

BETTERTIMES

Bohunt Education Trust Termly Events Review



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ISSUE 22 – SPRING 2026 – ACHIEVE

SGS BOARDING IS OFSTED OUTSTANDING!



BOHUNT FARNBOROUGH
WELCOMES DAME KATE
DETHRIDGE

NEW INTERIM
HEADTEACHER AT
BOHUNT WORTHING

BOHUNT SCHOOLS CELEBRATE THE TIMES SUCCESS

Read more inside:

TRAVEL EXTRAVAGANZA! BOHUNT HORSHAM STUDENTS VISIT NEW YORK CITY | BOHUNT WOKINGHAM STUDENTS TRAVEL TO CHINA | KENYA VOLUNTEERING FOR BOHUNT FARNBOROUGH STUDENTS | BOHUNT SCHOOL, LIPHOOK'S BIG EXPEDITION TO CANADA | BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW INTERVIEWS | SPOTLIGHTS ON... AND MORE...

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GOT NEWS?

Share school updates with your marketing contact or the BET Comms team for BETTER Times.



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FUTURE ISSUES OF BETTER TIMES

We want to ensure you enjoy BETTER Times and find it a useful and engaging platform. If you have any suggestions for future content, please email the Comms team at: comms@bohuntrust.com

Many thanks to all this issue's contributors.





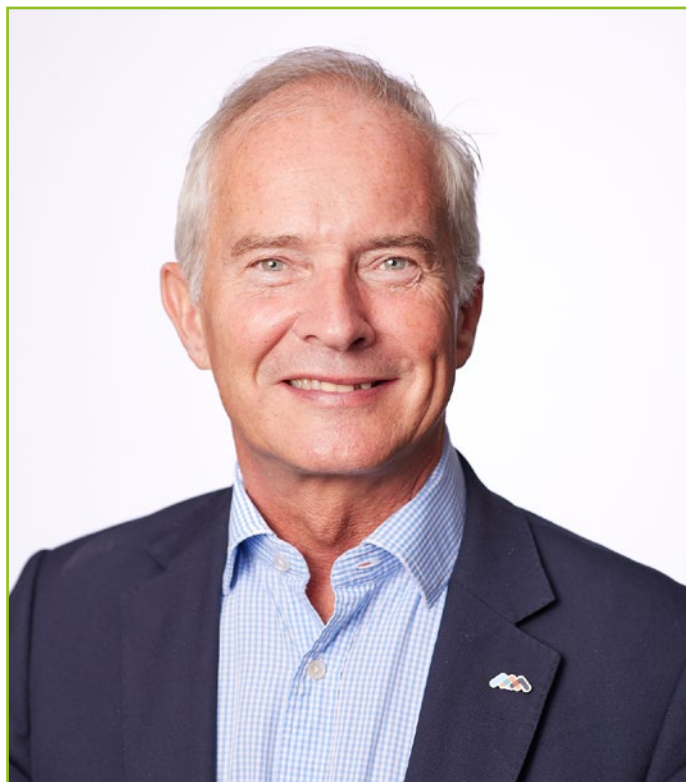
WELCOME FROM CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

I am delighted to write my first welcome to Better Times as we start 2026. This time of year is always an exciting one – time for reflection on the past achievements as well as looking ahead to the future.

The past 10 years since the Trust was formed have seen remarkable achievements, attainment and growth which we celebrated so well last year, and I would like to take the opportunity to thank our former Chair, Ray Morton for his amazing stewardship throughout that time. As I remarked in my interview for the last edition, I was thrilled to be able to take over this role last September. Having been involved as Vice Chair and trustee since the beginning I have been part of the journey as BET has grown from one to ten schools. I have been closely engaged in trust business for a long time and absolutely share BET's wonderful ethos and values. It is a real honour and a privilege.

The past year was an exceptional one for BET with a record year of achievement and exam results that reflect the diligence, talent and resilience of our communities. But the success we have celebrated is not accidental. It is the result of a culture that prioritises high expectations, inclusivity, and innovation. From outstanding academic outcomes to brilliant enrichment opportunities, our schools are equipping students not only with knowledge but with the confidence and character to thrive in an ever-changing world. This commitment to enabling and empowering everyone to reach their potential is something about which I am passionate.

I expect the year ahead will present some challenges, but also opportunities, and I am very confident that with our strong



management and governance and a strong Board of committed trustees, we are well placed to navigate them all successfully. We will build on what we have achieved, continue along the path of sustainable growth whilst always striving to deliver the best outcomes for all of our students. I am really looking forward to getting out and visiting more of our schools, meeting students, staff and governors, and gaining a better understanding of the issues and seeing BET ethos in action.

As you turn the pages you will see this is yet another superb edition of Better Times with great and compelling content. Having been an avid reader for many years, I have admired how much the publication has developed and blossomed, and credit must be given to Polly Sharpe.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to everyone who has contributed to BET's outstanding progress over the years. Trustees, leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, and of course, our students—you are the reason we can celebrate such success. It is an honour to serve alongside you, and I look forward to doing my best with my fellow trustees to work together to make the coming years even more memorable.

ALISTAIR HALLIDAY

Chair of the Trustees



WELCOME FROM THE TRUST LEADER

May I begin by wishing you a very happy and healthy start to the year! As the memories of festivities recede, I hope you have returned to school with renewed energy and a sense of anticipation for the important months ahead. I trust you enjoyed time with loved ones and perhaps indulged the epicurean side of life- some of us may even have overindulged and resolved, however briefly, to do better in 2026!

Working in education, we are well acquainted with the passing of time, its familiar rhythms and cycles. Time moves quickly, marked by milestones that feel both predictable and relentless. Before long, another series of public examinations will be firmly in view, with one round of mock exams already completed, and another soon upon us.

I gave up on New Year's resolutions some time ago - partly due to a lack of sustained conviction, and partly because I wanted to enter each new year with optimism rather than the near-certain failure of my good intentions. Eating more healthily, spending more time with family, or becoming the parent I would like to have had, are all laudable aims, but ones that resist neat calendrical deadlines.

There is, of course, a danger that the start of a new year serves only to underline the passage of time. For some, it brings a maudlin sense of unrealised ambitions; for others, a sharper awareness of distance from our perceived prime and proximity to the rest eternal. Yet, transcending our own anxieties about time and mortality, I would argue that new beginnings deserve celebration and optimism.

January takes its name from Janus, the Roman God of beginnings,

endings, doorways and transitions. Janus presided over war and peace; the gates of his temple were opened in times of conflict and closed to mark peace- the polar opposite, perhaps, of most school leaders' office doors!

Nevertheless, the symbolism endures. The turn of the year is a threshold, an invitation to move forward with hope and purpose. I know not everyone enjoys snow but I took great pleasure from the soft white and very light blanketing with which we welcomed 2026.

Happy New Year!

NEIL STROWGER

Trust Leader of BET



STEYNING GRAMMAR SCHOOL BOARDING PROVISION RATED OUTSTANDING BY OFSTED



STEYNING GRAMMAR SCHOOL IS CELEBRATING AFTER ITS BOARDING PROVISION RECEIVED THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE RATING FROM OFSTED - OUTSTANDING IN ALL AREAS.

Inspectors praised boarding as a central strength, highlighting high-quality care, strong safeguarding, and support that enables students to flourish academically, socially, and personally.

The report commends the exceptional relationships between staff and students, noting that boarders feel listened to, valued and respected, and that student voice plays a meaningful role in shaping boarding life. Inspectors also recognised the comprehensive induction for new boarders, strong pastoral systems and personalised support that helps students prepare confidently for life beyond school.

Safeguarding was judged to be outstanding, with well-trained and vigilant staff, robust recruitment practices and effective leadership oversight ensuring students feel safe and protected.

Leadership and management were also rated outstanding, with inspectors noting the warmth, ambition and clear vision provided by school and boarding leaders, supported by strong governance, guidance and oversight from Bohunt Education Trust.

Headteacher Aidan Timmons said:

“We are extremely proud of this outcome. It reflects the dedication and care shown by our boarding staff and the strong relationships we build with students and families. This judgement

is a testament to the values and commitment that underpin boarding at Steyning Grammar School.”

Rod Scott, Chair of Governors, added:

“This Outstanding judgement is a powerful endorsement of the care, ambition and professionalism that define boarding at Steyning Grammar School. Governors are proud of the way leaders and staff place students’ wellbeing, safety and personal development at the heart of everything they do.”

Neil Strowger, Trust Leader at Bohunt Education Trust, commented:

“This report reflects the very best of our values in action: high expectations, strong safeguarding and a deep commitment to knowing and supporting every young person to flourish. I congratulate the boarding team, trust colleagues, and wider school staff on this exceptional outcome.”

For more information about SGS boarding or to arrange a visit, please contact the admissions team at: sgsboarding@sgs.uk.net

BOHUNT EDUCATION TRUST SCHOOLS CELEBRATE SUCCESS IN THE TIMES SCHOOL RANKINGS

BET IS DELIGHTED TO CELEBRATE THE NATIONAL SUCCESS OF ITS SCHOOLS IN THE 2026 SUNDAY TIMES PARENT POWER LEAGUE TABLES FOR STATE, NON-SELECTIVE SCHOOLS.

Remarkable performances were noted by The Petersfield School (TPS) at thirteenth and Bohunt School in Liphook at sixteenth place in their respective categories: TPS for GCSE grades at 7+ in schools without a sixth form, and Bohunt School for its exceptional combination of both the highest A Level and GCSE grades.

These results demonstrate the impact of BET's common approach: delivering high-quality education, a broad balanced curriculum, and exceptional opportunities – irrespective of which BET school a student attends.

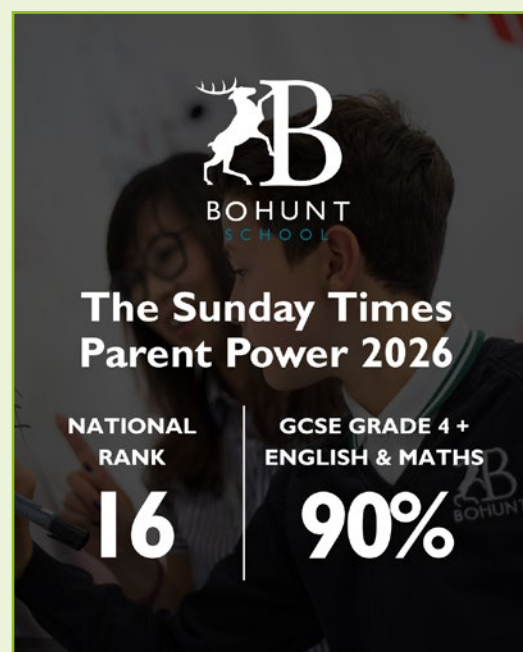
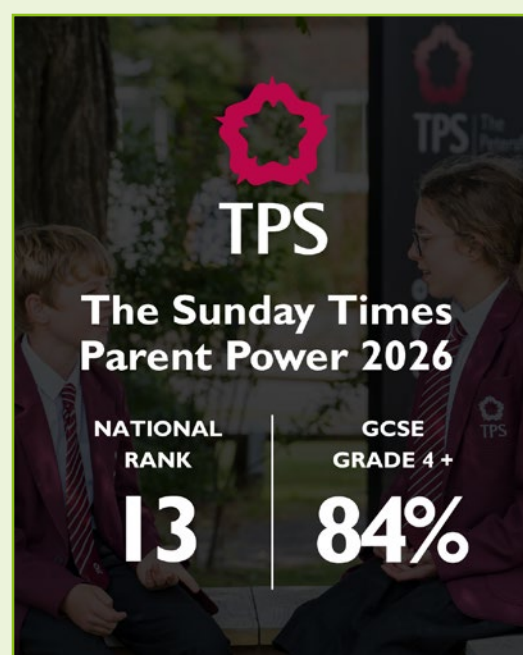
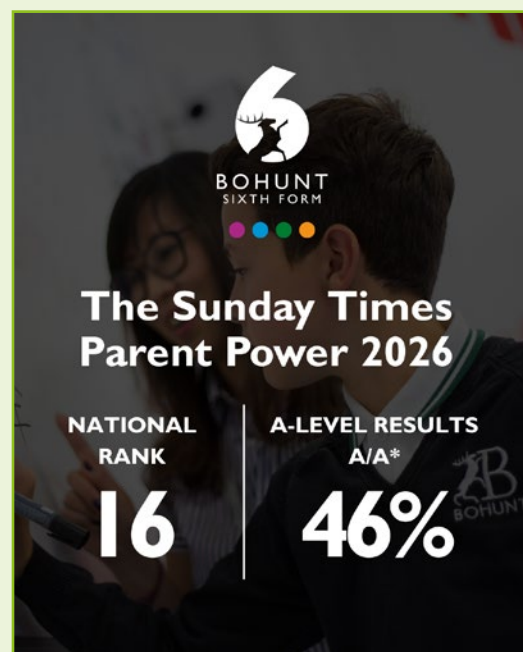
Over the past decade, BET has grown from a single school to a thriving multi-academy trust, serving twelve thousand students across the South of England.

Trust Leader Neil Strowger said:

"This is a proud moment for the entire BET family. The outstanding achievements of our schools reflect the impact of deep collaboration, combined with a shared culture, ethos and understanding of exceptional education. I would take this moment to thank students and staff for their Herculean efforts and parents for their unwavering support."



THE SUNDAY TIMES Parent Power 2026



BOHUNT SCHOOL WORTHING ANNOUNCES INTERIM HEADTEACHER

BOHUNT SCHOOL WORTHING IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE APPOINTMENT OF NICOLE JONES AS INTERIM HEADTEACHER, WHO JOINED THE SCHOOL FROM 1 JANUARY 2026.

Nicole joins Bohunt School Worthing from Bohunt Horsham, where she has served as Senior Assistant Headteacher. Alongside her school-based role, she is also the Safeguarding Lead for BET, bringing significant experience in student welfare, culture and inclusion. Her strong leadership experience, commitment to high standards and deep understanding of BET's values make her exceptionally well placed to guide

Nicole Jones said:

"I am excited and honoured to join Bohunt School Worthing as Interim Headteacher. Having worked within BET for several years, I know how committed our staff, students and families are to ensuring the very best outcomes for every young person. I look forward to getting to know the community and working collaboratively to build on the School's strengths and ambitions.

Chris Knight, Chair of Governors, said:

"We are delighted to welcome Nicole Jones to Bohunt School Worthing. I would like to thank the senior leadership team for their continued hard work and commitment during this transition. Nicole's leadership, experience and strong relationships across BET will ensure stability and momentum for Bohunt School Worthing."

Neil Strowger, Trust Leader at BET, said:

"Nicole is an amazing leader whose dedication to improving the lives of young people is evident in everything she does."



BOHUNT FARNBOROUGH SHOWCASES EXCELLENCE TO DAME KATE DETHRIDGE, DBE

BOHUNT FARNBOROUGH WAS HONOURED TO WELCOME DAME KATE DETHRIDGE, DBE, REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH EAST AT THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (DFE), ON MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER, FOR A DAY OF INSIGHTFUL DISCUSSION, COLLABORATION AND CELEBRATION OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE.



The visit highlighted the School's commitment to an ambitious, inclusive learning environment and strong culture of continual improvement.

Headteacher Daryl Bond opened the day with a learning walk, showcasing dynamic classrooms and high-quality teaching. He said:

"It was a privilege to host Dame Kate and share the exceptional work happening across our school. I'm incredibly proud of our staff and students, who demonstrate our values every day."

Bohunt Farnborough joined Bohunt Education Trust (BET) in January 2024, and is now in the top 4% nationally for progress improvement. The School has made enormous progress in all areas; parental recommendation has risen to 81% and staff confidence in leadership is at 94%.

A leadership briefing from senior staff set out the School's strategic priorities, followed by staff and student panel discussions that gave Dame Kate first-hand insight into the School's ethos and aspirations.

Trust-wide initiatives were outlined by Bohunt Education Trust's Director of Improvement, Gary Green and Executive

Headteacher, Mark Marande – supported by Subject Directors and Inclusion leads addressing key areas such as curriculum development, safeguarding, SEND and attendance. A lunchtime meeting with student leaders and a remote panel led by Executive Headteacher Georgette Ayling further highlighted student voice and women in leadership across the Trust.

The day concluded with strategic discussions led by Neil Strowger, Trust Leader of Bohunt Education Trust.

"Dame Kate's insight and deep understanding of school improvement made this a hugely valuable visit," he said. "Her reflections will help shape our next steps across the Trust."

Reflecting on the visit, Dame Kate praised the School's energy and ambition:

"Bohunt Farnborough is full of purpose and dedication," she said. "Students are confident and articulate, and staff are deeply committed to every young person's success."

Dame Kate's visit reaffirmed Bohunt Farnborough's strengths in leadership, innovation and inclusive practice. Staff and students found the experience energising and look forward to building on its momentum in the months ahead.

KINGFISHER SCHOOLS TRUST VISIT: CELEBRATING SHARED PURPOSE AND PARTNERSHIP

WE WERE DELIGHTED TO WELCOME THE SECONDARY HEADS AND LEADERSHIP TEAM FROM KINGFISHER SCHOOLS TRUST FOR TWO DAYS WITH US.

Ten years into our journey and now 10 schools strong, we're so proud of what our teams are achieving for young people—and it was a pleasure to share our work, culture and ethos with visiting colleagues.

The group saw first-hand the balance we strive for: a strong Bohunt 'bedrock' that unites us, paired with the freedom for each school to shape its own community and lead with real agency. It was inspiring to hear how closely this aligns with Kingfisher Schools Trust's developing vision.

A big thank-you to the National Institute of Teaching CEO Programme for creating the connections that make collaborations like this possible.

Great conversations, shared learning, and a brilliant couple of days!



ENJOY, RESPECT, ACHIEVE: BOHUNT STUDENTS CONTINUE TO EXCEL

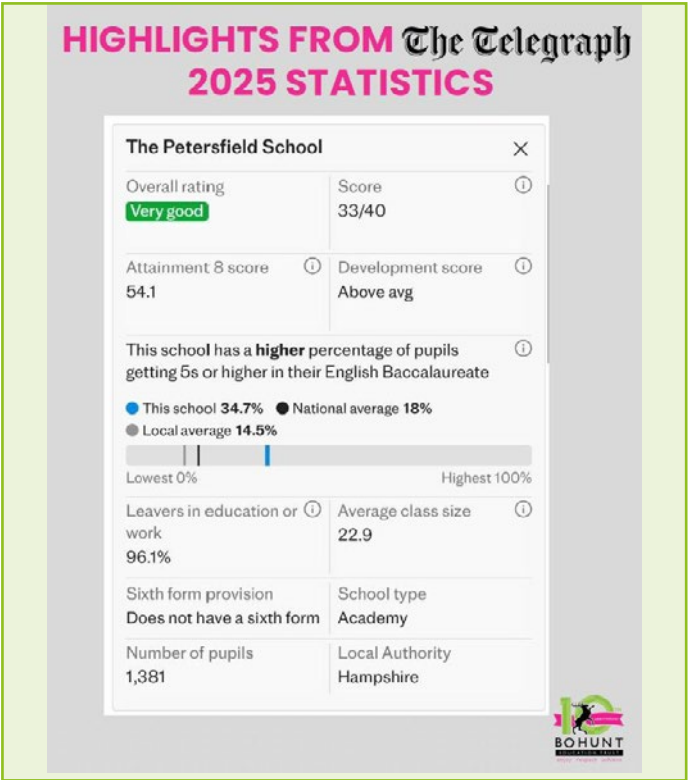
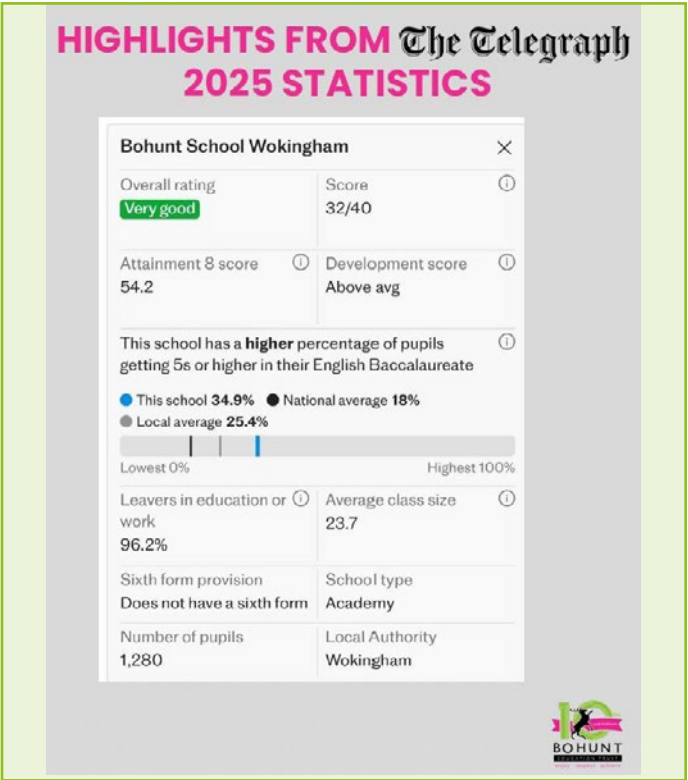
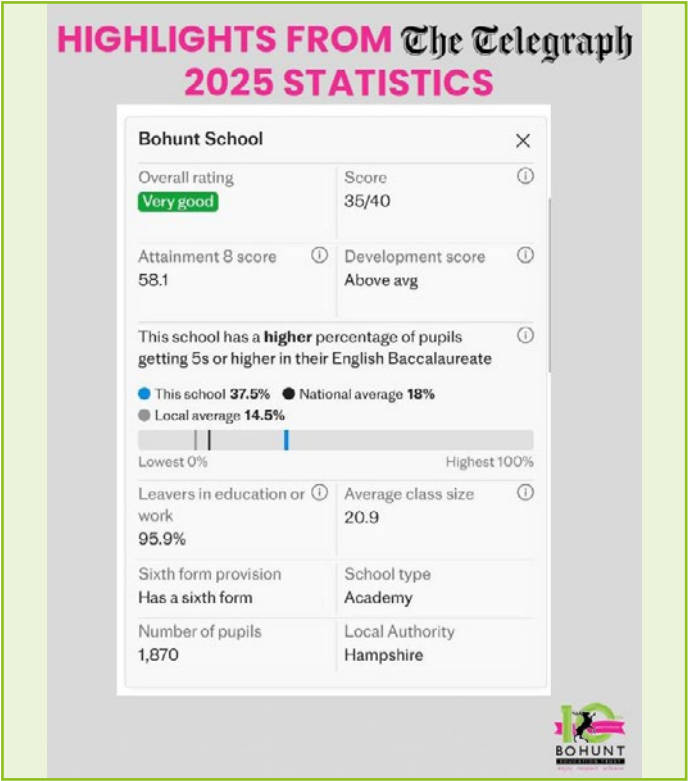
LAST TERM, THERE WAS FANTASTIC NEWS ON THE LATEST PERFORMANCE DATA FOR OUR SCHOOLS ACROSS BOHUNT EDUCATION TRUST, PUBLISHED BY THE TELEGRAPH.

Points are awarded across a number of criteria and, across BET, students are achieving outcomes above national averages in both Attainment 8 and EBacc – in some cases almost double the national EBacc rate. More than 90% of our young people move on to further education, training or employment, which is a real credit to the care, guidance and ambition shown by staff.

A few highlights worth mentioning:

- Three schools scored 'Very Good'
- Bohunt School in Hampshire stands out nationally, with an Attainment 8 of 58.1 and EBacc results twice the national average.
- The Petersfield School and Bohunt Wokingham are above average across the board, with over 96% of students progressing to their next stage.
- The Costello School, Bohunt Farnborough, Bohunt Horsham, Priory School, Steyning Grammar School and Bohunt Worthing combine strong academic results with excellent destinations, ensuring our young people are well prepared for life beyond Year 11.

BET's mission has never been about results alone, but it is inspiring to see how far students go when they are challenged, supported and encouraged to 'enjoy respect achieve.'



TRUSTEE AND GOVERNOR CONFERENCE 2025–26: INSIGHT AND COLLABORATION

TRUSTEES AND GOVERNORS FROM ACROSS BET CAME TOGETHER AT THE PETERSFIELD SCHOOL ON FRIDAY 24 OCTOBER 2025 FOR THE ANNUAL TRUSTEE AND GOVERNOR CONFERENCE. HELD IN THE STUDIO, THE EVENT PROVIDED A VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT, LEARN AND PLAN TOGETHER WITH A LOOK AHEAD TO THE COMING YEAR.



Following a warm welcome and trust update from CEO Neil Strowger, the morning focused on an interactive Ofsted session led by Ofsted Inspectors Mark Marande and Neil Strowger. Governors explored the new inspection framework and discussed what Ofsted will be looking for across schools and the Trust, with lively discussion throughout.

Updates on key strategic priorities followed, including Project ERA, where Director of Education Phil Avery outlined progress to date and next steps. After lunch, Andrew Wood presented a

trust-wide overview of GCSE and A-level outcomes, prompting important discussion about performance, comparison and the implications for governance.

The afternoon also included an attendance and pupil premium update from Gary Green, highlighting impact and support for disadvantaged pupils, before Governance Lead Sharon Taylor reflected on governance achievements in 2024–25 and priorities for the year ahead. The conference closed with final reflections from Trust Chair Alistair Halliday.



SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



BRITISH COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AWARD SUCCESS FOR BOHUNT SCHOOL WORTHING.

Bohunt School Worthing has been awarded the Foundation level of the British Council's prestigious International School Award in recognition of its work to bring the world into the classroom.

The International School Award celebrates the achievements of schools that do exceptional work in international education. Fostering an international dimension in the curriculum is at the heart of the British Council's work with schools, so that young people gain the cultural understanding and skills they need for life and work in today's world.

Bohunt School Worthing's international work includes a growing programme of global learning opportunities, with a particular focus on its successful student exchange activities. Central to this work is the school's partnership with The Middle School Attached to USTC in Hefei, China, which has enabled students to experience full cultural and curriculum immersion through a structured buddy system, participation in lessons, and involvement in after-school cultural workshops. These exchanges, alongside wider international curriculum themes and cross-cultural learning experiences, play a key role in strengthening students' global awareness, enhancing language skills, and fostering meaningful connections with young people from other countries. Together, these initiatives reflect the school's commitment to developing globally confident and culturally empathetic learners. A spokesperson for the school said:

"We are immensely proud to receive this recognition, which reflects our continued commitment to being a truly global school. Our international partnerships enrich our curriculum, broaden our students' horizons, and help them develop the confidence, empathy and cultural understanding they need to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world."

"Bohunt School Worthing's international work has earned the school well-deserved recognition with the British Council International School Award - Foundation Certificate. We are delighted and proud that Bohunt School Worthing is committed to developing a whole school approach to embedding and celebrating international work. We thank all involved in this important work; embedding an international ethos across a school can lead to International School Award accreditation, which is the highest level of the award."

Shannon West, Head of UK Schools for the British Council



BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW...



INTRODUCING TOBY RANDALL, GEOGRAPHY TEACHER

What inspired you to be a teacher?

I wanted to have a job where I could make a positive difference to the lives of young people.

If you weren't a teacher, what would you be?

I love the ocean so I would probably go for being a marine biologist!

What's the best part of your job?

Working with young people and seeing the progress they make. Teaching is also the only job I've ever had where I'm never clock watching and no two days are ever the same.

Who are your heroes?

My geography heroes would have to be David Attenborough and Simon Reeve. Thierry Henry when I was growing up!

Why did you choose to teach at Bohunt School Worthing?

The school values aligned very closely with my own views on education and its purpose. I really believe in the idea of inspiring students to be 'game changers' who are going to go out and make a positive difference to society.

Tell me a little about a teacher that inspired you.

My year 9 geography teacher was my favourite teacher at school. He made every lesson so interesting and engaging and is probably the reason why I'm a geography teacher today.

What is one exciting teaching method you use?

The use of iPads is new to me in my teaching career so that's probably the thing I find most exciting currently. I'm still getting my head around all of the ways in which it can be useful, but they have already opened up a whole range of opportunities I haven't used before.

What are your thoughts on education today?

I think that the range of opportunities available for young people today has hugely grown since I was at school in terms of innovation in lessons, the subjects and courses available and the range of extra-curricular options available.





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SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



FIRST INTERIM HEADTEACHER'S NOTICE: DAVID BIBBY, INTERIM HEADTEACHER



Over 1300 people visited us for our Y7 open evening and 650 prospective year 12 students attended our first BW6 festival. We have had multiple opportunities to invite our parents into school for information evenings, linked to safeguarding, curriculum and assessments. We have had trips to the Theatre to see Lord of the Flies, along with visits to Huntercombe prison and for careers talks at MACE. We

also celebrated world mental health day, LSA appreciation day and international teacher day. Outreach work with local primaries is well under way including our own students supporting PE Dance lessons. These are all on top of the hundreds of CCAs and sporting fixtures that have taken place already led by both the PE team and wider school staff. Where over 1000 students have engaged with CCAs and over 450 students have represented Bohunt Wokingham in a sporting fixture over the term.

A special mention should be made to the building progress of the new sixth form. We are due to have it handed over to us on the 17th July 2026 so that we move in and get set up over the summer and on the inset days in September. Building work is progressing well and we should be in line for a July handover should there not be any 'adverse weather' over the winter. This month the block work will be laid, hopefully to make the building watertight by Christmas. Away from the building work we currently have (November 2025) over 135 students apply for the sixth form in 2026 and we will begin to interview these over the upcoming months and offer conditional places as a result.



Our sixth form ambassadors (year 11 students) are amazing in raising the awareness of our sixth form with our current and external year 11s. Staffing the sixth form is also underway and we will be making appointments to leadership roles in sixth form, along with 4-6 new teaching roles over the next year as a result of the growth.

I am sure you will agree, exciting times are ahead for the school and local community. Here is some insight from one of our Sixth Form Ambassadors, Lenora:

As a Sixth Form Ambassador, I was proud to play a key role in supporting BW6 Fest, our school's first open evening of its kind. Throughout the event, I helped welcome prospective students and their families, ensuring they felt informed, comfortable, and excited about what our sixth form has to offer. In preparation for the evening, I also helped create an FAQ-style video for the school's social media platforms, answering common questions and giving viewers a clear idea of what to expect from the festival. On a separate day, I had the unique opportunity to visit the building site for our new school building. Seeing the plans come to life offered a real sense of how our community is growing and how much the future of Bohunt Wokingham is expanding. Being involved in both the event and the wider development of the school including working with my fellow ambassadors has been a rewarding experience, and it means a lot to be able to represent the school during such a positive period of change.



SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...

MY SCHOOL TRIP TO CHINA BY CAMERON M

Our school trip to China was honestly one of the best experiences I've ever had. It was really hot the whole time, but that didn't stop us from making the most of it.

We started in Hefei, where we got a feel for local life and tried some amazing food. Then we travelled to Huangshan, where we hiked up the famous Yellow Mountain and the views from the top were unreal. After that, we went to Hangzhou, which was one of my favourite places because of the lakes, temples, and how calm it felt compared to the cities. Finally, we ended the trip in Shanghai, which was like stepping into the future with all the lights, skyscrapers, and busy streets.

One of the highlights of the whole trip was visiting the Forbidden City in Beijing. It was massive and full of history. It was way cooler than just learning about it in class!

Overall, the trip was an amazing mix of culture, history, and fun. Even though we were all melting in the heat, it was totally worth it. Definitely a once-in-a-lifetime experience.



SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



TPS COMMUNITY DANCES, CLIMBS AND GIVES BACK IN REMARKABLE YEAR OF FUNDRAISING



At TPS we are extremely proud of how well supported our fundraising drives are, both by staff, students and parents, and every year we hold a variety of events.

Back in June, Year 7 students took part in a day-long Dance-a-thon. Raising money for The Genie's Wish Charity, Performing Arts staff and students danced non-stop for 6 hours. Lots of fun was had for a great cause that grants wishes and creates cherished memories for seriously ill people and young carers from across England.

In September the TPS PE Department embarked on a mammoth challenge, with the aim of raising money for Children in Need. They decided to take on the National 3 Peaks Challenge with the hope of completing the three highest peaks in the UK in under 24 hours. At 7am on the first day they were at the foot of Ben Nevis looking to take on the challenge without any training, no guide, no map and no designated driver to support the transport between the mountains, making the challenge even tougher.

After completing Ben Nevis in just over 3 hours the team worked hard to stay on track of the 24-hour time limit with the team's biggest challenge being to climb Scafell Pike in the dark, a trail unbeknown to the team which turns into a boulder field approximately halfway up. Spurred on by head torches in the distance, the team pushed on and eventually reached the summit.

The team continued their journey into the heart of North Wales to tackle the final mountain, Snowdon. Taking the 'miners trail' to the top took the last reserves out of the brave team as 80mph winds were looking to threaten the afternoon. After reaching the ground just before Midday on Sunday, the team had proudly conquered the three peaks and raised £2587.50 for Children in Need. The final time was 28hrs and 27mins.

In October 2025 the whole school took part in Raise and Give week which saw events from staff leg waxing to student tug of war, to staff lip sync battle and a non-uniform day. Students donated throughout the week to attend the various events and there was a cake sale every day provided by each year group across the week. Over £4000 was raised for the TPS House Charities and a great week was had by all.



STUDENT/TEACHER INTERVIEW



JOE T, Y11 HEAD BOY AT TPS & FRANKIE GOODALL, TPS ENGLISH TUTOR AND STAFF MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER (MHFA)

On Friday 24th October, Joe Tully and Frankie Goodall attended The Petersfield Awards Ceremony after being nominated for the Young Achiever Award and the Wellbeing and Mindfulness Award respectively. Both were thrilled to be announced as winners on the night and later sat down to interview each other about their experiences.



JOE TO FRANKIE

What inspired you to focus on wellbeing and mental health?

I've always believed that people do their best when they feel supported and valued. Becoming the staff Mental Health First Aider during the Covid pandemic was a significant experience for me, and it's been amazing to see so many colleagues accessing support.

What does the MHFA role entail?

The role is to listen without judgment, hold supportive conversations and signpost to help as necessary. I normally have one to one meetings with teaching and associate staff needing support, new staff and those returning from Mat/Pat leave.

What's the most rewarding part of your role?

When a staff member tells me that a conversation or check-in helped them feel better or more confident, or that they've had breakthroughs in an area they were struggling with.

How did it feel when you found out you'd been nominated for the Petersfield Award for 'Wellbeing and Mindfulness'?

I was completely shocked! I didn't expect it at all — but it made me proud to see something positive come out of something I care deeply about.

What does winning the award mean to you?

It was an honour. I see it as recognition not just for me, but for our whole school community who work together to look after one another.

If you could give one piece of advice to people about looking after their wellbeing, what would it be?

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Reaching out is a sign of strength, not weakness- it's good to talk!

FRANKIE TO JOE

Tell me about yourself in 30 seconds!

My name's Joe, I'm 16 years old, and I've lived in Petersfield all my life, attending local schools. I love performing in amateur dramatic shows and have even directed a few myself. Outside of that, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends.

What did you win the Young Achiever Award for?

I won the award for my charity work over the years, fundraising for several local charities such as the Food Bank and Home Start Butser, as well as for directing my own show with my amateur dramatic society.

How did it feel when you found out you'd won?

I was really shocked — I honestly wasn't expecting it! It felt like such an honour to be recognised for the work I've done for the causes I care about.

What challenges did you face along the way?

Each year, more people rely on local charities, which makes it harder to collect enough items to meet demand. With the show I directed, we also had cast dropouts at the last minute, so I had to think on my feet and find quick solutions to keep things running smoothly.

Who inspires you the most?

My parents- for teaching me and nurturing me as I've grown up. I also find inspiration in anyone who's achieved their dreams; hearing their stories and how they got there really motivates me.

What are your hopes for the future?

My long-term goal is to become a West End director and to support and inspire the people I meet along the way.

What message would you give to other young people who want to make a difference?

Don't worry about what others say. If you're making a positive impact on your community and the world around you, that's what truly matters.

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



MISSION WEEK INSPIRES JOY, REFLECTION AND WELL-BEING ACROSS STEYNING GRAMMAR SCHOOL



At the beginning of November, Steyning Grammar School held Mission Week: an event which brought more than 170 volunteers from local churches into school to explore ideas about faith, purpose and well-being.

From stage-shaking live performances by Christian dance music group LZ7 to peaceful prayer zones, the week had a festival feel about it.

The activities and events taking place included:

- Encounter teams engaging students in questions about life and faith
- Q&A sessions in RE lessons where students could 'grill a Christian', asking honest and sometimes challenging questions about faith and belief.
- Wellbeing lessons for each year group called 'Illuminate' which was led by the band LZ7. During this lesson, students discussed mental health and positive ways to embrace their future to become game-changers in their peer groups, school, and nation.
- Peaceful and calm prayer zones on each site with activities such as bubble prayers, colouring for calm, and blessing bracelets.

This was all made possible by a group of local churches providing over 170 volunteers to support our school Chaplaincy Team.

School chaplain Neill Stannard said: "Much is said of the state of schools in our country and of young people struggling with anxiety, social media impact, and negative behaviour. At SGS our school motto is 'to live life in all its fullness' and that was evident throughout Mission Week where love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control were the hallmarks of all that was said and done.

"This was a wonderful experience for our whole school."

Headteacher Aidan Timmons added: "I have never seen more engagement, happiness and positive energy in my 20+ years of working with Secondary School students than seeing every year group and the way they connected and interacted with the words and music of band LZ7 in our assembly halls on each site."

Mission Week also saw the launch of Church@5, a new weekly youth-focused service in the school's Drama Hall at Shooting Field. In addition, the Youth Alpha course has started on each campus, inviting students to continue asking big questions about life and faith in a welcoming open environment.



SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



STUDENT-LED GARDEN AT STEYNING GRAMMAR SCHOOL BLOSSOMS WITH RHS DOUBLE AWARD

A garden grown and nurtured by students and staff at Steyning Grammar School has been given two awards by the Royal Horticultural Society.

Formerly an unused and unloved outdoor space at our Rock Road (Key Stage 3) campus, the garden is now a place where a variety of vegetables and herbs are grown, is a haven for birds and other wildlife - and a place to enjoy Guinea Pig Fridays!

Teacher Caroline Arnold, who has led the project at Rock Road (our Key Stage 3 site), said students have learned how to collect seeds from plants, how to plant spring bulbs, sow seeds and harvest produce.

She said: "The Garden has had an enormous impact on the students who use it, whether as a quiet, relaxing place at break and lunch times or getting involved in the projects.

"Providing support for mental health and well-being is key to student's success in school and the Garden is a place that allows children to thrive and flourish at SGS."

The students are now planning to develop the garden further and their suggestions have included installing a pond and expanding the range of produce they grow.



Here is what the student gardeners had to say:

"Gardening makes me feel calm. If you've had a bad lesson and then do gardening, your whole body resets."

B: "Gardening means I get sun on my skin so I get Vitamin D which is really good for me." Estelle: "It helps me to focus."

Lily: "The Garden is a safe and calm space."

Theo: "Gardening makes me feel relaxed, happy and calm."

Callum: "Being in nature is calming."

To achieve the RHS Level One and Level Two Awards, the school has had to demonstrate that pupils understood the benefits of gardening, that they had made their growing space accessible and were successfully growing. We have now submitted our evidence for Level 2.

The RHS award comes hot on the heels of SGS receiving an Eco-Schools distinction, the highest possible accreditation given by Eco-Schools program. This recognises schools that have demonstrated exceptional pupil-led environmental action and sustainability.

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



FESTIVE MOMENTS THAT BROUGHT RUSPER PRIMARY TOGETHER

Last term, Rusper Primary School welcomed families and members of the wider community for a wonderfully festive Lantern Trail and Christmas Fair. The event brought the school grounds to life, with the Lantern Trail creating a magical atmosphere and the Christmas Fair offering festive cheer and fun activities that showcased the strong sense of community at the heart of the school.

Festive celebrations continued throughout December, with pupils delighting audiences through a Christmas nativity performance. The nativity provided a joyful opportunity for pupils to share their talents while families came together to celebrate the season. Pupils and staff also celebrated in style with Christmas Jumper Day, a magical Christmas Shop, and a delicious Christmas Lunch.

Well done to the dedicated staff team, Friends of Rusper Primary School, and the many volunteers whose time and commitment helped make these events such a memorable part of the school's Christmas celebrations.



SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



A CREEPY-CRAWLY SUCCESS FOR PRIORY SCHOOL'S YR 7 ANNUAL BUG FEST DAY

This November Priory's Yr 7 students were buzzing with excitement at the much anticipated 2nd annual Bug Fest. A whole day event designed to spark curiosity, build confidence, and bring learning to life across five different subjects.

The year group rotated through five themed sessions, each putting a unique spin on the world of insects and other creepy-crawlies:

Maths – Prime Numbers

In Maths, students tackled prime numbers through bug-themed puzzles and challenges. From cracking insect-inspired codes to sorting "prime beetles" from "composite critters," the session blended numeracy with imagination.

Science – Reactivity

Over in Science, students explored reactivity by observing how different metals interacted with various substances, linking their investigations to the way insects respond to their environments. The lively experiments definitely got a reaction, both scientifically and from the students.

English – Creative Writing

English transformed into a storytelling workshop, where students wrote imaginative pieces inspired by creepy-crawlies. From heroic hornets to mysterious millipedes, the creative writing session encouraged students to give bugs a starring role in their narratives.

Design & Technology – Junk Modelling Bug Habitats

In DT, students used recycled materials to design and build miniature bug habitats. Cardboard tubes became tunnels, bottle tops turned into water pools, and tissue boxes became burrows. The models were inventive, colourful, and surprisingly functional.

Live Bug Encounter – Up Close and Personal

The highlight for many was the live bug encounter. Students had the chance to meet and in some cases hold real creatures including vinegaroons, giant snails, scorpions, stick insects, tarantulas and even enormous bird-eating spiders. For some, it was the first time getting so close to animals they'd only ever seen in books or on screens.

The day sparked plenty of excitement, with students proudly sharing their thoughts:

"I wish every day was Bug Day!"

"It was perfect."

"It helped me to not be scared of bugs anymore."

Students showed remarkable enthusiasm throughout the sessions, with many stepping outside their comfort zones especially during the live insect handling.

Bug Fest proved to be a memorable blend of education, creativity, and a little bit of courage. With such positive feedback, it may just crawl its way onto the calendar again next year.

Quotes from students:

Phoebe S Yr 7 - "The subjects I did were bug talk, maths (which is when we had to calculate the population of a bug), science - when we had to do an experiment to figure out what metal was the least reactive. As well as DT (we created a habitat for an animal of our choice) and English - our assignment was to plan a plot for a bug

themed story. My favourite part of the day was probably the bug talk as I held every bug I was allowed to touch. I also loved it because it was the most interesting thing of the day. One competition we had was this thing where we had to go around the school during break and get bug stickers on our card. And there were prizes if we completed it!"

Victor D Yr 7 - "Bug day at school was such an enjoyable experience because every subject linked to insects in a clever way. In maths we learnt about cicadas, discovering how they have the intelligence to leave their habitat every 17 years (a prime number) to avoid predators. Science was my favourite since we compared how bugs react to things with how metals react to hydraulic acid, and I found fascinating how copper is not reactive at all. In art we created environments for bugs using different materials, and in English, we planned imaginative stories about their lives. The highlight was holding insects and learning about them. Overall, I liked bug day very much and left feeling curious."

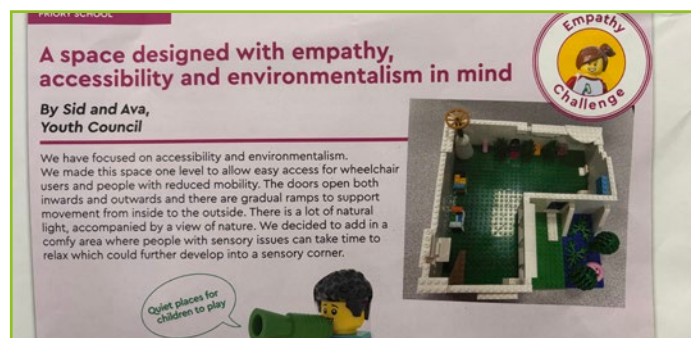


SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...

STUDENTS FROM PRIORY SCHOOL PARTICIPATED IN LEGO'S 'BUILD THE CHANGE' YOUNG VOICE CHALLENGE, WHERE THEY WERE TASKED WITH BUILDING A COMMUNITY SPACE WITH EMPATHY.

Sid and Ava were selected through vote from the student council and worked over 6 weeks to create their project out of Lego bricks. They created a community space that was built with environmentalism and accessibility in mind, using hydroelectric generation for power, a fish ladder to promote natural wildlife and calming scenic views for mental health, privacy plants to reduce anxiety and ramps for wheelchair users. The students took this build to the Lego Hub in London where they spent the day participating in activities celebrating students' individuality and the power of youth voice.

The day ended with a presentation to influential adults who make changes in London's community, including Chantelle Lindsay - Cbeebies presenter and activist, Abby Cook - Blue Peter presenter, and David Pallash - Director of build the change, the LEGO group. It was fantastic to see the students' passion and innovation at this event and answer questions from the audience with knowledge and enthusiasm.



TIM STANDING INTERVIEW



What gets you out of bed in the morning?

My bladder (welcome to old age you all have so much to look forward to) and the sound of either the milkman or car delivering papers to my neighbours.

How would you describe your day job to a child?

Like playing Lego all day long, but in many different locations.

What is your biggest achievement to date, personal or professional?

On a personal note, remembering my wife's birthday for the last 3 years, oh and my children's, without being reminded. Professional in a previous job, dealing with over 300 different people when there was a power spike in the middle of Bristol and then recovering most of the money from the outage for my main client, a power company.

What does a typical day look like to you and what are you currently working on?

There is no typical day. All can be different. Basically I check my emails early to see if there is any cover and then take the day from there. But working over a couple of departments you never know what is going to happen. Just smile and wave.

What 3 words would you use to describe your role?

Challenging, essential and rewarding.

What is on your wish list for the next five years at BET?

I never think that far ahead.

What's your favourite line from a film?

My name is Inigo Montoya, you killed my father - prepare to die.

What do you like most about your job?

The variety, the pace and making things.

What are your biggest professional challenges?

Always having time for people.

What's your personal mantra?

I'm not going to panic; smile and wave!

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...

BIG EXPEDITION TO CANADA BY LUCA WILSON AND AMELIA THOMPSON, SIXTH FORM



LUCA:

Why did I sign up for Big Exped?

I had experience with Bronze and Silver DofE, but I wanted to go beyond this, and I knew that Canada had amazing scenery and wildlife. I also love hiking expeditions, and I had never been canoeing before but I wanted to try it. I also knew that the school had a history of big expeditions, so I was confident that it would be well organised, and wanted to take advantage of the opportunity of such an adventurous trip being provided by the school.

What I did to prepare?

The school organised a training day on Hawley Lake where we did some paddle-boarding and canoeing, and we then had a 4-day practice expedition to the Brecon Beacons where we camped and did 2 days of canoeing (with guides) and 2 days of hiking, to practice our navigation and general expedition skills.

In terms of personal preparation, I did a lot of exercise, including a lot of running to train for endurance. I also made a kit list with all of the things that I would need and whether I already had them, and if not where to get new kit from.

What a typical day involved:

In the morning, we would pack down our tents and pack our bags as much as possible before breakfast. We'd then do a morning briefing before we set off. Lunch would be made and eaten on the trail, and on hiking we had breaks every hour or so to take off our packs and rest, whereas on canoeing we had a varying number of portages each day (which were a team effort) but the canoeing was more relaxed. We would get into camp anytime between 3 and 6, and we put up tents straight away before getting dinner ready. In the evening, we would have a team debrief and do some leg stretches, and there were a few nights where it was clear enough to do some stargazing.

What did I gain from the trip?

The trip developed my appreciation for nature and how we need to be mindful of our impact on it, as Algonquin and Killarney Parks were very protected ecosystems and so we needed to be very careful with leaving anything (like food wrappers or even washing up liquid in the water) behind. The trip was also a brilliant opportunity to speak to locals and to our canoe guides about the local environment and the way of life in the back-country.

Furthermore, I gained a lot of teamwork and communication skills, for example delegating tasks amongst people when we got into camp, as well as essential bushcraft skills, including firewood gathering and navigation.

What are your lasting memories?

I will always remember the amazing scenery that we had every day (especially canoeing), as well as watching the sunset and sunrise every day. We also had some incredible wildlife encounters, including a bear, two beavers, and a snapping turtle. It was also really nice to get to know the whole team and share the experience with them. Finally, I loved knowing that we were self-sufficient even while being completely out in the wilderness, which was a really nice escape from everything, and there was absolutely no light pollution so we had great views of the stars.



AMELIA:

Why did I sign up for Big Exped?

I signed up for the Big Exped because I wanted to do something out of my comfort zone and challenge myself beyond DofE which I had done in earlier years at Bohunt. I had heard about it when I joined the school in year 7 so jumped at the chance to get involved.

What I did to prepare?

To prepare for the Big Exped, I trained through going on walks with my backpack and running. I fundraised for the year preceding the expedition through craft sales, cleaning, babysitting, car boot sales, and vinted selling.

What a typical day involved:

On a typical day out on the expedition, we would cook breakfast (often pancakes!) and pack down camp before setting out hiking or canoeing. Our camps were always by a lake for water supply so the evening views were always amazing. Before bed we would choose a group "bear" (someone who had done something particularly great) and "moose" (someone who had done something entertaining) for the day, who would get to keep the toy bear or moose for the next day- a source of group spirit and morale.

What did I gain from the trip?

I have gained valuable skills from the trip such as teamwork, resilience, and dedication. I have also gained some lovely friendships! My favourite memories of the trip are seeing a black bear, watching the stars in the evenings, how peaceful the Canadian wilderness was, and the group jokes we had- we were all reluctant to fly home!



SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY: OUR NEW YORK ADVENTURE



From 23 – 28 October, our school organised an educational trip to New York City, which turned out to be an incredible opportunity for everyone who took part. The visit combined dance, drama, cultural experiences, and sightseeing, giving us a chance to learn in ways that are impossible inside a normal classroom.

One of the most significant parts of the trip was the dance workshops at the Alvin Ailey Dance Company - one of the world's leading centres for modern dance training. Working with professional dancers gave us the chance to develop new skills, try unfamiliar styles, and improve our technique. The teachers were inspiring and pushed us to work at a high standard, while still making the sessions enjoyable and supportive. For many of us, dancing in such a famous studio was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

We also took part in Broadway workshops, where we learned choreography and performance techniques used in real Broadway

shows. Being taught by industry professionals helped us understand how demanding and exciting the professional theatre world can be.

Many of us also attended drama workshops that focused on character work, physical theatre, and improvisation. These sessions were valuable because they helped us build confidence, strengthen teamwork skills, and experience a wider range of performance techniques.

One of the many highlights was watching Aladdin on Broadway. Seeing a live professional production allowed us to observe high-level acting, movement, staging, and technical elements such as lighting and set design. This gave us a deeper appreciation of what we had been learning in the workshops.

We also did a ton of sightseeing. We took the ferry to the Statue of Liberty, and the Top of the Rock, in which the views were unreal. The skyline looked like something off a postcard. We also went





on a walk around Central Park and saw the water fountain from 'friends'! Then we went up the Empire State Building too (because apparently one skyscraper isn't enough), and being that high up was a little terrifying but also kind of magical.

On the final day, we sat in this park and ate the iconic New York pizzas where the slices were as big as your head! We all sat together in a circle and were playing games whilst eating. It was absolutely hilarious.

We also enjoyed trying New York foods, including a popular bagel shop and Panera, both of which became familiar places for our group. We went to the famous Planet Hollywood, Margaritaville and our personal favourite Ellen's Stardust Diner, where the waiters sing while serving you. It was chaotic in the best way. My favourite memory is of all of us singing together around the table!

As well as the scheduled activities, the trip helped us build friendships, independence, and confidence. Travelling as a group, exploring a new city, and taking part in high-level workshops encouraged us to step out of our comfort zones and try new things. Many of us also created lasting memories, such as laughing together in the evenings, taking photos at famous landmarks, or discussing what we had learned each day.

When we weren't in workshops or sightseeing, we were in Times Square doing what we do best: shopping. We went to Target, Macy's, Sephora and many more!

Overall, the New York trip was an exceptional educational opportunity. The combination of dance and drama training, cultural experiences, and sightseeing helped us develop both personally and artistically. It is a trip that enriched our understanding of the performing arts and gave us memories that we will remember for many years. We conquered the big apple!



SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



BOHUNT HORSHAM WELCOMES LITTLE BARN OWLS NURSERY

Bohunt Horsham has welcomed Little Barn Owls, which has continued its growth in the Horsham community with the opening of a new Reggio-inspired nursery.

The Bohunt Horsham site now becomes its sixth setting, providing early years education for children aged 0–5.

Little Barn Owls is also part of a wider educational vision and is connected to Atelier 21 in Crawley, the UK's first Reggio Emilia-inspired, inquiry-based Future School for children aged 4–16 years old, reflecting the group's commitment to a continuous, child-centred learning journey from early years through to secondary education.

Inspired by the internationally recognised Reggio Emilia approach, Little Barn Owls encourages children to learn through play, exploration and curiosity. Across its nurseries, the group focuses on creativity, relationships and hands-on experiences, helping children develop confidence and a lifelong love of learning.

Georgette Ayling, Headteacher at Bohunt Horsham said:

“We are genuinely delighted that Little Barn Owls will be opening a branch on our site and excited by the opportunities this will bring for our wider school community. The ethos of Bohunt Education Trust aligns beautifully with Little Barn Owls Nursery, particularly our shared commitment to outdoor learning and the sense of awe and wonder it inspires in children. Together, we place great value on nurturing curiosity, resilience and a deep connection with the natural world, and we very much look forward to working together.”

Charlotte Bateman, Managing Director of Little Barn Owls said:

“We're proud to be opening Little Barn Owls on the Bohunt Horsham site, creating a place where early learning is taken seriously, without ever losing its joy. Our settings represent our belief that the earliest years matter most - and it's another exciting step forward for our nursery and the wider community.”

The new nursery also features forest and farm school provision, with animals to be introduced in the coming months, offering children rich opportunities to explore the natural world and learn outdoors.



SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



EXCERPT FROM WINNING ENTRY OF THE SPOOKY WRITING COMPETITION - BY FREYA S AND HARRY J 8C.

The taste of death in the wind

Demons were just a story, something we were told to scare us every night. Mother would tell me they targeted girls who didn't obey the rules, but that was merely just to scare me. I knew they weren't real, or at least, thought I knew.

I was gathering my hunting gear to find food in the forest when Loghan, my older brother, sat beside me. He sighed, then gave me a tiny flare. "To keep you safe Vali, who knows what may be out there." He smiled, but it didn't reach his eyes. I looked at him, then saw his eyes were wet and bloodshot. "What happened?" I asked. He wiped his eyes, then said "Mother disappeared."

I rolled my eyes then smiled, "Nothing wrong with that, she's the Queen. She can leave whenever she likes." But he shook his head and his hands began shaking, "I mean, she can't be found. Guards never saw her leave the castle and I've been trying to find her but she's nowhere. I found no note, no nothing, just gone."

We were both speechless, but I brushed him off. "Likely some joke she's pulling on us, you know what she's like." I said. He wiped the tears, then closed my hand with the flare still in it, "Just to be safe." He whispered. He then grabbed my hunting knife, my other gear and began packing them into my bag, but the knife scratched my arm and it began to bleed only slightly. "It's fine, I'll deal with it

later. Got to get those deer while they're still out." I grabbed the knife from him and he left my room.

The woods were dark, quieter than usual. Normally you'd hear the quiet chirp of a small crow. Or the sound of an owl, screeching from the top of the highest tree. But the forest was dead silent on this night, not a noise could be heard. I tread lightly, avoiding dry leaves and rogue twigs on the ground. That's when I saw them, antlers behind a large oak tree. I took a deep breath, then carefully walked over, wondering how big this thing might be...

You see, deer from these woods were different from your typical deer. These ones contained a special chemical in their antlers that could cure many diseases. The royals from the forest district not only forbid us from hunting them, but kept most of them for their own, so that our district would suffer. However, with the

great power in this animal, nature needed to protect it. The deer were blessed with extreme speed, small red eyes and giant, blade-like teeth that could rip your

limbs from your body in one bite. I may have been breaking the forest district's rules by hunting them, but it was going to be worth it.

Just as I leapt from behind the tree to attack the creature, I saw nothing but the other side of the tree. Before I knew it, my knife was stuck in the wood of the largest oak in the forest. I looked

behind me and saw its glowing red eyes looking back at me from the distance. Like I said, speed. With my knife still in the tree, I couldn't catch the deer. I used all my strength to pull the knife from the wood, but to no success. I took a breather for a second then looked back to find it had disappeared from out of the tree.

I suddenly realised, then shouted "Very funny Loghan, trying to play a trick on me to prove that demons exist. Well it's not working." I laughed and waited for him to walk out the bush defeated, but instead I was met with my knife flying past my

head and right back into the tree. I froze, what just happened? I forced out another more nervous laugh, "Ok Loghan, bit much don't you think? I already see the point but there's no need to almost kill me."

There was no answer.



The winner of the book cover design is Sophie W 8A

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN KENYA BY JACK H, AFRICAN ADVENTURES KENYA TRIP

Over the October half-term break, a group of students from Bohunt Farnborough took part in a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Kenya, where they made a real difference to the lives of children and families in the local community.

The group worked with African Adventures, a charity that supports schools and community projects in areas of need, to help develop facilities at The Andy Star Academy, a Pre-Primary School for children aged 3–6-years old. The school is in the slum-region of Nakuru where more than one million people live in poverty. Working in this environment was something that most of the group had not experienced before. Whilst the school had limited resources, the Andy Star Academy student's enthusiasm for learning was inspiring — an experience that proved deeply eye-opening for our students.

One of the team's biggest tasks was to build a new perimeter fence around the school site — a vital addition to help keep the children safe. After completing the construction, students spent time painting the fence in bright, cheerful colours, adding a touch of creativity to their hard work and helping to create a more welcoming environment for the young pupils.

In addition to their building work, students had the opportunity to teach lessons in English, using games, songs, and storytelling to engage the children in fun and memorable ways. They also led PE sessions, bringing plenty of energy and laughter to the playground.



Before the trip, the team worked hard to collect a multitude of donations to support the school — including clothing, personal hygiene items, stationery, and classroom resources. These gifts were received with enormous gratitude and will make a lasting difference to the children's education and wellbeing.

The trip wasn't all work, though. Students were also able to explore Kenya's incredible landscape and wildlife. A highlight for many was going on safari, where they were lucky enough to spot three of the Big Five — Lions, Water Buffalo, and Rhinoceros — an experience they'll never forget. They also spent a day in Nairobi, where they visited the Giraffe Sanctuary and even had the chance to feed the giraffes up close!

Another unforgettable moment was visiting the first African Adventures school, where the group were warmly welcomed by the community. They attended a special religious service, giving them the opportunity to see first-hand the faith, resilience, and teamwork that drive community efforts to improve education in the slum areas of Nakuru.

Throughout the trip, students represented both Bohunt Farnborough and The Bohunt Education Trust with pride and professionalism. Local partners and community members praised their positivity, teamwork, and respect for the culture and people they met.

This was more than just a school trip — it was a cultural and life-changing experience. Students returned home with a deeper understanding of global inequality, a renewed appreciation for what they have, and pride in knowing they made a genuine difference to others. What an incredible experience.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the trip behind the scenes — from donating essential items, helping to fund the expedition, to offering guidance and encouragement. Your contributions were invaluable in making this experience such a resounding success.

We look forward to the next adventure, continuing to make a positive impact and support those in need.



SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



BOHUNT FARNBOROUGH WINS PRESTIGIOUS GOLD EAL EXCELLENCE AWARD – AGAIN!

Bohunt Farnborough is proud to announce that it has once again been awarded the Gold EAL (English as an Additional Language) Excellence Award, marking the second time the school has achieved this prestigious recognition. This award celebrates outstanding support for multilingual students and highlights our commitment to inclusive, high-quality education for all.

With around 33% of students speaking a language other than English at home and over 50 different languages represented within our school community, Bohunt Farnborough is a vibrant and culturally rich environment. This diversity is not only celebrated but embraced as a core strength of our school's ethos.

The Gold Award acknowledges the continued dedication of our expert EAL team and teaching staff, who work tirelessly to ensure that every student—regardless of language background—can access the full curriculum, achieve academic success, and feel a strong sense of belonging. Through tailored learning programmes, family engagement initiatives, and classroom strategies that promote language development, Bohunt Farnborough consistently demonstrates best practice in multilingual education.

Mr Bond, Headteacher said:

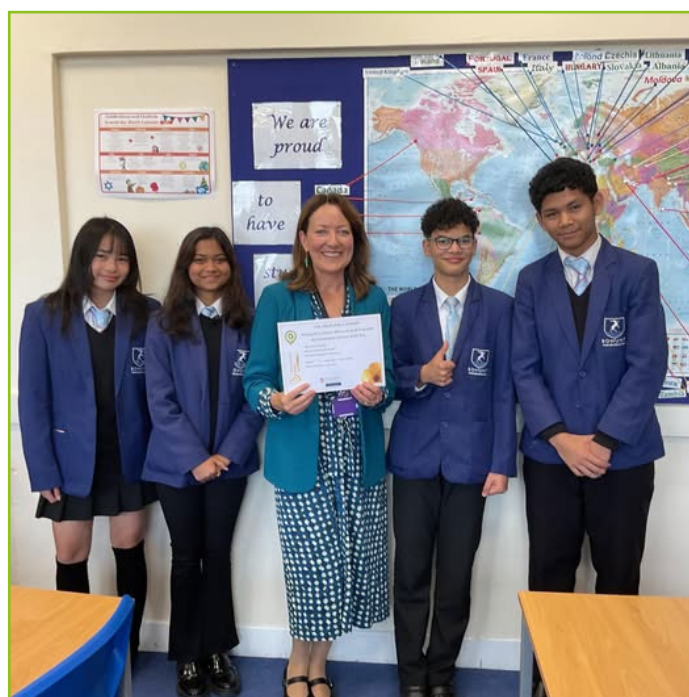
"We are incredibly proud to receive the Gold EAL Excellence Award once again. This achievement reflects the hard work of our staff, the resilience and talent of our students, and the strong partnerships we have built with families. Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do, and this award recognises our commitment to ensuring that every student succeeds."

Our school remains dedicated to maintaining high standards of teaching and learning while fostering a community where diversity is celebrated and every voice is valued. We look forward to continuing our journey of excellence in EAL provision in the years ahead.



EAL Award Gold

Hampshire EMTAS 2025



SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



#PROUDTOBECOSTELLO — THEN AND NOW: GWEN'S REMARKABLE RETURN

On 12 May, The Costello School hosted a very special event that connected past and present in the most meaningful way. Organised and coordinated by Miss Brooks, the session gave students the unique opportunity to meet Gwen - a remarkable woman who grew up during wartime Britain, right here in Basingstoke. Gwen attended The Costello School, which was formerly known as Basingstoke High School for Girls.

Gwen, now in her nineties, shared her memories of being the same age as many of the students in the room - but in a very different time. She spoke of a quiet Basingstoke, then a small market town with little industry beyond Vosper Thorneycroft and of the daily realities of life during the Second World War.

Gwen spoke with warmth and pride about her school years, recalling friendships that, remarkably, still endure today. At the time, uniform expectations were high and students wore theirs - including a formal hat - with great pride. Just as students are #ProudToBeCostello today, it was clear that wearing the uniform then was a symbol of belonging and aspiration. Gwen's story reminded everyone listening that her education wasn't just a foundation; it was a privilege she cherished.

"I simply felt it was time to give something back to the school that gave me so much," she told the students with gentle sincerity. "It played such a significant part in shaping the person I became, and for that, I shall always be grateful."

Her visit gave life to a time students had only read about in books, making history personal, emotional and real. Gwen's stories of resilience, rationing and community spirit were deeply moving and her perspective was a powerful reminder of how far society has come - and of the values that endure.

Representing the school with exceptional maturity and warmth were our School Council members: Ethyn, Emily, Keerthana, Paige, Alexander and Ava. Their thoughtful questions and respectful engagement helped create a space where Gwen could truly share her story. We are so proud of the way they upheld the values of our school and made our visitors feel genuinely welcome.

After the visit, Gwen's son Gideon shared:

"Thank you for organising the session with your School Council and my mother. I really do hope it was interesting for your students to meet someone who was their age, in a very different time - not only was there a war, but also when Basingstoke was a small market town."

In a small but meaningful gesture, Gwen and her son were presented with a thoughtful selection of Costello mementos to take away - including a slice of cake, which was gratefully received.

Gwen's visit reminded us that while times change, the impact of education, friendship and kindness remains constant. We are grateful to her for her time, her stories and her generosity - and we hope her legacy inspires our students for years to come.



A quick word with Gwen

Q: What year did you start at The Costello School (then Basingstoke High School for Girls)?

A: 1939 - the year war started

Q: What was your favourite subject in school and why?

A: Deep take in of breath....English, enjoyed reading and poetry and biology, the teacher was a particularly quirky Cornish woman with a lovely sense of humour and enthusiastic about her subject. In the laboratory she kept an axolotl in a little tank

Q: One word to describe school uniforms back then?

A: Uncomfortable!

Q: What did you want to be when you were a student?

A: I wanted to be a doctor

Q: Something you remember about wartime Basingstoke?

A: Through the piano, playing for a ballet teachers lesson in return for more tuition

Q: A food you missed during rationing?

A: Oranges and bananas

Q: A value you learned at school that stayed with you?

A: Being responsible for your own actions and to be helpful and pleasant

Q: Best piece of advice you'd give students today?

A: Never to see education as something that comes to an end when you leave school, keep looking for new interests and qualifications

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT...



A VISIT THAT WILL STAY WITH US: CHARLIE'S PROMISE INSPIRES CHANGE AT COSTELLO

On Thursday 13 November, The Costello School welcomed a visitor whose presence would leave an indelible mark on both students and staff. Charlie's father, representing Charlie's Promise, the charity founded in memory of his son, came to speak with our Year 9 and Year 10 students about a story that is as tragic as it is powerful.

Charlie was just 17 when his life was taken in a senseless knife attack - a devastating loss that no family should ever have to endure. His father spoke with remarkable courage and honesty about the grief that followed, painting a vivid picture of the heartbreak, confusion and fear that his family experienced. Yet, what could have been simply a story of loss became a story of hope, resilience and a mission to make a difference.

From the moment Martin began speaking, it was clear that this was more than a talk; it was a message, a plea, and a lesson all in one. He spoke of the choices we make every day, the ripple effects those choices can have on the people around us and the irreplaceable value of life.

"Every choice matters," he told students. "Every life has value. Kindness, empathy and respect can save lives."

Students and staff listened in silence, captivated by his words. His story was so raw and honest that tears were shed in the room, but it was not a story that left anyone feeling hopeless. Rather, it was a call to reflection, an invitation to think carefully about decisions, and a reminder of the power each individual has to make the world a safer and kinder place.

Charlie's Promise works tirelessly to raise awareness of knife crime and its devastating consequences. Through education, campaigns, and personal stories like Charlie's, they aim to prevent harm and ensure that no other family has to endure the loss they experienced. Their work aligns closely with Costello's values (Enjoy, Respect, Achieve) and our commitment to nurturing young people who are responsible, compassionate and thoughtful.

Many students later reflected on the visit, sharing that it had changed the way they think about their own actions. Some spoke about the importance of speaking up when they see something wrong, others about valuing friendships and showing empathy. One student noted, "It really made me think that the decisions I make every day aren't just about me - they affect everyone around me."

Staff too found themselves moved. The honesty, courage, and strength demonstrated by Charlie's father was a powerful reminder of the human stories behind the statistics we often hear about knife crime. His ability to channel grief into purpose was nothing short of inspirational.

At Costello, we believe education extends far beyond lessons and exams. It is about nurturing values, awareness, and empathy - qualities that guide our students through life's challenges. The visit from Charlie's Promise was a poignant example of this in action. It challenged everyone who heard it to reflect, to value life, and to act with kindness and thoughtfulness in every interaction.

As we continue our work to support and safeguard young people, we are grateful for the partnership and vital work of Charlie's Promise. Their visit reminded us all that even in the darkest moments, there is potential for hope, understanding, and positive change.



This was more than a school talk—it was a profound lesson in humanity, compassion, and responsibility. Charlie's story will remain part of the fabric of our school community, inspiring young people to make choices that respect life, foster empathy, and ultimately, save lives.

After the talk, many students shared their reflections, revealing just how deeply Charlie's father's words had resonated. They spoke candidly about the emotions they felt, the lessons they learned and the ways the visit made them think differently about their own choices and responsibilities. Here's what some of them had to say:

- "Hearing his story really made me think about the choices I make every day. It's not just about me - it affects everyone around me."
- "I never realised how much one bad decision can hurt a lot of people. It made me want to be more careful and look out for my friends."
- "It was so sad, but also inspiring. He turned something terrible into a way to help other people and that's really brave."
- "I feel like I understand now that kindness and respect aren't just nice words - they can actually save lives."
- "I didn't know you could report stuff safely to Fearless. I feel better knowing there's a way to help without getting into trouble."
- "It made me think about the kind of person I want to be. I want to make good choices and help others stay safe."
- "I'll never forget what he said about every life having value. It really stuck with me."

Website: www.charliespromise.org/





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www.bohunttrust.com Longmoor Road, Liphook, Hampshire GU30 7NY
t: 01428 724324 e: comms@bohunttrust.com  facebook.com/BohuntTrust  [@bohunt_trust](https://www.instagram.com/bohunt_trust)



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