



# Odyssey

## Collaborative Trust



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## HELPING PUPILS, COLLEAGUES AND THE COMMUNITY TO THRIVE

### NATIONAL SCIENCE AWARD RECOGNISES QUALITY TEACHING

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There have been a host of Christmas activities going on in Odyssey schools and it has been a pleasure seeing the enjoyment these have brought the pupils. A huge thank you to all of my colleagues for putting on plays, fayres and parties, the events take a lot of organising at the end of a long term.

As we come to the end of the year it is a good time to look to the future. We have exciting developments at two of our schools where we are working closely with the Local Authority to provide additional spaces for pupils with autism and high levels of need. With the numbers of children with special educational needs increasing it is vital that there is sufficient capacity so all pupils can experience an excellent education regardless of their need.

Not all academy trusts choose to work with their Local Authorities and are sometimes spread over several areas, but we are proud to be based solely in Derby and will always work closely with the council to improve the lives of children in our city.

Another key local partner is the University of Derby and we are excited to be partnering with them to provide teacher training opportunities for graduates from September 2025. You can read more about this later in the newsletter.

Wishing you the best for the Christmas holiday,

**Ian Dewes**  
Odyssey Collaborative Trust CEO

### ODYSSEY TRUST COLLABORATION WITH UNIVERSITY

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### PUPILS REACH FOR THE STARS WITH ROLLS-ROYCE

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# A focus on science teaching earns top award for Cherry Tree Primary School



## »»» OUR CHILDREN THRIVE

Cherry Tree Hill Primary School has been awarded a national science mark in recognition of the quality of its teaching.

The Primary School Quality Mark (PSQM) is a sign of the commitment the school has made to excellence in science leadership, teaching and learning.

Through the quality mark programme, the school received training and development to ensure teachers have the knowledge, capability and support they need to transform science education.

Teachers Bernadette Brooks and Craig Taylor took part in the development programme on behalf of the school.

Bernadette explained: "We started with a full review of where science was in our school and after that we had to set out what we wanted to focus on in our next steps for science."

The school selected several different areas to focus on. "We chose outdoor learning and how we can get science outside, as well as careers, and how our science lessons link to future careers," added Craig.

The school then had to work towards these goals, evidencing their work and achievements every step of the way to feed back for their PSQM assessment, which is led by the University of Hertfordshire.

Helen Sizer, PSQM Co-Director, said: "By enabling effective science leadership, PSQM is powering the potential of all children to see the relevance and importance of science in their lives, now and in the future. "Schools that have achieved a Primary Science Quality Mark have demonstrated a significant commitment to science leadership, teaching and learning and the profile and quality of science in each accredited school is very high."

Paul Appleton, head teacher at Cherry Tree Hill Primary School, part of the Odyssey Collaborative Trust, said: "I'm so proud of how the team have worked to really set our science teaching apart and it is wonderful that has been recognised with this award."

**Schools that have achieved a Primary Science Quality Mark have demonstrated a significant commitment to science leadership, teaching and the profile and quality of science is very high."**

**Emma Wilkinson, Portway Junior School**

# Odyssey Collaborative Trust becomes university partner

## »»» OUR COMMUNITY THRIVES

Odyssey Collaborative Trust has been chosen to deliver teacher training in partnership with the University of Derby. The trust will contribute its expertise and experience so that trainee teachers can have an impact in their classrooms straight away. It will work with its own schools, and others, to offer placements for trainee teachers.

Ian Dewes, Chief Executive Officer at Odyssey Collaborative Trust, said: "We are proud to be partnering with the University of Derby to deliver their teacher training courses. Odyssey Collaborative Trust is passionate about providing high quality Initial Teacher Training & Education (ITTE) in a full-time school-based setting.

"We have a wealth of experience within education and within the continued professional development of our colleagues so this partnership is the perfect way for us to take the next step in supporting aspiring teachers in gaining the experience and qualifications they need to thrive and make an immediate impact in the classroom."

There are two options offered – a 3-7 option focusing on teaching younger pupils, or a 5-11 route.

The successful completion of the course will lead to the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), 60 credits towards a masters and a Teacher Reference Number (TRN). The course is full-time and lasts one year.

While on the programme, students will be supported by expert staff including a lead mentor and personal and academic tutor.



**'We have a wealth of experience within education so this is the perfect way for us to support aspiring teachers'**

Ian Dewes, CEO Odyssey Collaborative Trust

Sarah Charles, Head of The Institute of Education at the University of Derby, said: "We work collaboratively with expert colleagues from across our community of practice to deliver an innovative and ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of all learners.

"We are delighted to begin our partnership with Odyssey Collaborative Trust. This programme will equip new teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to have a significant impact on the lives of pupils that they work with."

# Learning from our Chinese exchange

## »»» OUR COLLEAGUES THRIVE

Headteachers from two of our schools have made changes to the way they work following a visit to Derby's twin city of Hefei in China. Through the Global School Alliance, Emma Wilkinson from Portway Junior School in Allestree and Paul Appleton from Cherry Tree Hill Primary School in Chaddesden, both travelled to Hefei last month.

It followed a visit from dozens of primary pupils from Hefei to both Derby schools, which are part of Odyssey Collaborative Trust, earlier in the year. The two Derby headteachers spent time visiting several schools in Hefei, experiencing different ways of teaching and learning. For Paul, one of takeaways from the trip was how the schools in China celebrate success.

**“I think our school days are quite fast-paced and there is a lot of rushing around so I’m keen to find ways we can encourage staff to slow the pace down a little.”**

**Emma Wilkinson,  
Portway Junior School**

“Every school we visited had an entire museum of its own, marking its own history and celebrating its successes,” he said. “These were vast rooms full of documents, memorabilia and trophies which charted the schools’ developments and achievements through the years.

“Everyone knew so much about their own school’s story and it just really showed a sense of pride and that’s something I was keen to bring back to Cherry Tree Hill – a way of sharing our pride in our school and celebrating our successes.”

Emma is planning on introducing some ways of helping staff and students to slow down following her visit. She said: “What I really noticed was that pupils were encouraged to slow down and do things very precisely over there. They would do things over and over until they were happy.”

The school has already introduced an afternoon break to help children reset and focus for later classes, but now Emma is looking for other ways to bring more mindful practices into learning.

“I think our school days are quite fast-paced and there is a lot of rushing around so I’m keen to find ways we can encourage staff to slow the pace down a little and help children to take their time with tasks.”

Both Paul and Emma are hoping to be able to take children on a trip to Hefei in a few years to experience the education system for themselves.

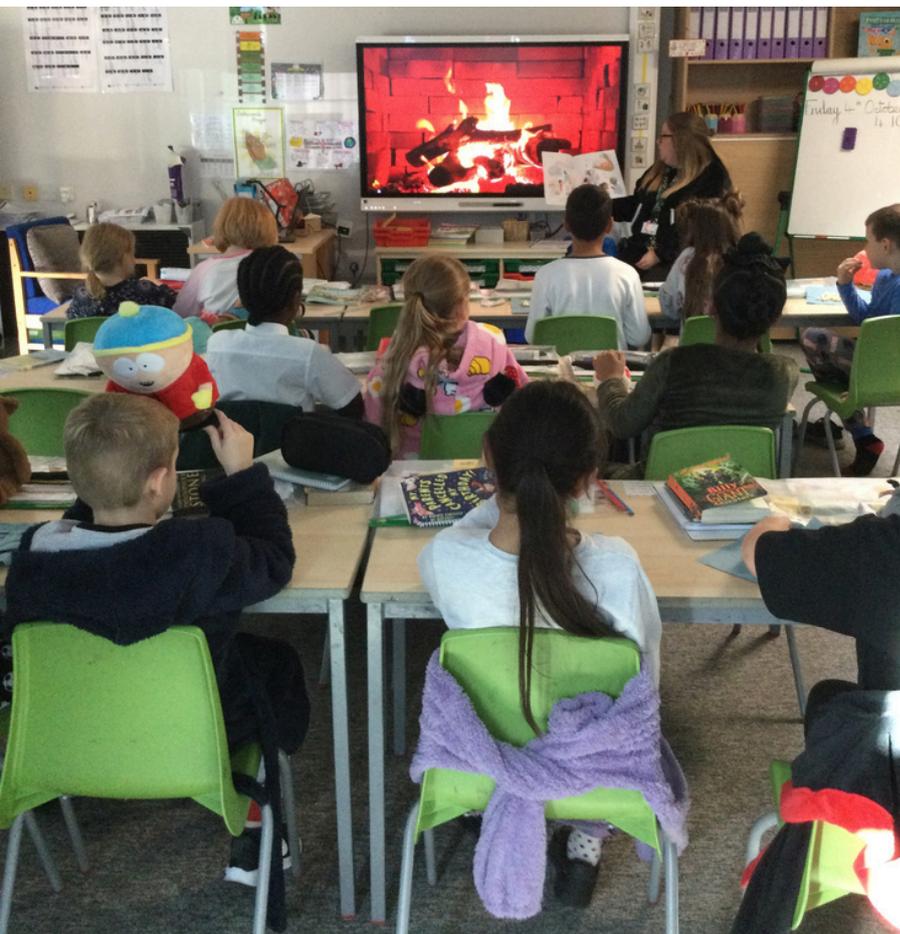


# Choir hits the right note at Asda

## ➤➤ SPRINGFIELD PRIMARY



The choir from Springfield Primary School delighted shoppers at Asda with their Christmas songs, spreading festive cheer with their wonderful performance. Their singing didn't just capture the attention of the shoppers – it also impressed the team at McDonalds, who kindly treated our talented singers to a drink as a thank you for their efforts.



# Reading challenge

## ➤➤ OAKWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Oakwood Junior School in Derby staged a readathon this term, to encourage a love of reading among its pupils who were invited to immerse themselves in the world of books. The readathon was another step in fostering a vibrant reading culture at the heart of the school community. Well done everyone!

# Budding scientists reach for the stars

## »» BEAUFORT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Children at Beaufort Primary School aimed for the stars - and the planets - during a space workshop with Rolls-Royce.

Their fantastic STEM outreach team, which has visited other schools in the Trust, worked with children to inspire a love of science.

Children learnt about the various STEM careers while hands-on activities included making and launching a rocket. Children and colleagues are already excited about the next visit from Rolls-Royce!



# New wall art

## »» CHERRY TREE HILL PRIMARY

When mural artist Leigh Irvine received a call about painting a wall in a school library, he was filled with nostalgia when he found out the school's name.

Cherry Tree Hill Primary School, in Chaddesden, had seen some of Leigh's work locally so asked if he was available - not knowing he was a former pupil. Leigh had attended the school in the 1990s, from nursery school age all the way up to leaving for secondary school.

He's created a stunning piece of artwork for the library and certainly left his mark on the school - several decades after he left!



# Pupils put mental health first

## ➤➤➤ ASTERDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Students at Asterdale Primary School came together to observe World Mental Health Day with a variety of activities. In an effort to promote peer support, the pupils elected Wellbeing Buddies in every year group.

The day began with a special assembly focused on the importance of mental health and the incredible work of the charity YoungMinds, which raises awareness and funds for children and young people's mental well-being. As part of their commitment to this cause, the entire school participated in the charity's "Wear Yellow" initiative, donning bright yellow attire to show solidarity and raise funds for YoungMinds.

Adding an extra layer of fun, the school's PTFA organised an Emoji Glow Disco in the evening. This vibrant event invited students to "dress to express," using their clothing to reflect their personalities and emotions. With music, glowing decorations, and creative costumes, the disco reinforced the message that expressing oneself is a key part of maintaining good mental health.

At Asterdale, mental health is seen as a golden thread weaving through every aspect of school life. By focusing on mental health in such creative and inclusive ways, Asterdale Primary School is fostering a supportive environment where everyone can thrive, learn, and grow together.

## Food donations

### ➤➤➤ BORROW WOOD PRIMARY

A heartfelt thank you to everyone at Borrow Wood Primary who generously contributed to Food 4 Thought during the Harvest Festival. The food donations have now been collected by the charity and will make a significant difference to the lives of families in our local community who are facing challenging times. Every item donated will help ensure that these families have access to nourishing meals and the comfort of knowing their community cares.

