

TRUST STAFF NEWS



* DECEMBER 2025 *

LOOK OUT FOR: Our annual staff survey in the New Year which is a valuable opportunity for us to hear your views and understand how best to support you as you strive to provide an outstanding education for all children with no excuses.

DEAR COLLEAGUES

It was lovely to see you all at the Trust Professional Day in November where we looked to the future with Wandle 2030. Thank you for your feedback on the day which was overwhelmingly positive – clearly the opportunity to network with colleagues from other schools was well received and we know from our discussions that there were many partnerships forged on the day which will continue throughout the year.

For those of you that are new to Wandle, we hope that the day gave you a sense of what we're all about and that you left feeling energised about the future.

As we approach the end of term, we would like to thank you for your dedication and commitment. Christmas is one of the busiest times in the school year. We are in no doubt that you will be working hard to make the last days of term extra special for the children, and we hope that when the Christmas holiday finally arrives, you get to spend some quality time with family and friends.

We look forward to seeing you all in 2026.

Best wishes
Christian, Mark and Sian



In November, as part of the Wandle Promise commitment to inter-school competitions, we held the much-anticipated primary Maths Bee at Ravenstone Primary!

Fierce competition between teams ensued and after much battling, first-timers Fircroft emerged victorious! Great news for Denise and the team and a brilliant showcase for the skills of what can only be described as a 'swarm' of talented Year 4 mathematicians across WLT.

Thanks to everyone who took part and made this a brilliant and memorable Wandle Promise fixture.

NEWS FROM Fircroft Primary, Tooting

National Portrait Gallery and local partnerships

Over the course of this term, every class has enjoyed self-portrait workshops led by the National Portrait Gallery. The children studied a diverse range of famous portraits before creating their own.

December has been packed full of festive events, including our choir performing at The Mayor of Wandsworth's Concert, the turning on of the lights at Springfield Hospital and at our own Winter Fair.

We love our partnership with South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust and look forward to further collaboration during Children's Mental Health Week in the Spring term.





NEWS FROM

Paxton Academy, Thornton Heath

Leading two projects as an Oracy Hub school

At Paxton, we believe every child deserves the confidence and skills to express themselves clearly and thoughtfully. We are delighted to have been selected as a Hub School to lead two new Oracy projects with the Croydon Education Partnership (CEP).

Early Years Oracy Project

Supported by the Little Wandle Foundations programme, up to 40 early years settings across Croydon will develop

language-rich interactions, storytelling and high-quality talk to strengthen young children's communication skills.

Whole-School Oracy Project

Teachers from primary and secondary schools will work with Oracy Cambridge to develop strategies that help pupils speak confidently, listen respectfully and articulate their thinking.

We are proud to be supporting schools across the borough and look forward to sharing the impact of this work on children's learning over the coming months.

NEWS FROM

Chestnut Grove, Balham

Sixth Form enrichment and careers education

This week, our Sixth Form students experienced truly inspiring opportunities that broadened their horizons and deepened their learning.

Media students engaged in a dynamic workshop led by Lucie Cave, former editor of Heat magazine, gaining first-hand insight into the fast-paced world of journalism and media careers.

Meanwhile, our Economics students were energised by an interactive session with Alessia Isopi, Economics lecturer at the University of Manchester, alongside Zeenia Naqvee, a leading figure from the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ).

These experiences offered students a unique chance to connect with industry experts, explore future pathways, and develop skills that will serve them well beyond the classroom.



NEWS FROM

Kensington Avenue Primary, Thornton Heath

Focusing on reading, fundraising and sport!

We have been actively working to instil a lifelong love for reading in all our pupils. Our KS2 Poetry Recital and Book and Biscuit events saw parents join children in class to share stories and performances. Year 6 classes enjoyed insightful trips to the local library, exploring the wide range of books and enjoying quiet reading time.

Our pupils showed great community spirit during our fundraising drives: they wore pyjamas for Children in Need and the colours of the Jamaican flag to raise funds for hurricane victims.

We were absolutely thrilled to host the iconic FA Cup and Community Shield! Staff and pupils had the exciting opportunity to take photos with the magnificent trophies.

Finally, some Year 6 pupils had an unforgettable experience on a trip to Wembley Stadium to watch an American Football game!



Grovelands Community Primary, Hailsham

Year 6 drone coding workshop

Our Year 6 pupils recently took part in an exciting Drone Coding workshop led by Hyatt Education. Using block programming and Swift—the same language used to create iPhone and iPad apps—pupils learned to code flight patterns for their drones.

They programmed algorithms to make drones take off, land and navigate obstacle courses with precision. The workshop aimed to build coding knowledge, promote safe technology use, and apply STEM concepts in real-life scenarios.

Expert instructors ensured every child could fully participate. It was a fantastic day of creativity, problem-solving, and innovation! One of our Year 6 pupils had this to say about the experience, 'It was surprisingly easy - we were absolutely thrilled when our drone soared perfectly through the target!'

Thomson House, Mortlake

International Week and Healthy Eating

Thomson House School celebrated International Week, bringing UNCRC Article 30 to life through cultural immersion across both of our school sites. Following Black History Month and Diwali assemblies, pupils explored global cultures through music, dance, languages and cuisine, documenting their journey in International Week Passports. Staff shared their heritage through traditional Indian and Latvian dance performances, whilst families contributed authentic dishes and recipes for a school cookbook. The week concluded with Foreign Office visitor Umaira Navaid leading UN discussions, with Upper School hosting a mini-UN assembly on Sustainable Development Goals.

During the half-term we also welcomed a film crew and representatives from Healthy Schools London to showcase the incredible work we do to promote healthy lifestyles. From the Daily Mile to our Pantosaurus sessions, Year 6 cooking lessons and our nutritious school lunches, the visiting team were genuinely impressed by our children's wonderful attitudes towards keeping healthy and staying safe. We currently hold Silver Healthy School accreditation—and we're hopeful that Gold status is within reach!



Hellingly Community Primary, Hailsham

Enriching curriculum experiences for all year groups

It has been a very busy term across Hellingly School. Years 5 and 3 have had a great time at Forest School in all weathers, putting our new field shelter to good use.

Our Year 3 children also stepped back in time during their Egyptian Day, immersing themselves in ancient history with great enthusiasm and fantastic costumes. Reception pupils had the opportunity to create beautiful Christingles and shared a special visit to the local church. Year 6 also

enjoyed an informative trip to the Imperial War Museum, deepening their understanding of the topics they have been exploring in class over the last two terms.

A huge thank you to our PTA for organising the annual Christmas Light Switch-On and Fair—an event enjoyed by families, staff, and children. It was a fantastic way to bring our community together.



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NEWS FROM Norbury High School For Girls, Norbury

Fundraising, mentoring and oracy

Staff and students, together with members of the Chestnut Grove community, donated various items to the Jamaica relief effort in the devastating wake of Hurricane Melissa. Norbury High also organised a borough-wide non-uniform day to raise funds for the appeal, with students and staff encouraged to dress in Jamaica flag colours.

Talk The Talk trainers delivered oracy-focused workshops to year 7 students aimed at promoting confidence and helping them build relationships with their new peers.

Fifteen Year 10s have begun coaching Year 7s in maths as part of our peer-to-peer learning partnership with CoachBright which seeks to encourage self-assurance and develop subject knowledge.

Author Sarah Lipman visited the school to discuss her work and new book, *Sophia Starr and a Dog to Love*, about a girl who dreams of owning a pet before finding out things aren't quite as straightforward as she thought.



NEWS FROM Chesterton Primary, Battersea

New starters and sharing best practice

Over the Autumn term we have had the privilege of seeing all our new joiners thrive, both in early years and throughout the rest of the school. We are very proud of how well they have settled in and even more proud of all their achievements. It is always wonderful to be a part of a child's journey through school.

We have been lucky to share what we do with a wide range of professionals, from trainee teachers starting out on their teaching careers to experienced leaders through the Little Wandle live events.

It has been wonderful to hear about all that they have learnt from their visits and what they will be taking back to their own schools. We also took part in a Trust school review, led by an experienced school leader and Ofsted inspector. We received really positive feedback during the review, and we are now working on our improvement points to make things even better.

NEWS FROM Ravenstone Primary, Balham

New choir and our growing Forest School

We're delighted to have launched our new school choir who have already performed modern pop songs, alongside traditional classics, and festive favourites, at our Winter Fair for parents and at the local Dementia Café in Balham.

Our Forest School is continuing to flourish after lots of support from Edress at Chesterton to help get us off the ground. Our children in Nursery and Reception will soon be joined by children in the HIVE autism base in enjoying weekly sessions and activities including den building, planting trees and vegetables, mud drawings and nature jewellery making. We are delighted to have received a micro-climate grant from Wandsworth which we will use for a range of new resources.

NEWS FROM Little Wandle

Thank you to all Trust schools who attended our recent 'Becoming a reader' webinar with Professor Kathy Rastle, an award-winning Professor of Cognitive Psychology at Royal Holloway, University of London.

Kathy is a brilliant science communicator and led a lively 45-minute session for us providing compelling evidence for why phonics is the only reliable method of teaching reading. Little Wandle member schools fed back that it provided them with great evidence to share with families and other professionals visiting their schools who may argue that certain children 'can't do phonics.'

The webinar is available to watch in full on the Little Wandle website.

This half-term we've also been excited to launch Little Wandle Code, our brand-new all-in-one assessment and phonics intervention programme for Key Stage 3. The programme has been piloted over a three-year period with over 60 schools, including Chestnut Grove and Norbury High School.

Please contact us (enquiries@littlewandle.org.uk) if you would like to be sent our flyer to share with any secondary schools you are working with. We also have briefings for schools coming up on 16th and 21st January, which we can let you know about by email.



NEWS FROM Wandle Learning Partnership

CPD

We're delighted to invite Deputy and Assistant Headteachers across the Trust to Leading Forward, a new conference from Wandle Learning Partnership.

The conference will bring together expert speakers and colleagues from across the system to explore what it means to lead ambitiously, inclusively and sustainably. This includes contributions from Cassie Buchanan, who was part of the Curriculum and Assessment Review and will speak about the new national curriculum and what this means for schools. Amjad Ali will also be joining us and will speak on SEND and inclusive practice.

As part of the Wandle Learning Trust community, colleagues can access an exclusive £20 discount on the early bird price using the code WLT20. This brings the cost of tickets to £130 each.

We'd love to see leaders from across the Trust there, learning together and leading forward. [Book my tickets.](#)

MATHS HUB

We're pleased to share a new [report](#), presented at this year's British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics conference, which includes findings from [London South West Maths Hub](#). The report is focused on embedding teaching for mastery approaches in secondary schools.

Drawing from a wider research project exploring Teaching for Mastery in secondary schools in England, the paper examines how the approach is understood by mathematics teachers and senior school leaders; how teachers utilise the mastery approach in their classroom practice; the role and impact of the NCETM-coordinated Maths Hubs programme; and how Teaching for Mastery reaches beyond the Mastery Specialist. Crucially the paper also identifies the conditions which enable embedding Teaching for Mastery in secondary schools, reflecting on how implementation can best be facilitated.

ENGLISH HUB

This month we are delighted to share that our programme coordinator, Maggie Crowell, has been promoted to WLP Operations Lead. We are now advertising for a new English Hub Programme Coordinator. If you are interested, or know someone who would be, please share [application information](#) with them.

We are also looking to expand our team of Literacy Specialists, who may specialise in Early Literacy in Reception, Early Reading and Phonics in Reception and Year 1, or Reading in Secondary. We would love to have more representatives from our amazing trust supporting schools across our 16 boroughs. Your school will be paid for the time you are released to undertake this work – for example, one day a week. Full training will be given. If this sounds like you and you'd like to find out more, please complete the [Work With Us](#) form.

