



SPRING NEWS

from our Trust community

WORKING TOGETHER ENJOYING LEARNING BEING BRAVE CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE



Get to know our CEO

We are delighted to welcome Karen Hayes as the new Chief Executive Officer of Esteem Multi-Academy Trust, leading our specialist trust supporting children and young people across Alternative Provision and SEND.

Karen brings over twenty years of experience in education, having worked in operational leadership, school improvement, and system-wide roles. She began her career in the commercial sector, but in 2002 she made the move into education, joining a large Derby secondary school as an Office Manager. What started as a practical choice to spend more time with her young children soon became a true passion for helping young people flourish.

She progressed through leadership roles, eventually becoming Headteacher of Derby Pride Academy, a specialist Alternative Provision school. She has also served as an Ofsted Inspector and is an executive member of PRUSAP, supporting leaders nationally in Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision.

Guided by a belief that every child deserves to feel they belong and can achieve, Karen is committed to building inclusive schools, nurturing strong relationships, and supporting colleagues to grow and feel proud of the work they do. Her warmth, energy, and dedication are evident in every part of her work, from visiting schools to working alongside staff and communities.

Family and community are central to Karen's life. Her husband serves in the armed forces, and the values of service, resilience, and teamwork have been a big part of her own journey. She is deeply involved in the military community, serving as Treasurer of the Green Howards and Royal Yorkshire Regiment Association, London Branch. These connections have inspired her leadership style, which values strong relationships, loyalty, and supporting others to thrive - principles she brings to her work across the Trust.

A Few More Things You Might Not Know...

- Hidden talent: Trained opera singer
- Football loyalty: Middlesbrough FC
- Family life: Grandmother to two adorable granddaughters
- Weekend joys: Walking, reading, travelling
- Leadership style: Prioritises strong relationships, loyalty, and helping others thrive



Karen, as drawn by her Granddaughter



This term the Central Team got the keys to The Esteem Hub, a new shared office space designed for colleagues from across our Trust to use as a central base for collaboration and connection.

Bringing this space to life has been a fantastic collaborative effort between our Estates, IT and Office Management departments.

All furniture has been sustainably sourced via [ORS](#) by Head of Procurement and Infrastructure, Rob, with a huge amount of help from Estates & Facilities Manager, Mick, Office Manager, Gemma, and our new Receptionist, Heather.

We are excited to welcome colleagues into this new space and look forward to seeing it become a hub for collaboration alongside the Central Team.



SUSTAINABILITY

UPDATES

The Trust continues to embed sustainability across all areas of our work. Sustainability priorities are now formally integrated into both our Estates and Procurement Strategy and policy.

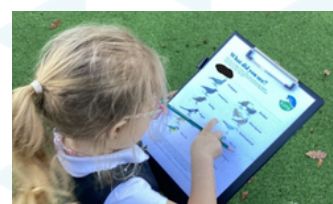
This term, our academies celebrated World Wetlands Day. Rufford class at Bennerley Fields School visited Allestree Park Lake as part of their outdoor learning curriculum. "We looked at the lake wetland and discussed and researched the different species living there" Children at Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School took part in some colouring activities provided by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School also took part in the Big Schools' Bird Watch, completing a survey which has been sent to the RSPB. They have also been recognised as a school for nature!

Thank you to all of our academies for engaging with our sustainability initiatives and sharing your work with us.

Finally, work is underway to strengthen sustainability within the curriculum. A workshop in collaboration with Let's Go Zero will take place on **14 May**. All staff are welcome to attend. This CPD session offers a valuable opportunity to explore how sustainability can be embedded into the curriculum, helping schools to align with their climate action plans.

If you would like to attend please contact cbrown@estemmat.co.uk or aparveen@estemmat.co.uk.



Thank you for being a



Awarded to

Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School

By making your school a little wilder,
you are helping to bring back nature.

David Attenborough
Sir David Attenborough



STUDENTS AT ST CLARE'S HELP TO SHAPE DERBY LOCAL PLAN

Young Star Voices in Derby brings together students from local SEND schools to discuss city plans, mental health, and community issues, acting as an empowerment group.

This term, students at St Clare's attended to discuss Derby's Local Plan! The Local Plan is a crucial document that shapes how Derby will grow and change in the years 2023 - 2043. It sets out a vision for the city's future, identifying:

- Where new homes and jobs should go,
- Which areas need protecting,
- Information about the planning policies that will guide decisions.

Students were asked for their thoughts and feelings about the future of Derby and played an important role in ensuring that Derby is inclusive of all needs and diversity.

It took place at the wonderful Grow and Glow Café in Derby. As always, Students' behaviour, attitudes and conduct were exemplary and they should feel very proud of their efforts.



FOUNTAINS HIGH SCHOOL NEXT STEPS EVENT – A GREAT SUCCESS!

Fountains High School recently hosted their Next Steps event – a fantastic opportunity for learners, parents and carers to explore future pathways and opportunities. Representatives from local education providers, employers, social care teams and the local authority attended to share how they can support the young people of FHS now and as they move into adulthood.

FHS were delighted with the excellent turnout and incredibly proud of how confidently their learners engaged with visitors. They asked thoughtful questions, explored a range of future options and showed real enthusiasm about planning their next steps.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the event such a positive and inspiring evening!

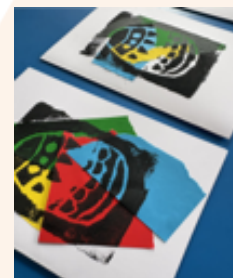
ESTEEM AP FOOTBALL MATCH

This term, Esteem North Academy and Derby Pride Academy met for their first friendly football fixture. Both sides showcased impressive skills and great sportsmanship. Although the score favoured DPA, the match was thoroughly enjoyed by all, and we're already looking forward to planning more joint sporting opportunities in the future.



COMMUNITY EASTER CARDS AT ESTEEM NORTH ACADEMY

This term at ENA, KS3 pupils have been putting their art-based printing skills to excellent use by designing and creating their own Easter cards. These will be delivered to their neighbours in the local community!





STUDENTS AT ASPIRE WORK ON NEW WORKSHOP UPGRADES

Some of the Aspire pupils have been helping upgrade the workshop storage. A previously unused area of the tool cupboard has been boarded out and is now being used as an area to store commonly used tools. The pupils took an active part in the design and construction of this area which is now used daily by everyone in the workshop.



The wood storage area has also been upgraded to provide shelving for the shorter lengths of timber. The pupil shown has used good problem solving skills as well as tool and timber selection to add an extra shelving section to the timber storage area. His independent work means that others can now more easily select appropriate timber for their projects.



With many pupils using the workshop on different projects, it has been necessary to ensure that screws and fixings are readily available and easily located. To facilitate this students decided to install French Cleats in the main work area to allow boxes of screws and nails to be easily removed and replaced on the wall. A pupil has also constructed and installed storage for sanding pads. These additions have been well executed by the pupils involved and appreciated by all who use the workshop.

When weather has permitted work has been ongoing in the garden. The ground has been levelled and a lot of roots removed to allow for a path to be installed. This has required some very hard work and perseverance by the pupils but their teamwork has been outstanding. They have encouraged and supported each other through every task and have managed to solve many problems along the way.



They now have the path and first bed marked out and levelled as well as a tool storage shed built and in use. With more materials being delivered before Easter they are expecting the path to be complete and the turf layed ready for use at the start of the summer term.



Meanwhile, in the workshop, work has been started on making a bench, planters and a bird box to add the final touches needed. This picture is an example of the excellent teamwork in play as all three students are working on different pieces of the bench.



FAMILY THRIVE WITH FASST

Timara from the FASST team recently delivered a six-week Family Thrive programme, working with parents to help them understand how children develop socially and emotionally as they grow.

The programme focused on the needs of children at different stages of development and explores how parents can best support and meet those needs. Over the six weeks, the group came together really well and built strong, supportive connections with one another.

To celebrate the end of the programme, the group met at The Coffee Bean for coffee and cake, which was a lovely way to finish the final session. Some of the feedback from parents included:

“Fabulous course. It created really supportive bonds and helped me reflect on my parenting skills and how to better connect with my child.”

“A great opportunity to bond. Tamara had excellent skills in making us all feel very welcome. The discussions were excellent and it encouraged us to explore new ideas.”



SCIENCE WEEK AT DERBY PRIDE

For Science Week, Derby Pride Academy got hands-on with the Great Egg Drop Challenge.

Students from every year group put their creativity, teamwork and problem-solving skills to the test by designing contraptions to protect their eggs from a drop at height. From parachutes to cushions and some very imaginative engineering, students thought outside the box, using the skills they have learnt in science to protect their eggs whilst having fun with their teachers.

Well done to everyone who took part.



ASPIRE PUPILS MEET THE BOXING 'BARD'

*'There's an entire chain of people, Connected to me and my success
They're the memories across my heart, Like the lion upon my chest.'*

Matt Windle became Commonwealth boxing champion (light flyweight) in 2022 and was named Birmingham Poet Laureate 2016-18. When Matt visited Aspire in February, he led an assembly for pupils in KS3 and Year 10, explaining his passions for both boxing and poetry. He then spent the day in classes helping pupils to write poetry of their own. He also spent time in the gym, watching our Kickboxers train and showing them his Commonwealth belt. Matt visits many schools across the country and so it was great to hear him say that he thought Aspire is one of the best, and that he would love to visit again in the future!





FOUNTAINS PRIMARY NAMED BEYOND INCLUSION SCHOOL

Fountains Primary School has been recognised as a Beyond Inclusion School for their commitment to supporting children's communication and promoting inclusive practice.

This recognition comes from Beyond Words Creative, an organisation dedicated to celebrating schools that go above and beyond in creating inclusive environments. Jo Smith, founder of Beyond Words Creative, was inspired by the Communication Station initiative, describing it as "exactly what inclusion should look like in practice."



As part of this recognition, FPS received a signed copy of Harvey's Silent Discovery—a beautiful book that helps children understand that everyone communicates in their own way and that every voice matters.

Beyond Words Creative has also offered FPS a free one-year membership, giving access to lesson plans, resources, and a digital badge to showcase their commitment to inclusion. This partnership will help FPS continue to make communication accessible for all.

Thank you to Jo Smith and Beyond Words Creative for this incredible support. Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do, and we're so proud of Fountains Primary for being recognised for the difference they are making.

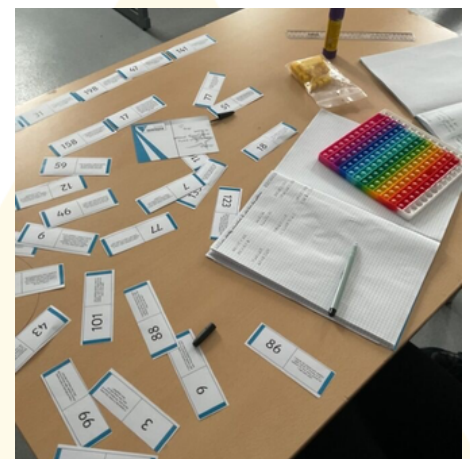
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AT ESTEEM SOUTH ACADEMY

Key Stage 3 and 4 Students at Esteem South Academy have shown real determination and progress this term in their core subjects.

In Maths students have embraced a variety of strategies to build independence and confidence. KS3 pupils have been exploring different ways to represent and interpret data, and their confidence in choosing the most effective method for a given situation has grown noticeably. In Year 10, students have been strengthening their non calculator skills, tackling mathematical problems across all four operations with increasing accuracy and independence. Year 11 have been applying their algebraic knowledge to solve a wide range of equations.

KS4 students have been studying the topic of Gothic horror to develop the key skills needed for GCSE English Language Paper 1, Section B. As part of this unit, students visited a local graveyard to inspire and enhance their sensory descriptive writing.

In Science this term, students have been getting stuck into some exciting practical experiments. They explored the weird and wonderful world of non-Newtonian fluids, discovering how something can behave like both a solid and a liquid depending on how you touch it. Around Valentine's Day, students created they own "love potions" by mixing vinegar and sodium bicarbonate to learn about chemical reactions and gas production.





STUDENT VOLUNTEERS FROM DPA MAKE IMPACT ON LOCAL COMMUNITY

At the end of December, year 10 and KS3 students from Derby Pride Academy volunteered for Derby Food 4 Thought Alliance at St Peter's Church. Staff were so incredibly proud of students' attitudes and how they interacted with other volunteers.

On Day 1, year 10 prepped the Church by setting up the tables and bringing all of the food donations into the church. KS3 then followed this up the next day by packing up food hampers for people living in Derby City.

Two year 10 students asked if they could revisit St Peter's Church with KS3 as they wanted to be able to chat with a lovely lady, who was volunteering for her church. Miss Richards, assistant head at DPA had an incredibly proud teacher moment, when the lady said, "Thank you to all of your students for their help and support. Chatting with these two students has made my week."

Staff at our alternative provision schools are always proud of their students but it is moments and interactions like this, that have true impact and cannot be planned for.



JOINT RESIDENTIAL AT FPS AND ELMSLEIGH

This term has been one of adventure, courage and unforgettable memories for our pupils across Fountains Primary and Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School. Both groups travelled to Standon Bowers Outdoor Education Centre and this year, for the very first time, our Year 2 pupils also enjoyed their own one night residential, joining the older children in experiencing the magic of outdoor learning.

Throughout their stay, the children embraced an incredible range of outdoor activities that pushed them to discover strengths they didn't know they had.

Residential trips form a powerful part of our pupils' personal development journey. By stepping away from home routines and comfort zones.

This shared residential reflects the strength, warmth and ambition of our Esteem MAT family. Both schools came together to create an experience that the children will remember for years to come.



PEAK SCHOOL STAFF ARE RUNNING 10K!

Staff at Peak School will be participating in the gruelling and very muddy, 10K Born Survivor event (UK military themed obstacle course) at Capesthorpe Hall in Cheshire on 16th May 2026 to raise money for projects to take learning beyond and outside the classroom. Good Luck to everyone participating!

Donate here: <https://gofund.me/b95f11e69>

If you would like to join their team, Follow the link www.born-survivor.com, click on enter Cheshire - Sat 16th May 2026, add 1 participant to the classic 10k - go to checkout. You should select JOIN Existing TEAM and enter the team name - Peaksters. At checkout enter the following promo code offering tickets at £65 each. A discount of £5 pp. Code: PEAK-SCHOOLSURVIVOR-CH2026. I would use your personal email (School / work seems to be filtered) After checkout you will be directed to Register on Race Space You will be able to download your ticket from Race Space This code is live up to 20 places. Choose - Pay up front / pay monthly. Make sure you Join Existing Team when you click on enter Cheshire Join Existing Team - type in Peaksters.



FHS DOG MENTOR RECEIVES AWARD

Fountains High School were delighted to welcome Shannan, SEND Team Manager from Provide Education, to school to present a very special award to their support dog, Cracker.

For nearly 11 years, Cracker has been a huge part of life at Fountains High School. He has supported students through difficult meetings, joined Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, sponsored walks and residentials, and even spent time supporting a local SEND primary school.

This year, Cracker has officially been recognised as a Superstar Senior in Provide Education's Pet Show. Now almost 12, he's slowing down slightly, but still loves coming into school to listen to students read and be part of the community. Congratulations Cracker!



NEURODIVERSITY WEEK AT FOUNTAINS PRIMARY

This term Fountains Primary School celebrated Neurodiversity Week, a special time dedicated to recognising, valuing and celebrating the wonderfully different ways our brains work. Throughout the week, pupils took part in a wide range of engaging activities designed to help them understand that everyone thinks, learns and experiences the world in their own unique way.

Children explored the idea that our differences are not just something to accept, but something to be proud of. From creative discussions to hands-on tasks, each activity encouraged pupils to recognise their own strengths as well as the strengths of others. Classrooms were filled with conversations about what makes us special, celebrating talents such as problemsolving, creativity, kindness, perseverance and imagination.



EMBEDDING MAKATON INTO BENNERLEY FIELDS

Bennerley Fields are on a very exciting journey of embedding Makaton throughout their school. This term, they trained and announced their new Makaton Class Ambassadors.

As part of this, class teacher Sarah recently completed her training to become a Makaton Tutor, which opens up lots of wonderful opportunities to enrich communication across the community.

Sarah shares "One of the first initiatives we are launching is the introduction of Class Makaton Ambassadors. These roles have been created to empower our students, celebrate their strengths, and help build excitement around using Makaton in everyday school life."

During a celebration event, the new ambassadors were presented with their lanyards and certificates, whilst being cheered on by their classmates. Congratulations to all of the students involved!





HOLBROOK ALUMNI STARTS SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP AT CHESTERFIELD ROYAL

This term one of our Trustees, Craig, and Careers Specialist, Rachel, had the pleasure of visiting a former student in his supported internship at Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust provided by Project SEARCH.

Lewis, who previously attended Holbrook School for Autism, is excelling in the roles he has taken on so far in imaging and estates, enjoying the social and practical aspects of both.

This is a hugely positive success story for Lewis and Esteem, showing how targeted and specialist support can change outcomes - and lives - for students with additional needs.



BRACKEN HILL - THIS IS ME

Bracken Hill held their first art exhibition this term – This Is Me.

Rufford and Sherwood Class put on a very impressive display of their own artwork, showcasing their individuality and creativity. Sherwood Class also produced a beautiful PowerPoint performing the poem "The British" by Benjamin Zephaniah. Rufford Class performed a dance routine and signed in Makaton to the song This Is Me.

Students got creative, using lots of different mediums to bring their pieces to life. One student was even inspired by her teacher's paper bead necklace and designed her own.

Well done to all involved, we can't wait to see what students at Bracken Hill create next.

