




***New course set
to instil social
work values
across the Trust***

***Nailing it: Young
woodworkers tackle
community projects***

***Introducing CCS's
Youth Support Team***



***Climbing
frame takes
playtime to
another level***

Welcome

Greetings and welcome to the latest instalment of Novalis News! We hope you enjoy reading about some of the events and exciting developments which have been taking place at our two Schools in recent weeks.

As part of its ongoing commitment to fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for staff, pupils, and residents, Novalis launched its comprehensive wellbeing and mental health programme this term at a drop-in event introduced by Caroline Tebay, and led by Grace Chapman and Hannah Dury.

‘Cotswold Chine School which has been rated as “good” overall and “outstanding” for leadership and management.’

Recognising the pivotal role that mental health plays in our overall success, this new initiative seeks to provide essential resources, support networks and strategies to enhance the overall wellbeing of our whole community. You can find out more about the drop-in events on Pages 22 and 23.

Equally noteworthy is the introduction of an innovative social work course designed especially for staff members. The course aims to develop and embed the use of social work knowledge, skills, and values across Novalis and underscores our commitment to continuous professional development.

We're also pleased to share the news of our recent Ofsted inspection results for the care provision at Cotswold Chine School which has been rated as “good” overall and “outstanding” for leadership and management. This achievement speaks to the commitment and effort of our team in creating a secure, caring, and positive environment for our students. The acknowledgement from Ofsted reaffirms our commitment to maintaining high standards in everything that we do.

We'll be bringing you more Trust news at the end of the summer term. In the meantime, I wish you and your families a very happy Easter.



Carol Hill

Deputy Headteacher
William Morris School

carol.hill@william-morris.org.uk



If you would like to help us save paper by receiving future Newsletters **by email** please register via the Novalis Trust homepage at novalis-trust.org.uk

Contents

Novalis swimmers make waves.....	1	Students run pop up hair and beauty salon.....	13
Leadership at CCS homes is outstanding	2	New creative arts trail for WMS.....	14
James and Bruno's Amazing Project.....	3	Skillzone teaches pupils how to play it safe.....	15
Novalis knitters hook up for a natter.....	4	Meet CCS's Youth Support Team	16
Pupils sign up for local activities	5	New climbing frame puts students on top of the world.....	18
WMS marks 100 days of learning.....	6	Novel ways to celebrate World Book Day	20
Caroline set for half marathon.....	8	Novalis Wellbeing Action Plan is up and running.....	22
James to take part in fundraiser challenge	8	Choir strikes a chord with residents.....	24
New course set to embed social work values.....	9	Library visits teach pupils not to judge a book by its cover	
Boys at the Workbench nail community projects.....	10		
CCS pupils shine during work experience week.....	12		

Novalis swimmers make waves at local gala



Novalis youngsters made quite the splash when they competed in a swimming gala at Tewkesbury Leisure Centre.



Seven pupils from Cotswold Chine and William Morris Schools took part in the event organised by YuGo – a Gloucestershire-based group which arranges sporting experiences for special educational needs schools across the county.

According to WMS Headteacher Gareth Parker and CCS teacher Ben Jones the children all performed confidently at the gala and were a credit to the Trust.

Working as a team, CCS pupils Alice, Clayton, and Warren took first place in the relay competition, with Warren

swimming twice. Clayton and Warren also came first in their front crawl races and second in their breaststroke and freestyle events respectively with Alice taking second place in her backstroke race. WMS pupils James and Lily came first in their freestyle races while the WMS relay team took third and fourth place in two events.

“I’m very proud of the way that the pupils conducted themselves both in terms of their performances and their behaviour,” said Ben. “They were all very positive about taking part and felt a massive sense of achievement afterwards. Everyone is keen to sign up for next year.”

The Trust’s pupils attend weekly swimming lessons at the Pulse in Dursley which provides an excellent opportunity for both sensory engagement and physical exercise.

“Swimming is a great activity for all children and especially for those who have additional needs,” says Ben. “The sense of weightlessness in the water is very calming and it helps children to develop self-confidence and belief in their abilities. As well as being an important life skill that can save lives, mastering the art of swimming offers many advantages as an adult ensuring that you never feel left out of water adventures on holiday.”

YuGo’s parent charity is Allsorts which supports families who have children with additional needs. It is hoped that the Tewkesbury swimming gala will become an annual fixture.

‘Working as a team, CCS pupils Alice, Clayton, and Warren took first place in the relay competition...’





Leadership at CCS's children's homes is outstanding, says Ofsted



Ofsted has rated the care provision at Cotswold Chine School as “good” overall and “outstanding” for leadership and management.

Following the three-day inspection in February, the Ofsted report described the leadership team as “strong and effective” and leaders and managers as “ambitious for the children in their care”.

“strong, effective and nurturing relationships”

Inspectors also found that the children who live at CCS are happy and feel safe. They said that staff “really care and want the best” for the children and that they have succeeded in building “strong, effective and nurturing

relationships” with them. Positive behaviour management was found to be well rooted in everyday practice.

CCS's therapeutic provision – overseen by qualified therapists who guide the clinical therapy assistants based in each house – was also praised by Ofsted as an excellent resource and a strength which ensured that children receive the support they need.

CEO Jake Lukas said the results were a positive reinforcement of the high standard of care provided to children who live at CCS.

“It was particularly pleasing that Ofsted acknowledged that the staff working in our homes feel well supported and that the training they receive is meaningful and helps them to meet the children's needs,” he added. “I'd like to congratulate Valerie Gomez, our Head of Care and Registered Manager, other members of the leadership team and all our care staff for their efforts. We'd also like to thank both the children and parents for the part they have played in this achievement.”

‘Inspectors also found that the children who live at CCS are **happy** and **feel safe**.’



HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE: JAMES & BRUNO'S AMAZING JOINT PROJECT

You've got to hand it to CCS student James – his recently completed high-tech construction project (pictured) is rather impressive!

James, aged 11, from Cedar Class spent several months building a hydraulic robotic hand with assistance from Bruno Greateorex, CCS's Head of Care (Guidance & Support).

The robotic hand simulates the movement of a human hand using hydraulic power for mechanical transmission without electricity. It allows every finger joint to adjust at different angles for a precisely closed

fist or an open palm. It can be used to execute different grip techniques allowing it to hold a variety of items such as a bottle, balls, or tiny screws.

"I've been supporting a number of children at CCS with creative projects as a way of helping them to build up relationships with other students and staff," says Bruno. "James has shown great commitment and determination seeing this project through to the end. He should be very proud of his efforts."

James, who joined CCS last year, says he found the weekly construction sessions really enjoyable. "I've loved working on this project with Bruno," he added. "It helped me to stay calm and have a focus when things were difficult for me."



Novalis knitters hook up for a natter!



A keen group of crafty Novalis staff are knitting and nattering their way to contentment in a cosy classroom setting every Friday afternoon.

Set up by Becky Kent (Head of CCS Sixth Form), the Trust's Knit and Natter group is open to staff from across the organisation.

"Knitters and crocheters of every level of ability are welcome", enthuses Becky, who taught herself during the pandemic by watching YouTube videos and now describes herself as a "prolific" knitter. "Beginners will find it's a supportive environment because we all help one another and share our knowledge."

It's well known that knitting can be beneficial for both physical and mental health because the repetitive motions can help to calm the mind and promote relaxation. It also requires the use of fine motor skills which improves dexterity and hand-eye co-ordination.

"I've certainly found that knitting helps to quieten the mind at the end of a busy working week," says Becky. "It's

also a great way of connecting with colleagues who we might not have met before, and it allows us to develop friendships in a positive space."

As well as the health benefits, Becky says the members of the group enjoy the sense of achievement that comes with finishing projects which have included dresses, mittens, Christmas crowns as well as baby cardigans, hats, and booties for Novalis staff members' newborns.

Anyone who would like to join the Knit and Natter group can find out more information by emailing Becky at: becky.kent@cotswold-chine.org.uk



JOIN THE CLUB!



PUPILS SIGN UP FOR LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Children from Cotswold Chine School are strengthening their connections with the local community by signing up to an assortment of clubs across Gloucestershire.

More than a dozen pupils are currently taking part in activities run by local organisations which not only helps to promote closer community ties but also fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion amongst the children.

Manager of CCS's Youth Support Team, Sam Connell, explains that club membership is often inspired by the children's interests and talents with staff encouraging pupils to pursue new hobbies and learn new skills to build their confidence and self-esteem.

'...to pursue new hobbies and learn new skills to build their confidence and self-esteem.'

"At present we have a couple of good footballers – Kye and Catherine – who are training and playing with Stonehouse Town FC and Dursley Town FC. Sol is really benefitting from Jiu Jitsu sessions at the Stroud Martial Arts Club," says Sam. "Naomi's membership at a CheerDance group in Gloucester led to her performing in the club's end of year show last Christmas which was fantastic."

Budding equestrian Isobel volunteers and rides at the Barton End Riding Centre while fellow horse lovers Leah and Lilah attend lessons at the Tumpey Green Riding Centre. Mya is improving her fitness levels through her membership of the Anytime Fitness Gym in Stroud.

CCS children are also well represented at local youth clubs. David and James have become regular attendees at Nailsworth Youth Club and Phoebe is an active member of Stroud's Door Project Youth Club.

A number of children will soon be joining clubs run by the All Sorts Charity in Stroud which include dance, swimming, trampolining, and football.

"Joining a local club gives the children the opportunity to explore a range of hobbies and improve their skillset," says Sam. "It's also an important way of developing independence and friendships outside of school."

Sam says that she and her team are constantly on the lookout for community activities to inspire pupils and sometimes the children will initiate the request themselves. Once a local club is identified, Sam will discuss the proposal before carrying out a full risk assessment. Children are usually accompanied at sessions by a member of staff but there is potential for pupils to attend independently over time.

"Taking part in a new group activity shows real bravery and commitment on the children's part. Pupils who've chosen to join these groups are breaking out of their comfort zones and increasing their social interactions which leads to all sorts of positive outcomes in the long term," says Sam.

"If any children would like to join a new club then please could they let either me or another member of the youth support team know so we can look into it further. We'd also like to hear from members of staff who might be aware of other local clubs so that we can spread the word and find out if these are of interest to any of the children."



LOOK AT HOW FAR WE'VE COME: WMS MARKS 100 DAYS OF LEARNING!

William Morris School marked the amazing progress made by pupils since the beginning of the academic year with a **100 days of learning** celebration.

A number of fun events marking this learning milestone – which was reached on March 5th – took place throughout the School.

“There are at least 100 reasons for our children and staff to feel very proud of what they have achieved...”

As well as running activities within individual classrooms, staff also set up a number of themed stations around the site including a 100 acts of kindness wall chart for pupils to fill in and a stall in Upper Court offering 100 tiny snacks.

In other events, Rose Class clocked up 100 laps of the School's grounds and Acorn Class came up with 100 words to describe some of the things that they have accomplished so far this year. The children also

participated in a 100-word creative writing project describing how they think the world might look in 100 years' time.

There was also an opportunity to take part in a 100-cup tower structure challenge in the Art Room and get involved in some hands-on gardening by helping to plant 100 spring bulbs.

Headteacher Gareth Parker said the event highlighted how much the children had learned since September.

“We thought it would be a great opportunity to reflect upon the huge strides that all our pupils have made so far this year and to celebrate the hard work and dedication of all our staff,” Gareth added. “There are at least 100 reasons for our children and staff to feel very proud of what they have achieved already but we're sure that everyone will approach the remainder of the year with the same levels of enthusiasm and curiosity for learning!”





Ready, steady go... Caroline is set for charity half marathon

Novalis Deputy CEO Caroline Tebay is running the London Landmarks Half Marathon this month in aid of the charity Breast Cancer Now.

This is the third time that Caroline, who is also the Trust's Head of Clinical and Therapy Services, has taken part in the fundraising event which takes competitors through a closed-road route highlighting hidden and quirky landmarks of central London.

Her chosen charity, Breast Cancer Now, is currently funding over 70 cutting-edge projects worth over £24m aimed at preventing breast cancer which is the most common cancer in the world. The charity's research has led to around 200 scientific discoveries during its 50 year history.

"More than 55,000 people are diagnosed with breast cancer every year in the UK alone," says Caroline.

"I have too many family members and close friends who have been affected so I wanted to do something to show my support. I recently became aware of Breast Cancer Now and the great work that they do from those who are accessing their support services."

You can donate to Caroline's JustGiving page via this link: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/caroline-tebay3



James pushes himself to the limit for fundraiser ultra-challenge

Novalis OT James Mountjoy is set to run a gruelling 100km loop of the Cotswold Way in just one day in support of Cancer Research UK.

The endurance event – known as the Cotswold Way Ultra Challenge – starts and finishes at Cirencester basecamp on June 23rd and involves 2,250 metres of climbing across hilly terrain.

Although James has previously climbed Ben Nevis, Scarfell Pike and Snowden as well as successfully

completing long distance walks including Hadrian's Wall, this is the first time he has attempted a 100km run.

His training schedule has involved running 5–6km three times a week in the evenings, after he's helped put his two young children to bed, with double that distance at weekends. As part of his preparations, he completed the Rayader Round the Lakes 30km trail race with WMS Headteacher Gareth Parker in March. In order to maintain his general strength and fitness, he's also been doing weight training sessions, cycling and he plays squash regularly with colleagues from Novalis.

James is hoping to raise £1,000 for Cancer Research UK, a cause which holds special significance for him. "Everyone knows someone who's been touched by cancer," he says. "My grandparents both died of the disease and my godson had childhood leukaemia which he has thankfully beaten now. Taking part in this race is my way of trying to help others who have also been affected."

You can donate to James' JustGiving page via this link:

www.justgiving.com/page/james-mountjoy-1693476828567?utm_term+qw5d9jkG

'...my way of trying to help others who have also been affected.'



New course set to embed **social work values** across the Trust

An introductory course which seeks to instil social work skills and values throughout Novalis was launched this term.



The two-year Introduction to Social Work course – which has been designed by Kate Barnett (Professional Development Consultant) and other members of the Trust's management team – will deepen senior care workers' understanding of the profession and prepare staff who wish to pursue a degree apprenticeship in the subject.

More than a dozen members of the care team from Cotswold Chine and William Morris Schools and Paradise House have already started the course which involves a blend of monthly workshops and self-reflective study led by senior social workers and managers from within the Trust. Specialists from outside Novalis will also be invited to share their expertise at some of the workshops.

“The course aims to develop and embed the use of social work knowledge, skills and values across Novalis and support the development of outstanding practice within our homes,” said Kate, who is herself a qualified social worker. “It will follow the Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Workers covering each of the nine learning domains which include topics such as professionalism, values and ethics and diversity as well as rights, justice and economic wellbeing.”



‘Social work values and practices align very closely with everything we do here at the Trust...’

The training will also provide a platform for staff who wish to undertake the three-year BSc in Social Worker Apprenticeship being offered by the University of Gloucestershire. Those wanting to progress to degree level study will be supported to produce a portfolio of evidence of their course learnings.

“Social work values and practices align very closely with everything we do here at the Trust,” adds Kate. “Everyone on the course will gain a greater understanding of why we place such a high priority on individualised care at Novalis. What participants learn will cascade down to the staff they are supervising inspiring the use of social work values throughout the organisation.”

The course will also provide care staff with enhanced career development opportunities. “Staff might join us as keyworkers but within five years they could progress to becoming practising social workers,” Kate said. “Members of the education and therapy teams have a distinct career pathway. We want to ensure that we can provide a strong professional development route for all our care staff as well.”

BOYS AT THE WORKBENCH NAIL COMMUNITY PROJECTS



A group of Novalis sixth formers are creating meaningful pieces of woodwork for the local community during weekly sessions at the Nailsworth Community Workshop.

Connor, Laurance, Stevie, and Ty all take part in the “Boys at the Workbench” initiative which has its roots in the Australian “Men’s Shed” movement providing spaces for men to express themselves in a neutral environment whilst carrying out manual activities.

During the sessions, the students are supported by CCS Teacher Lewis Newman, Trust Occupational Therapist James Mountjoy and woodwork tutor Gavin Pond who set up the Nailsworth Community Workshop with former charity fundraiser Pam Brown in 2009.

The sixth formers are currently working on two exciting community projects – an oak garden bench for the residents of Minchinhampton’s Horsfall Care Home and a unique handmade electric guitar built from a variety of materials including richly coloured plum tree wood. The finished guitar will be donated to the Trinity Centre in Bristol, a charity which runs a diverse programme of creative and performing arts.

Sixth Form teacher Lewis says the Tuesday morning sessions provide the boys with a safe space to talk about what’s going on in their lives whilst gaining practical woodworking skills and channelling their creativity. In addition to this, “Boys at the Workbench” gives the boys a sense of “greater purpose” as a result of being able to create something worthwhile for others.

“We’re a close knit group which means that the students feel able to share any concerns they might have or discuss what’s going well for them in a very supportive environment,” adds Lewis. “The boys get a lot from the sessions on a personal level, but it’s also been fantastic to see how enthusiastically they’ve embraced the concept of making something which will benefit the local community.”

As an occupational therapist, James Mountjoy is able to enhance the woodworking sessions by incorporating strategies to address individual challenges, for example promoting fine and gross motor skills development. He also focuses on how the boys’ participation can help with building skills acquisition, independence, and confidence.

Lewis says that Connor, Stevie, Laurance, and Ty have been actively involved in choosing the distinctive designs of the garden bench and the electric guitar. “The garden bench is a curvy rustic design, and the guitar is particularly unique. Its main body is shaped like a devil’s horns, and it features a scroll type head, similar to a violin,” Lewis says.

It’s hoped that the bench – which will feature a plaque recognising the boys’ contribution to the project – will be ready to be presented to the Horsfall residents during the summer term.

Meanwhile, Gavin and Lewis are in the process of planning a visit to the Trinity Centre in Bristol so that the group can find out more about the charity’s work and how their guitar will be used.





‘..building skills acquisition, independence, and confidence.





CCS pupils shine during work experience week



Cotswold Chine pupils hosted an afternoon tea for residents from a nearby care home and helped out at a toddler group as part of a work experience week with a local community focus.

Students who had elected to try their hand at hospitality during the School's work experience week invited 17 residents from Minchinhampton's Horsfall House Nursing Home to a high tea at the Halfway Café where they served up a selection of sandwiches and homemade cakes they'd prepared and baked themselves.

Later in the week the same students catered for eight members of the British Legion at another afternoon tea event at the Halfway Café.

Jaimme Burfoot (CCS Assistant Headteacher) said Cotswold Chine's connection with Horsfall House began last year when students wrote letters to the residents as part of an English coursework project.

"It's a special and worthwhile link to have made," said Jaimme. "Engaging with older members of our community fosters understanding, empathy and mutual respect between both the children and the care home residents. It was wonderful to see our children interacting so well with the Horsfall residents and members of the British Legion."

In other work experience week placements within the community, students helped run activities for youngsters attending the Playcircle toddler group in Nailsworth. Others assisted local school children as they explored the great outdoors during Forest School outings.

Jaimme said that both placements had taught pupils the importance of adapting their skills to different workplace environments and provided experience of working with younger age groups. "After their experiences, the pupils

then came back to Cotswold Chine and took sessions with some of the junior class groups which reinforced many of the things they'd learnt," she said.

During the week students also worked at animal haven Peopleton Brook Farm, Tumpey Green House Stables, the All Pets petshop in Stonehouse and the Kitchen Café in Minchinhampton as well as Gavin Pond's community woodwork workshop in Nailsworth.

'The students were able to build self-esteem and confidence...'

Some students were based closer to home enjoying stints with the Trust's HR and maintenance teams as well as with Novalis head chef Paul Carney at Ebley House.

"The work experience week was real preparation for adulthood," said Jaimme. "The students were able to build self-esteem and confidence as well as interpersonal and communication skills."

Jaimme said that employers had provided valuable feedback, all of which had been very positive. "Every student saw their placement through to the end showing a good work ethic and reliability", she added.

CCS runs two work experience weeks in both the summer and autumn terms and are always keen to hear from local employers who might be interested in providing placements for CCS students.





STUDENT STYLISTS RUN POP-UP HAIR AND BEAUTY SALON



CCS students Destiny, Emily and Kaci ran a popular hair and beauty salon for staff and pupils at Paradise House's wellbeing suite during work experience week.

Hair and beauty professionals from Claire Frances Hair Design in Nailsworth visited the Trust to teach the trio how to professionally wash, blow dry and style hair and how to give relaxing hand and face massages.

Charlotte Paiva (CCS teacher), who supervised the students, said all three had embraced the opportunity to learn new skills with great enthusiasm.

“...all three had embraced the opportunity to learn new skills with great enthusiasm.”

“After receiving their training on the first morning, Destiny, Kaci and Emily spent the rest of the day carrying out treatments on each other so that they could practise honing their skills,” she said. “The following day they worked on preparing their salon at Paradise House, creating advertising posters and gathering resources from local beauty shops.”

The students' talents were very much in demand and the high uptake from staff and other students ensured that they had a full appointment diary for a variety of treatments which included gel nail polishes, hair straightening and curling, washes and blow dries as well as hand and face massages.

“Kaci, Destiny and Emily were delighted to receive some very positive feedback and email reviews from their clients who enjoyed being pampered,” said Charlotte. “They did themselves proud and learnt a lot about time management and how to organise themselves as well as gaining some excellent hair and beauty experience.”



Novalis walks the talk with new creative arts trail

An imaginative new creative arts trail designed around the Trust's five core values is to be constructed within the grounds of William Morris School.

The Novalis Values Walk will take visitors on an interactive journey guiding them to five different locations across the School site where they will find an outdoor art installation representing each of Novalis' five values: positivity, creativity, empathy, kindness, and curiosity.

'Art has the power to communicate and inspire...'

Trust CEO Jake Lukas said the new initiative was a unique way of sharing and reinforcing the beliefs that guide what Novalis does as an organisation.

"Art has the power to communicate and inspire and we're all really excited about bringing the Trust's values to

life through this exciting project," he said. "We hope that everyone who comes to the School will enjoy finding out more about our guiding principles and our portrayal of these through a variety of art works."

Bristol company EatCake Design has teamed up with Novalis to assist with the design of the values walk. Its co-owner and graphic designer Jon Osborne will be creating some of the project's installations including an LED fibre optic information and map display in the WMS entrance lobby. It's hoped that other artists connected with the Trust will also get involved.

Novalis's maintenance team will be assisting with the construction of the trail which is expected to be completed over the summer. Similar future projects are planned for Paradise House and Cotswold Chine School.

Explore our values trail

All learning starts with the establishment of **safety**. A sense of well-being and positive relational health is important to **William Morris School** and is reflected in **our values**. Our values help us build trust and create a positive impact on ourselves, relationships, and society. Follow the trail marked by the dotted line on the map and look out for an art installation at each value station.

Novalis Trust | William Morris School





SKILLZONE

VISIT TEACHES PUPILS HOW TO PLAY IT SAFE

Pupils from William Morris School visited a state-of-the-art safety education centre designed to help children stay safe at home and within the wider community.

The life-sized SkillZONE village – operated by the Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service – is made up of 17 zones each presenting a range of potential hazards which people might face in their everyday lives.

Taking part in challenging real life scenarios, pupils from Acorn, Lark, Rose, and Vine classes explored the interactive areas which included a full-sized house where volunteer guides offered advice about kitchen safety and how to prevent and tackle fires.

At the realistic dark alley zone, the youngsters learned the importance of never taking short cuts at night and avoiding situations where they might become vulnerable. When they visited the road zone, they were encouraged to think about their safety as a pedestrian including considering distractions, how long it takes a car to stop and the correct use of a pelican crossing.

Other zones featured information and advice about how to stay safe around water and electricity, in parks, farms, building sites, train stations and railway level crossings.

James Phillips (Assistant Headteacher) said the pupils had found the trip to SkillZONE both enlightening and thought-provoking.

“It was an empowering experience for the children to be able to focus on making good decisions about their own personal safety in real life settings,” he said. “They were even able to practise making a 999 call so that they could learn about the information call handlers require and of course the importance of only calling 999 in a real emergency. Rose Class particularly enjoyed visiting the railway zone where there was an imitation train that created a slipstream that blew everyone’s hair.”

SkillZONE measures the effectiveness of its programme by asking attendees to complete a quiz before and after their visit. Analysis of these results has shown that visitors report making safer choices following a learning session at the village.





Meet Cotswold Chine School's YOUTH SUPPORT TEAM!

In this issue of Novalis News, we'd like to celebrate the great work done by Cotswold Chine School's youth support team.

Youth support workers have a wide range of responsibilities including supporting children to participate in activities such as PE, cooking, arts and crafts, woodwork, Forest School, and swimming lessons. They recently came under the umbrella of the Trust's Education team highlighting the valuable contribution they make towards the children's learning.

In addition to classroom duties, the 8-strong team also operates an after school club for residential students from Monday to Thursday. This term's activities have included keep active sessions, board game club and drama and singing.

Sam Connell (CCS Youth Support Team Manager) explains that the team also accompany children to external clubs being run within the local community and organise the children's half term activities which run throughout the academic year. Another important part of the youth support worker's job is planning and hosting monthly youth club sessions in the Halfway Café.

"These are usually based around a theme and have included celebrations for Chinese New Year, Halloween, or major sporting events such as the World Cup," says Sam. "The children really look forward to youth club night as it's a fun way of getting everyone together in a relaxed setting. The team put in a lot of effort into planning the themes which are always educational as well!"

As you might expect, the youth support team comprises a number of strong sportspeople including Finn Fowler who plays for Stonehouse Town FC and was named as one of the players of the match in the recent Novalis inter staff game in which he scored all four of his team's goals!

Ella Hitchcox takes her sport seriously too playing indoor futsal to a high level with Hartpury Futsal Club. Dom Bergonzi also brings to CCS his expertise as a local scout leader. Lucy Hedges shares her knowledge and experience of graphic design with sixth formers during their art classes.

"A lot of the team are either sports or arts graduates, so we have a great mix of people who are interested in getting the children active and engaging them in arts and crafts activities," adds Sam.

A sports therapy graduate herself, Sam has been leading the team for the past year. She started at the Trust five years ago when she joined as one of the very first youth support workers. She was promoted to deputy manager and, after taking a short break away from the Trust, re-joined as team manager in 2022.

Following her recent return from maternity leave, Sam has been supporting the youth support workers as they become fully integrated with the Trust's Education team. She's also taken a lead in encouraging students to participate in local community clubs.

"It's been great to see how the role of youth support workers has expanded at Cotswold Chine over the years," says Sam. "We've got a great group who are really dedicated to making a positive impact on the children's lives."

As well as Sam, Finn, Ella, and Dom the other members of the team are: Elliot Baldwin, Lucy Hedges, Abby Wajtknecht, and Millie Reeves.





“We’ve got a great group who are really dedicated to making a **positive impact** on the children’s lives.”



A young boy with short hair, wearing a green school sweater with a small orange logo on the chest and dark blue trousers, is climbing a metal frame. He is looking upwards with a focused expression. The frame consists of several horizontal bars and vertical posts. The background shows a clear blue sky and some green trees. The text is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

**NEW CLIMBING FRAME
PUTS STUDENTS ON
TOP OF THE WORLD**



Playtime at William Morris School has reached new heights thanks to the installation of a brand new giant timber climbing frame.

The three-metre high frame – which features monkey bars, log stepping stones and climbing nets – was unveiled at a special ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by WMS staff and pupils as well as the Trust's senior managers and members of maintenance team who spent many hours assembling it.

As soon as Novalis trustee Maureen Smith cut the ribbon, pupils wasted no time in testing their agility and courage on the new piece of equipment with staff also joining in on the fun. Jane White (Domestic Manager) and Clare Twizzell (Deputy Domestic Manager) were on hand to provide soft drinks and fairy cake refreshments to the thrill seekers.

Martha Lukas (Placement Planning Social Worker), who chairs the WMS School Council, said that the pupils had been quick to give the new installation a big thumbs up.

"A lot of hard work went into the project," said Martha. "The idea for a climbing frame came from the School Council and WMS headteacher Gareth with the maintenance team spending many hours on its construction. The children are thrilled with it and are getting very confident using it and proud of the progress they've been able to make on the monkey bars."

James Phillips (WMS Assistant Headteacher) said the frame was a great addition to the playground. "As well as being a fun piece of equipment, it also helps the pupils to improve their gross motor skills and their balance, co-ordination, and agility."

Thanks to all the maintenance team who made it happen but especially Rhys Rounds and Matt Rea and his son Olly who were responsible for most of the construction work.



NOVALIS FINDS NOVEL WAYS TO CELEBRATE WORLD BOOK DAY!

Staff and pupils from William Morris and Cotswold Chine Schools took part in a variety of inspiring World Book Day events to celebrate the difference that reading makes to our lives!

This year's World Book Day theme of "Read Your Way" highlighted the fact that children are more likely to enjoy reading when it's made fun.

The charity behind the event called on everyone to let go of the pressure and expectations around reading, giving youngsters choice and a chance to enjoy all sorts of literature.

At WMS, staff created a series of imaginative book-based experiences in different rooms around the School. Each room was decorated to tie in with a particular book title. Dressing in theme, staff read passages from each book during visits from pupils.

Kallie Parker (WMS English lead) said that celebrating World Book Day helped to instil a lifelong love of reading and fostered a sense of community around literature.

"Reading exposes children to new worlds, characters and ideas and encourages them to think beyond their immediate surroundings," she added. "Reading can also be a calming and enjoyable activity which provides an escape from daily stressors and contributes to emotional wellbeing."

At CCS, there was story book evening for Seedling and Sapling students in the School Hall. Children came along in their pyjamas to enjoy a range of bedtime stories and a healthy snack.

Students were also invited to dress up as their favourite book character or bring in their favourite book with storytelling events involving teachers reading favourite books from their own childhood taking place throughout the day.

"Reading exposes children to new worlds, characters and ideas..."

There was also a book fair held in the science room arranged by the independent Gloucester-based business The Yellow Lighted Bookshop.

Clare Bonnici (CCS SENCo) said the fair encouraged a love for reading by providing access to a diverse range of books, catering to different interests and reading levels.

"There was a real buzz around the School for the World Book Day events," she added. "The book fair helped generate excitement around reading and was the perfect opportunity for students to explore new stories and expand their literary horizons."





HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WIZARD?

**APPROACH WITH EXTREME CAUTION
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO USE
MAGIC AGAINST THIS WIZARD**

Any information leading to the arrest of this wizard shall be duly rewarded. Notify immediately by owl to the Ministry of Magic.

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS WIZARD?

**APPROACH WITH EXTREME CAUTION
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO USE
MAGIC AGAINST THIS WIZARD**

Any information leading to the arrest of this wizard shall be duly rewarded. Notify immediately by owl to the Ministry of Magic.



NOVALIS WELLBEING ACTION PLAN IS UP AND RUNNING!

Novalis kicked off its new wellbeing and mental health action plan this term with an interactive drop-in event for staff, students, and residents.

The launch day event was based on: "The Four Pillars of Health: Sleep, Relaxation, Movement and Eat" with members of the Trust's therapy and youth support teams providing information and advice on each topic at stations set up around Ebley House.

Caroline Tebay (Deputy CEO and Head of Clinical and Therapy Services) introduced the day's themes which had been adapted from GP and author Dr Rangan Chatterjee's best-selling book on healthy living.

"While Novalis has always embraced a robust wellbeing culture, we're thrilled to be able to formalise this further through the introduction of an action plan designed to enhance the mental health and wellbeing of all our staff, children and residents," said Caroline.

The Trust's new initiative includes a dedicated online wellbeing resources site and personalised wellbeing action plans for all employees, residents, and children. It was developed after Grace Chapman (Deputy Head of Clinical and Therapy Services) and Hannah Dury (CCS Head Teacher) took part in a pilot programme entitled "Embedding Staff Mental Health in School" run by the charity Education Support and NASS.

Visitors to the drop in event were given the opportunity to explore a number of suggestions about ways to improve their health and wellbeing. At the "sleep" station, Beth Price-Bish, Madina Panchbhaya, and Natalia Jarvis, offered guidance about the recommended number of hours' sleep for different age groups and how to make improvements to bedtime routines and sleep habits.

"We enjoyed working with children and adults to create individualised strategies for those who found it hard to fall asleep," said Beth. "We also handed out sleep diaries to anyone who wanted to track their sleep patterns over the next few weeks. Everyone was invited to build their own takeaway bedtime relaxation basket with items such as bath bombs, face masks, hand creams, eye masks and customised sleep sprays."

Magda Wrona and Holly Farrington ran the "relaxation" station, providing information on the importance of integrating self-care into everyday life including mood tracking and daily reflections using a positive planner as well as identifying relaxing hobbies and interests such as yoga, crochet, and colouring.

Learning about different food groups and why it's important to eat a balanced and varied diet was the focus of the "eat" station led by Sam Connell and Kirsty Preece. There was an opportunity for visitors to sample a range of foods which proved extremely popular with allcomers!

At the "movement" station, Ellie Keen and Emma Carter shared advice and information about the importance of keeping active and engaging in play, dance, and exercise. There were parachute games and a creating "a paperchain of kindness" activity on offer as well as a silent disco.

Other activities taking place throughout the day included the chance to send a compliment to someone in the post and opportunities for staff, children, and residents to fill out a questionnaire assessing their current engagement with the four pillars of health.

"Research has shown that being kind to others doesn't just benefit the receiver; it can also be incredibly beneficial for the giver's wellbeing too," said Caroline. "One study found that people who perform more acts of kindness in a day are more resilient to stress and have a more positive outlook on life. Practising kindness in the workplace and in relationships is an easy thing for us to do and can make a huge difference to our mental health."

Grace Chapman and Hannah Dury have designed and conducted staff and student surveys to establish a baseline Novalis wellbeing score which will be repeated every six months to monitor the progress of the new initiative.



“Practising **kindness** in the workplace and in relationships is an easy thing for us to do”



SCHOOL CHOIR STRIKES A CHORD WITH CARE HOME RESIDENTS

Children from Cotswold Chine School choir hit all the right notes when they performed for residents and staff at a local care home last term.

The choir – led by CCS music teacher Hilary Ball and Jaimme Burfoot (Assistant Head Teacher) – staged a medley of classic and contemporary Christmas carols during their visit to Oldbury Care Home in Stonehouse.

Their rendition of We Wish You a Merry Christmas was performed entirely in British Sign Language and during some of the carols they played jingle sticks which had been made by pupils from Holly and Cedar classes.

“The children loved meeting the residents and got a lot of pleasure from seeing them enjoying and singing along to their performance.”

The residents – all of whom dressed in festive clothing for the occasion – had made wonderful gift bags of cards and sweets for the children. The children were able to return the favour by handing out cards and mince pies and biscuits made by CCS pupils.

“It was a magical event,” said Jaimme. “The children loved meeting the residents and got a lot of pleasure from seeing them enjoying and singing along to their performance.”

The children received some fantastic feedback from the care home staff following their visit. “We really appreciated your kind gesture,” wrote one staff member. “We were honoured to have such kind and thoughtful children in our home. It certainly put a smile on everyone’s faces”.

Jaimme said CCS was delighted to have strengthened its links with Oldbury Care Home and hopes that the choir will perform there again in future.

“It was a special feeling for the children to be able to share joy with members of the local community,” added Jaimme. “Belonging to the choir also gives pupils an opportunity to forge relationships across the whole school. And of course, singing makes everyone feel fantastic.”







Library visits teach pupils not to judge a book by its cover



Pupils from Cotswold Chine School have been discovering that libraries encompass so much more than just books!

During visits to local libraries including Minchinhampton and Stroud, the students have been able to experience for themselves the huge range of resources on offer.

In addition to borrowing and reserving books of special interest to them, the CCS youngsters can also access computers, eBooks, eAudiobooks and a variety of reliable online news sources as well as digital magazines and comics.

Recently the School's sixth formers also signed up to The Lab – an innovative Gloucestershire library service led by a specialist tech team which provides digital skill development sessions on topics such as 3D design, print, scanning and prototyping.

Clare Bonnici (CCS Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) says the weekly trips have raised the children's awareness of the valuable role of libraries within the local community.

"Whilst libraries are the perfect place to foster a love of learning and reading, they also provide so much more than that," says Clare. "We want our students to know all about the amazing resources so that they'll feel confident about accessing these when they become fully independent adults. Libraries not only provide local communities with trusted sources of information and support, but they also offer skills development and learning for both children and adults."

According to Sixth former Mya, taking part in the LAB sessions run at Stroud Library has been an inspirational experience.

"In the LAB we discover and learn new things. It's great being able to make things with the 3D printer and the laser cutter. This increases our knowledge of computer aided design and manufacturing," says Mya. "For the 3D printer we use a website called Thingiverse which helps us to find print ideas. For the laser cutter we use All Illustrator. Then we can go into Google and select what we want to laser cut. The end results are amazing – it's been a really positive experience overall."

Holly Class pupil Zack is also getting a lot from his library visits. "It's great to spend time with friends at the library and also to get to know new people," he says. "You can look up any book you're interested in and reserve it – there's something for everyone at the library."

As part of its efforts to encourage a love of reading amongst pupils, the Trust is also strengthening its links with the independent Gloucestershire business The Yellow Lighted Bookshop which has two shops in Tetbury and Nailsworth.

"The staff there are really helpful and have given us excellent advice about which books might be good for our classrooms," says Clare. "We're delighted to be able to support a local community enterprise."