TRUST STAFF NEWS



OCTOBER 2026

DEAR COLLEAGUES

As we move through the first half of the autumn term, we want to thank every colleague across the Trust for the commitment, care and ambition you bring to your role each day. Reading this half-term's newsletter, we are struck by the many examples of excellence across our schools and partners: new leaders establishing strong relationships at Ravenstone and Kensington Avenue, Chesterton achieving the UKLA (United Kingdom Literacy Association) Reading for Pleasure Gold Award, Norbury's sporting success, outstanding community engagement at Chestnut Grove, and exciting developments from Grovelands, Thomson House and Hellingly. We have also been delighted to welcome Julia Hamilton and her team at Swaffield into the Trust.

Equally inspiring is the impact of our wider family of organisations. Through Little Wandle, our Maths Hub, English Hub, Teaching School Hub and Wandle Learning Partnership, we continue to share expertise and influence practice locally and nationally. This included having Chestnut Grove and Little Wandle together at the Key Stage 3 RISE launch event where we shared key findings from Little Wandle Code pilot schools around motivating struggling KS3 readers.



Christian Kingsley (Co-CEO), Mark Siswick (Co-CEO) and Sian Mathias (Chair of Trustees)

What connects all of these achievements is people. Your dedication ensures that children and young people experience the very best education and opportunities. Thank you for everything you do for our communities and for one another.

We look forward to seeing you at the Joint Professional Day after half-term.

Christian, Mark and Sian



NEWS FROM

Kensington Avenue Primary, Thornton Heath

Building strong relationships across the school community

It has been a busy and positive half term at KAPS. Our main focus has been on building strong relationships and creating a culture where children feel supported, valued and ready to learn. Through initiatives such as our new welcome packs for new starters, Hot Chocolate Fridays and our weekly attendance raffle, we have been celebrating pupils' successes and encouraging excellent attendance every day.

At the same time, staff have worked hard to strengthen the quality of the curriculum and the teaching children receive in the classroom. Through collaboration, professional development and ongoing feedback, we are continuing to raise expectations and improve outcomes for all pupils.

We have also enjoyed growing our links with the PTA and wider community, recognising that strong partnerships between school and home are central to helping every child achieve their potential.

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NEWS FROM
Little Wandle

Showcasing programmes across the UK

You wait all Summer for a good conference ... and then three come along at once! The Little Wandle team have been busy this half-term, showcasing the Foundations, Letters and Sounds and Code programmes to prospective members and partners at events in Coventry, Cardiff and London.

As this newsletter goes to press the team are preparing to visit the Confederation of Schools Trusts (CST) in Birmingham to share details of all Little Wandle programmes with MAT leaders from across the country.

We're also delighted to report that the Little Wandle Handwriting programme with Collins has been shortlisted for a Teach Primary Award. Please keep everything crossed for us.

NEWS FROM
Chesterton Primary, Battersea

A golden start to Autumn

We Are Gold! Chesterton are delighted to have achieved the UKLA Reading for Pleasure Gold Award, recognising our commitment to fostering a love of reading throughout our school community.

This award celebrates the many ways we promote reading, including our diverse range of books, welcoming classroom reading areas, well-stocked library, and lending libraries for both children and adults. It also recognises initiatives such as our Community Roof Garden book-sharing scheme, which helps make reading accessible to everyone.

We are incredibly proud of this achievement, which reflects the dedication of our staff, the enthusiasm of our pupils, and the support of our families in creating a culture where reading is truly valued and enjoyed.



NEWS FROM
Thomson House, Mortlake

Community effort lands brilliant new playground

Our new Sheen Lane playground has transformed an outdoor space into somewhere children can play, create, explore and relax.

The project was brought to life through the determination of our Bruges cyclists, the support of Friends of Thomson House and the generosity of our wider community. It has already become a much-loved part of the school day and is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when a school community comes together around a shared goal.

Pupil voice has been centre stage this term through our Young Leaders elections. Children wrote and delivered campaign speeches, confidently shared their ideas and took part in a whole-school vote. It was wonderful to see so many pupils stepping forward as leaders, developing their confidence and communication skills, and experiencing the democratic process first-hand.



NEWS FROM
Chestnut Grove, Balham

Students play key role in successful open events

Our Open Events season has once again showcased everything that makes Chestnut Grove Academy such a special place to learn and belong. Across our Summer and Autumn open mornings and evenings, we welcomed more than 3,000 prospective students and their families, giving them the opportunity to experience our vibrant school community first-hand.

The atmosphere throughout the season was overwhelmingly positive, with visitors consistently commenting on the warmth, ambition and sense of community they experienced. One family summed up their visit by saying, “We are blown away”, while another remarked, “I wish I could fast forward and be a student here already.” Others commented that “Every single staff member was welcoming and well informed. We can tell this is a great place to be.”

A particular highlight was the contribution of our student ambassadors, who collectively toured thousands of visitors around the school. Families described them as “a real credit to each other and the school”, while another visitor praised their guide as “friendly, articulate and responsive. A great ambassador for the school.” One prospective parent was so impressed by their student guide that they wrote to say she answered every question with “genuine enthusiasm and passion” and that it was clear she was “truly thriving” at the school.



NEWS FROM
Ravenstone Primary, Balham

Welcoming new members of the senior leadership team

It has been a really positive start to the year at Ravenstone, with our newly appointed Headteacher (Mike Riches) and Deputy Headteacher (Flora Martin) settling in well and quickly getting stuck into school life. The school has a strong, committed and supportive team, which is at the centre of the local Balham community.

The first few weeks for the newly formed team have focused on listening, learning and building relationships: getting into classrooms, meeting families, understanding the school’s strengths and identifying our next steps together.

Our school structure is also evolving to reflect changes in the local demographic, with Years 2 and 6 remaining two-form entry while other year groups are now one-form entry. This gives us an exciting opportunity to shape our future and ensure Ravenstone continues to stand out as the community school of Balham – offering something distinctive and special to the families who choose us.



NEWS FROM
Hellingly Community Primary, Hailsham

Reception make an awesome Autumn start

It has been a wonderful and busy start to the new term at Hellingly, with our 30-strong Reception class settling into school life brilliantly, as though they have always been here!

The children have been embracing their new learning experiences, from exploring Little Wandle phonics and investigating numbers in maths, to getting creative outdoors with pumpkin potions in our EYFS environment.

We have also welcomed parents and carers into school to celebrate Harvest Festival. Our Year 6 pupils shared thoughtful readings and poetry, reflecting on the meaning of Harvest, while our Reception children proudly welcomed their families into their new classroom. They delighted everyone with Harvest songs and enjoyed showing their grown-ups their favourite places to learn, play and explore.

It has been lovely to see our youngest learners growing in confidence and our whole school community coming together to celebrate this special time of year.



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NEWS FROM
Norbury High School For Girls, Norbury

Sporting silver amongst Autumn term highlights

We're pleased to announce that Norbury High has been awarded the School Games Mark Silver Award for the 2025/26 academic year. A government-led scheme that was launched in 2012, the School Games Mark rewards schools for their commitment to developing competitive sport within their school and community.

Our annual Harvest assemblies were once again a great success with a wide range of donations received from students and their families for Croydon's AR Projects, which provides community services including a food bank, soup kitchens and workshops. Celeste, our elite choir, delivered a beautiful rendition of The Sound of Silence and house points were awarded for the best-decorated donation boxes.



Year 9 students visited Bletchley Park on 6th October where they learned about historical codes and ciphers from Ancient Greece to the modern day and witnessed a demonstration involving a genuine Enigma machine.

NEWS FROM
Grovelands Community Primary, Hailsham

Fantastic reception for new playground!

Our new Reception children joined school this term to find a wonderful new playground area designed especially for them. The new equipment provides exciting opportunities for climbing, balancing, exploring and imaginative play, helping children to develop their physical skills, confidence and independence in a fun and safe environment.

Since the arrival of the equipment, the playground has been filled with laughter, smiles and enthusiastic adventurers keen to try out the new features. It has been fantastic to see the children playing together, building friendships and developing important social skills. We are thrilled to provide this exciting new space for our youngest learners.



NEWS FROM
Wandle Learning Partnership

MATHS HUB

London South West Maths Hub offers a school-led programme of professional development and our 2026-27 Work Groups are now open for booking.

Each Work Group is year-long, enabling opportunity for continued development in your workplace, as you explore, practice and embed approaches that you have seen and discussed with colleagues from other local schools, facilitated by local teachers and leaders. All Maths Hub programme activity is FREE to participate in.

Take a look at this great selection of Work Groups:

- **Specialist Knowledge for Teaching Mathematics for**:
  - Reception teachers
  - primary teachers
  - primary TAs
  - primary ECTs
  - secondary ECTs
  - secondary TAs
- **Year 5 – 8 Continuity**. As a Trust, we want to learn from and with each other, so that our students experience a coherent learning journey.
- **Securing Year 7 Foundations and Developing Multiplicative Reasoning at KS3** – both pitched to enable equity of our disadvantaged students.
- **Developing A Level Pedagogy** – join other local KS5 teachers in ever-developing pedagogic content knowledge for A level maths.

For detail of these and more, and for booking places, please see our 2026-27 Maths Hub catalogue



NEWS FROM

Wandle Learning Partnership



ENGLISH HUB

What a start to the new academic year at Wandle English Hub! September has been packed with exciting events, including a fantastic launch for our Partner Schools at CLPE, with inspiring keynotes from Professor Kathy Rastle and Julian Grenier.

We also hosted a hugely successful Support Staff Showcase at Chesterton Primary, celebrating the vital role teaching assistants and support staff play in ensuring every child becomes a successful reader.

There is still time to apply for Transforming Schools' Reading Culture, our fully funded, five-session Reading for Pleasure CPD programme, supporting schools to build a vibrant, research-informed reading culture. Apply here.

TEACHING SCHOOL HUB

Excellence in Reception Teaching Programme

The new Excellence in Reception Teaching Programme launched on 1st October 2026. Developed by University College London (UCL) and aligned with the Department for Education's Excellence in Reception Teaching Content Framework, this exciting new programme equips Reception teachers with the latest evidence-informed practice.

The programme covers key areas including child development, communication and language, early literacy and mathematics, physical development, play-based learning, inclusion for children with SEND and EAL, and supporting successful transitions into school. Register for the Spring cohort here.

NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (NPQS)

Applications for the next cohort of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) close on 30th October 2026. UCL-funded scholarship places are still available for most programmes, alongside self-funded and school-funded options for teachers who are not eligible for funding.

Participants consistently tell us that their NPQ has supported their professional development, strengthened their leadership practice and helped them progress in their careers.

Considering your next step in the teaching profession? Find out more on the UCL Institute of Education website. If you're ready to apply, you can do that on the Department for Education NPQs web page.

TRAIN TO TEACH WITH WANDLE!

Could you be the teacher who changes a child's future?

If you are a teaching assistant or other colleague who has ever wondered whether teaching could be the right next step for you, we would love to hear from you. The skills and experience you already have could make a real difference in the classroom. Take a look at our website to find out more and register your interest.

CPD

It has been a strong start to the year at Wandle Learning Partnership, with a wide range of CPD opportunities already up and running for colleagues across the Trust and further afield.

- ✓ Our Thinking Heads and Thinking Deputies programmes have launched with great feedback already, giving leaders dedicated time to connect, reflect and strengthen their practice.
- ✓ Staff from across a range of our schools have skilled themselves up by engaging with our Trust-wide Paediatric First Aid training.
- ✓ The Building Strong Foundations leadership twilight for deputy and assistant heads drew an impressive turnout, supported by an engaging keynote from Ofsted.
- ✓ We've also begun this year's cycle of Trust working parties, starting with the primary writing leads coming together in our stunning new training space at Fircroft Primary School to shape the first steps of our work on effective dictation in EYFS and KS1.

Over the coming weeks, we look forward to the Maths Working Party, the launch of our new Leading Adaptive Practice programme, bespoke Whole School SEND sessions, our Curriculum Conversations Twilight and much more. We have already seen high levels of engagement in our CPD programmes from staff across our schools which demonstrates a strong collective commitment to professional growth. If you would like to keep up to date with our latest CPD opportunities, please sign up to our mailing list



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