Spring Newsletter

Societas Trust

SILLY BILLY

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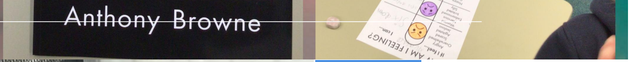
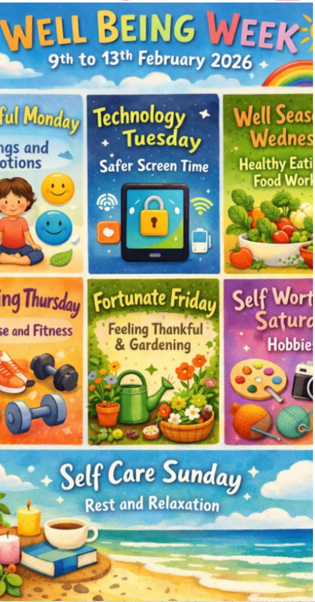


Worry Box
I am grateful for...

Trust Wellbeing Week

1. Wellbeing Week

GLASHEEN ACADEMY Martial Arts
The Huge Bag of Worries
Based on the story, we looked at the question, 'Are all feelings good?'
What could we do instead of using technology?



Trust Wellbeing Week

On Monday 9th February, during Children's Mental Health Week, the Societas Trust launched as a 'Well Schools' Trust. "Well Schools' is a movement of over 2,000 schools and trusts taking positive action to improve education outcomes by supporting the health and happiness of their staff and pupils. This important step reflects our commitment to supporting the physical health, mental wellbeing, and overall happiness of every member of our school community – pupils, parents, and staff alike.

To celebrate each school hosted a 'Wellbeing Week', with each day from Monday to Sunday, being themed around an aspect of supporting our wellbeing. Our Trust was buzzing with excitement as we embarked on a wonderful, week-long journey exploring wellbeing, positivity, and healthy habits. Each day brought something new, meaningful, and memorable for our children—and the energy across the Trust was nothing short of inspiring!

🌟 **Munching Monday**
We kicked off the week with a delicious start! Children learnt all about the importance of eating at least five fruits and vegetables a day—fuel for both body and brain. From tasting rare and exotic fruits to blending their own smoothies, pupils threw themselves into every activity with enthusiasm. There were smiles all around as children discovered new flavours and the joy of healthy eating!

💻 **Technology Tuesday**
In honour of National Online Safety Day, children explored how important it is to strike a healthy balance with screen time. They reflected on how too much screen use can affect our brains and wellbeing, and took part in engaging assemblies and activities to support safer, healthier digital habits. A truly eye-opening day for everyone!

😟 **Worries Wednesday**
Midweek, our focus turned to emotional wellbeing. Children learnt that having worries is completely normal—and that sharing them can make all the difference. With visits from published authors, special live sessions, worry-themed books, and a host of creative activities, children explored helpful coping strategies and ways to manage tricky feelings. A thoughtful, empowering day for all.

💛 **Thankful Thursday**
Gratitude was the attitude on Thursday! Children took time to notice the positives in their lives, reflect on what makes them feel happy, and share what they're most thankful for. From gratitude circles to creative journaling, the school was filled with warmth and appreciation.

🏃 **Fitness Friday**
We ended the school week on a high-energy note! Children learnt about the huge wellbeing benefits that come from staying active. From parent-and-child morning workouts to dance sessions, yoga, cricket workshops delivered by Chance2Shine, and a range of fun fitness projects, the day was bursting with movement and joy.

😴 **Sleepy Saturday**
At home, families received helpful guidance on developing healthy sleep routines—vital for both learning and wellbeing. Our school community embraced the restful theme with plenty of calming activities.

💙 **Self-Care Sunday**
To close our wonderful week, children and families were encouraged to do something that brings them joy. Many embraced the outdoors with scavenger hunts in local parks, long walks, zoo visits, and hiking adventures, while others enjoyed cosy cinema trips or peaceful family time.

A huge **thank you** goes to the **Youth Sport Trust**, who visited many of our Trust schools and helped support and facilitate this fantastic week-long launch. Their contribution made our celebration of wellbeing truly unforgettable!

What a week it was—and what a brilliant community we have! 🌟

Shakespeare

The Societas Trust pupils take to the stage for the Children's Shakespeare Festivals

Primary school pupils from The Societas Trust have taken to the stage as part of an educational arts project that aims to develop confidence and wellbeing.

Around 400 pupils from nine schools at the Trust, along with other schoolchildren from across Stoke-on-Trent, have performed at the New Vic Theatre.

The Children's Shakespeare Festivals are organised by North West Drama and combine classroom activity and learning with performances including acting and singing on professional stages.

Aimed at children in Year 5, the project seeks to raise aspirations and increase confidence, wellbeing and interest in the arts, and runs in different parts of the country.

This year's choice of play is Hamlet, which explores the themes of revenge, honour, life and death.

Children are initially taught about the play in the classroom as part of the English curriculum and rewrite sections of it based on their own interpretation of the material.

They then go onto take part in performances of their interpretation of the play at prestigious theatres alongside pupils from other schools.

The audiences comprise parents and carers, pupils, teachers and governors. Performances took place on 10th, 18th and 19th March.

Jon Lovatt, Chief Executive Officer, The Societas Trust, said: "We are committed to inspiring our pupils to fulfil their potential.

"Taking part in the Children's Shakespeare Festivals has provided them with a fantastic opportunity to enjoy the arts, enhance their creativity, confidence and communication skills, and gain an understanding of the issues explored in the plays."

Amy Darby, Class Teacher at Ash Green Primary Academy, said: "The children have absolutely shone by taking on the roles. We have seen sides of the children that we have not seen before with a real improvement in confidence."

Matt Wardle, Creative Producer, North West Drama, said: "Giving children an opportunity to immerse themselves in the arts and progress to performing on a professional stage helps them to learn a lot about themselves. They see and experience different sides of themselves, which develops aspirations and confidence, and realise that they can achieve a lot if they set their mind to it.

"Taking part in a play also helps to develop other qualities such as empathy as the children immerse themselves in the storylines and experience characters from different points of view. As part of the project, we also skill up teachers so they can work with drama in the classroom where a lot of the preparation begins."

Sonay, 10, from Ash Green Primary Academy, said: "I really enjoyed the story. It's fun and there's some unexpected twists and turns. It felt really exciting and also nerve wracking taking part. But we did a lot in rehearsals so I knew I could act on stage. I put lots of pride into it and learnt my lines off by heart. I feel a lot more confident with acting now."

Emilia, 10, from Ash Green Primary Academy, added: "It was an incredible feeling knowing we were going on stage with children from lots of other schools. Our teacher has been wonderful and creative, and really helped us. It's really given me a boost of confidence."

Maya, 9, from Ash Green Primary Academy, commented: "I felt a mix of nerves as well as joy and excitement. Taking part in this play has brought us all together as friends."

Georgie, 9, from Alsager's Bank Primary Academy, said: "It's been really exciting to dive deep into this play and I have loved performing. I really enjoy learning about Shakespeare. It's been brilliant and really fun."

Ben, 10, from Gladstone Primary Academy, added: "I have enjoyed the story, having lines to learn and acting out all of those moments."

Evelyn, 10, from Gladstone Primary Academy, explained: "It has brought the class together as we have had to learn teamwork when working on the scenes. The play is exciting as well as a bit intense."

Liam, 10, from Goldenhill Primary Academy, said: "It's been a great experience. I was like: 'Yes, I'm playing a bad guy' even though I am not bad in real life."

Brooke, 9, from Goldenhill Primary Academy, added: "Our teacher really helped us with remembering our lines. I want to be an actor so it's been a good experience being in a show."

The Societas Trust schools that took part were Alsagers Bank Primary Academy, Ash Green Primary Academy, Ball Green Primary Academy, Burnwood Primary Academy, Carmountside Primary Academy, Ellison Primary Academy, Gladstone Primary Academy, Goldenhill Primary Academy and Summerbank Primary Academy.

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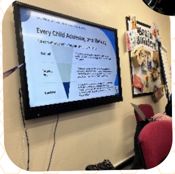
CPD & Events



Staff Focused CPD - Deputy Heads

Dirk Smith's facilitation of the latest Societas Trust Deputy Heads Group at Ash Green Primary School was both highly impactful and intellectually invigorating. His session brought together a powerful blend of contemporary educational research, reflective leadership practice, and purposeful strategic challenge. Drawing on national policy updates, established leadership thinking models, and frameworks such as *Time to Think* and the *Go M.A.D. Thinking* approach, Dirk created a rare and valuable space for deputy heads to pause, connect, and examine the underlying assumptions shaping their leadership behaviours.

Throughout the session, Dirk skilfully unpacked key themes influencing the current educational landscape. His analysis of Ofsted priorities, curriculum and assessment expectations, and the shifting context of SEND and inclusion provided leaders with a clear, research-informed understanding of the external pressures driving school improvement. This wider system perspective enabled deputies to better situate their own school-level decisions within a broader strategic narrative.

One of the most distinctive aspects of Dirk's approach was his use of structured thinking activities designed to stretch and challenge professional reasoning. Through exercises such as reframing persistent issues into solution-focused questions and generating expansive "20-solution" lists, he encouraged colleagues to think with greater creativity, intent, and optimism. These activities not only deepened the quality of professional dialogue within the group but also helped leaders consider how such methodologies could be applied back in their own settings to strengthen problem-solving, team thinking, and strategic planning.

Beyond the content itself, Dirk's facilitation strengthened relationships across the Trust. Leaders valued the opportunity to collaborate, test ideas, and learn from one another in a purposeful but supportive environment. The session left deputies feeling energised, more strategically aligned, and equipped with practical tools to lead with greater clarity and confidence in the months ahead.

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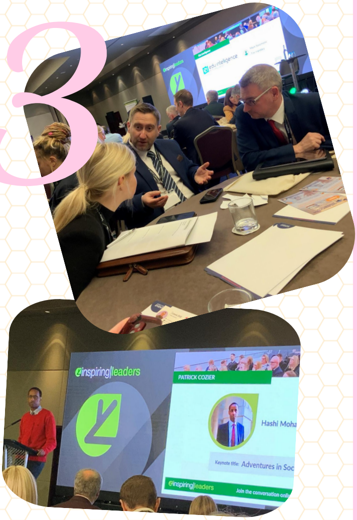
CPD & Events



Staff Focused CPD - Inspiring Leaders

Senior leaders from across The Societas Trust recently came together for the Inspiring Leaders Conference, a dedicated event focused on *Inclusive Leadership - closing the gap and creating belonging*.

The conference provided a valuable opportunity to reflect, reconnect, and explore how leaders at every level can act with purpose to reduce inequality, dismantle barriers to learning, and foster cultures in which all pupils and staff can thrive.

This conversation is especially timely as the education landscape continues to evolve, with the Government's White Paper proposing significant SEND reforms and the introduction of a new Ofsted Framework.

Navigating these changes requires thoughtful, inclusive leadership, making our discussions all the more relevant and impactful.

We were delighted to hear from an inspiring lineup of speakers, including:

- **Baroness Nicky Morgan**
- **Hashi Mohamed**
- **Patrick Cozier**
- **Dr Katriona O'Sullivan**

Their insights brought depth, challenge, and inspiration, helping us to consider how we can lead with intention and create environments where everyone feels they belong.

Quote from on of our headteachers:
Attending the Inspiring Leaders Conference was incredibly impactful. The theme of inclusion truly resonated with me in the context of my school, offering not only powerful affirmation of the practices we already have in place but also fresh ideas and practical strategies to take away and try. I left feeling motivated, reflective, and inspired to continue strengthening our work for every child and every member of our community

Lisa Challinor Headteacher.

Staff Focused CPD - Adaptive Teaching

At The Societas Trust, we are committed to supporting the professional growth of all our staff. This term, we were delighted to welcome Alex Neophitou from Focus Education, who delivered an engaging training session for Teaching Assistants.

Adaptive teaching is an approach that helps staff adjust their teaching so all pupils can take part and succeed. Instead of using a single method for everyone, adaptive teaching encourages adults to use different strategies, resources, and levels of support to meet the varied needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This helps ensure every child can access learning in a way that works for them.

We are grateful to all our TAs for their full engagement during what proved to be a valuable learning opportunity.

Quote from a member of staff:
"The training really helped me understand how small changes can make a big difference. I now feel more confident supporting every child in a way that works best for them."

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Young Voices

Children from across The Societas Trust once again came together to take part in the unforgettable Young Voices concert—an event that continues to be a highlight of the school year for pupils and staff alike. With excitement building from the very first rehearsals, this year's group has embraced every moment of the experience, from learning upbeat songs to mastering energetic dance routines.

For many Year 5 pupils, this was their very first taste of Young Voices, and their enthusiasm has been infectious. One Year 6 pupil, speaking as part of the Pupil Voice team, shared just how special the event feels:

"Young Voices is really exciting, especially for the Year 5s who haven't been before. Those of us in Year 6 have been before and know how good it is, so we know that they are in for a big surprise. We are really looking forward to being back in Manchester and getting to sing all together with lots of other children; it is really magical."

Rehearsals, which have been well underway across Trust schools, have been filled with laughter, energy, and anticipation. Pupils have particularly enjoyed this year's selection of upbeat and well-known songs—along with dance moves taught by Young Voices' dynamic Urban Strides team.

"It is great how we get to learn not only the songs but we have some dance moves too. Rehearsals have been going well and we like that the songs are popular songs and fun to sing."
Katie Knight, who helps lead Young Voices within the Trust, expressed her delight at how the programme has grown:

"Young Voices is especially exciting this year as it has become very popular in school. It is fantastic that this year, we have been able to double our numbers for the amount of children that we take to the concert, and I can't wait for them all to share the magical experience together. Rehearsals are well underway and the children are enjoying all of the songs that we have learnt so far. We are all really looking forward to February!"

And the children themselves had plenty to say about the big event:

- **"I enjoyed singing all the songs, especially the ones with the dance moves. I thought Urban Strides were really good too!"**
- **"I liked a lot of the songs. The *Wicked* medley was my favourite as I know the song well. I can't wait to watch the film!"**
- **"I loved it! Tea time was the best bit. My favourite songs were the Sea Shanty medley and the Pop medley – I knew all the words!"**
- **"I really loved joining in with all the dance moves. I thought the conductor was a magician."**
- **"I enjoyed the concert because I liked the songs and singing with my friends and teachers. I also enjoyed the Urban Strides dancing."**

From joyful rehearsals to the grand spectacle of performing with thousands of others, Young Voices continues to inspire confidence, teamwork, and lifelong memories. The Sociatas Trust is incredibly proud of every pupil who took part and can't wait to see what next year brings.

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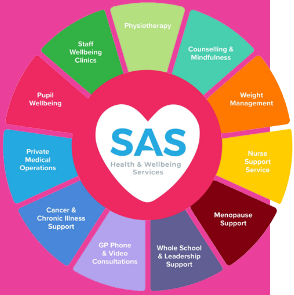

Physiotherapy
Counselling & Mindfulness
Weight Management
Nurse Support Service
Menopause Support
Whole School & Leadership Support
GP Phone & Video Consultations
Cancer & Chronic Illness Support
Private Medical Operations
Pupil Wellbeing
Staff Wellbeing Clinics
SAS
Health & Wellbeing Services

Staff Wellbeing Focus

Working for us - Our commitment to Wellbeing!

Focus - Physiotherpy

At The Societas Trust, we believe that wellbeing isn't a bonus—it's a foundation. Our commitment to staff wellbeing is woven into every aspect of our work, creating an environment where people feel safe, supported, and empowered to thrive.

All of our staff and Governors have access to our wellbeing services, and part of that service includes access to physiotherapy.

SAS offers a range of physiotherapy resources to help manage and treat a variety of conditions. To reduce waiting times, we provide a private physiotherapy service that allows staff to begin treatment and alleviate discomfort while waiting for a referral.

Each client will have a phone consultation with an experienced physiotherapist who will create a personalised treatment plan tailored to their needs. If further intervention is needed, clients will be referred to a local clinic for additional support.

Accessing Physiotherapy

Staff who would like to speak with a physiotherapist can simply call **l01773 814403**. Be sure to have your **school postcode** or **school/trust name** ready when you call.

6

We are hiring!

Working for us

Working for The Societas Trust: Join a Community That Puts Children First

If you're looking for a career that makes a meaningful difference every single day, The Societas Trust offers an inspiring place to work. As a family of primary academies across Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, the Trust is committed to *"Achieving the Best, Together"*—not just for children, but for staff too.

The Societas Trust continues to grow its vibrant, supportive network of schools, each one rooted in shared values of creativity, inclusion, high expectations, and community engagement. With more than 2,200 children and hundreds of dedicated staff across multiple primary academies, the Trust provides a dynamic environment where every team member is encouraged to develop professionally and contribute to the Trust's vision.

Why Work for The Societas Trust?

A Collaborative, Values-Driven Culture

Staff are welcomed into a professional community that values teamwork, innovation, and continuous improvement. The Trust's focus on "innovative and creative approaches to learning and teaching" helps ensure that both children and staff have the opportunity to thrive.

A Network of Excellent Schools

The Trust comprises several primary academies, each playing a crucial role in shaping a positive learning environment across the region.

By working within this multi-academy structure, employees benefit from shared expertise, strong leadership, and opportunities to grow within a forward-thinking organisation.

Employee Support and Development

The Societas Trust places high value on staff wellbeing, professional development, and clear career progression. Whether you're beginning your journey in education or seeking to take the next step in your leadership pathway, the Trust offers a supportive environment designed to help you succeed.

Current Opportunities

The Trust regularly advertises a variety of roles—from teaching positions to support roles such as lunchtime supervisors, site staff, and administrative posts. Our current vacancies include Assistant Headteacher, Lunchtime Supervisor, and Catering Assistant. [societastrust.org.uk]

All current vacancies are published on the official Trust website, where you can view job descriptions, downloadable application forms, and closing dates for applications.

How to Apply

If you're ready to take the next step in your career and join a passionate, child-centred community, visit the Societas Trust's vacancies page:

👉 **View and apply for current vacancies:**
https://www.societastrust.org.uk/page/?title=Vacancies&pid=21

Applications are completed directly through the Trust website using the links provided for each role.

Join Us in Making a Difference

Working for The Societas Trust means becoming part of a network committed to excellence, compassion, and lifelong learning. Whether you're an experienced educator or exploring a new direction in your career, there's never been a better time to join a team dedicated to transforming children's lives—one school, one classroom, and one moment at a time.

7

Welcome
EVERY CHANCE
BALL GREEN
PRIMARY
Silver Award

Inclusive Attendance Award

Ball Green Celebrates Silver Inclusive Attendance Achievement

We are delighted to share some fantastic news.

Ball Green Primary Academy has been awarded the Silver inclusive Attendance Award in recognition of its ongoing commitment to supporting every student to attend, engage and succeed.

This achievement reflects the collective efforts of staff, students, families and the wider support teams who work together to create an inclusive, welcoming environment where attendance in encouraged through care,understanding, ad high expectations

The Silver Award recognises the strong systems that are in place to identify barriers to attendance early and to respond with tailored support for individual needs.

Ball Green believe that regular attendance is key to wellbeing, achievement and belonging. Their approach focuses not only on expectations, but also on relationships - ensuring that pupils feel safe, supported and motivated to attend every day.

From Pastoral support and targeted interventions to close communication with families, this award highlights the impact of their inclusive practices,

Headteacher, Jon Hankey said

“Achieving the Sliver Inclusive Attendance Award is something we are incredibly proud of at Ball Green. If reflects our strong belief that every child matters and our commitment to removing barriers s that al students can feel supported, valued and able to attend and thrive”

Wayne Harris, The CEO & Founder of Inclusive Attendance posted on LinkedIn

“Congratulations Ball Green Primary School, Stoke. A Hugh well done on achieving this prestigious accreditation.

Two years of whole-school, accredited professional learning, building staff expertise and shared understanding of attendance practice.

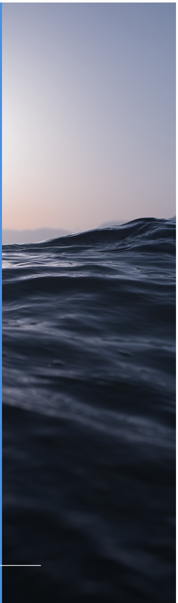
11% reduction in persistent absence - with sights firmly set on pre-pandemic outcomes.

Building whole school culture
Embedding a strategic, evidence-informed approach aligned to EEF best practice
Implementing attendance through the fore-stage implementation programme

This is a school committed to innovative, forward-thinking leadership and sustained improvement.

Onwards to Gold!”

Thank you.



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