



SIGMA NEWS

For Students, Parents and Carers of The Sigma Trust

Greater than the sum of its parts



INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

- New buildings for secondary schools
- Pandemic prompts reflection garden creation
- Sixth formers explore post-18 options
- Broad curriculum expands skills
- New school already third most popular
- PE lessons continue in lockdown

Welcome...

Welcome to the latest edition of Sigma News, containing a wide range of articles which celebrate the activities students have been engaged in during the last six months. Sigma is now in its fifth year and its collaborative way of working has become established and enhanced.

In this edition, you will find news on the building programme at Clacton County High School and Colne Community School and College, as well as new-look classrooms at Monkwick Infant School. It is great to see pupils from all schools across Sigma engaging in a range of opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom.

The focus on wellbeing across schools is apparent and it's heartening to see how different schools and groups have supported this issue. The importance of wellbeing has become ever more significant, so we look forward to the Holland Park Primary School hub establishing itself and the support it can offer.

Last year was, without doubt, one of the most challenging years for us all. It is fair to say that this time last year we were starting to think about the light at the end of the tunnel and a return to some form of normality in the autumn – how wrong could we have been? The pressure felt from the continued spectre of Covid-19 contributed to a difficult and relentless year.



Summer schools took place over the break and our young people were able to proudly celebrate their examination results. Schools will have now welcomed back all pupils and it is poignant to remember that the middle of September marked 18 months since the first lockdown.

Please take a moment to read through this edition of Sigma News which goes somewhere to acknowledge your commitment and support and the exceptional work being undertaken in schools.

Lyn Wright, CEO, The Sigma Trust

WE ARE THE SIGMA FAMILY...



Building for a bright future



Work continues to expand a secondary school to cater for an increase in population.

Clacton County High School is planning for the future as it creates more space to accommodate the growing number of students in the area. With the relocation of the sixth form to Sigma Sixth Tending, it has been possible to remodel the school site for expansion.

Work includes providing a four-court sports hall, gym and six extra classrooms

Chris Taylor, Head of School, said: "At Clacton County High, we continually plan for the future, aiming to drive up standards and improve outcomes for all of the children in the local area. This includes improvements to the school site and environment. This is a very exciting opportunity for the school."

Extra space for growing school community

Students are eagerly awaiting the official opening of their new school block.

Work has been taking place at The Colne Community School and College to add eight new classrooms and four design technology rooms, including

purpose-built metalwork and woodwork rooms and food technology classes.

The planned opening is for the end of November, when students will be able to utilise the new facilities.

Internal work to the older buildings will

take place to improve functionality and student flow around the building.

There are also plans for a complete renovation and expansion of the kitchen and refectory area to ensure there is enough seating and facilities for the expanding year groups.

Returning to new-look classrooms

Over the summer, classrooms at Monkwick Infant School and Nursery were fully refurbished.

The transformation of Year 1 and 2 classrooms was part of ongoing Trust improvement works and brings the classrooms in line with the newer EYFS building already in place.

The revamp included new carpets, sink areas and doors, as

well as an upgraded IT system.

Headteacher Claire Holmes said: "This will be an amazing boost to both staff and pupils returning to school in September.

"After some really difficult times, this will really lift morale for everyone to be in such a positive learning environment."

Bouncing forwards after the pandemic

A school is focusing on "bouncing forwards" as it moves out of the pandemic.

The Philip Morant School and College put together a two-day programme to help young people to look to the future.

Steph Neill, Head of School, developed the Bouncing Forwards programme after reading Bouncing Forwards by Patrick Regan.

The book states: "Many people talk about the need for us to 'bounce

back' after all the disruption and challenge as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, when we rise again in a different form, when we see positive change, we can think of this as 'bouncing forwards'."

The school programme includes –

- an interactive online mental health event introducing students to support available
- an online Staying Safe presentation from Essex Fire Service
- sports day

- a carousel of reading and writing activities to expose students to a range of genres
- a practical workshop introducing Year 7 and 8 to technology
- a wellbeing survey and student voice activities to reflect and plan ahead
- a Change Your world event for Year 9 to explore how they can make a difference to their world
- a Sigma Sixth taster day for Year 10

Saying a fond farewell to Year 6

Primary education came to a jam-packed ending for those leaving Monkwick Junior School this summer.

With transition events hindered by pandemic restrictions, the school ensured Year 6 got a send-off to remember.

The end of school was marked by pupils recording a play based on their favourite book of the year, *Holes* by Louis Sachar, making props, scenery and background music and practising their performance skills.

They demonstrated resilience, bravery

and teamwork when they visited the Nuclear Races obstacle course, in Brentwood.

The challenge was to complete a muddy obstacle course, culminating in the Death Slide with a 10ft drop into water.

Teacher Tom Hewitt said: "We wanted to give the children a memorable send-off from Year 6 and we couldn't have chosen a better trip. The children worked brilliantly as a team, encouraging and helping each other through some intense challenges! The



children had so much fun, especially when they got to push their teachers in the water!"

They also took part in trips, worked with visitors, enjoyed experience days and attended a party.

The importance of looking after our wellbeing

A wellbeing hub has opened at Holland Park Primary School.

Pupils will attend weekly sessions to help them to understand the importance of looking after their wellbeing.

Each week, pupils will focus on a different area, including what makes them special and their unknown superpowers.

They will look at a range of emotions and discuss why they

may feel a certain way and how to cope with their feelings.

Work started before the summer with nine Year 4 pupils – referred by their teachers or parents – who attended the hub for six weeks to help them to regulate and express their emotions.

This academic year, the hub – funded by Tendring District Council – will be opened up to other year groups.



A space to reflect and relax

Students returned to school after the summer to find a brand-new reflection garden had been installed to support their mental health and wellbeing.

The school linked up with VXFIBER and Lilaconnect while installation work for fibre optic cable was taking place near Paxman Academy.

The connection has led to students gaining access to careers and safety talks from the supplier.

The latest project has seen the contractor create a reflection garden in the school grounds.

Deputy Headteacher Nick Mussett said: "The companies

were very keen to be involved with Paxman Academy and support our work because we are a STEM school. We have been talking about creating a reflection garden as part of our recovery curriculum as a result of the pandemic. We wanted to have a quiet space where students could take time out of their busy lives and reflect.

"It is about improving mental health and wellbeing."

A competition is being held for students to name the new space, which includes a seating area, water feature and low maintenance planting which students will take care of.

In the future, the garden will also be used as a memorial space for lost loved ones.

Whole school assembly tackles topic of racism

Inclusivity and a supportive nature were nurtured during a whole school assembly on racism.

Students at St Helena School were given examples of studies into racism, as well as looking at racism in football.

They ended the session with an anti-racist notion and song to drive home the inclusivity and supportive nature of a multicultural society.

Dan Austin, Assistant Head, said: "It seems every day we see and hear stories of intolerance and hatred, both in our local news and internationally.

"The assemblies highlighted a study in Italy with young

children in relation to the difference between two dolls; one white, one black. The children, as young as four, had already been taught preconceived notions that the white doll was pretty and the black doll was ugly and naughty.

"St Helena students responded with conviction that it wasn't right and that it made them feel sad to see such young children with certain views already taking root.

"Our students could see the connection between racism and ignorance.

"We are very proud of the inclusivity and supportive nature of our St Helena community."

Keeping in touch with business during the pandemic

Young people have continued to plan for their futures with a raft of online opportunities made available to them.

A careers bulletin has kept students at The Stanway School informed of college information and virtual workshops and

work experience opportunities during the pandemic.

Careers Advisor Tracy Laney said: "It is going to take a while for businesses to open back up and allow us into their workplace with groups of students, so

these virtual events are an excellent opportunity for students to learn about the world of work."

The bulletin is sent to parents each week and posted on the school's website.

Tell your story on teacher's radio show



A teacher is giving students and parents an opportunity to tell their interesting stories on the airwaves.

Bill Lawrance, Subject Leader for history at The Philip Morant School and College, creates and presents radio programmes for local stations.

His shows include a magazine and music programme called Box 39, a one-to-one conversation show called Red Button, a panel show called Guppy's Opinion Box and Bill's Big Bag of Onions which shares 100-

word stories written by listeners.

Mr Lawrance said: "I am very pleased to have given our students and staff the opportunity to tell their stories to our community.

"Radio and podcasts are integral to our communities; locally, nationally and internationally.

"If any students or parents have a great story to tell about themselves or want to contribute a 100-word story, please contact me at the school."

You're hired! Sixth formers look to their futures

Students studying at Sigma Sixth Tending took a break from traditional lessons to focus on their transition to university or employment.

A programme of activities helped Year 12 to focus on their post-18 pathways for when they complete their A-levels next year.

Students attended sessions based on employability, interview skills and communication etiquette, as well as practising the skills and discussing trends in professional behaviour.

Each student dressed in business wear to attend a mock interview with professionals from different educational and business backgrounds.

Sarah McKarry, Head of College, said: "It was an excellent couple of days and invaluable in highlighting to our students the options that are available once they move on from Sigma Sixth; this includes the workplace, apprenticeships and university. Career advice is an integral part of the Sigma Sixth



offer. Whichever pathway a student decides upon, our support is specifically tailored to the individual student and their mock interview day was designed to complement their career aspirations."

Interviewers were asked to choose a successful candidate from their list to receive a You're Hired award.

The overall winner was Emily King who was praised from both her interviewer and observer for her preparation, confidence and overall performance in the interview.

The delights of the Orient



Curious students were transported to India as they were immersed in the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the Orient.

The Year 9 English class at Clacton County High School arrived in lesson to find the room had been transformed into an Indian bazaar.

Teacher Nicola Oram gave students the opportunity to smell spices, taste dates and seeds, feel the textures of the cloths on each

table, listen to Indian style music and handle various fruits, ornaments, toys and tools found in that part of the world.

They were then tasked with using their descriptive writing skills to paint a picture in words about all of the sensual stimulation from around the room.

Miss Oram said: "The immersive experience of the Orient helped students to bring their imagination to life and helped to make links to the text they were studying, The Sign of Four by Arthur Conan Doyle."

NEWSBITE

Taking control of feelings around transition

Concerns children felt ahead of moving to secondary school were tackled head-on.

Year 6 pupils at Holland Park Primary School worked with poet Zohab Zee Khan on their virtual transition project.

They were challenged to list anything they were worried about or excited for ahead of their move to secondary school.

As a way of helping them to express any concerns, they were also tasked with writing a list of questions.

After lots of discussion, pupils then crossed out any of the worries that were out of their control.

Worry monsters take away children's anxiety

Concerned children are ridding themselves of worry with the help of some cuddly friends.

Alton Park Junior School has been given hand knitted worry monsters by the Knit-for-Nowt charity.

The monsters are used by pupils in Year 3 to 6 to help them to access a way of sharing their worries, by writing their

concern on a piece of paper and feeding it into the monster's mouth.

Headteacher Nicky Sirett said: "Given the high levels of anxiety and worry some children have experienced through lockdowns and school reopening, it is great to know they have these resources to help them to explain their feelings."

Pupils are getting support with their worries by their learning mentors.



A broader curriculum to prepare for life



Real-life and alternative skills are being taught as part of a broad curriculum.

Clacton County High School has launched the new curriculum to give Year 9 students an opportunity to learn extra skills alongside their academic learning.

Students spend seven weeks focusing on each of their chosen broader curriculum subjects.

Alternative lessons on offer include The Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award, employment skills, understanding money and finance, boot camp, yoga, gardening, basic first aid, cooking meals, web development, basic Greek, STEM/robotics, community work and charity work.

Recent lessons have seen students complete a series of beach cleans, as well as learn first aid skills such as resuscitation and bandaging a wound.



Brilliant students graduate from university scheme



A scheme to promote applications for highly selective universities has given students a taste of further education.

Year 9 students from St Helena School worked with PhD student Johanna through university style lectures regarding "peace and reconciliation" as part of The Brilliant Club.

The Cambridge University scheme helps young people from

deprived backgrounds to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to secure places at highly selective universities.

The 12 students engaged with conversations and literature regarding conflict, elections, political leaders and what are the predicted pathways of Columbia's government towards reconciliation.

After each session, a follow-up assignment was completed regarding the topic at hand, applying subject specific research.

For their final project, students wrote 2,000 word essays titled Post Conflict and Reconciliation: the Case of Columbia, successfully deciphering historical past and present political global events in the shaping of Columbia's future.

Cherri Farren, Science Teacher, said: "Students continued to persevere diligently with their work and research while working from home during lockdown."

Who's behind the mask?

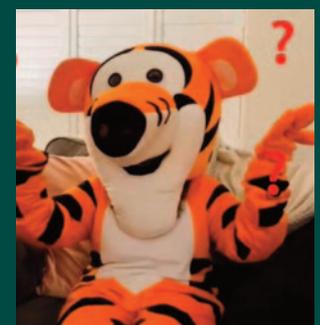
A TV show inspired excitement around the annual World Book Day.

With lockdown in place, Monkwick Infant School and Nursery came up with a unique way to inspire a love of reading among its pupils.

Inspired by the popular programme The Masked Singer, teachers dressed up in various costumes and read stories to pupils via ClassDojo.

Excited children enjoyed the stories and had a guess at which teacher was reading to them.

Charlotte Cumming, Deputy Head, said: "It's about raising the profile of reading for pleasure, modelling for parents on how to promote the love of reading. It gave us the opportunity to not only engage with the children during lockdown, but also to bring a little joy to the community."



Ban of mobile phones a success

A ban of “disruptive” mobile phones has been hailed a success.

Harwich and Dovercourt High School introduced the ban on mobile phones in school in the summer term after consulting with parents.

Headteacher Kate Finch said the ban is paying off.

She said: “The mobile phone ban was supported by parents and gratefully received. I think all of us, as teachers and parents, want our children to communicate well and to be mentally healthy – conversation helps enormously with this.

Children are often quietly relieved when they are not able to use their phones as the constant pressure of keeping in touch and knowing what is going on is removed, taken out of their hands.

“Social media, which is the main use of phones among young people, has become a toxic place and we need to do everything we can to relieve children of the burden of feeling they must participate and have a presence in it.

“Additionally, and frankly, phones are disruptive to learning in school.”

Competition set to grow the tallest plants

Budding gardeners nurtured their vegetable plants to be in with a chance of winning a school competition.

Students in Year 7 at The Stanway School have been growing tomato and cucumber plants from seed in gardening club.

Having each adopted a plant, students were challenged to see whose plant would grow the most.

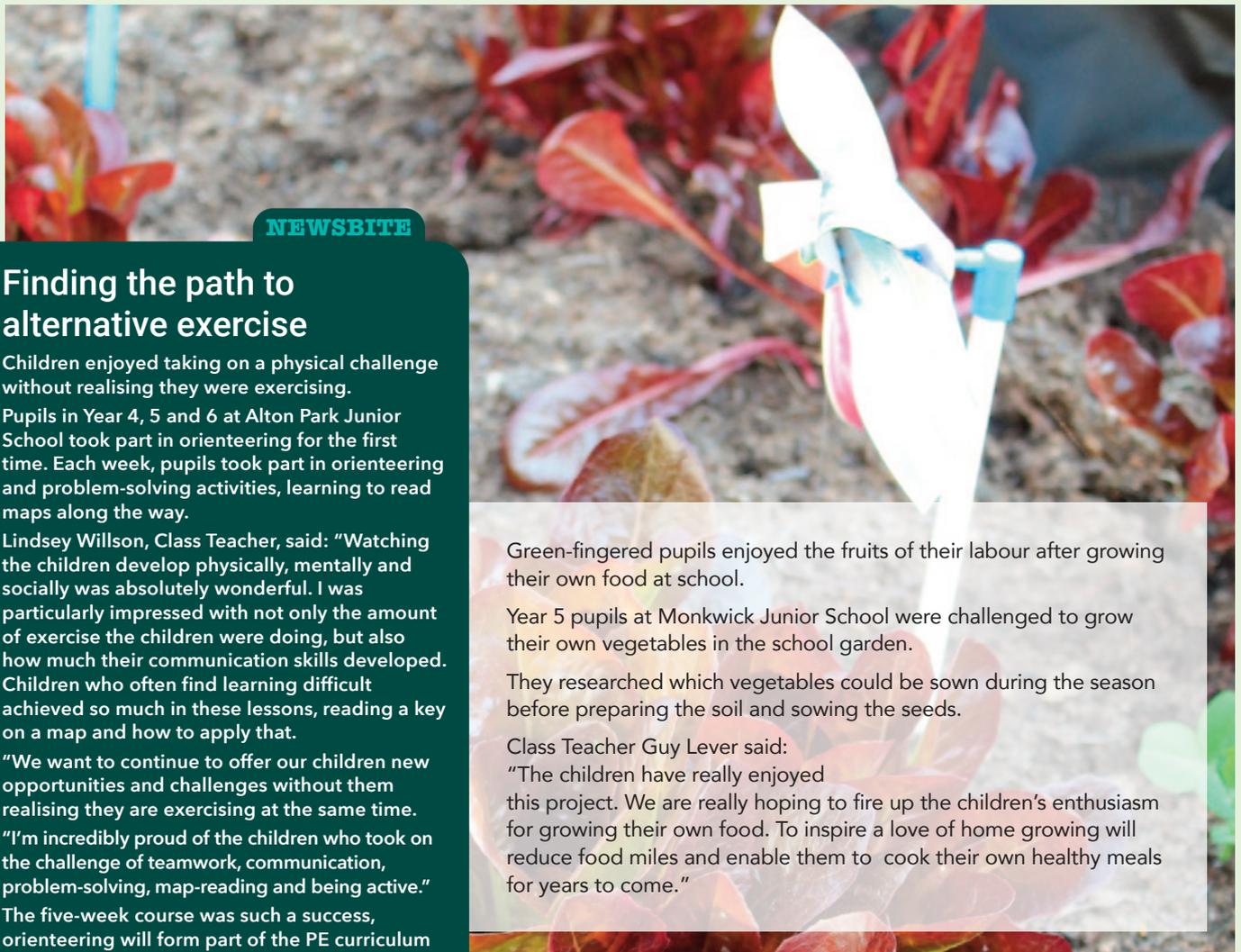
They measured and charted their plants’ growth, with the

tallest and fastest growing plants judged as the winners.

Club members also took up the challenge of growing 38 chilli plants before the summer break.

Liz Burgess, Reintegration Support Assistant, said: “It is lovely to give our students the chance to experience growing edible produce in a fun and informative approach.”

Planting the seed to encourage home-grown food



NEWSBITE

Finding the path to alternative exercise

Children enjoyed taking on a physical challenge without realising they were exercising.

Pupils in Year 4, 5 and 6 at Alton Park Junior School took part in orienteering for the first time. Each week, pupils took part in orienteering and problem-solving activities, learning to read maps along the way.

Lindsey Willson, Class Teacher, said: “Watching the children develop physically, mentally and socially was absolutely wonderful. I was particularly impressed with not only the amount of exercise the children were doing, but also how much their communication skills developed. Children who often find learning difficult achieved so much in these lessons, reading a key on a map and how to apply that.

“We want to continue to offer our children new opportunities and challenges without them realising they are exercising at the same time.

“I’m incredibly proud of the children who took on the challenge of teamwork, communication, problem-solving, map-reading and being active.”

The five-week course was such a success, orienteering will form part of the PE curriculum in future.

Green-fingered pupils enjoyed the fruits of their labour after growing their own food at school.

Year 5 pupils at Monkwick Junior School were challenged to grow their own vegetables in the school garden.

They researched which vegetables could be sown during the season before preparing the soil and sowing the seeds.

Class Teacher Guy Lever said:

“The children have really enjoyed this project. We are really hoping to fire up the children’s enthusiasm for growing their own food. To inspire a love of home growing will reduce food miles and enable them to cook their own healthy meals for years to come.”

Putting wellbeing at the top of the agenda

Students at The Colne Community School and College have taken part in various initiatives to focus on their wellbeing.

Tom Ryder, from Retune, delivered wellbeing workshops to each year group. Through live performance, open discussion and student participation, the workshops demonstrated the importance of using creative outlets such as music, art, drama, dance and writing to maintain wellbeing and build emotional resilience.

Students also took part in a live webinar hosted by radio station REPREZENT, which raised awareness of the risks to

young people's mental health. A 15-minute wellness walk allowed students to benefit from being outdoors in nature as a way of improving their wellbeing.

Fe Wynne, Science Teacher, said: "The events of 2020 have thrust mental health even further into the spotlight. It is more important than ever before for young people to have strategies up their sleeves to improve mental wellbeing.

"Our students have had the opportunity to take part in some extra activities to help maintain and improve their wellbeing."

New school making its mark on town

A school which opened just two years ago is already the third most popular secondary school in Colchester.

Paxman Academy opened in September 2019 with its first group of students and just seven members of staff.

As it welcomes just its third cohort of students – it now has Year 7, 8 and 9 – it has already proven to be a popular choice. Data released by Essex County Council showed the number of applications made to secondary schools

in the borough.

The school had 195 students choose it as their first option, with 177 places on offer for Year 7.

Headteacher Carol Anne Moffat said: "We are immensely proud to have been named as the third most popular non-selective secondary school in Colchester."



Plans for eco garden unveiled

An eco garden is being created to give students and adults an opportunity to spend time in nature.

The eco garden project will provide an outdoor space at St Helena School and will be used for lessons including geography, religious studies, food technology and science.

There will be raised beds for growing fruit and vegetables, a wild flower meadow, a sensory garden and space for seating.

Faculty Leader Humanities Lizzie Annandale, Food Technology Teacher Izzy Pearson and Events Management

Teacher Jess Smith said: "Spending time outdoors in nature can have great benefits to both mental and physical wellbeing.

"We want to raise the profile of nature on our fantastic school site as we are fortunate to have a menagerie of wildlife here, including ducks, foxes and squirrels."

Students in the events management team took on the challenge of raising funds for the project, with ideas including a staff plant sale, exotic animal encounter and eco bake sale.

What does our future sound like?

Musical students were challenged to create a piece of music to illustrate the future.

Students in Year 8 to 10 at The Philip Morant School and College took part in the Soundscapes project to compose a piece of music directed by CLIP, an organisation which encourages young people to take creative risks and make new music.

Natural and manmade recordings were used as stimuli to create and produce unique samples incorporated into a piece of music exploring the theme "what does our future sound like". The school's newly refurbished music department was used as students explored editing, sampling and processing sound.

Year 8 student Harley said: "The experience during Soundscapes was amazing! Collecting the sounds and compiling them was an incredible time and really taught me a lot about making music. Who'd have known random things could sound like that."

Gillian Bartle, Subject Leader Music, said: "This was a fantastic opportunity to inspire and support students in gaining confidence to ensure self-perceived ability is never a barrier to success. The results produced were outstanding."

The project culminated in an installation with other schools as part of Roman River Music Festival.



Having our voices heard as we represent our school

The ideas and opinions of young children were shared during a meeting with other schools.

A group of six Year 4 pupils from Holland Park Primary School attended the Multi Schools Council Meeting virtually. They listened to the views of other schools in attendance and contributed their own ideas and opinions.

The council's charity walk up Mount Snowdon was discussed, with pupils committing to celebrating Green Day – another council initiative, to raise awareness of protecting our planet - and making a donation.

Sarah Edwards, Behaviour and Wellbeing Lead, said: "They

discussed how to raise awareness for visually impaired children, how to make children more aware of the dangers surrounding social media and fundraising suggestions for the Mount Snowdon walk. The Multi Schools Council Meeting is a nice opportunity for pupils to represent their school and to be given a voice."



Hair today, gone to a good cause tomorrow!

The Little Princess Trust will be thrilled to receive 14 inches of hair donated by two generous students.

Twins Lexi and Layla are sporting shorter haircuts, having had their flowing locks chopped and donated to the Little Princess Trust.

The Year 7 students at Paxman Academy wanted their hair to be transformed into wigs for young cancer sufferers or for young people suffering from hair loss.

Layla said: "We wanted to give hair to someone who really needed it. We wanted someone to enjoy our hair."

After the two-hour hair-cutting sessions, the girls said they would be keen to grow their hair and donate again.

Aimee Taylor, Teacher of Humanities, said: "This is a wonderful act of generosity and compassion from Layla and Lexi."



Wide-eyed students took to the outdoors to witness a partial eclipse

Students at St Helena School used protective glasses to see the annular solar eclipse. They saw the moon crossing the surface of the sun, with a maximum of 20 per cent of the sun obscured.

Theatre company approaches dancers for community show



of the people behind the Peasants Revolt of 1381.

Laura Hicks, Drama and Dance Senior Leader, said: "We were so pleased and proud to be approached by an outside company to produce some performance work that showed off the quality of work our drama students can create here at Philip Morant.

"Having this extra-curricular platform to work towards meant students were positively collaborating with each other again, sharing performance skills which enabled them to approach their final exam year with regained confidence."

Young dancers were commissioned to put together a performance by an outside theatre company. Year 10 GCSE dance students at The Philip Morant School and College were asked by The Packing Shed Theatre Co to be part of a unique performance. The group devised a 20-minute performance piece of drama to express what they believe to be equality in the 21st Century. The event celebrated Colchester hero John Ball, who was one

The event, supported by the Human Rights Centre at Essex University along with Colchester Borough Council, Firstsite and the Colchester Arts Centre, took place at the Castle Park Bandstand in Castle Park, Colchester, and included live music, performances and historical talks.



Artwork celebrates our pandemic heroes

A celebration of pandemic heroes could see the artwork of a young person from north Essex distributed around the world. The Royal Mail's Heroes Stamp Design Competition challenged young people to express their gratitude for pandemic heroes by designing a stamp.

The winning design will be made into an official postage stamp. Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and 2 at Monkwick Infant School and Nursery took part in the competition, learning to draw figures in their art lessons in preparation. The winning designs will be selected in September.

Bringing objects to life through poetry

Poets used their imagination and vocabulary to see objects in their classrooms in a new light.

Year 6 pupils at Monkwick Junior School took part in a virtual poetry workshop with Jo Stokes.

The poet spoke to pupils about personification and how to apply it to poetry. Each class chose an inanimate object in their room – including the door, fire alarm and

globe – and collaborated with Jo to write a poem which personified it and detailed how it felt about its place in the classroom.

Class Teacher Tom Hewitt said: "Year 6 had a fantastic time collaborating with Jo on personification poetry. They were able to describe how objects in the classroom might feel about how we treat them using wonderful vocabulary."

Ahoy there! Celebrating Clacton turning 150



Creative pupils were proud to see their work of art go on display in a public library. Pupils in Year 4 at Alton Park Junior School took part in the Octopus Ahoy! public art trail to

mark 150 years of Clacton-on-Sea.

The challenge was for pupils to design and

decorate a plaster cast octopus to feature as part of the trail over the summer.

Deciding on creating a female octopus, pupils added eyelashes and red lipstick before hand-drawing designs relating to the anniversary.

The creation – named Coral by pupils – went on display in Clacton library.

Pupils also entered a competition to design a coat of arms for the town, with Charlie in Year 6 winning a certificate and prize for his design which came runner-up.



Hiking towards The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Adventurous young people took to the outdoors to learn how to fend for themselves.

Year 9 students at Clacton County High School took part in a series of hikes as they worked towards The Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award.

The award challenges young people to complete volunteering, physical, skills and expedition projects to expand their experience of life.

The group of 50 students spent weeks planning their route as they prepared for

a practice hike around Great Oakley, Ramsey and Harwich.

The five-hour hike included a stop-off where they had to serve their own hot lunch, as well as complete a project such as sketching their surroundings.

They hiked through woods, across fields, along designated footpaths as they worked their way along the Essex Way to the finish at the old lighthouse on Dovercourt seafront.

They completed another practice hike before taking on the final two-day hike

and night under canvas as part of the award.



Creative students awarded for art and photography



Proud students welcomed their families in to school to see their artwork on display.

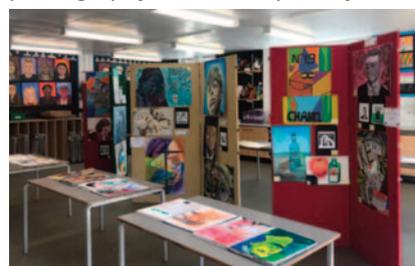
The art department at The Colne Community School and College held its annual GCSE art and photography exhibition to celebrate the work of Year 11.

Awards were given out for a range of achievements, including best portrait photographer, best digital editing and painter of the year.

Lauren Kelly, Art Teacher, said: "This year, there was not the usual busy atmosphere at the exhibition as it was important to limit numbers and run it in line with the current

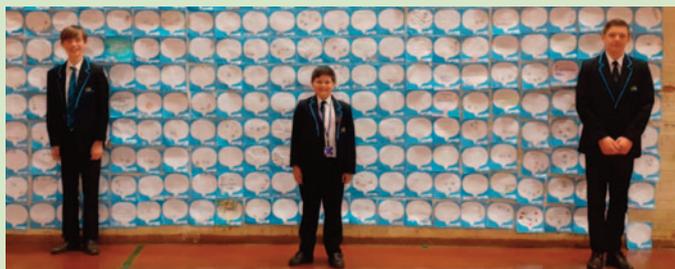
restrictions. However, the quality and standard of the work and proud faces of parents and students visiting were very much still present.

"It was lovely to showcase the fantastic work by students who have completed the GCSE fine art and GCSE photography courses, especially since their journey over the



past two years has been far from the usual. The quality of work on display was testament to their resilience, discipline and hard work, even while working from home."

Running in tribute to loved ones affected by cancer



A fundraising event gave students an opportunity to raise money in support of their loved ones.

Year 7 and 8 students at Harwich and Dovercourt High School took part in their own Race for Life event to raise funds for Cancer Research UK.

Students could walk or run the 5km route around the school field in support of or memory of loved ones affected by cancer. Their event numbers carrying tributes were displayed on a memorial board.

Sophie Southgate, Head of KS3 PE, said: "Our youngsters are the generation which could see ground-breaking treatments and cures for cancer in their lifetime. They're the rising stars who could be the researchers and lifesavers of tomorrow.

"By taking part in Race for Life and uniting together against cancer, all students were doing something really great."

The school raised more than £3,000.

Funding success for school PE department

The PE department at The Thomas Lord Audley School has been successful in securing grants to improve provision.

A grant of £11,920 was received from Active Essex in Opening Schools Facilities funding to open extra-curricular activities to students.

The arrival of moveable football goals means the school can open its facilities to youth and adult football clubs all year round. The school is also installing hoops with adjustable height to enable satellite basketball academies to open up to inactive children or those with disabilities. A further investment has been made into conditioning-based gym equipment to close the gap in girls joining fitness clubs when they leave school to enhance their health and wellbeing.

The school has also received £11,757 from Essex County Council for the installation of two new 20-cycle storage compounds to encourage students and staff to cycle to school, reducing their carbon footprint and improving their health and wellbeing.

Olympian holds PE lesson for juniors

Fencing Olympian and 11-time British champion James Beevers inspired children during a school visit.

Pupils at Monkwick Junior School were given an hour-long session on fencing by the visitor, learning how to advance and retreat and stand in the en garde position.

Class Teacher Kayleigh Knights said: "James taught the children the values of the Olympics through different games, including a ring toss game which involved the children catching hoops on their sword. The session culminated in the children taking part in fencing matches, as well having their peers coach them. The children thoroughly enjoyed the experience."

Lockdown no barrier to a full PE curriculum

Students were kept active during lockdown with a full range of PE tasks to complete.

The PE department at Paxman Academy provided both theory and practical aspects to remote learning during the partial closure of schools. Every student was challenged to complete one theory and one practical lesson each week.

Ravi Samjawn, Head of PE, said: "During these unprecedented times, we believe it is important to keep physically active which can lead to many benefits, such as wellbeing.

"We have been really impressed with the high-quality pieces of work received."

For the practical lessons, a fitness challenge was set via video, including the FIFA Ultimate Player challenge. Students completed a quiz at the end of each task to track their progress.

The theory lessons involved students developing their knowledge and understanding of the key body systems and how they impact health, fitness and performance in physical activity and sport.

Year 11 take on final challenge – student V teacher events



As Year 11 brought their school days to an end, they had one final challenge – to take on their teachers at sport.

Clacton County High School teachers stepped up to compete against their eldest students in both football and netball tournaments.

With one football match ending in a 1-1 draw, it meant a sudden death penalty shoot-out had to be held to find the winning team – with the staff pipping students to the post.



Teacher takes on 100-day run challenge

PE Teacher Anna Hibbens spent three months devoted to a challenge to raise money for charity.

The Stanway School teacher ran for 100 days in a row, completing a minimum of 3.5 miles each day in January to April.

More than £1,000 has been raised for Macmillan Cancer Support and £500 donated to Single Point nurses at St Helena Hospice.

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