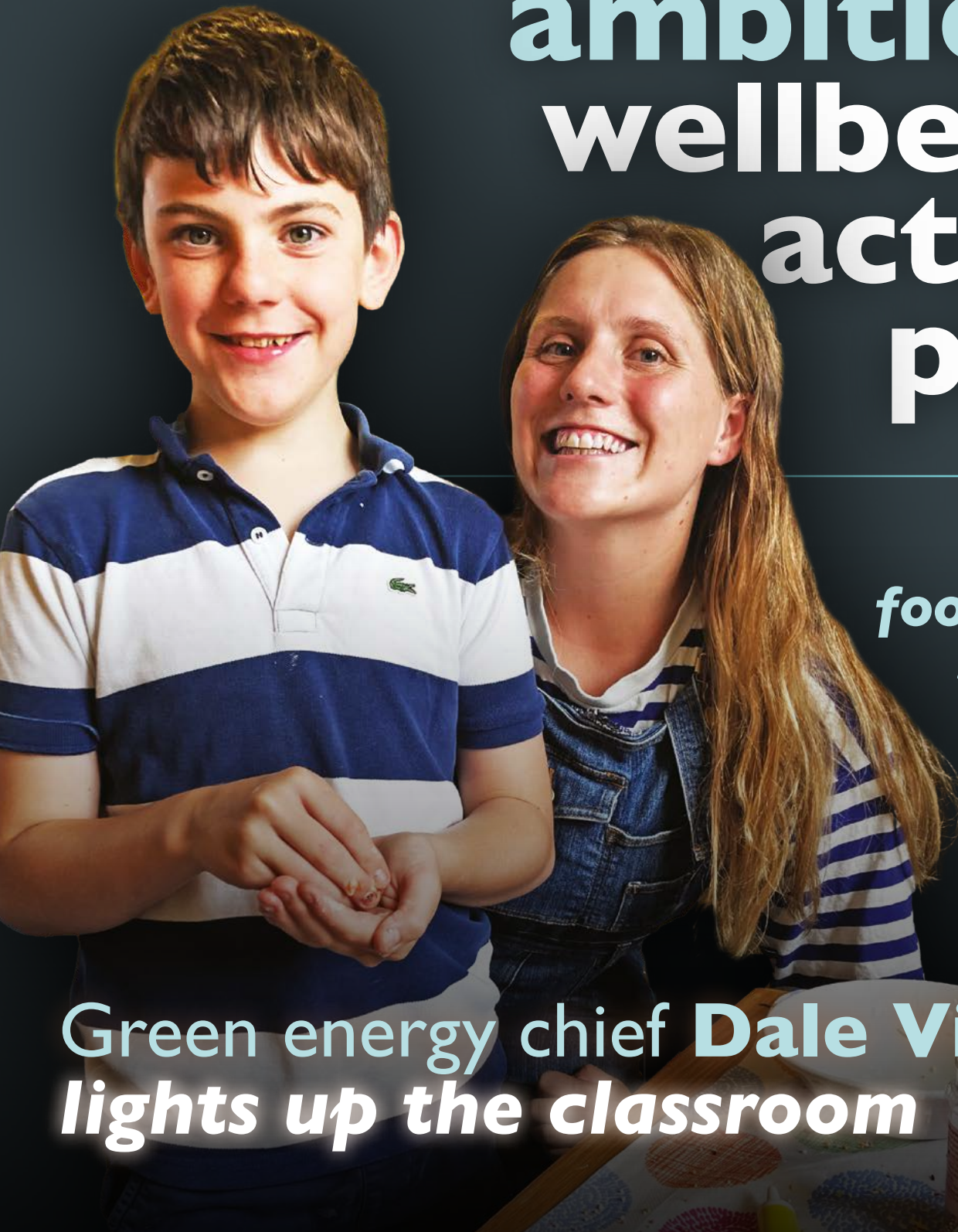




Trust unveils ambitious wellbeing action plan

*Novalis
footballers
put in a
great
shift*

Green energy chief **Dale Vince**
lights up the classroom



Welcome

Welcome to this term's edition of Novalis News and a particularly warm welcome to all the new pupils and staff who joined the Trust this term.

Whether you've only recently arrived or have been here for some time, the past few weeks have involved all staff members and pupils settling into new routines and getting to know each other better. Now, as Christmas approaches, we can't wait to celebrate the festive season at some of our much-loved annual events including the Christmas panto, the staff Shepherd's Play, and the Cotswold Chine carol concert. At William Morris School, pupils and staff have been busy making their own new Christmas traditions with a Christmas carol concert and pantomime trips planned for the last week of term.

“William Morris School's first ever Ofsted inspection saw the school being rated good in every category.”

In this issue we feature the new Novalis wellbeing and mental health policy which is being launched next term. As part of this initiative, every pupil and teacher has already been given a “positive planner” which uses evidence-based strategies to promote wellbeing and help students tackle issues they may otherwise find



challenging. We're also very pleased to bring you news of William Morris School's first ever Ofsted inspection which saw the school being rated good in every category. This is a well-earned acknowledgement of all the hard work put in by staff and pupils over the past year. You can also read about what happened when the schools' Eco Councillors welcomed climate campaigner and green energy chief Dale Vince to the Trust for an inspiring and entertaining question and answer session!

I hope that you and your families have a wonderful Christmas and New Year or as we say in my native Costa Rica – Feliz Navidad! We look forward to bringing you the next Novalis News in 2024.

Valerie Gomez

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They think it's all over – **IT IS NOW!**

It was the game that everyone had been waiting for...
Novalis's first ever inter-staff football match.



The live-streamed event – which took place in Stroud's Stratford Park – saw members of the education team from Cotswold Chine and William Morris Schools clash with the Rest of the World comprising staff from the therapy, care and maintenance teams and Paradise House.

According to spectators, it was a game of two halves. Education was up 2-0 at half time, both goals having been slotted in by Finn Fowler. Under the cosh, the Rest of the World tried to claw their way back into the game during the second half scoring twice through Tash Martin and Toby Wyatt. However, when the final whistle blew it was the Education team who took the spoils with their star player Finn Fowler burying the ball in the back of the net twice more resulting in a final score of 4-2.

Team manager for the Rest of the World, Dan Blackwell said the aim of the match was to bring everyone together

for a fun event after a number of social occasions had been scuppered by the pandemic. "Both teams competed in the spirit of the game to provide entertainment for both children and adults at Novalis," he added.

Andy Roberts, the Education team manager, attributed a large part of their success to star player Finn who chalked up all four goals. "But Jaimme Burfoot and Dom James also had outstanding games and worked hard. I'm not sure either of them stopped running for the whole 60 minutes," he added. "Our skipper Ben Jones continually motivated all our players, and everyone kept their cool!"

There were a number of memorable moments during the game which included Jaimme outmanoeuvring Dan Blackwell on the pitch – which earned her a yellow card – and Andy Roberts' penalty save. There was some controversy over referee Mark Powis's decision to award a penalty for a handball against Education team captain Ben Jones – VAR replays showed that the incident took place outside of the box!

The IT department arranged to livestream the match and provided commentary so that the children and Paradise residents were able to enjoy the game. It's hoped the event will become a regular fixture in the Novalis staff calendar.

Well done to everyone and especially to the four players of the match: Jaimme Burfoot, Tash Martin, Finn Fowler and Sam Rowher.



Season's Greetings to all as Novalis makes it a December to remember...

Novalis is getting into the festive spirit this month with an exciting schedule of Christmas events and entertainment in the offing.

This year's panto "Cinderella's Grumpy Turkey" – directed by Bruno Greatorex and featuring a cast of around 15 students and staff – will take place in St John's Hall at William Morris School on Tuesday, 19th December.



According to Beth Price-Bish, who's playing the role of Abanazar as well as helping out behind the scenes, the panto features a mixture of characters from the much-loved fairy tales Cinderella, Peter Pan, and Aladdin.

"...there's a few twists and turns along the way..."

"The storyline involves the characters all being invited for a feast at the castle but there's a few twists and turns along the way," she says. "That's about as much as I can share without giving anything away!"

The four pirates in the production are played by students Violet and Xander together with Tim Makaruk and Martha Lukas. Vicky Butcher stars as the Grumpy Turkey,



Grace Chapman plays Cinderella and Gareth Parker and Natalia Jarvis are Baron and Baroness Hardup.

The Genie of the Lamp is played by Sarah Day and Buttons by Jaimme Burfoot. Mark Powis and Samuel Rowher star as the two ugly sisters Lily and Grace. Bruno takes on the role of Captain Hook while Jake Lukas and Caroline Tebay will narrate the production. Children from both WMS and CCS are helping to create props and scenery for the show.

Other members of staff will also be treading the boards for this year's Shepherd's Play which has been part of Novalis' Christmas celebrations for more than a decade. The play – the staff's fun-filled take on the nativity story – features traditional songs sung by the cast with live accompaniment from the Trust's music teacher Hilary Ball. It will be performed in the CCS Hall on Wednesday, 20th December.

The Shepherds will be played by Mark Powis, Bruno Greatorex and Gavin Pond, with Jaimme Burfoot starring as Mary as Samuel Rowher as Joseph. Other cast members include Bille McGarrigle, Becky Kent, Jack Horrell, Lewis Newman and Dominic James.

No Christmas celebration is complete without carol singing and CCS students will be taking part in a concert at the Halfway Café on Thursday, 21st December while WMS will be staging their own carol concert in St John's Hall on the same day. WMS class groups are also going to see Mother Goose at the Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham.

Novalis cooks are looking forward to preparing tasty homecooked Christmas meals for students and staff on Wednesday 20th December. After the meals, there will also be festive games and activities with a present for every pupil.



CHICA AND PECKY ARE A CRACKING PAIR

Staff, students and residents from all over Novalis were able to watch this adorable pair of chicks hatch in a Cotswold Chine classroom thanks to the wonders of modern technology.

Chica and Pecky's long awaited arrival was captured on a livestreamed "chick cam" set up by IT assistant Jamie Hatton. The project was all about enriching the School's life cycle curriculum topic and enabled the whole Trust to get a bird's eye view of the moment the chicks entered the world.

Dan Woodhead (Curriculum Enrichment Co-ordinator) explained that the fledglings – who were named by students following a draw – started out as two fertilized bantam eggs which were delivered to Novalis via an ethical chick hatching company. The eggs were placed in an incubator and cared for by the children for 21 days.

"The children were in charge of checking the temperature of the incubator at regular intervals and turning the eggs three times a day. Once the chicks had

hatched, the students had to feed and water them and clean out their enclosure," says Dan. "As well as being a fun educational activity, there was a real element of caring and responsibility involved. I'm pleased to say that the children responded really well."

Dan has experience of chickens as he's kept them in his garden for several years. At four weeks of age, Chica and Pecky had outgrown their classroom enclosure so Dan brought them home to join his own flock.

"Luckily both chicks turned out to be hens, but had they been cockerels we had already agreed that they would go to a local farm where some of the children do work experience because it wouldn't have been suitable for males to live in an urban environment," he says.

It's hoped that Chica and Pecky will be laying eggs by next Spring. In the meantime, Dan is looking forward to bringing the pair into Novalis for what will be an egg-citing reunion!



IT'S A FOREST SCHOOL FIRST FOR NOVALIS!



Novalis Trust's very first on-site Forest School is up and running in the grounds of William Morris School thanks to the sterling efforts of pupils and staff.

WMS's Forest School Leader, Amanda Brown, has been working with other staff members and children since the beginning of term converting an area of the school field into a dedicated space for outdoor learning.

The exciting new project – which has involved making living willow fencing and planting native climbers to encourage wildlife – is allowing the WMS pupils to discover, play, explore and learn within a natural outdoor setting.

Amanda, who is currently working towards a Level 3 Certificate in Forest School leadership explains that participating in Forest School activities helps children to develop confidence and teamwork and communication skills and gives them the opportunity to take appropriate supported risks.

"We're so delighted to have created our very own Forest School right on our doorstep," she says. "There are huge benefits associated with taking part in Forest School including building independence and resilience as well as improving physical well-being and increasing motor development. The Forest

School ethos is about children being able to take responsibility for leading their own learning at a pace they feel comfortable with."

Small groups of children attend the Forest School every day with Amanda and their class teachers to engage in a huge range of activities including shelter building, bug hunts, woodland art, willow weaving, tying knots, whittling and mud kitchen role play.

"The pupils are getting comfortable with being outside in all weather, getting dirty and encountering insects and other wildlife," says Amanda. "During Forest School time pupils are encouraged to take controlled risks which can lead to better self-esteem and an increased ability to calculate risk. We've seen children who perhaps have difficulty concentrating in class come to Forest school and enjoy focusing on practical hands-on tasks which is lovely to see."





“...activities including shelter building, bug hunts, woodland art, willow weaving, tying knots, whittling and mud kitchen role play.”

NOVALIS SET TO LAUNCH WELLBEING ACTION PLAN

A comprehensive new wellbeing and mental health policy which provides additional support to Novalis staff, residents and pupils is due to be launched next term.

The Trust-wide initiative – which includes a dedicated online wellbeing resources site and personalised wellbeing action plans for employees, residents, and children – will be shared with staff at a series of drop-in events at Cotswold Chine School on 17th January.

It was developed after Grace Chapman (Deputy Head of Clinical and Therapy Services) and Hannah Dury (CCS Head Teacher) were selected to take part in a pilot programme entitled “Embedding Staff Mental Health in School” run by the charity Education Support and NASS.

According to Grace and Hannah, participating in the programme highlighted that there was already a strong culture around wellbeing at Novalis. They said that the Trust actively promotes mental health awareness amongst staff in order to create a psychologically safe work environment.

“However, our new policy is all about adding that extra layer of support so that staff, residents and students can feel even more confident about managing their own psychological and physical wellbeing,” Grace explained. “We want to ensure that staff have equal access to opportunities and resources to maintain and improve their wellbeing and that our leadership team continue to support mental health across our organisation.”

As part of the strategy, a wellbeing resources SharePoint site is being set up so that both leaders and staff can assess advice and guidance on topics ranging from TREAT – the Novalis employee benefits scheme – to a wellbeing calendar of events including the weekly staff running, whittling, netball and knitting clubs as well as information about professional development courses and a wellbeing reading list. This will allow new joiners to find out what’s going on at the Trust and connect easily with the relevant contact people.

Wellness Resilience Action Plans (WRAP) – which give staff and children the opportunity to create a “wellness toolbox” – are also being introduced. The WRAP process prompts participants to identify emotions such as anxiety, anger or sadness and the changes which occur in the body when experiencing these feelings. Children and staff are then encouraged to develop reminders and resources which help them to maintain their wellness on a daily basis and especially during difficult periods in their lives.

“We’ve found that the students are really enjoying filling in these action plans and taking ownership of their wellbeing,” says Grace. “The pupils decide who they wish to share them with. It’s been very useful to be

able to send copies to parents, if the students give their permission, so that they can see what their children find most helpful in terms of coping strategies.”

The new initiatives are in addition to the existing support structures in place for residents and pupils which includes a clinical therapy referral system, access to family work sessions and the promotion of low arousal environments throughout the Trust. A therapeutic curriculum operates at both CCS and WMS.

“We’re very fortunate to have so much support and highly trained professionals working within the Trust.”

Staff receive mental health and wellbeing training as part of their continuing professional development and are supported through regular relational check-ins, debriefing sessions, and line management and reflective supervisions.

Both Jake Lukas (CEO) and Caroline Tebay (Deputy CEO and Head of Clinical and Therapy Services) are trained in the Neurosequential Model of Reflection and Supervision which is designed to help staff process experiences, problem solve and generate new ideas in workplace settings. Grace and Hannah are currently in the process of completing the training so that they can also offer this support to colleagues.

“One thing we noticed on the course was just how forward thinking we already are as an organisation,” says Grace. “We’re very fortunate to have so much support and highly trained professionals working within the Trust. There’s a clear process that staff can follow as and when they need support with their wellbeing.”

To measure the outcome of the initiative, Grace and Hannah are designing and conducting staff and student surveys and questionnaires to establish a baseline Novalis wellbeing score. This will be repeated at six and 12-month intervals to monitor progress.

The Trust will be sharing further details about the wellbeing and mental health policy with parents at a special information evening which will be held at CCS on Thursday, 25th January 2024. Those who are unable to attend in person will be able to join the meeting online.



Planners get the term off to a positive start!

Every Novalis pupil has been provided with a specially designed student planner developed to support mental health as part of the Trust's wellbeing action plan.



The "positive student planners" – which have been co-developed by the UK health charity Samaritans and a Bath-based company – use evidence-based strategies to promote wellbeing using positive affirmations, daily reflections, and mindfulness activities.

They've been specifically designed to help students tackle the issues they often find challenging and include grounding tools, expert wellbeing tips, a calming colouring and creative space and even bookmarks to help with homework tasks.

Hannah Dury (CCS Headteacher) said students are being encouraged to fill in their planners at the end of every school day.

"The pupils have responded really favourably to the personalised planners," she said. "We know that looking after our mental health should be a daily priority and the planners are a great way of helping our pupils to check in and manage their own wellbeing on a regular basis."



"We know that looking after our mental health should be a daily priority..."

Novalis students are not the only ones being inspired to manage their mental health and wellbeing. All Trust staff have also been supplied with a slightly different version of the positive planner which features sections dedicated to daily intentions and reflections, a mood check and gratitude diary as well as other tools aimed at inspiring positivity.

The pupil and staff planners are designed to be used over a 12-week period and fresh copies will be handed out every term.

Green Energy Chief Dale lights up the classroom

Novalis pupils were expecting great things when Gloucestershire climate campaigner and green energy chief Dale Vince came to visit – and he didn't disappoint!

The founder of the green energy firm Ecotricity and owner of League Two football club Forest Green Rovers pulled up at William Morris School on his electric Harley Davidson for a meet-up with members of the Eco Council from both WMS and CCS.

Bella, Joey, Justine, Phoebe and Xander were all ears as Dale – who's been awarded an OBE for his services to the environment and the electricity industry – spoke to them about his energy company and his involvement with other environment-related projects including Little Green Devils, a sustainable vegan food range for UK schools.

and whether the footballs used at the Forest Green Rovers stadium are eco-friendly and vegan."

Since his visit, Dale has announced that he's planning to launch Britain's first electric airline early next year with a 19-seater plane travelling on a route between Edinburgh and Southampton. The Ecojet will run initially on kerosene based fuel for the first year before being retrofitted with engines than convert green hydrogen into electricity.



“Forest Green Rovers – known as the world's greenest football club.”

Dale is currently developing a new eco-park adjacent to William Morris School which will house a 5,000-seat wooden stadium and training ground for the Forest Green Rovers – known as the world's greenest football club – as well as a care home, hotel, and office space for eco businesses.

The club has already been recognised by football's governing body FIFA and the United Nations for its environmentally conscious practices which include a vegan match day menu at its current ground.

Dale presented the children with club shirts which have been made from a composite material consisting of recycled plastic and coffee grounds and signed copies of his book Manifesto in which he explains how focusing on energy, transport and food can help solve the climate crisis and change the way we live for the better in other ways.

Tim Makaruk (Principal) said Dale's visit was a day to remember: "We were very grateful that Dale was able to give up his time to speak to representatives from our Schools' eco councils who were extremely interested in what he had to say. The pupils had plenty of questions to ask him and were keen to hear about how his famous electric car works, what children think about his Green Devils vegan food



"Having met Dale, I know that the pupils will be following all of his ventures with great interest," added Tim. "We're looking forward to having the new football ground and eco park on the doorstep of William Morris School once the project is finished. I think Dale's visit has won the club a whole new group of fans."





“Having met Dale, I know that the pupils will be following all of his ventures with great interest...”

Ofsted gives William Morris a clean sweep of good ratings



William Morris School has been rated good in every category in its first Ofsted inspection!

Inspectors found that WMS leaders have succeeded in establishing a positive culture since the school opened its doors last September.

Staff were praised for developing productive and trusting relationships with pupils and for taking the time to learn about their needs and interests which "puts the children at ease".

"...the children enjoy their learning and feel challenged."

According to the report, many pupils had made significant improvements to their behaviour as a result of the calm and consistent way that WMS's leaders and teaching and therapy staff make their expectations clear.

Inspectors carried out "deep dives" into English, maths, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and science, meeting with WMS subject leaders and visiting lessons

where they spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at examples of their work.

They particularly praised the School's strong emphasis on early reading, highlighting the one-to-one work staff do with pupils to address gaps in their phonic knowledge which has led to pupils reading with increasing accuracy and fluency.

During the course of the inspection, the lead Ofsted inspector also spoke to a representative from the local authority about their experiences of placing pupils at the School and considered responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.

Headteacher Gareth Parker said: "We're delighted that Ofsted has recognised that William Morris is a good school. It's particularly pleasing that the inspectors found that we provide a broad and interesting curriculum well matched to our pupils' academic stage and that the children enjoy their learning and feel challenged. I'd like to thank the school staff and leadership team and the pupils and parents who have contributed to this achievement!"

NOVALIS YOUNGSTERS GET ONBOARD TO ACHIEVE YACHTING SUCCESS

Cotswold Chine students David, Harry, Warren and Xander have achieved their Royal Yachting Association Bronze award after learning the ropes at a Gloucestershire sailing club.



The budding young mariners have been attending lessons at Whitefriars Sailing club which operates a "Sailability" group between April and October.



Following the weekly sessions – which placed a high priority on teaching the students how to conduct themselves safely on water – the four are now able to sail independently.

"It was a fantastic opportunity for this group of students to master a completely new set of skills. They should be very proud of their accomplishments," says Dan Woodhead (Enrichment Curriculum Co-ordinator). "We're hoping that at least one of them will be able to take what they have learned on to the expedition section of the Duke of Edinburgh gold award in future."

The pupils received their awards from a member of the Royal Yachting Association and club staff earlier this term.



Novalis welcomes **Husna & Emily**

Meet Emily Exton and Husna Khapedi – the Trust’s two new speech and language therapists.

Husna (23) joins from City University London while Emily (21) has arrived from Leicester’s De Montford University.

After starting with Novalis in September, the pair have spent this term working alongside children at Cotswold Chine School where they are already growing their own caseloads.

Emily was inspired to become a speech therapist because her cousin has Apert syndrome – a rare cranial-facial condition that causes speech and language difficulties.

“...bursting with enthusiasm and new ideas.”

“When I saw how much progress my cousin made after sessions with a speech therapist it gave me a real insight into how rewarding the work is,” says Emily. “It definitely inspired me to pursue speech and language therapy as a career.”

As part of her degree course, Husna gained experience of working at three London schools and at an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) clinic. She also boosted her skills by working for a charity which provided online assistance to adults who have aphasia – a language disorder which is caused by damage to the brain often as the result of stroke.

While she was studying in Leicester, Emily undertook a placement at a stroke ward at a Derby hospital and worked with children who have cleft lip and palate and hearing impairments. She also gained valuable experience of fluency disorders including stammers and assisted with children who have ASD.

Having moved from Denmark to Cheltenham at the age seven, Emily is familiar with life in Gloucestershire. However, moving to the county has been a novel experience for Husna who grew up in East London.

“It’s a very different pace of life from London and I’m not used to seeing cows grazing in the fields on a daily basis,” she says. “It’s very beautiful countryside though and I’m enjoying that.”

Both Emily and Husna are enthusiastic about their new roles. “The support from the whole therapy team has been fantastic and I’m enjoying working alongside Husna,” says Emily. “It’s been great being able to share new experiences with Emily,” added Husna. “We’ve definitely been able to support each other.”

Mike Bebbington (Senior Speech and Language Therapist) said that the new recruits are a very welcome addition to the therapy team.

“Husna and Emily have both arrived from university bursting with enthusiasm and new ideas,” he said. “I’m very pleased that they’ve made such a great start working in the classrooms and getting to know all the children. They have each been given their own caseloads and we’re excited to see the progress that the children will be making under their excellent care.”

IT'S ALL IN A DAY'S WORK FOR SARAH

After 27 years with Novalis, you might think that life at the Trust would hold very few surprises for Sarah Day, William Morris School's Head of Care. That's not the case, however, as 53-year-old Sarah is constantly amazed by the incredible resilience and determination of the children she works with.

"I remain in complete awe of how well our pupils have coped with early adverse experiences, how resilient they are and how they continue to have such joy for life," she says. "Working here makes me feel humble every single day."

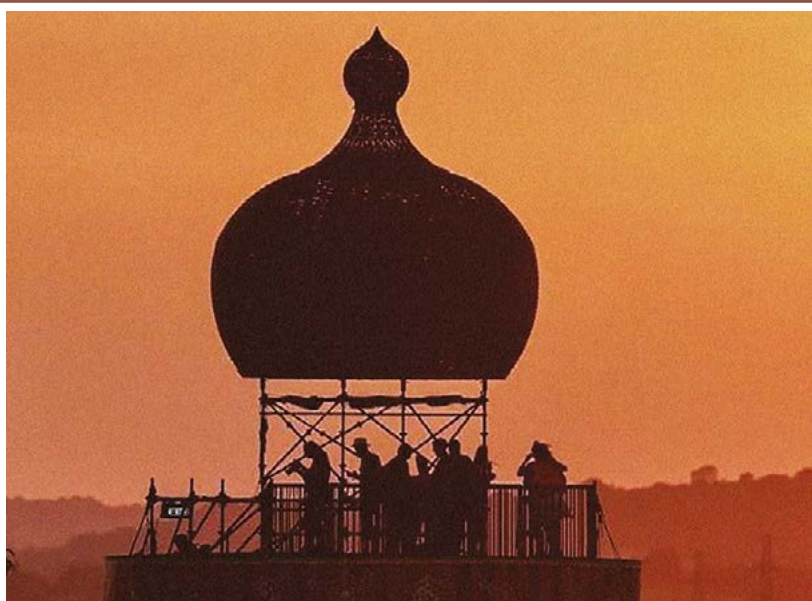
Sarah first joined Novalis in 1996 as a care worker doing waking night shifts at Cotswold Chine's Luke House and Spring Cottage. Since then, the Gloucestershire born mum of three, has thrown herself into an assortment of roles across the organisation which has allowed her to put to good use what her colleagues describe as a knack for getting the best out of both children and colleagues.

After several years as a care worker at Cotswold Chine School, Sarah became Deputy Manager of Luke House. Then between 2008 and 2013 she moved to Ebley House to work in the Trust's in-house training department, an experience which reinforced her belief in the importance of further education. Having notched up an enviable collection of qualifications herself – including Novalis's Level 4 Certificate in Trauma Informed Care and the Level 4 Certificate in Family Work – she appreciates first-hand how boosting skills can open doors for both staff and students.

During her time in the department, Sarah was part of the team that turned Ebley House into an accredited training centre which meant that staff were no longer required to attend external courses in order to obtain NVQ qualifications in subjects ranging from Working with Children and Young People to Business Administration and Hospitality. After becoming a registered course verifier and assessor she was also able to train and support staff and students working towards new accreditations.

"It was a turning point for Novalis because it meant that training was a lot more accessible so we were able to involve a more diverse group of people who might not otherwise have been to advance their skills," says Sarah. "It also meant that our students could gain practical qualifications onsite including at the Halfway Café."

After a short spell managing the then newly opened Halfway Café and time as Deputy Head of Care at CCS, in 2016 Sarah took on responsibility for the students' health and wellbeing which entailed overseeing the Trust's medical record system, ordering medications and training staff in the administration of medicines, as well as liaising with a huge network of health professionals in order to ensure that every child's mental and physical care needs were met.



"The job gave me lots of scope to get more involved with the children and their families. Quite often I'd accompany children to CAMHS appointments in their local area which was an excellent opportunity to get to know them really well," she says.

In 2020, Sarah moved to what was then William Morris College to support a group of students who were finding the transition from Cotswold Chine School challenging. When the College became William Morris School the following year, Sarah was appointed as its Head of Care. There are now 23 day pupils at WMS and Sarah is gearing up to welcome up to 14 boarders from next September.

"I've met such a huge mix of people which has taught me never to judge a book by its cover..."

As well as planning for the new arrivals, Sarah has been visiting WMS day pupils and their families in their own homes over the summer holidays to help ease the anxiety that many children experience without the structure of regular school attendance.

"That six week period is long, and some children can lose their sense of belonging in that time. Many rely on the rhythm and routine of school life and when this breaks down over the summer holidays then their behaviour can become dysregulated which is tough for them and for their families," she explains. "It's been great to visit them at home and share details of their new teachers and any other changes so that they know what to expect when they return to the classroom. It's also a good opportunity to strengthen the lines of communication between school and home."

Since becoming Head of Care, Sarah has also been expanding her skillset further by becoming a training

facilitator for the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism and starting her Level 2 training in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy, an attachment focused therapy which focuses on enabling young people to establish secure attachments with their adult carers by developing or rebuilding trust.

Away from Novalis, Sarah makes sure to clear her diary for a week every summer for her annual visit to the Glastonbury festival. She's been working as a volunteer there for the past eight years and the wages she earns goes towards supporting a local charity in Stroud.

"I wouldn't miss Glastonbury for the world," she enthuses. "I've met such a huge mix of people which has taught me never to judge a book by its cover and, like me, people keep returning year after year so now they're a bit like family."

When you ask Sarah what she enjoys most about working at Novalis she'll say it's being able to see how the job makes a tangible difference to children's lives.

"Working with children who have additional needs is always rewarding. You might not see the results of the work you're doing in six months, but you almost certainly will in six years," she adds.

"I'm still in touch with some of the children who have now left Novalis. I had an email from one the other day. She now has a two-year-old boy and messaged me to say that she always buys the exact type of jam that we had when she was living here as it reminds her of the one of happiest times of her life. That was lovely to hear. If you can create happy memories for children who've had a difficult time, if you are able to make someone feel safe and loved, then that's a massive achievement."



Therapy team join the club to share **new research**

Members of the therapy team are helping each other to stay on top of the latest developments in their own practice areas thanks to a collaborative new approach.

The Journal Club – set up by Mike Bebbington (CCS Senior Speech and Language Therapist) – involves therapy practitioners from across Novalis coming together to share information about innovations in their respective fields and how these might impact on the work carried out by other members of the team.

“...therapists bringing themselves up to speed with a piece of relevant new research and then sharing it with the whole cohort.”

“There’s a vast amount of new research coming out all the time which can make it challenging for us as practitioners to keep up to date with what’s happening in the therapy

world,” explains Mike. “The idea behind Journal Club is for us to take a multidisciplinary collaborative approach with individual therapists bringing themselves up to speed with a piece of relevant new research and then sharing it with the whole cohort.”

Staff from all three Novalis sites including speech therapists, social workers, occupational therapists, and the Trust’s psychologist are being invited to give 20-minute presentations on a variety of topics which have ranged from how memory impacts on language learning (Mike Bebbington) to the experiences of autistic mothers of autistic children accessing social service provisions (Martha Lukas, Placement Planning Social Worker).

“So far it’s been a great forum for finding out about new areas of research and we’re all taking advantage of the opportunity to refresh our existing knowledge,” says Mike. “It’s proving to be a very useful way of engaging with our continuing professional development obligations in a relevant and engaging way.”





STAFF SIGN UP TO PUPILS' PAPER PLEDGE CHALLENGE



Young environmentalists from William Morris School have been raising awareness of wasteful paper consumption by inviting staff to embrace positive new habits.

Pupils Charlie and Marcus – both members of the WMS student council – gave a thought-provoking presentation to the Trust's senior management team this term in which they made suggestions for reducing paper use and encouraged staff to sign up to a paper pledge challenge.

“1 million pages of paper... is the equivalent of 110 trees.”

“At our last student council meeting, we thought about how we use paper at School and how the adults across the Trust use paper,” said Marcus. “We learnt that Novalis printed 1.1 million pages of paper last year which is the equivalent of 110 trees.”

Martha Lukas (Placement Planning Social Worker), who chairs the Student Council, explained that after hearing the facts the students were eager to address the issue and bring about change throughout the organisation.

“They decided to hold an assembly on the topic to see what could be done. This led to some really

thoughtful and creative solutions,” she added. “For example, Vine Class suggested that we could make use of the environmentally friendly search engine Ecosia and Lark Class proposed that we could utilise a writing tablet for doodling instead of using paper. Other recommendations included asking staff and pupils to reuse scrap paper; make greater use of laptops, and utilise digital files rather than paper ones.”

Future plans include introducing a system whereby staff and pupils earn “tokens” as a reward for cutting down on their paper usage. The tokens could then be spent on buying plants, flowers, or vegetables for the Trust's grounds. The WMS pupils would also like to raise money for the charity Team Trees, the largest tree-planting non-profit organisation in the world.

“The pupils were really pleased that so many members of staff agreed to sign up for the paper pledge,” said Martha. “But they want everyone to keep up the good work, so they'll be following up on the Trust's paper usage in 12 months' time to see if there's been any positive change.” Watch this space!

WMS students set to make their mark at **ART SHOW**

Artwork created by William Morris pupils in the School's state of the art print studio is set to go on show at a prestigious Gloucestershire art exhibition.

The eight large original prints – which feature mark-making and abstract writing – were produced by the students during an Art Week pilot project funded by the Gloucestershire charity Fresh Air Sculpture.

The initiative involved the youngsters taking part in a series of five indoor and outdoor workshops at WMS led by Novalis Art Co-ordinator Eppie Short and Wiltshire-based stone carver and letter artist Lisi Ashbridge.

Now the children's work is set to be displayed at Fresh Air Sculpture's biennial exhibition which will be held in the organic gardens of The Old Rectory in the Cotswold village of Quenington next summer. The exhibition attracts more than 10,000 art and garden enthusiasts and showcases unique sculptural pieces as well as decorative arts.

Eppie said that the timing of the week was significant for William Morris because it was a collaborative project involving pupils at a new school and marked the end of WMS's first year in operation. The primary aim of the project was to allow children to express their creativity freely and without judgement.

"It was about pupils learning the link between making marks in response to their thoughts and emotions and how they feel when they make these marks. Each student has their own unique mark-making language, and this language doesn't involve any judgement of their cultural background, or physical or academic ability", she said.

"We're delighted that Fresh Air will be displaying our pupils' work at their exhibition. We're also extremely grateful to both the charity for funding the art week project and to Lisi Ashbridge who inspired our students throughout the week."

Following the exhibition, the prints will be displayed permanently in the communal areas of WMS.

Tickets for the Fresh Air outdoor exhibition will be available online from February 2024. You can find out more information at freshairsculpture.com

You can also read more about artist Lisi Ashbridge's work at itswritteninstone.co.uk





“Each student has their own unique mark-making language, and this language doesn’t involve any judgement of their cultural background, or physical or academic ability...”

NOVALIS WELCOMES TWO NEW TRUSTEES

Novalis is delighted to announce the appointment of two new trustees.

Maureen Smith, a former headteacher of Cotswold Chine School, and **David Rice**, who has 12 years' experience of working for organisations within the health and social care sector, were both appointed to Novalis' Board of Trustees this summer.

Along with existing Trustees Matthew Bennett, Liz Buckland, and Dan Walton, they will have ultimate responsibility for governing and setting the strategic direction of the charity, for ensuring that its resources are managed responsibly and for acting in its best interests.

A former nurse, Maureen joined Novalis in 1998 as a class teacher at CCS before becoming a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator at the School. She later took on the role of Assistant Head before being appointed Headteacher of CCS between 2006 and 2014.

Having completed both Level 1 and 2 of the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT), Maureen is able to train others in the Model which was developed by US psychiatrist and children's mental health professional Dr Bruce Perry. She's also a keen hiker and environmentalist and volunteers for the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation and The Magnificent Meadows Project.



David Rice has held senior leadership positions within a variety of UK organisations for more than 18 years. Until recently, he was a Business Development Director for the Guinness Partnership, one of the largest affordable housing and care providers in England.

“...setting the strategic direction of the charity, ensuring that its resources are managed responsibly and for acting in its best interests.”

Prior to this, he spent 11 years at the housing, care and support charity Brunelcare in a variety of roles including Housing Director, Business Development Director and Care Homes Director. He's also worked as a Children's Service Co-ordinator for the housing and homelessness charity Shelter and as Head of Education Support and Development for Bristol City Council. David volunteered as a Trustee for the faith-based charity Emmanuel Bristol between 2010 and 2021.

As well as welcoming Maureen and David, Novalis also bids farewell to James Hope who stepped down from the Board earlier this year. Novalis would like to thank James for the significant contribution he has made to the running of Trust and everyone wishes him all the very best for the future.





Four-time winner Dom does it again!



Novalis teacher Dom James (pictured front right) is the fastest man to run the Cheltenham half marathon for the fourth time in a row!

The distance runner, who trains with local club Western Tempo and races competitively in events all over the UK, was first past the post in under one hour and 10 minutes. This is his fourth win having also finished first in 2019, 2021 and 2022. The race was cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic.

After committing to a gruelling training regimen of up to 10 hours each week, Dom was delighted to pick up the top prize once again in front of proud family, friends and colleagues who were cheering him on throughout the 13.1-mile course.

"It was a slightly different route this year with a few more uphill sections. And it was a close race, definitely a sprint finish," he says. "I'd love to make it five wins in a row, so I'll be entering again next year and having another go."

Dom has been enjoying sharing his success with pupils at Cotswold Chine School where he teaches English to the sixth formers.



"Hopefully they've found it inspiring to see what can be achieved through a mixture of commitment, hard work and determination," he says.

Novalis is now sponsoring Dom and he's looking forward to wearing Trust-branded kit at future events. At the Stroud half marathon in October, he acted as a pacemaker for those looking to complete the event in under one hour 30 minutes.

"I spend a lot of time travelling to races all over the country and I'm always in training," says Dom. "I take a week off in the winter and in the summer but that's about it. I'm very grateful for Novalis's support."

Meanwhile, the Trust's very own answer to Forest Gump is keen to get more people involved in the staff running club which he set up last year. The Wednesday evening club – which aims to provide a welcoming and friendly environment for runners of every level of experience and ability – is starting up again later this term after a short break. Anyone who would like to find out more can email Dom at dominic.james@cotswold-chine.org.uk.



Fun days shine light on Novalis values

Children from Cotswold Chine took part in activities based on the Trust's five core values during a series of fun days led by the therapy team.

More than 20 children took part in the Thursday morning sessions which were held at the School over the summer and included a range of arts and crafts and games linked to the Novalis values: kindness, empathy, creativity, curiosity, and positivity.

Grace Chapman (Deputy Head of Clinical and Therapy Services) said that the children enjoyed finding out more about the beliefs that guide what Novalis does as an organisation and putting them into practice.

"All of the activities hinged on a particular value," she explained. "For example, we ran sessions where the children wrote compliments about one another on a piece of paper. These were put into a jar and read out.

We also made a positivity tree which involved children writing positive messages on cardboard leaves which they were then able to attach to the branches."

"All of the activities hinged on a particular value..."

While activities such as superhero face painting and biscuit decorating were hard to resist, the therapy team had also set up a quiet room so that the children could spend some time chilling out during the sessions.





“...children enjoyed finding out more about the beliefs that guide what Novalis does as an organisation and putting them into practice.”

IT'S ALL IN THE BAG



The Novalis tote bag has really been going places lately – all as part of a competition for Trust staff!

Over the past few weeks Novalis employees have been invited to take a photograph of the jute holdall in an unusual spot with prizes on offer for the quirkiest location.

Dozens of entries featuring photos of the bag in far flung destinations and closer to home were received and many of them have been posted on the Trust's social media accounts.

Now the judges have made their final decision.... and the winners are:

Alison Marshall – Top of Skirrid Fawr, Wales

Amanda Brown – Eric Morecambe Statue, Lancashire

Faye Longley – Latchi Beach, Cyprus

Greta and Martha Lukas – Tour of Britain, Gloucestershire

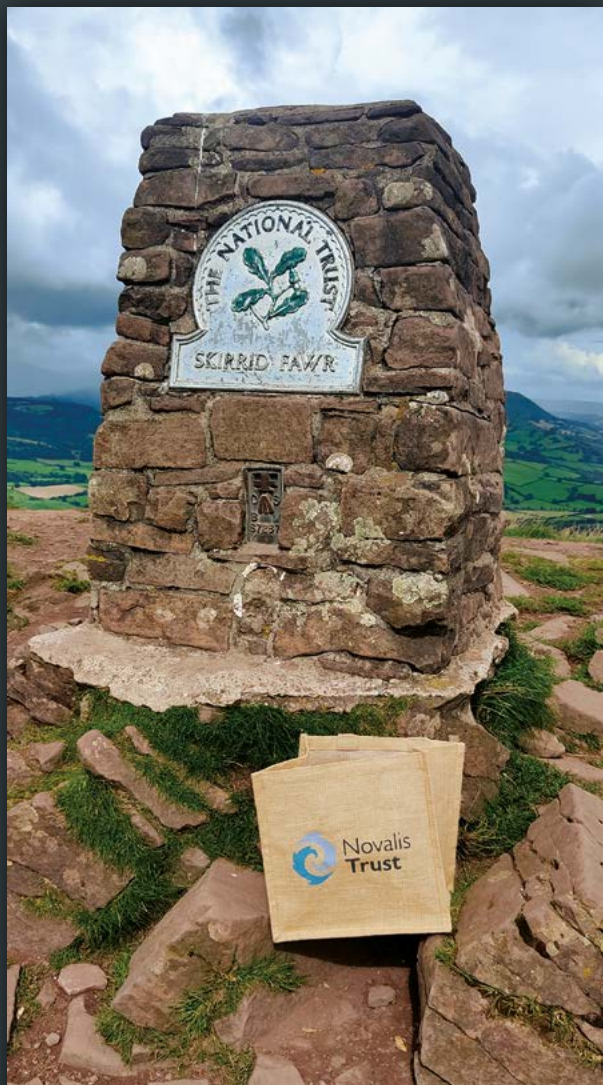
Jodie and Joe Franks – Their wedding day in Gloucestershire

Kate Sampson – Norwegian Sea near Narvik, Norway

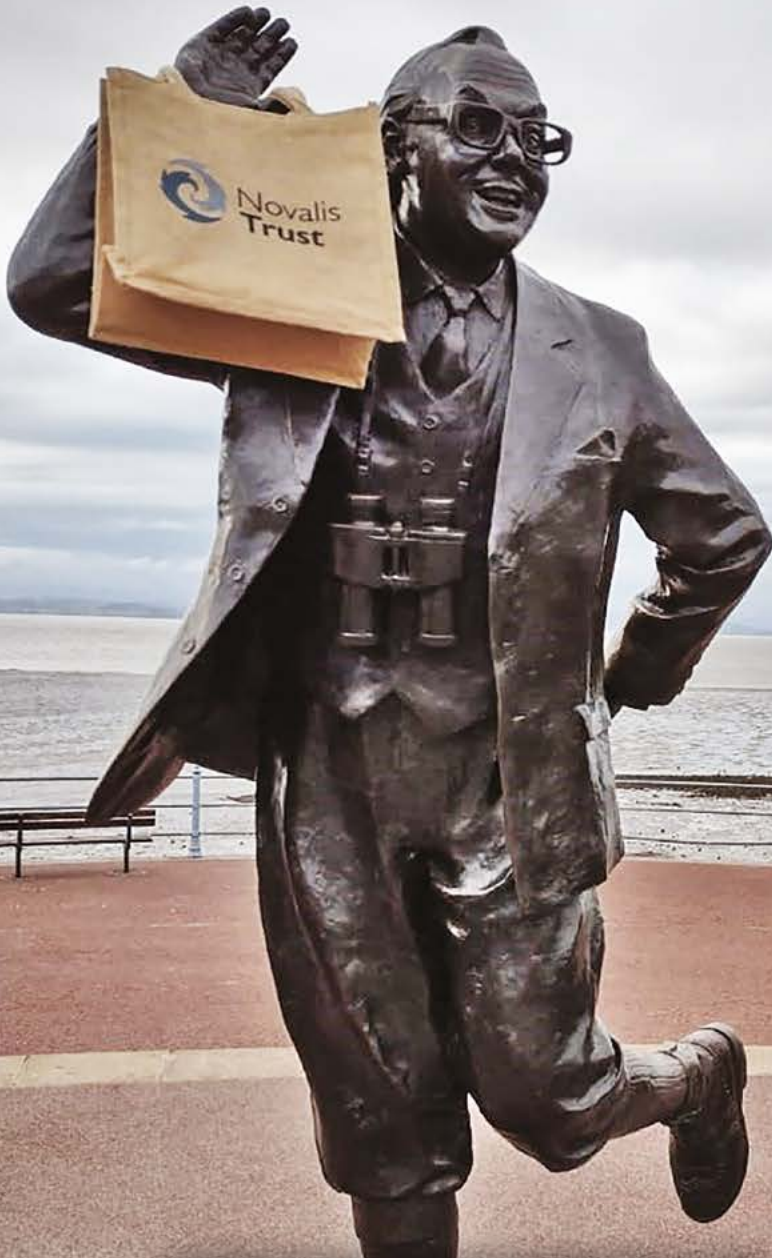
Matthew Rea – Walt Disney World, Florida

Caroline Tebay (Deputy Trust CEO), who was one of the competition judges, said: "We've been really enjoying seeing weird and wonderful photographs of the bag popping up all over the UK and abroad. Thank you to everyone who made the effort to take part. There's been some fantastic entries which made the judges' job tricky, but we're delighted to announce our worthy winners."

The lucky victors have each earned themselves one of four prizes which includes an afternoon tea at Burleigh Court Hotel, a trip to Mr Mulligans indoor mini golf, a voucher for a meal at Egypt Mill or vouchers for the cinema. Congratulations to them all!



COMPETITION PRIZE WINNERS REVEALED!



Life's a Beach for young holidaymakers



Novalis youngsters have been busy making special memories at the Trust's holiday home in west Wales!

More than a dozen groups of pupils and staff from both Cotswold Chine and William Morris Schools visited the house in Llanilar – near the university town of Aberystwyth – over summer and autumn.

The holiday home is set in a 4.5 acre riverside location with its own fishing rights and a view over the Ystwyth Valley and River which is renowned for its natural beauty.

In July and August, nine groups of children from Cotswold Chine School enjoyed a variety of activities including a 20km bike ride to and from Aberystwyth, dolphin and bird spotting at New Quay beach and a visit to the Fantasy Farm Park in Llanrhystud.

Beth Price-Bish (Clinical Executive Assistant), who went on one of the holidays, said the children loved the opportunity to get away to the countryside and recharge their batteries. "As well as visiting local attractions, we all had fun sharing fish and chips on the beach one night as a special treat."

Two groups of pupils from William Morris School were also based at the holiday home in October for a series of educational outings. On their travels they toured Hereford Cathedral which is home to the largest surviving chained library in the world and contains about 1,500 books dating from around the year 800 to the early 19th century.

Gareth Parker (Headteacher) explained that a chained library contains books attached to their bookcase by a chain which is long enough to allow them to be taken from their shelves and read but not removed from the library itself. "In the Middle Ages books were a prime target for thieves to steal which led to the setting up of such libraries," he added.

At the Cathedral, the students were also able to catch a glimpse of the Hereford Mappa Mundi, which scholars believe was made around the year 1300 and shows the history, geography, and destiny of humanity as it was understood in Christian Europe in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. Pupils also visited Elan Valley, went on a boat trip and spotted wild seals at New Quay.







COTSWOLD CHINE YOUNGSTERS CELEBRATE DUKE OF EDINBURGH SUCCESS

Congratulations to the Cotswold Chine students who have successfully completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award!



After several months of volunteering, learning a new skill, improving their physical fitness and undertaking a two-day hike and overnight expedition, Catherine, Clayton, Josie, Kye, Stevie and Tyrone were thoroughly deserving of their award certificates which were presented to them this term.

Dan Woodhead (CCS's DofE leader) said the group had gained in confidence and improved their resilience, teamwork, and leadership skills as a result of completing the first stage of the prestigious award.

"We're extremely proud of their achievements," he added. "Participating in the DofE scheme is a fantastic opportunity for students to develop a skillset which will stay with them for life."

In order to satisfy the expedition requirement, the pupils hiked a 21 km section of the Cotswold Way in challenging conditions carrying heavy packs. They also had to plan the route, do their own packing, map

read, light fires, and cook their own food with their experiences being captured on a video blog.

"It was a hilly route undertaken in the height of last summer's heatwave," says Dan. "Fortunately everyone was well kitted out thanks to generous funding from the DofE charity which supplied each of our students with a set of expedition equipment including a tent, rucksack, sleeping bag and cooking equipment."

The youngsters were accompanied by Dan, Lewis Newman (CCS teacher) and Eve Marsh (CCS trainee teacher) with a very welcome surprise visit from Mark Powis (CCS teacher) who met the hikers on top of Camp Peak in Dursley with a cool box full of snacks and drinks.

Having attained their bronze level, this group of students are certainly not resting on their laurels. They've already started working towards their Silver award and Dan is hoping they will go on to complete the Gold level in future which would involve an invitation to Buckingham Palace to celebrate their achievements.