to build a university next!"

We were delighted to have CDAT representatives and Chris Penn at the opening, and proud that the story was even featured in the Chester Standard, shining a spotlight on Huxley's remarkable journey.

From four pupils to 63, Huxley stands as a testament to what can be achieved when schools, and families work together.





BROADBOTTOM PUPILS CHAMPION MENTAL HEALTH

At Broadbottom, five pupils have proudly completed their training to become Mental Health Ambassadors, working alongside Holly Hines, Mental Health Education Practitioner.

The journey began with applications and interviews, followed by training focused on the Five Ways to Wellbeing. The ambassadors have since developed a pledge and action plan, and have already made a positive impact by launching lunchtime sports activities across the school helping everyone stay active, connected, and supported.

We're incredibly proud of their leadership and commitment to creating a caring, inclusive school environment where wellbeing is a shared priority.



ST GEORGE'S: SUPPORTING WELLBEING AND FAIRTRADE VALUES

At St George's, pupils have been exploring how to care for themselves and others both locally and globally.

To mark Children's Mental Health Week, pupils wore yellow and took part in activities supporting Place2Be, a children's mental health charity. Through the My Happy Minds programme, they've been learning how to look after their wellbeing and understand the importance of sharing feelings and building resilience.



St George's is also proud to be a Fairtrade School, having achieved the FairAchiever Award in June 2025. This reflects their commitment to global citizenship, with pupils learning where food comes from, how trade affects communities, and how their choices can make a difference. Regular events and classroom activities help embed these values across the school.



Together, these initiatives show how St George's is nurturing thoughtful, compassionate pupils who care deeply about their world and each other.



MOTTRAM CE: GIVING BACK, LOOKING BACK

Pupils from Mottram CE and Broadbottom CE joined forces with Mottram Parish Church to support families in need through the Tameside South Foodbank. Following generous Harvest donations, the schools and parish contributed an impressive 261.3kg of food enough to provide 623 single meals for local families facing hardship. This visit gave pupils a real insight into how their actions make a difference, and highlighted the importance of compassion and community service.

Back in school, Year 6 pupils at Mottram have been immersing themselves in their Ancient Greece topic. After studying traditional Greek pottery, they used their knowledge to design and create their own clay pots. The project combined creativity with historical learning, giving pupils the chance to experience history in a hands-on, memorable way.

Together, these activities show how Mottram pupils are developing as thoughtful, engaged learners caring for others while exploring the world around them.





GEE CROSS: MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

At Gee Cross Holy Trinity, our youngest children have shown how small acts of kindness can make a big impact. To mark a very special milestone, pupils from Nursery, Reception, and Year 1 came together to celebrate Jean's 100th birthday.

The children surprised Jean at the church hall with a heartfelt rendition of 'Happy Birthday' and presented her with a beautiful handmade card to mark the occasion. Their smiles, waves, and claps filled the room with joy, making Jean's day truly unforgettable.

The celebration didn't just touch those present it reached far beyond the hall. Shared online, the moment captured hearts across the community, with over 4,500 views on social media. This wonderful occasion reflects the spirit of Gee Cross Holy Trinity: nurturing kindness, celebrating achievements, and making a real difference in the lives of others.



BREDBURY: SHARING JOY THROUGH SONG AT ST MARK'S

At Bredbury, our Year 6 children brought music and smiles to the Prime Time group at St Mark's Church. During the group's monthly catch-up, pupils delighted everyone with a heartfelt performance of songs.

The atmosphere was filled with joy as some of the group even joined in, creating a wonderful moment of togetherness across generations. Smiles and laughter were shared all round, showing the power of music to connect and uplift our community.

This visit reflects the values we hold dear at Bredbury celebrating community, spreading kindness, and making lasting memories.



CELEBRATING SUCCESS AND LEARNING AT TARPORLEY

At CDAT, we are always proud to share the wonderful achievements and learning taking place across our schools. Tarpoley has been especially busy recently, with pupils shining in sport, culture, and new skills.

- Sporting Triumphs: Our Year 5/6 Hockey team achieved a fantastic third place finish, while the Year 5/6 pupils were crowned overall winners in the Indoor Athletics competition.
- Cultural Exploration: Bluebells Class embraced the celebrations of Diwali, learning about the traditions and values behind this vibrant festival.
- New Learning Journeys: Rabbits Class enjoyed their very first computing lesson, beginning an exciting adventure into the digital world.

These moments reflect the spirit of CDAT schools where pupils are encouraged to achieve, explore, and grow together.



EXPLORING SPIRITUALITY AT ST. BERTELINES

At CDAT, we value opportunities for children to reflect, connect, and grow and St. Bert's recently embraced this beautifully during their Spirituality Day.

Held during the autumn term, the day began with whole school worship, offering a moment for collective reflection on the many elements of spirituality. Pupils then explored these themes through a rich variety of activities including art, dance, meditation, music, and thoughtful discussions.

From quiet candlelit circles to joyful movement among autumn leaves, the day was filled with moments of peace, creativity, and connection. It was a powerful reminder of how spirituality can be expressed in many forms and how it nurtures the heart of our school communities.



CELEBRATING READING AND PLANTING AT ST THOMAS'

At CDAT, we love to celebrate achievements that grow both minds and communities and St Thomas' have done just that!

For an incredible eighth year running, St Thomas' topped the Summer Reading Challenge, earning a bespoke mural designed especially for their pupils. The mural, themed "What can we learn from the pages of a book?", features vibrant illustrations and inspiring quotes chosen by the children themselves. It now brightens their library space and celebrates the joy of reading across the school.



Meanwhile, Year 6 pupils have been busy outdoors, volunteering their time to complete winter planting in Alexandra Park. Using funds raised during their Enterprise Project in June, they filled the St Thomas' planter with bulbs and plants—and even made use of a bare patch of land under the park sign for surplus bulbs.



Come spring, we look forward to a colourful display that reflects both the creativity and care our pupils bring to their community.

STRETTON ST MATTHEW'S: CREATIVE REMEMBRANCE

Pupils at Stretton St Matthew's marked Remembrance Day with a moving service in church, using music and the arts to reflect and remember.

Year 6 pupils learnt to play the Last Post on their brass instruments, performing it to mark the beginning and end of the two-minute silence. Across the school, children created thoughtful artwork, wrote poetry, and sang beautifully coming together to honour those who have served and sacrificed. It was a powerful moment of reflection, creativity, and community.





SIAMS CELEBRATION: OVERLEIGH ST MARY'S SHINES

We're thrilled to share the glowing feedback from Overleigh St Mary's Church of England Primary School's recent SIAMS inspection. The school's Christian vision Love God, Love Ourselves, Love People—is not just a motto, but a lived reality that shapes every corner of school life.



Notable strengths highlighted in the report include:

A Vision That Transforms: The school's deep commitment to its Christian foundation creates a culture where love is central and lives are changed for the better.

Relationships Rooted in Kindness: Pupils and staff treat one another with exemplary love, respect, and care making the school a haven of safety, trust, and hope.

Empowered Pupils: Children know their voices matter. They take on leadership roles with enthusiasm, eager to make a positive impact in school and beyond.

A Curriculum of Wonder: The Christian vision inspires a curriculum that nurtures spirituality, self-awareness, and a sense of awe for the world.

Worship That Moves Hearts: Collective worship, enriched by strong church partnerships, is inclusive, inspirational, and central to school life.

This report is a testament to the love, dedication, and faith that radiates through Overleigh's community. Huge congratulations to everyone involved!



A NIGHT OF LIGHT AND SONG AT OVERLEIGH

This week, Overleigh St Mary's was aglow with joy as pupils, families, and staff gathered for a heartwarming community carols event. Beneath a stunning canopy of paper doves symbols of peace and hope the school hall was filled with candlelight, music, and togetherness.

The evening was a beautiful reflection of Overleigh's Christian vision in action: Love God, Love Ourselves, Love People. With voices raised in song and hearts united in celebration, the event offered a moment of stillness, connection, and festive cheer. Thank you to everyone who helped make the evening so special—from the talented singers to the thoughtful decorators. It was a true celebration of community spirit.

