

Autumn 25



Welcome from the CEO



Welcome to the Autumn 2025 edition of our termly Salterns Academy Trust newsletter!

It has been an uplifting start to the academic year across all our schools, with students settling quickly into learning and staff leading with professionalism, warmth and aspiration for all. This term has already brought many highlights—from national recognition for our schools to inspiring curriculum innovation—and it is wonderful to see our community continuing to thrive.

As we approach this festive season, I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to all our staff, parents and carers for your support for our school communities throughout the year. This is a time for rest, reflection and togetherness, and I hope each of you finds moments of joy and connection over the festive break. On behalf of the Trust, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and hopeful New Year. I look forward to all we will achieve together in 2026.

Salterns Trust welcomes a new Chair

We are delighted to announce that **Paul Hayes** will be taking on the role of Chair of the Board for the Salterns Academy Trust. A. Paul brings experience, energy and commitment to our governance — and we look forward to working alongside him as we continue to grow and support our community across all of our schools.



We also want to say a heartfelt thank-you to **Andy Cree**, whose dedication and leadership as outgoing Chair have helped guide the Trust through important times. His service has laid a firm foundation for the future, and we are deeply grateful.

With Paul in his new role — and indeed Andy in the legacy of his service — we're excited about the journey ahead. Together we will continue to uphold our values of inclusion, aspiration and community for every student!!

Education Minister visits Admiral Lord Nelson School

On Thursday the 27th November Georgia Gould the Minister for School Standards and other DfE representatives visited Portsmouth and particularly ALNS.

They wanted to speak to school leaders, local MPs, local authority representatives and students about Inclusion and how SEND provision can work well within a mainstream setting.

The minister held meetings with school leaders, student groups and with a selection of Headteachers from across Portsmouth to help inform DfE thinking and planning around SEND and inclusion. During the visit, Minister Gould heard first-hand about what is working for children with SEND locally and what urgently needs to change. Discussions focused on early intervention, access to local provision, and the pressures schools and families face in securing timely support.

This was an amazing opportunity to share some of the great work we do around inclusion across the Trust and also to share some of the challenges that we face.- and we look forward to seeing how our ideas have influenced the Governments plans!

DfE visit Trafalgar School

We were delighted to welcome colleagues from the Department for Education to Trafalgar School recently, as part of an important visit arranged by Portsmouth City Council. The visit provided an opportunity to showcase how Trafalgar School and the Trust approach inclusion through strong relational practice—an area in which the DfE has already heard very positive feedback about the work taking place across our three schools.

The day included a tour of lessons and Trafalgar's three inclusion centres, alongside meetings with students and staff from across the Trust. These discussions focused on our shared journey and the practical ways inclusion is embedded in everyday school life. Feedback from both PCC and DfE colleagues was overwhelmingly positive, with visitors commenting on how inspirational it was not only to hear about our approach, but to see and feel it in action throughout Trafalgar School.

We are hopeful that what was seen and heard during the visit will help inform future DfE thinking, including the forthcoming White Paper and future funding decisions. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to making the day such a success—it was a powerful reminder of the difference our collective work continues to make.

Every day counts -Admiral Lord Nelson School and Trafalgar School Recognised as National Attendance Higher Performers

We are delighted that **Admiral Lord Nelson School** and **Trafalgar School** have been formally recognised by the Department for Education as *higher performing schools* for attendance within our national comparison group. This recognition places us amongst the strongest schools in the country for sustaining high attendance and reducing persistent absence – a significant achievement in the post-pandemic landscape where attendance remains a national challenge.

This acknowledgement follows the DfE's latest release of the **Similar Schools Comparison Report**, which now highlights schools with standout attendance performance. Being named means that other schools across England will see our approaches showcased and may contact us to learn from our systems, culture and practice – a testament to the hard work embedded across both academies.

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

Leading the Way Nationally

Only a small proportion of schools have reached or exceeded their pre-pandemic attendance levels, and we are proud to be among them. The report reinforces that our ethos of high expectations, relational support, early intervention and strong partnerships with families is making a meaningful, measurable difference.

Mayfield School makes the news

The Trust is proud that staff from Mayfield School were recently selected by the Local Authority to share their experiences of working with Neuro diverse students with a journalist from *The Economist*. The focus of the conversation was the city's Neurodiversity (ND) Team and, in particular, the ND profiling system used across the Trusts schools that enables us to identify and respond to a child's needs without waiting for a formal diagnosis. Portsmouth has long championed a needs-led approach to SEND, and while this may feel intuitive to those working within the system every day, it is increasingly clear that this practice is both distinctive and progressive on the national stage.



During the interview, Verity Howard (AHT/SEND CO) and Melanie Trise (Head of Provision) spoke in depth with *The Economist's* Slavea Chankara about how this approach shapes day-to-day practice in our schools. The resulting article, published on 1 November, attracted significant interest and led directly to a follow-up interview with the *Irish Independent*. Journalist Mary McCarthy highlighted the stark contrast between our model and the situation in Ireland, where children cannot access SEND support without an official diagnosis. It served as a powerful reminder of what we often take for granted within both Portsmouth and our Trust — that staff work tirelessly to understand each child's needs and act on them promptly.

The momentum has continued. Following the visibility created by these articles, ITV has approached the school for a potential feature involving Verity and other members of the Mayfield School community, focusing on the value and impact of meeting needs early rather than waiting for diagnostic confirmation.

What may feel like everyday practice within our Trust has unexpectedly generated widespread interest, and rightly so. Our collective commitment to recognising and supporting children's needs from the outset is not only central to our ethos but is increasingly seen as a beacon of common-sense, compassionate practice. We hope this growing attention ultimately leads to better outcomes for children and families far beyond our own community.

The Economist (1st November 2025) - [A fresh approach to helping children with special educational needs](#)

Trafalgar leader scoops Innovation award!

We are delighted to that the outstanding work of Chris Furnell, a highly valued member of our pastoral team at Trafalgar School has been recognised at the Teach Portsmouth awards where Chris was awarded the Innovation award

Only recently appointed to the school's leadership team, Chris continues to make a significant contribution to improving student attendance and strengthening our school community.

Chris has developed and launched a new peer-mentoring scheme that partners Key Stage 3 students with trained Year 10 and 11 mentors. The programme features weekly mentoring sessions, half-termly celebration events, group breakfasts to recognise achievements, and regular communication with parents.

Since its introduction, the scheme has delivered impressive results, including a 7% increase in attendance compared with the previous year, as well as stronger, more positive relationships between students, staff, and families.

We're proud to celebrate Chris's dedication and the meaningful difference his work is making across the school.



We were also thrilled that Andrew Beecher a long- serving volunteer at Admiral Lord Nelson School won the Volunteer award.

For over a decade, Andrew has led the gardening club, inspiring students to grow fruit and vegetables. His efforts have empowered children, fostering new skills and self-belief.

The students who work with Andrew see it as a huge highlight of the week; they share their produce and talk with excitement about what they will be doing next.

Andrew has re-engaged and reached out to those students who find it harder to find a sense of belonging or build relationships.

He has given some very vulnerable children the opportunity and outlet to be successful and feel like they have learnt new skills, equipping them with qualities that will help them once they leave the school.



Solent Languages Network: Celebrating Languages Across the Trust

The Solent Languages Network has had an exciting term, engaging students and staff across the Trust in a wide range of events celebrating the value of languages.

Teach Meet

On the 1st of October, primary, secondary and student teachers from across Portsmouth joined us at Admiral Lord Nelson School to explore smooth progression from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. Following this was a session led by our colleagues Catherine Woodward and Michelle Massey from the Kinder Language Network and this focussed on innovative ways to teach languages using song!

Careers in Languages – Languages at Work Day

On the 6th of October, over 120 students from both the primary and secondary phases discovered how languages open doors to global careers – the biggest event of its kind in recent years! Highlights included interactive sessions with interpreters, Futbol Lingo, and local business and Navy representatives. Students participated in mock interviews, gaining insight into communication, confidence, and cultural awareness. One student commented: *“I think that the event was very beneficial as I got to learn how languages*

helped in lots of different jobs, especially ones that you wouldn't think of like the Football industry and Police."



Languages at Work Day!



Languages at Work Day!



Languages at Work Day!



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Languages at Work Day!

British Council Webinar

On 16th of October, students attended “Careers with Languages – Where Can Languages Take Me?”, learning from professionals who grew up in, or are now based in Portsmouth, how language skills had shaped careers in finance, defence, and education.

GCHQ German Webinar & National Language Competition

On the 21st of October, students explored German in a hands-on GCHQ webinar, decoding messages and discovering how language skills applied to national security. One student commented after the webinar: “I find it interesting to look at careers that are more aspirational”. From the 17th – 21st of November, Year 9 students also competed in the GCHQ National Language Competition, tackling puzzles and problem-solving challenges for a chance to visit GCHQ!

Looking Ahead

Next year, the Solent Languages Network will continue to bring schools together with joint meetings in February and May 2026, our annual cross key-stage Languages Conference in July 2026, and a “**Celebrating Languages in Portsmouth Fortnight from the 16th – 27th March 2026**”, featuring a wide range of activities and events to celebrate languages across the Trust, Portsmouth and beyond.

Mayfield Primary Update

Reaching the end of Autumn Term, it is with mixed emotions that we share a few staffing changes into the new year. We are sad to say a few goodbyes to members of our support team who are taking up exciting roles and promotions in local schools. We are incredibly grateful for their hard work, dedication and contribution to our school community, and we

wish them the very best as they step into their new adventures. Looking ahead, we are delighted to welcome new members to our support team next term who have a range of experience from nursing to gymnastics! We look forward to seeing them in the New Year and warmly welcome them to our team.

Our Christmas shows this year were truly special—tear-jerking, energetic and wonderfully exhausting. The children performed beautifully and with such enthusiasm, and we are grateful to all who found time in their busy schedules to attend and support.

Congratulations to Year R, who were crowned the winners of our Christmas Door Competition, with Seals class taking a close second place and Octopus class celebrating a triumphant third. A huge thank you to Mrs Phillimore, our Student Services Manager, who encouraged the excitement, negotiated the friendly (!) competition and judged the final entries. Key Stage 2 are already thinking ahead and planning their approach to be able to emerge victorious in next year's challenge....

The Polar Express Movie Night enjoyed by our Key Stage 1 children added a touch of magic to the festivities, especially when welcoming some of our previous primary pupils from Admiral Lord Nelson School to join our Mayfield Students to help with popcorn and hot chocolate deliveries. Our Christmas Jumper Day also proved popular with both staff and children, and the team enthusiastically shared gravy and squash duties during our Primary Christmas Lunch that day.





This half term, Primary Leaders and members of our teaching staff joined the Rivers C of E Trust to participate in Teacher Research Groups, helping us continue the development of our Mayfield Primary Teaching & Learning Toolkit. Alongside this work, pupils across the school have enjoyed a busy schedule of trips and experiences. Year 5 joined other schools across the city to watch our Secondary students' impressive production of *The Wizard of Oz*, which left many of our pupils feeling inspired for their own future performances. Year 4 enjoyed an informative visit to the Sustainability Centre, while Year 3 took part in an exciting animal care workshop delivered by Zoolab. Meanwhile, Year R visited St Nicholas Church and had the pleasure of meeting Rev'd Samantha Duddles as part of their Nativity celebrations.

Our OPAL play programme continues to thrive, with children regularly sharing how much they enjoy the freedom to choose their play activities and how valued they feel knowing that no one judges the way they choose to spend their playtime. We are very grateful for the donations we have received so far, which have made a significant difference. If families are sorting through items at home to make space for new Christmas presents, we would be delighted to receive any further contributions!

Festive Joy at Mayfield School nativities

The recent Mayfield School nativity plays offered a warm and memorable start to the holiday season, bringing our youngest students, families, and staff together in celebration. Each performance reflected the hard work, creativity, and enthusiasm of our students who delivered their roles with confidence and joy.



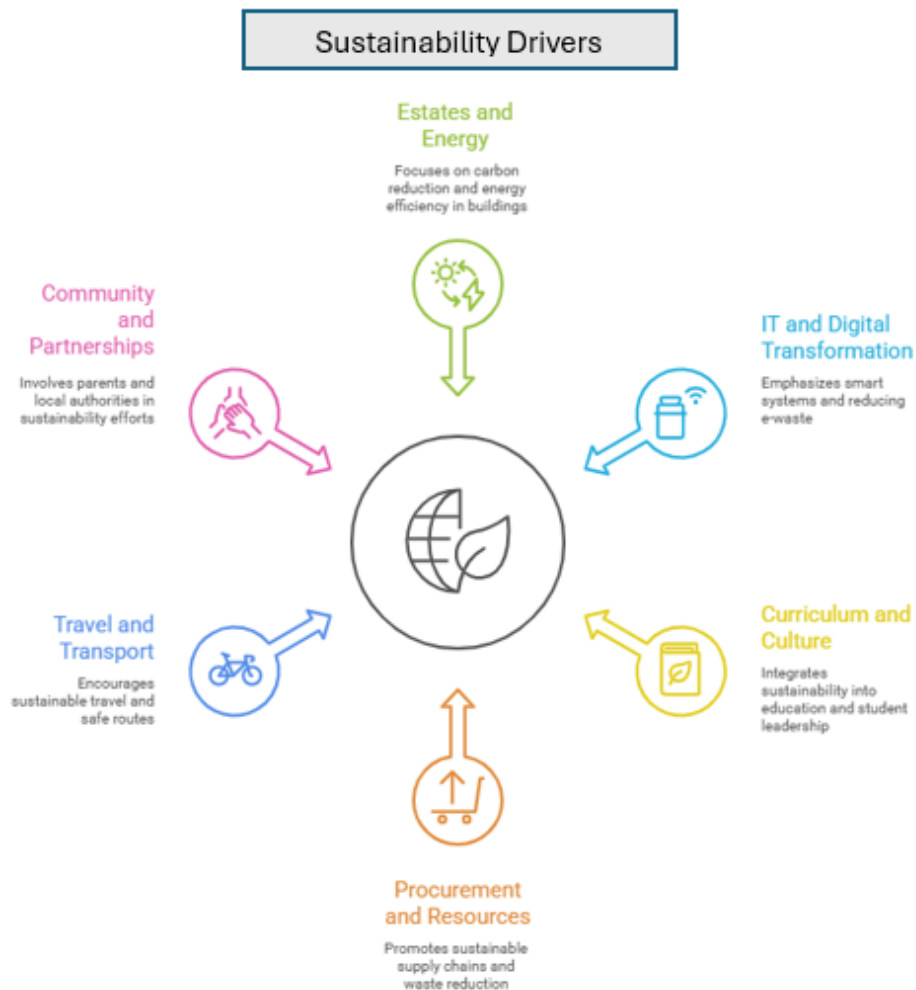




Salterns Trust adopts its first Sustainability Strategy

This year marks a major step forward in our Trust-wide sustainability journey. From installing new colour-coded recycling bins to reducing printing and food waste, we are already cutting our landfill contribution and helping students form greener habits. Energy use is now monitored in real time, enabling pupils and staff to see where waste occurs and act quickly to reduce it. Our sustainability work is strengthened by digital improvements too: smarter IT

systems, cloud services and automated building controls are helping us track energy use, reduce paper reliance and run our schools more efficiently.



Alongside this culture shift, we have begun to invest in long-term energy improvements that will directly benefit our school environments. LED lighting is now in place, insulation has been improved, and solar installations will follow—reducing emissions while protecting us from rising energy costs. With sustainability embedded across estates, IT and daily school life, we are moving beyond words to measurable action. Together, we are creating schools that not only teach sustainability but demonstrate it—ensuring every change we make today supports our pupils and planet for the future.

Going Solar at Mayfield School

Mayfield School has taken a big step toward sustainability with a brand-new solar PV installation. The system features 265 solar panels and it is estimated that 84% of the electricity generated through solar will be used instantaneously at the school!



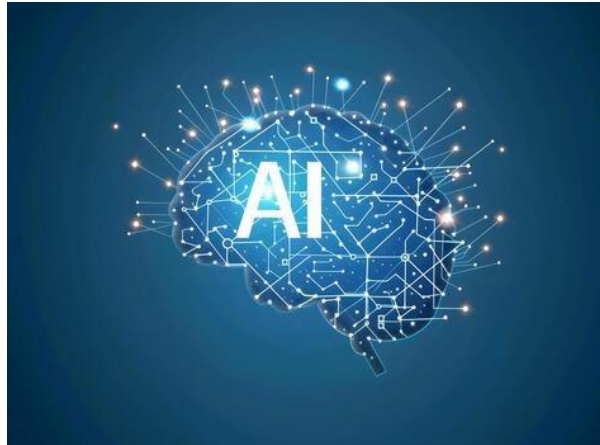
By switching to solar, the school is reducing its carbon footprint by 30 CO₂e tonnes in year one, cutting energy bills, and setting an example for environmental responsibility. Solar PV on schools isn't just about savings - it's about creating a cleaner future and inspiring students to learn about renewable energy in action.

The solar PV is delivered in partnership with Portsmouth City Council who have been installing solar PV for over 10 years and owns a portfolio of solar PV of just under 13 MWp across 400 buildings. That's approximately 36,000 solar panels.

The council's largest solar PV installation can be found at Lakeside Business Park with over 4.3 MWp of solar PV; across the roofs and car park canopies. Lakeside is also home to Portsmouth City Council's largest battery energy storage system which will trade in various energy markets, providing cost avoidance and income to the Council. In addition to this, electric vehicle charge points have been installed to support staff, users and visitors of the site to make the transition to electric vehicles.

Facing the future - Salterns approach to AI

Salterns Academy Trust is embracing AI with energy and purpose, guided by DfE-published best practice and a firm commitment to *keeping the human in the loop*. Our approach places safeguarding, ethical compliance, and curriculum impact at the centre of every decision. AI is used only in transparent, age-appropriate, risk-assessed ways, with staff guiding students' use and ensuring that AI enhances—never replaces—great teaching. With strong alignment to DfE standards on data protection, filtering and monitoring, and bias prevention, the Trust ensures all tools are secure, fair, and educationally purposeful. Student access to generative AI is restricted, and only vetted, GDPR-compliant platforms are approved for use.



We're equally excited about how AI can reduce workload, personalise learning, and broaden the learning experience. As new tools emerge, the Trust's robust approach to AI mean we can adopt AI Usage safely while upholding our commitment to safe, ethical, inspiring education for every young person.

Proud to Be Cyber Essentials Accredited – Again

We are pleased to share that the Trust has successfully retained its Cyber Essentials accreditation. This achievement reflects our ongoing commitment to strong, well-managed digital practices that support the smooth and secure operation of our schools.



Cyber Essentials is a nationally recognised scheme that helps organisations demonstrate they have effective, proportionate controls in place to protect their systems and data. It focuses on good practice in areas such as secure configuration, access control, malware protection and keeping systems up to date. Retaining this accreditation confirms that our approach continues to meet these standards and that our digital foundations remain robust.

Our sincere thank you to everyone involved for their professionalism, attention to detail and commitment. Their efforts ensure that our schools remain well supported by reliable, resilient digital systems and that we continue to meet national expectations with confidence.

Governor Vacancies

Becoming a school governor is a great way to make a lasting impact to the lives of young people in our community. As a school governor, you'll have the opportunity to contribute your skills, experience, and passion to help shape the direction and policies of our schools. Whether you're a parent, a professional, or a community member, your involvement as a governor will help make positive change and help to ensure that our schools provide the best possible learning environment for our students. Join us as a school governor and become an integral part of building a brighter future for our children and our society as a whole.

To find out more about our current vacancies please visit our website (www.salternstrust.co.uk) or contact clerk.alns@salterns.org



We welcome your feedback on anything contained in this newsletter or on any matters related to the Trust or its schools.

In addition to the usual channels of communication you may already use, feedback can be provided by clicking in the following link and completing this form.

[feedback form](#)



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