

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 - MARCH 2026



IN THIS EDITION:

From the CEO

Hear from Our Director of Education

Trust News

News from our schools

 [Forward Education Trust Facebook](#)

 [Forward Education Trust LinkedIn](#)

 [@ForwardEdTrust](#)



Welcome from CEO

I am pleased to welcome you to this second edition of the Forward Education Trust newsletter.

I hope you found our first edition, published just before Christmas, an informative insight into the work of our Trust and our six schools. In each edition, we aim to achieve a healthy balance of articles about our Trust's work and the work in our schools – including our central team, Trustees and Executive Leaders who support schools on a day-to-day basis.

We also want to help parents across our schools appreciate the rich diversity of our pupil population, while recognising what we have in common. We are proud to showcase the achievements of our children, and how our staff work hard every day to support their learning and care for their wellbeing.

We also want to reach our wider community – those who partner with us and provide support to our schools and Trust.

Together, we are shaping a bright future for our children, their families, our staff and our schools – all part of Forward Education Trust. I hope you enjoy this edition, and please look out for the next one, which we will publish just before the summer holidays.

In the meantime, I would like to wish you and your families a restful break over the Easter period.

Warm regards,
Simon Dilkes CEO
Forward Education Trust
Email: ceo@fet.ac



Introducing Our Director of Education - Leanne Mahony

What does being the Director of Education mean to you, and how does the role help shape the Trust's vision and support our schools?

Being the Director of Education at Forward Education Trust is a privilege. For me, it means keeping a clear focus on what matters most, ensuring our pupils thrive and our staff feel supported to grow and excel in their practice. The role allows me to provide coherence and direction across the Trust while also championing and preserving each school's unique identity and strengths. My aim is to offer clarity, guidance and practical support so leaders can turn priorities into meaningful action in a way that reflects their local context. Above all, it's about celebrating the excellent work happening across our schools and ensuring every pupil receives the high-quality education they deserve.

What are the key priorities for our schools and the Trust this term and into the summer, and how do they support continued improvement?

We are developing evidence-informed approaches to teaching, to ensure high-quality, consistent practice across classrooms. Alongside this, we continue to develop inclusive attendance cultures, supporting schools to build clear systems and positive engagement with families.

We are also focusing on fully embedding Evidence for Learning so that pupil targets, especially those linked to EHCP outcomes, are meaningful, impactful and regularly reviewed. Finally, we are strengthening provision mapping to ensure every child receives the right support at the right time.

What successes or developments across the Trust are you most proud of so far this year?

I'm particularly proud of how well our schools have collaborated this year. The introduction of our core and bespoke school improvement offer has brought greater clarity and support for leaders, while still recognising each school's individuality.

Our Behaviour and Relationships work has also been a standout success, with colleagues across the Trust coming together to co-create shared principles and a new policy. I'm equally pleased with the progress in Inclusive Attendance, where schools are embracing a more relational, supportive approach that reflects our commitment to pupil wellbeing and engagement.

What message would you like to share with staff, pupils and families as we move into the second half of the academic year?

As we move into the final term of the year, I want to thank everyone, staff, pupils and families, for the commitment, resilience and care you bring to our Trust community every day. It's clear that our shared focus on inclusion, high-quality teaching and strong relationships is making a real difference.

The coming months are an opportunity to build on this momentum: to keep championing our pupils, supporting one another and celebrating the progress, big and small, that happens in every classroom and every school. I am incredibly proud of what we are achieving together, and I'm looking forward to the rest of the year with optimism, gratitude and a continued belief in what our children can accomplish.

Forward Education Trust Listening to Parent Voice – Simon Dilkes, Chief Executive Officer

Over recent weeks, many of you have taken the time to complete our Parent and Carer Survey. By the time you read this newsletter, the survey will have closed, but I want to express my sincere thanks to everyone who has shared their views. Your voice matters deeply to us.

The questions explored key areas such as communication, support for your child's learning and wellbeing, confidence in our SEND provision, experiences of parental events, and your understanding of the role of the Trust. Each response helps us build a clearer picture of what is working well and where we must go further.

Listening is only the first step. What truly counts is how we respond. Over the coming months, we will analyse the feedback carefully and use it to shape improvements across our schools. Our commitment is simple: to work in genuine partnership with you, so every child receives the support, care and opportunities they deserve.

Thank you for helping us get better.



Forward Education Trust Conference – 5th May 2026 – Simon Dilkes

For the third time during my tenure as Chief Executive Officer, we will be bringing all our staff together for a day of training and development at Villa Park. This is an important date in our calendar, where colleagues from across the Trust, regardless of role, come together to share experiences and connect with others they may not see regularly.

On Tuesday 5th May, we will gather as one Forward Education Trust family for a day centred around this year's theme: **Flourishing – Connect, Inspire, Achieve**. It is a rare and valuable opportunity for us all to pause, reconnect and focus on what helps us thrive, both professionally and personally, so that we can continue to grow and excel in the work we do.

The day will begin with a warm welcome and an energising shared activity, followed by an inspiring keynote session that we are confident will resonate with staff. While I won't reveal our guest just yet, we look forward to sharing more in our next newsletter. This session will encourage us all to reflect on the positive difference we make in our pupils' lives.

Throughout the day, colleagues will be able to choose from a wide range of workshops – whether deepening professional practice, exploring wellbeing, developing new skills or taking time to reflect. From behaviour and relationships to creativity, sustainability, personal growth and wellbeing, there will be something for everyone.

We are looking forward to what promises to be an uplifting and inspiring day.



Building a Culture of Safeguarding - Cavelle Burris, Trust Safeguarding & Attendance Lead

In issue 1, we explored what safeguarding means in education and the importance of shared responsibility. This time, we want to shine a light on how we build a strong culture of safeguarding across all our schools.

Creating a safe environment isn't a one time action, it's something we nurture every day. Our staff work hard to build trusting relationships with pupils, so they feel confident to communicate their worries. We know that even small conversations or interactions can make a big difference.

We continue to strengthen our safeguarding culture through:

- **Regular staff training** to ensure our teams stay informed about emerging risks, new guidance, and best practice. This helps staff feel equipped and confident in their roles.
- **Strong communication** so concerns are never missed or delayed. We ensure information is shared promptly and appropriately, allowing staff to act quickly and confidently when something doesn't feel right.
- **A proactive approach** that ensures children and families receive support early. By tuning into the small but important changes in a child's behaviour, wellbeing, or attendance, we are able to recognise when additional help may be needed.
- **Partnership working** because safeguarding is most effective when agencies and families work together. Families are central to this process, and we strive to create supportive, non-judgemental relationships built on trust and shared responsibility.

By embedding safeguarding into our daily routines and organisational culture, we aim to create school environments where every pupil feels safe, respected, and understood, and where families know they will be met with empathy and support. We remain committed to keeping safeguarding strong, visible, and at the heart of school life across Forward Education Trust.



Meet the Chairs of Our Board Sub-Committees

Our Board of Trustees is supported by three important subcommittees, each helping to make sure our Trust delivers the very best experience for pupils, staff and families. Here's a quick introduction to the Chairs of these committees and what each group is responsible for.



Education Committee – chaired by Everton Burke

Everton brings over 40 years of experience in the further education sector, having worked as a lecturer, senior leader, governor and national adviser on curriculum and qualifications. He also runs an education consultancy and mentors leaders across the Further Education sector.

Our Trust's Education Committee focuses on the quality of education across all our schools: its purpose is to ensure every child receives a high quality education and that our schools continue to improve. The Committee meets regularly to review key information, celebrate successes, and identify areas for further improvement. It monitors the progress and impact of the strategic priorities for education set by Trust leaders, ensuring that actions taken are making a real difference for pupils across our schools.

Our Director of Education, Leanne Mahony, works closely with this committee.



Audit, Risk & Finance (ARF) Committee – chaired by Mark Morgan

Mark is a Chartered Surveyor with four decades of experience in UK and European property sectors, bringing deep expertise in strategy, performance, risk management and governance.

His background includes setting key performance measures, shaping organisational direction and overseeing major programmes of work.

The ARF Committee keeps oversight of the Trust's financial health, governance, risk management and internal controls. It reviews budgets, audits, financial reporting, estates and digital standards, and ensures the Trust complies with statutory and regulatory requirements — all helping to secure strong, sustainable stewardship of public funds.

Our Director of Finance & Operations, Jenni Pearce, works closely with this committee alongside our Director of Governance & Development, Emma Arnott.



HR & Pay Committee – chaired by Alison Levey

Alison has held senior leadership roles in Midlands universities and now works as a consultant supporting institutions to improve student experience. She is deeply committed to education access and brings expertise in organisational transformation, people development and governance.

The HR & Pay Committee oversees staffing, staff wellbeing, recruitment, development, pay structures and performance processes across the Trust. This includes monitoring workforce data, ensuring fair and transparent pay, reviewing HR policies and supporting efforts to make the Trust an employer of choice.

Our CEO, Simon Dilkes, works closely with this committee.



Impact of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and INSET (In-Service Training) Days across our Trust

This year, all schools in the Trust introduced a stronger programme of weekly CPD and additional INSET time by including 10 half day INSETs across the academic year. This has allowed us to offer a wider range of high-quality professional development than ever before.

How has CPD improved?

Previously, staff time was mainly used for required training such as safeguarding and medical needs.

The additional INSET time has enabled:

- Greater focus on teaching and learning, including curriculum planning and subject knowledge.
- More evidence-informed practice, helping improve consistency in classrooms.
- Clear training pathways, including attendance and assessment modules.
- More time for practice, reflection and coaching.
- Specialist and accredited training in key areas such as behaviour and inclusive attendance.

Overall, staff have accessed around 30 hours more training compared with previous years.

What has been the impact for staff?

Feedback shows that staff now feel more confident in how pupils learn and are using more consistent approaches to teaching and assessment. They are applying new strategies more effectively across areas such as behaviour, attendance and communication. Staff also report increased opportunities to work with colleagues in other schools, helping to strengthen shared expertise across the Trust.

What has been the impact for pupils?

The enhanced CPD offer is leading to better outcomes for pupils. They are experiencing more effective learning through clearer explanations and better-sequenced lessons, alongside calmer and more predictable classrooms created by consistent routines. Staff now have a stronger understanding of how to support individual needs, including SEND and communication approaches, and improved attendance practices are helping pupils access learning more regularly.

The expanded CPD and INSET programme has strengthened professional development across the Trust, giving staff a richer and more focused range of training that has built expertise in teaching, curriculum, behaviour and assessment. Evidence from Trust reviews of schools show clear improvements in the quality and consistency of provision, with staff applying new skills more confidently and effectively.

Most importantly, pupils are experiencing better-quality teaching, more predictable routines and stronger support for their individual needs, demonstrating that investing in staff development is directly improving their educational experience.

What are our next steps?

Following the positive impact seen this year, we propose continuing with additional CPD next year. However, to support families and reduce disruption, we are moving from 10 half-day INSET sessions to 6 half-day sessions – that will be one per half term. This approach keeps high-quality staff development at the heart of our work while offering a more predictable and manageable model for parents and carers.





Introduction to our Teaching & Learning Network - Leanne Mahony, Director of Education

The spring term marked the launch of our Teaching and Learning Network, an exciting opportunity for colleagues from across all Trust schools to come together and deepen our shared understanding of how pupils learn. The network is focused on evidence informed approaches to teaching across all pathways, from pre-formal learning to more formal pathways, ensuring that every pupil benefits from high-quality, thoughtfully designed practice.

As the network develops, it will become a space where we can share best practice, learn from one another and collectively shape the expertise of teachers, teaching assistants and all colleagues who contribute to pupils' learning. Moving forward, we want to shine a light on the "bright spots" across the Trust, those individuals and teams demonstrating exemplary practice, so they can help inspire and support others.

Alongside this, we will soon be recruiting a Trust Teaching Lead from within our Trust, creating further capacity to strengthen teaching and learning. More information on this will follow in the coming weeks. We are excited about the difference this network will make and look forward to growing our collective expertise together.



Solar projects - update - Mandy Winfield, Trust Business Manager

We are pleased to share an update on two major sustainability projects taking place across our Trust this term. Both High Point Academy and The Heights Academy will benefit from new solar PV systems, funded by the Department for Education through the Great British Energy Solar Project (GBESP)— a national initiative supporting schools to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions. With only 250 schools selected nationally, we are delighted that two of our Trust schools are included.



High Point Academy: installation began on 2nd March

High Point's system will include 266 solar panels, generating an estimated 109.19 MWh of electricity each year and meeting approximately 63% of the school's energy needs.

The school is forecast to save over £14,000 in the first year, with total lifetime savings estimated at over £260,000.

The project also includes the installation of four new EV chargers, bringing the school's total to seven.

The Heights Academy : Installation began on 16th March

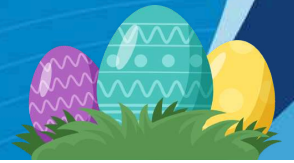
The Heights' installation includes 166 panels, producing around 68.01 MWh per year and supplying 48% of the school's energy demand. Year 1 savings are projected at £11,000, with lifetime savings of £349,000.



Hallmoor School and Leycroft Academy

Although unable to host solar panels at this time, both schools will still benefit from the GBESP programme through energy saving initiatives and sustainability workshops for pupils.

These DfE funded GBESP installations represent a significant step forward in reducing energy costs and strengthening our Trust's environmental commitments.



Emma Arnott
- Director of Governance
and Development.

Supporting staff development - Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeships

At FET, we're committed to helping our colleagues grow, and the Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship (PGTA) is a great example of how we support staff to progress in their careers.

Each year, support staff with ambition to teach are offered the opportunity to train 'on the job', in the school in which they already work.

Our Teacher Apprentices spend most of their time in class, gradually increasing their teaching responsibilities. They also take part in university-based training and a placement in a mainstream school to broaden their experience.

Andy Gibbons, now in his second year as an early career teacher at High Point, completed his PGTA in summer 2024. He shared how the programme helped him turn his passion for sport into a teaching career. "Sport has always been part of my life, from childhood participation to later coaching, and completing the PGTA strengthened my subject knowledge and adaptability as a practitioner. It has helped me refine my approach so that every student can succeed, regardless of their starting point."

Looking ahead to 2026/27, we're pleased to be partnering with the University of Worcester for the Primary PGTA and the University of Wolverhampton for the Secondary PGTA. We're delighted to be supporting colleagues from across the Trust as they take this next step.

The PGTA is just one of the ways we invest in our people— playing an active role in shaping the teachers of tomorrow, helping aspiring teachers develop and supporting retention across our schools. As Andy put it, "I'm excited to continue my journey as part of the FET family". And we look forward to welcoming our next cohort of Teacher Apprentices in September 2026!

An update following our staff survey - Simon Dilkes

We conducted a survey of our staff in September 2025, when we asked them about their experience of working in our Trust and about their well-being.

The engagement rate was very good and since we received the results, each school has been examining the feedback, to create development plans for the future, based around the format of "you said - we did".

We run surveys regularly and it's pleasing to see year-on-year improvements, but we know there are still things we can do better. We saw increases in overall job satisfaction, staff felt strongly supported in their work and that communication day-to-day was good.

Enabling all staff colleagues to stay on top of their work responsibilities remains a priority, as part of ensuring that staff are physically and mentally well, so they can support children in their schools effectively. Our staff value the investment we make in their professional development.



Our family of schools



Brays School

Primary Special School

Brays School is a school for children with profound and multiple physical or learning disabilities. There are 110 children in this school, including in nursery.



The Bridge School

Primary Special School

The Bridge School is for children with profound and multiple physical or learning disabilities. There are 90 children in this school.



Hallmoor School

An All-through Special School

Hallmoor School is for children with learning difficulties, autism and complex needs. Ages range from 4-19 including a thriving Post-16 program. There are nearly 300 children in this school.



The Heights Academy

Junior / Secondary Special School

The Heights Academy is for children with autism, with a secondary SEMH need. The school is growing, it has 80 places in September 2025 and will grow to a capacity of 116 places.



High Point Academy

Secondary Special School

High Point Academy is for children with autism. There are 106 children in this school with further plans for limited expansion to a maximum of 118 children in 2025.



Leycroft Academy

Primary Special School

Leycroft Academy is for children with autism. There are 170 children in this school.



Behaviour & Relationships Approach - Julia Lloyd-Jones, Deputy Headteacher

Belonging, kindness, safety, aspiration, and respect

At Brays School, relationships underpin every aspect of our Behaviour and Relationships approach. The concepts of belonging, kindness, safety, aspiration and respect are embedded within our core values of #braysbelonging and TREKS (teamwork, respect, equality, kindness and safety). These principles shape the daily experiences of pupils and staff and guide our decision-making, practice and culture.

How staff are supported to model calm, predictability and emotional availability

We recognise that adults must be regulated in order to effectively coregulate with pupils. Staff wellbeing is therefore a priority, and we maintain a strong culture of reflective practice where feedback is valued and acted upon through our 'You Said, We Did' process. As part of our commitment to becoming a Trauma-Informed and Attachment Aware School, staff are receiving training and coaching to strengthen their relational practice. Although we are at the beginning of this journey, the work already undertaken is positively influencing the whole school community.



How pupils' rights to safety, expression and regulation support are being embedded

We take a holistic approach to supporting our children, always placing their needs at the heart of what we do. This was reflected in the way we supported one of our youngest pupils, who joined us in September 2025. Although we began by putting in place the support outlined in their EHCP, it quickly became clear that further adjustments were needed. Working closely with the family and seeking guidance from external professionals, including an Occupational Therapist, we adopted a solution-focused and compassionate approach. This collaborative effort has led to a noticeable reduction in behaviours of concern and, most importantly, it has been wonderful to see the child engaging more confidently and joyfully within the classroom.

How the Positive Behaviour Support framework is delivered

At Brays School, behaviour is understood as a form of communication. Our role is to interpret this communication and respond in a way that meets pupils' needs. We apply a curious, relational and investigative approach which incorporates:

- Zones of Regulation
- Communication profiling, tools and strategies
- Sensory regulation profiles and environments
- Restorative approaches

Together, these elements create a holistic framework that supports pupils to regulate, communicate and thrive, aligning with our school values of #braysbelonging where everyone TREKS together #teamwork #respect #equality #kindness #safety. These values underpin the day to day lived experiences of children and adults at Brays School.



Spring Sporting Success at Brays

Thanks to investment from our Forward Education Trust, Brays School's swimming pool is now fully operational, allowing children to benefit from hydrotherapy sessions that support their physical and emotional well-being as well as swimming lessons. We are also grateful to Badminton England for organising the inclusive Shuttle Stars Festival, where #TeamBrays shone brightly. Our children were fantastic ambassadors, demonstrating perseverance and enthusiasm across all activity stations. This event not only celebrated sporting achievement but also reinforced our values of #teamwork, #respect, and #belonging.



Something to look forward to in Summer.....

This summer, Brays School is thrilled to have organised our first-ever residential trip for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties to the Wingfield Centre in Cheshire. Over two nights, our dedicated staff will receive specialist training from the nursing team to expertly support each child's unique needs. Children will enjoy rebound therapy sessions aimed at enhancing core stability, offering both therapeutic benefits and joyful experiences. We are incredibly grateful to our committed staff for their time and to families for entrusting us with this privilege. We look forward to sharing the success of this memorable adventure with you in the Summer newsletter.

Behaviour & Relationships Approach - Clare Jaques, Assistant Headteacher

Our Behaviour & Relationships approach brings ***belonging, kindness, safety, aspiration and respect*** to life by building strong, authentic relationships with every pupil and family. Guided by our values of belonging, respect, independence, diversity, growth and equality, we use the PACE approach to ensure each interaction is rooted in curiosity, empathy and connection. PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make the child feel safe. We know every child and family as unique individuals, creating a safe, inclusive environment where pupils feel seen, valued and supported to achieve their best. Together, we make 'Bridge the place to be.'



We support staff to model calm, predictability and emotional availability through a strong culture of high expectations and professional growth. Coaching and in-the-moment modelling help staff refine relational practice, while high-quality CPD—delivered by internal certified experts and external therapeutic professionals—builds confidence, consistency and shared understanding.



Professional learning underpins the translation of principles into effective practice, strengthened further through regular reflection, supportive dialogue and a shared relational language. This collective commitment ensures our Behaviour & Relationships approach is lived every day.

We are strengthening pupils' rights to be safe, to express their feelings in ways that work for them and to develop regulation skills through a collaborative and therapeutic model. Emotional Regulation and Behaviour Support Plans are co-constructed with pupils, families and professionals, ensuring each child's view shapes their strategies.

Timetables are personalised and adapted to individual needs, supporting regulation and enabling meaningful access to learning. With a core focus on communication development and creative occupational therapy, pupils are supported to express emotions safely and confidently. Our multi-agency therapeutic provision brings staff, therapists and families together to design tailored regulation tools and approaches that promote increasing independence.

Our framework is embedded across the school, woven into daily practice and explicitly taught through the curriculum in alignment with EHCP outcomes. By helping pupils understand themselves, regulate emotions and build positive relationships, we equip them with skills for learning, independence and life beyond school. This focus on lifelong learning strengthens confidence, resilience and meaningful participation in their communities, improving long-term outcomes.



Celebrating the Year of the Horse with Missy

As part of our Chinese New Year celebrations and our learning about the Year of the Horse, we were delighted to welcome a very special visitor into school – Missy the therapy horse.

The visit gave our pupils a truly memorable, hands-on experience. Children were able to gently brush Missy, add colourful bows to her mane, and even walk her carefully around the secure carpark with support. For those who were not quite ready to be close to Missy, hobby horses were available so that everyone could take part in the experience in a way that felt safe and comfortable for them.

Spending time with Missy brought enormous benefits for our pupils. The calm, steady presence of the horse supported emotional regulation and helped children to feel relaxed and secure. Many pupils showed increased confidence as they approached, touched or walked alongside her. The sensory experience of brushing her coat, feeling her warmth and listening to her gentle movements provided rich, meaningful engagement. Activities such as grooming and walking also encouraged communication, turn-taking, coordination and the development of fine and gross motor skills. Most importantly, every child was able to participate at their own pace. The session was a wonderful example of inclusive learning in action – building confidence, joy and connection while deepening our understanding of Chinese New Year traditions.



The Big Bridge Picnic

We are excited to introduce a brand-new event coming this summer term – The Big Bridge Picnic. For the first time, pupils and their loved ones will be invited to enjoy a relaxed picnic together, either in the beautiful surroundings of Sutton Park or within our wonderful school grounds.

The picnic will link to our learning in Design and Technology and to story themes explored in class, giving pupils meaningful opportunities to connect their learning with real-life experiences. It will be a chance for families to spend quality time together outdoors while celebrating food, stories and creativity.

We are sure this will become a much-loved Bridge tradition enjoyed by all.





Behaviour & Relationships Approach - Richard Grant, Assistant Headteacher

Belonging, Kindness, Safety, Aspiration, and Respect

At Hallmoor School, these five words are the foundation of how we act, speak, and learn together. As we develop our Behaviour & Relationships approach, each value is being given real meaning through everyday practices, shared language, and consistent adult modelling.

Staff are supported to model calm, predictability and emotional availability through three core approaches:

1. Focused Professional Development

We provide regular training on trauma-informed and autism-aware practice. These sessions include practical examples and opportunities for staff to develop both their understanding of why and how we model calm, predictability and emotional availability.

2. Coaching and Support

School leaders at all levels spend time in classrooms, not to judge, but to coach. We offer supportive feedback, demonstrate calm language or de-escalation strategies when needed, and model routines that create predictability. This helps staff see what “calm presence” looks, sounds and feels like.



3. Emotional Availability for Staff

We cannot ask adults to be emotionally available to children if they do not feel supported themselves.

We prioritise:

1. open-door leadership,
2. time to talk through challenges,
3. positive recognition of progress,
4. and a culture where it is okay to ask for help.

How pupils’ rights to safety, expression and regulation support are being embedded

Adults use predictable routines, calm tone, and consistent expectations so that children know what will happen and how adults will respond, even when things go wrong. We also make sure that children who are experiencing challenges understand that they will not lose a relationship or support, that we do not hold grudges and that they are still held safely within our community.

How the Positive Behaviour Support Framework is delivered

Our Behaviour Support Framework is underpinned by a trauma-informed and autism-aware approach. Rather than focusing on correcting behaviour after it happens, we work co-productively as a school with our pupils and key stakeholders to proactively shape the conditions that help children succeed socially, emotionally and academically.



National Year of Reading

Reading is at the heart of Hallmoor, and in each of the phases we introduce our children to new and exciting opportunities to read and experience different types of literature. We have started the National Year of Reading with some exciting activities and are looking forward to lots more to come.

Pupils enjoyed a fantastic WOW Day based on their new book Gangsta Granny. Children had lots of fun creating Crown Jewels for an exhibition, as well as searching for clues to solve the mystery of who had stolen them. They also designed posters to help track down the missing jewels.

In Key Stage 5 we have introduced a reading programme with a focus on reading/decoding for purpose to support students as they move to adulthood.

Whole school activities will be taking place during the year to excite and enrich all of our young people's experiences of reading.



Animal Fun

Throughout the school the opportunity to introduce the children to different animals provides a wonderful experience. In Key Stage 4 a theme of pets saw the children visit farms, pet shops and consider how to look after animals. In primary and secondary we were thrilled to welcome Animal Man for a truly unforgettable visit! Pupils had the chance to get up close to an amazing range of animals, including cockroaches, snakes, lizards and birds, and there was plenty of excitement (and bravery!) all around. Animal Man shared fascinating facts about each creature, helping the children learn more about habitats, diets and how animals protect themselves in the wild. Pupils were encouraged to ask questions, handle some of the animals safely, and challenge their own fears in a calm and supportive environment. The visit sparked lots of curiosity, discussion and wonder, and it was wonderful to see so many children engaged, enthusiastic and respectful towards the animals. For some, it was a huge achievement just to touch or hold an animal for the first time.





Behaviour & Relationships Approach - Sarah Baker, Assistant Headteacher

How the values of belonging, kindness, safety, aspiration and respect are being made meaningful

At The Heights, these values are embedded in daily practice. Belonging is strengthened through predictable routines and strong adult–pupil relationships so every child feels part of our community. Kindness is modelled by staff and encouraged through restorative conversations and recognition of positive choices. Safety is prioritised through calm adult responses, clear boundaries and access to regulation spaces, ensuring pupils feel emotionally and physically secure. Aspiration is promoted by celebrating progress and helping pupils understand the opportunities that come from engaging in learning. Respect is taught through consistent, empathetic adult behaviour and expectations around listening, communication and responsibility.

How staff are supported to model calm, predictability and emotional availability

Staff are supported through regular discussion, CPD and modelling of routines that promote consistent relational practice. Agreed scripts and predictable responses help staff remain calm and confident. A recent example involved a pupil struggling to engage; the team used emotion coaching to help her express disappointment and regulate. She recovered quickly and continued her day successfully.



Belonging

Every individual is welcomed and valued for who they are. We foster inclusive environments where individuals feel accepted, connected, and part of a collective purpose.



Kindness

Kindness is demonstrated through empathy, compassion, and thoughtful actions. We promote positive interactions where language and behaviour reflect care and understanding.



Empowerment

We support individuals to develop confidence, independence, and ownership of their learning and actions, enabling them to make informed choices and contribute meaningfully to the school community.



Respect

We hold high expectations for all learners and staff, encouraging ambition and perseverance. Through tailored support and challenge, we enable meaningful progress and success.



Safety

We prioritise physical, emotional, and psychological safety in all settings. Creating secure environments is essential for wellbeing, learning, and personal growth.

How pupils' rights to safety, expression and regulation support are being embedded

We promote pupils' rights by ensuring they can express emotions safely and receive help with regulation. Staff provide calm, predictable responses and offer varied ways for pupils to communicate, including visuals, movement and quiet spaces. One form group has shown a significant improvement in attitude and enjoyment of school due to increased predictability, emotional space and trusted relationships.

How the Positive Behaviour Support framework is delivered

It is delivered through consistent relational practice, predictable routines and a focus on understanding behaviour. Staff are beginning to use proactive strategies, analysis of behaviour and individual plans where needed. Positive choices are celebrated, helping pupils feel safe, valued and ready to learn.



Spring 2026

It is a busy time at The Heights with multiple projects bringing enrichment and enjoyment to our students. Mr Harris our PE teacher has launched a new Wednesday afternoon session for our girls. Being outnumbered in classes by boys, some struggle to engage in their timetabled lesson. He has recognised this and now teaches Y6 and Key Stage 3 girls for once a week for their own exclusive session. The girls enjoy a range of activities together whilst listening to their favourite music artists. It has been hugely successful, and we are now seeing more engagement in the girls' class sessions too!



Summer 2026

We will be continuing to work on initiatives that have been launched this year, like Dogs in School (which is very popular), school council meetings, BCFC and Birmingham Rep for drama.

School council will be launching 'Jobs in school' during this term to give students a sense of responsibility and ownership and also work experience. Jobs will include looking after specific areas of school, and our local Mental Health in Schools Team will be training selected students to become Mental Health Ambassadors and Listening Peers.

Students will go through a recruitment process before embarking on a role.





Behaviour & Relationships Approach - Rebecca Richardson, Deputy Headteacher

How the values of belonging, kindness, safety, aspiration and respect are being made meaningful

At High Point Academy, the values of belonging, kindness, safety, aspiration and respect are embedded in everyday practice. Strong adult–pupil relationships, trauma-informed approaches and clear routines underpin a sense of belonging, supported by consistent form time, WOW Days and assemblies. Kindness and respect are reinforced through shared expectations such as using kind hands, kind words and active listening, with a focus on relational practice rather than punitive approaches. Safety is promoted through predictable routines, robust safeguarding, the use of Zones of Regulation and regular check-ins. Aspiration is developed through curriculum pathways, careers education, PSHE (including Jigsaw) and a clear focus on preparing pupils for adulthood.

How staff are supported to model calm, predictability and emotional availability

Staff are supported to model calm, predictability and emotional availability through a structured programme of CPD, including Teach Like a Champion, trauma-informed practice and the Zones of Regulation. This is reinforced through consistent routines and clear expectations across the school day. Leadership further supports this through regular briefings, strong pastoral systems and targeted coaching aligned with key strategies such as checking for understanding, retrieval practice and positive framing—enabling staff to respond consistently and effectively in the classroom.



How pupils' rights to safety, expression and regulation support are being embedded

High Point ensures learners' rights—to be safe, to express feelings appropriately and to receive help with regulation—are upheld through Zones of Regulation, Holistic Pupil Activities (HPAs) linked to EHCP needs, trauma-informed approaches and strong pastoral systems. Pupils are taught language and strategies to express emotions, supported by strong adult–pupil relationships, and given structured opportunities through HPAs to work on communication, SEMH targets and self-regulation. HPAs provide personalised regulation support three afternoons a week, where Level 3s work directly with pupils on EHCP-linked emotional and social development needs. This was recognised by Ofsted as a strength and is a clear example of pupils receiving targeted regulation support in a safe environment.

How the Positive Behaviour Support framework is delivered

Positive behaviour support at High Point is delivered through a trauma-informed, relational framework that emphasises consistency, safety and skillbuilding. Staff use predictable routines, Zones of Regulation and relational approaches such as “connect before correct” to help pupils regulate and return to learning. Achievement and positive conduct are reinforced through the school's Dojo points system, which celebrates effort, engagement and kindness, and is shared with families to strengthen home–school relationships. Regulation support is embedded through safe spaces such as The Hive and through structured pastoral intervention. Staff also use Team Teach strategies, ensuring that all de-escalation and physical intervention approaches are safe, consistent and rooted in positive behaviour support; all staff are trained or have scheduled training dates in place. This approach, combined with reduced restrictive practices and strong pastoral links, enables pupils to feel supported, understood and safe while developing the emotional and behavioural skills needed for long-term success.



Exploring emotions with Big Brum

Pupils within the Developer phase have been exploring emotions and body language. We invited 'Big Brum' to explore emotions and stranger danger through a traditional story.

Pupils explored the main feelings of anxiety, worry and sadness and strategies they can use to support when they feel this way.

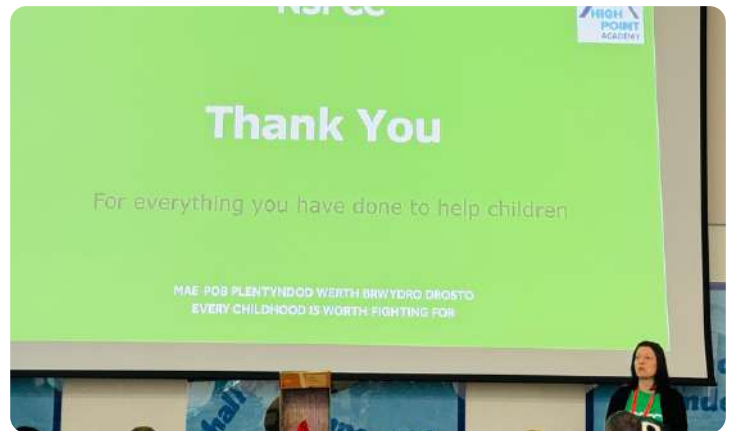
They also explored safety and boundaries with strangers, and when strangers offer something enticing what might be their reasons for doing this.

Fund raising for NSPCC

Our year 11 group completed a fund raising event for the NSPCC as part of their entry level qualification.

The pupils had to complete a sponsored walk and other activity events to raise money for the charity. They managed to raise a huge £526. A lady from the charity joined us in praise assembly to celebrate how well the pupils had done.

Well done year 11!





Behaviour & Relationships Approach - Zoe Redding, Assistant Headteacher

How the values of belonging, kindness, safety, aspiration and respect are being made meaningful

Our SHINE ethos and school rules are embedded every day within Leycroft, woven both verbally and non-verbally through the actions of both staff and pupils to create an environment that strives to fully encapsulate the Behaviour and Relationships approach.

How staff are supported to model calm, predictability and emotional availability

At Leycroft all behaviour is a form of communication, and it is for us to decipher, address and manage our pupils through this process. Therefore, it is imperative that we are always calm, we thoroughly analyse the situation before, during and after and we provide a safe haven for our children. This has been achieved through CPD and ensuring staff members' full understanding of autism and the "why" around behaviour e.g through FOCUSS, Team Teach.



How pupils' rights to safety, expression and regulation support are being embedded

Within Leycroft, emotional regulation occurs multiple times throughout the day for many of our pupils, and as a school we seek to support this through instilling class routines, offering a full communication system, meeting sensory and movement needs and adopting de-escalation strategies. Staff are always attuned to our pupils' emotions and intervene when required. We offer interventions around "Zones of Regulation" and "The Worry Monsters", working with them to be able to begin to name their emotions and understand how these feel inside.

How the Positive Behaviour Support framework is delivered

At Leycroft, we acknowledge and support all behaviour as a form of communication and pupil voice. We reflect and analyse both positive and challenging behaviour so that we can ensure our practice is both child-centred and personally structured to that child. With the support of external agencies we are able to positively manage both staff and pupils to engage in a continuous cycle of relationship building practice and adopting strategies that will ensure long term positive outcomes and progress.



Spring

During the spring term, many of our pupils had the opportunity to take part in a range of exciting off-site visits. We are incredibly proud of the children for bravely exploring new environments and trying new experiences. Trips included swimming sessions, visits to the farm and a memorable day at Cadbury World. These visits provided valuable opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. Swimming helped pupils develop confidence, physical skills and independence, while farm visits supported learning about animals and the world around us. At Cadbury World, pupils explored how things are made and experienced a new place within the community. We are also very proud of our staff, who worked hard to facilitate these experiences and continue to embrace Leycroft’s vision to “enable children to explore the world around them and discover the talents within.”



Coming up in Summer

In the second part of the summer term, our Explorers’ topic will be competition. We are very excited to link this theme with the excitement of the World Cup, creating engaging learning opportunities for our pupils at Leycroft Academy.

Each class will represent a country that is both participating in the World Cup and connected to our school community. This will give pupils a chance to explore different places, cultures and ways of life, while taking part in fun football-themed activities.

Throughout the topic, pupils will develop their imagination through small world play around football, take part in imitation games, and practice remembering important places around school, such as the sports hall. They will also explore similarities and differences between places, identify different types of transport, and show curiosity about life in other countries.

We are looking forward to a term full of movement, teamwork and discovery, where pupils can enjoy the spirit of friendly competition in ways that are meaningful and accessible to them.



We will be holding the latest **Annual Pupil Celebration and Awards Ceremony** on Friday 3rd July 2026.

Planning for that event has just started. It will be held at The Heights Academy and schools will now be selecting nominees for the awards in the following categories:

- Most Improved in Reading and/or Communication
- Most Improved in Numeracy & Problem Solving
- Most Improved in Independence
- Kindness & Working Together
- Contribution to School Award
- Achievement/Inspiration Award

This is a celebration of our wonderful children, which parents love to attend. More information will follow from your school as we approach the May half-term break.

We will be publishing the next edition of the Forward Education Trust newsletter just before we break up for the summer holiday.

In that edition, we will share some insights into the roles of two of our Executive Leaders:

- **Emma Arnott** who is our Director of Governance & Development, who has worked for the Trust since 2021; and
- **Jenni Pearce** who joined the Trust in January 2026 as Director of Finance & Operations.

Both Emma and Jenni work closely with Leanne Mahony (Director of Education) and Trust CEO Simon Dilkes, providing strategic leadership & support to our Headteachers.

Other highlights coming in the next edition will include:

- Information about the Trust's approach to **local governance** and the importance of parents and other stakeholders having a part to play in the decisions made about their school.
- We'll include a review of our **Trust Conference**, which takes place on 5th May, when we can share some images of our staff coming together, sharing professional learning and taking on board new ideas which will support the children in their schools even better.
- We'll preview some of the **investment projects** which we will be planning in our schools during the summer school closure period.

We hope that by providing information about Forward Education Trust, parents & carers, as well as wider stakeholders interested in our schools and our Trust will be able to see the work that we're achieving by working together collaboratively.

There are important national developments in education which we want to keep parents informed and up-to-date about.

Ofsted has been reformed and a new inspection regime is in place. As a Trust, we are delivering training to Headteachers and school teams, so that they are always prepared, but especially ready for an Ofsted visit, whenever it comes.

Judgements by Ofsted are important, but we are preparing in all of our schools, no matter how far on the horizon their next formal inspection is, as we want the best possible education standards to be evident every day.

We also know that the Department for Education published a new **Schools White Paper** for consultation. In the next edition of the newsletter, we will report on a summary of our thoughts, what implications this has for our Trust, our schools and, therefore, your children. At present, little is changing, but we do have to prepare well for the future.





As we enter the Easter season and look forward to a well-earned spring break,

we celebrate this moment of renewal, hope, and new beginnings. Whether you observe Easter, mark the arrival of spring in your own tradition, or simply enjoy the pause, we wish everyone a peaceful and uplifting break.

Location

Trust Central Office
c/o Leycroft Academy, Leycroft Avenue,
Tile Cross, Birmingham, B33 9UH

www.fet.ac

FORWARD
EDUCATION TRUST 