# TEACHING AND LEARNING

# NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Leading Learners newsletter- a way to celebrate all the hard work and excellent practice occurring across our Trust. We hope you find it useful and inspiring.



**Summer 2025**

> "Celebration is not a distraction from learning – it is an essential part of it."
>
> Unknown

## Why celebration is important?

Celebrating children's learning is far more than just a "feel-good" moment — it is a powerful pedagogical tool backed by research. When we take time to notice, affirm and celebrate effort, progress, and achievement, we positively impact both educational outcomes and pupil wellbeing.



Celebrating achievements strengthens pupil belonging and self-worth. Reports from Public Health England and The Children's Society highlight that pupils who feel recognised and valued show higher levels of self-esteem, attendance, and engagement — all key drivers of attainment and wellbeing.

In essence, what we celebrate shapes what children value about themselves as learners. By embedding celebration meaningfully — whether it's through praise, displays, shout-outs or recognition of progress — we create classrooms where effort is visible, learning is joyful, and success is seen as achievable for all.

Celebration and praise are central to nurturing a growth mindset in our classrooms — the belief that intelligence and ability can be developed through effort, practice, and persistence. Carol Dweck's research shows that when we celebrate the process of learning — such as resilience, strategy use, and perseverance — rather than just the end result, children become more motivated and more likely to embrace challenge. Meaningful praise that recognises effort helps pupils see mistakes as part of the learning journey, not a sign of failure. By celebrating progress, no matter how small, we send a powerful message: that what matters most is not where you start, but how you grow. This mindset builds long-term confidence, independence, and a love of learning..



While celebrating the achievements of our children is at the heart of everything we do, it is equally important to shine a light on the incredible work of our staff and support teams across the trust. Every day, teachers, teaching assistants, and wider school staff go above and beyond to create rich, engaging, and inclusive learning experiences. This term, as we focus on the theme of celebration, we will be recognising not only pupil successes, but also the dedication, creativity and collaboration that underpins effective teaching and learning. From new curriculum innovations and high-quality interventions, to inspiring classroom environments and inclusive support strategies — we are proud to showcase the brilliant work that makes our schools such vibrant places to learn and grow.

At Mendell Primary, we have worked incredibly hard to transform our EYFS outdoor area to enrich learning and play opportunities for our children. With the amazing support of parents and local businesses, we've developed an exciting new construction zone and a thriving vegetable patch. We've also created a stage area to inspire creativity and confidence, a role play space that encourages imagination, and a cosy reading corner to foster a love of books. Our natural music wall invites children to explore sound, while sensory buckets and a small world table offer rich, hands-on experiences that support exploration, storytelling, and discovery.



The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) recognises effective praise and recognition as valuable tools for improving learning outcomes, particularly when used to reinforce positive behaviours, encourage engagement, and build pupil confidence. In their guidance on Behaviour, Feedback, and Metacognition, the EEF emphasises that specific, targeted praise — focused on effort, strategies, and progress — can increase motivation and help pupils develop the self-regulation skills needed for success.

Rather than generic rewards, the EEF highlights that celebration is most effective when it is meaningful, timely, and linked to learning goals. This helps children understand what they are doing well and why it matters, reinforcing high expectations and deepening their understanding of effective learning habits.

In addition, the EEF notes that a positive school culture — where effort and achievement are recognised and celebrated — contributes to better behaviour, improved relationships, and stronger pupil wellbeing, all of which support academic progress.

Education Endowment Foundation

## The Power of Praise in the Classroom

A recent study published in Educational Psychology has shown that praising pupils for positive behaviour is significantly more effective than reprimanding them for misbehaviour when it comes to improving focus and engagement in the classroom.

Over three years, researchers observed more than 2,500 pupils aged 5–12 across 151 classrooms in the US. They found that students in classes where teachers used more praise than reprimands were 20–30% more focused on tasks. Even a 2:1 ratio of praise to reprimand led to a marked increase in attention and productivity.

Lead researcher Dr. Paul Caldarella from Brigham Young University explained that praise reinforces desirable behaviour and helps children understand what is expected of them. In contrast, overuse of reprimands can have a negative impact on classroom climate.

The study underlines that recognition and positive reinforcement not only improve behaviour but also enhance self-esteem, motivation, and ultimately, learning outcomes — especially for children who may find school challenging.

As schools across our trust continue to celebrate both pupil progress and staff innovation, this research reminds us of the transformative impact of a well-timed, meaningful “well done.”

As part of our “My Big Future” project in partnership with The Johnson Foundation, Mendell’s Year 5 took part in an inspiring and action-packed visit to Manchester Airport.

The day began with an exciting exploration of the airport, where children identified key features of the site and even had a rare opportunity to go behind the scenes at the security check area. They were fascinated to see cabin crew (and even a pilot) having their luggage screened before boarding!









Back at the AeroZone, pupils engaged in interactive activities that introduced them to the wide range of roles within the airport. From air traffic control to baggage handling and passenger services, the children were all smiles as they discovered just how many different careers are involved in helping an airport run smoothly.

To round off the experience, pupils watched aircraft take off on their journeys around the world — a perfect moment to reflect on their own aspirations for the future.

Throughout the day, our children represented Mendell beautifully and were praised for their excellent behaviour, attentiveness, and curiosity.
A big thank you to Mrs Eason and Miss Harvey for supporting the trip and to our families for your continued encouragement. It truly was a day to remember!

The Johnson Foundation was established to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the Liverpool City Region. The advancement of education, the preservation and protection of health and relief of poverty and sickness. For more information on the Johnston Foundation, please visit https://thejohnsonfoundation.co.uk/

This term, pupils from Overchurch Junior School had the fantastic opportunity to take part in a Peace Conference held at St James' Church in New Brighton, thanks to our involvement in the Wirral LTLRE Hub. The event, attended by the Mayor and students from LJMU, was a vibrant celebration of peace through the arts. Children took part in a range of creative activities including music, dance, origami, poetry-writing, and painting, all centred around the theme of peace. It was a memorable and inspiring day for everyone involved.





We are very proud of our pupils who attended a Peace Conference.
We were one of only nine schools to have been part of this special day and it was attended by the Mayor of Wirral, Councillor Cherry Povall JP. Mrs Kenningham was extremely pleased, though not surprised, that all of the pupils showed our RESPECT Values perfectly throughout the whole day.
The themes running through the conference were love, peace, empathy, hope, tolerance, community and kindness. Activities included poetry, music, dance, origami and story-telling. They designed and made the following: Peace Poetry Dove, Handkerchief of Peace and Happiness, Origami Crane, Dream Music, Fingerprint Bird of Peace and a dance using the poem 'We are Here' as a stimulus. At the end of the day, all the pupils involved showed the music and dances they had created to all the other schools participating.



The work created on the day was on display at Earlston Library in Wallasey.

Some quotes from the children during the day are below:
"I haven't got a favourite part of the day because I've enjoyed it all so much."
"The whole experience was really fabulous and I feel really special to have been chosen to come today."
"I liked it all - especially mixing with the other schools - it was a really unique day."

At Woodside Primary School, we all took part in Samba workshops. Year 2 really enjoyed learning about the names of all the instruments from South America and how they were used. We had a turn using each instrument with the Samba instructor and learnt about timing and rhythm when following a beat. We even had a little dance at the end too! It was very educational and great fun too!





The children in reception class have been working hard helping out around school to earn money. They have been learning how we need to have a job, do our job well and enjoy working to earn money so we can buy nice things. They have helped shred paperwork in the office, washed the outdoor toys, tidied the library, picked up litter and washed the pots, plates and cutlery in nursery. They saved their pennies in the piggy bank so we can buy something for the class.



Linking Schools

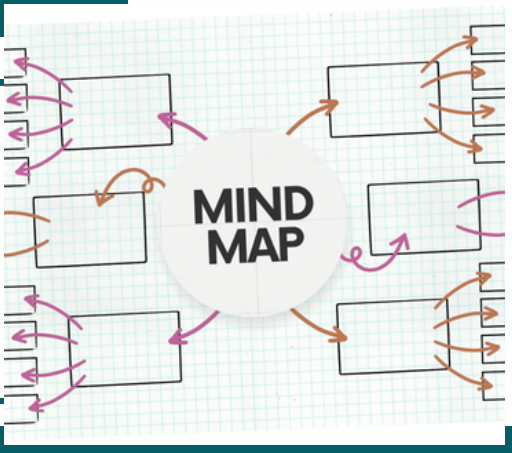
This year, our Y3 cohort at Woodside Academy have engaged in the Linking Schools experience with Westbourne Primary. This has included video calls for catch ups throughout the year and a visit to one another's school. Westbourne Primary had a fun-filled day at Woodside on the 4th of June which, despite the weather, included lots of games, networking and team-building activities. After the event, the visitors commented on how welcoming and polite all staff and children were reflecting the success of the day



Scaffolding Techniques at Tyldesley Primary School

At Tyldesley Primary School, we recognise the importance of scaffolding in enhancing pupil learning and ensuring that every child can access the curriculum effectively. By implementing various scaffolding techniques, we are able to support our pupils' understanding and independence in their learning journeys. Here are some key examples of scaffolding techniques we have employed and their positive impacts on our pupils:






1. Gradual Release of Responsibility

·Technique: We employ the "I do, we do, you do" model, where teachers first demonstrate a concept (I do), then practice it together with pupils (we do), and finally allow pupils to apply it independently (you do).

·Impact: This gradual release helps pupils build confidence and competence. Many pupils have reported feeling more prepared to tackle tasks independently, leading to increased engagement and success in their learning.

2. Use of Worked Examples

·Technique: Teachers provide worked examples that break down complex problems into manageable steps, illustrating how to approach and solve them.

·Impact: Pupils have shown improved understanding of challenging concepts, as they can refer back to these examples when working on similar tasks. This has led to higher levels of achievement, particularly in mathematics.

3. Graphic Organisers

·Technique: We incorporate graphic organisers to help pupils visually map out information, such as mind maps, Venn diagrams, and flowcharts.

·Impact: These tools have aided pupils in organising their thoughts and understanding relationships between concepts. Many pupils find it easier to recall information and articulate their ideas during discussions.

4. Sentence Starters and Frames

·Technique: To support pupils' writing and speaking, we provide sentence starters and frames that guide them in structuring their responses.

·Impact: This scaffolding has empowered pupils to express their ideas more clearly and confidently, resulting in improved oral and written communication skills.

5. Peer Support and Collaboration

·Technique: We encourage collaborative learning through paired and group activities, where pupils can support each other in their learning.

·Impact: Working with peers has not only enhanced social skills but also allowed pupils to learn from one another. This collaborative approach has led to a more inclusive classroom environment and increased motivation among pupils.

The implementation of scaffolding techniques at Tyldesley Primary School has had a significant impact on our pupils' learning experiences. By providing structured support and gradually increasing independence, we are nurturing resilience and ambition in our pupils, helping them to take pride in their achievements.

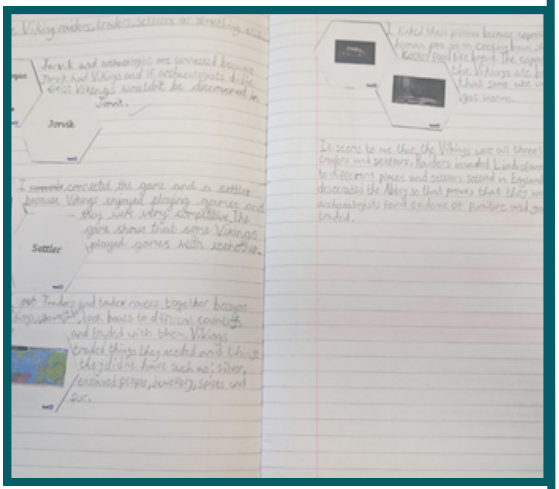


This June, Carrwood Primary School proudly took part in a series of enriching events to celebrate Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) History Month, recognising and honouring the heritage of many members of our school community. The celebrations offered children and families a chance to learn more about GRT cultures and traditions through engaging and creative experiences. Highlights included a captivating storytelling session, a vibrant art gallery showcasing students' work inspired by GRT heritage, and a hands-on family art workshop that brought generations together through shared creativity. A particularly memorable moment was the visit from a traditional living wagon and horse, offering children a unique opportunity to explore and connect with this rich cultural history in a meaningful and interactive way.

At Carrwood, we have been focusing on developing Oracy skills in the Early Years, with a particular emphasis on encouraging confident speaking and active listening in Nursery. A recent highlight was the visit from the traditional living wagon and horse, which provided a wonderful opportunity for the children to express their thoughts and curiosity. These moments not only sparked imagination but also gave our Nursery pupils a real reason to use their voices and share their experiences with others.




At Carrwood Primary School, we are working on creating tasks that deepen understanding and critical thinking skills. We took part in CPD on Task Design by Karl McGrath @MRMICT where we learnt about the reasoning behind carefully designed tasks and the impact they can have on learning. From this, our focus this half term has been to trial two types of task: Three Heads and Hexagons. Three Heads challenges children to think critically about a concept and use their reasoning skills to form an opinion based on evidence. Hexagons challenges children to make connections between concepts to deepen their understanding. It is also a great tool for assessing learning at the end of a topic



## Before

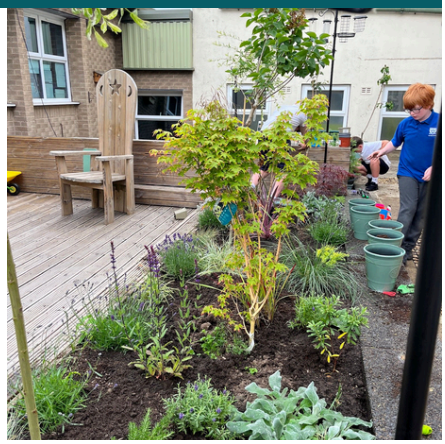


At Worth Valley, we are delighted to share that we were successfully awarded a Nature Parks Grant of approximately £10,000 to transform some of the more 'grey' and underused areas of our school grounds into vibrant, green spaces. This exciting project has completely revitalised parts of the site, replacing dull concrete with rich planting beds, wildflower areas, and natural features that encourage biodiversity and outdoor learning. Both children and staff have played a central role in bringing the space to life—from planting and designing elements of the layout, to helping maintain and care for the area as it grows. The result is a beautiful, calming environment that is already having a positive impact on well-being, learning, and our collective sense of pride in the school. The new nature space is now a much-loved part of daily life and a fantastic resource for outdoor education.

## After







As part of an enterprise challenge at Sandbrook, our Year 5 and 6 pupils were given £10 of seed money and tasked with starting their own mini businesses. From the outset, the children took full ownership of the project—planning, organising, marketing, and sourcing stock for their stalls. Working collaboratively in teams, they demonstrated fantastic creativity, resilience, and entrepreneurial spirit.



After days of preparation, the businesses opened their doors for two afternoons after school, each running for around 20 minutes. The buzz around the stalls was incredible, and the event was a huge success with families and staff turning out in support. In total, the children raised an impressive £138, which will go towards their end-of-term outing. It was a brilliant opportunity for pupils to develop key life skills, and we couldn't be prouder of their efforts and teamwork.

Trust-Wide Residential at Dearne Valley

This term, several of our schools came together for a fantastic trust-wide residential at Dearne Valley, and it was an experience to remember! The children took part in a wide range of exciting and challenging activities, including the exhilarating Leap of Faith, designed to help them step outside their comfort zones. Throughout the trip, pupils demonstrated incredible resilience, confidence, and independence — pushing themselves, encouraging each other, and truly doing themselves proud. Their behaviour was exemplary, and it was especially heartening to see children from different schools mixing so naturally — whether during team tasks or simply enjoying a game of football during downtime.

Residentials like this are more than just a few days away from school — they are powerful opportunities for personal growth. Research shows that outdoor learning and overnight residentials help develop critical life skills such as teamwork, self-confidence, problem-solving, and emotional regulation. These experiences also support positive wellbeing and give children a valuable sense of independence in a safe, supportive environment. A huge thank you and well done to Masara Sandells for organising the event so successfully — it was a brilliant example of what can be achieved when we come together across the trust to offer enriching experiences beyond the classroom.



As we come to the end of another incredibly busy and rewarding term, I want to take a moment to say a heartfelt thank you to all the teachers and support staff across our trust. Your unbelievable dedication, passion, and commitment to improving the lives of our learners is truly inspiring. It's a real privilege to see first-hand the fantastic things happening in our schools every day — from creative classroom practice to thoughtful support and care for our pupils. As we head into the summer break, I hope you all find time to rest, recharge, and switch off. You have more than earned it. Thank you again for everything you do — have a wonderful, well-deserved summer.

