



# Chadsgrove Educational Trust Specialist College

Newsletter Spring Term 1 - 2025



**Our seekers students arrive in style at St Basils' Café in Charford for their work experience visit**

## A Half-Term Full of Action!

This term has been packed with creativity, hands-on learning, and community adventures! Our new Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV's) are already making a huge impact, helping students explore, connect, and learn beyond the classroom.

Students have been busy building independent living skills. On Enrichment day they embraced music, movement, and mindfulness whilst also expressing emotions through art, music, and poetry. A live music gig and a multi-sensory theatre show added extra excitement!

Out in the community, students visited Chadsgrove Cosy Café to practice maths and communication skills and planned their Summer Fete Garden Project at Willowbrook Garden Centre. With Valentine's Day coming up, they've also been crafting cards, chocolates, and gifts for their enterprise project.

With so much happening, we're excited for what's next - especially with our new WAV's taking us even further!

## Story Massage Video Project Learning Through Creativity

Students have been developing their maths, thinking, and digital skills through an exciting Story Massage Video Project. Story Massage is a technique that combines positive touch with storytelling, using simple massage strokes on the back, arms, or hands to enhance relaxation, engagement, and communication.



For their first video, students chose “How Far I’ll Go” from *Moana* as the soundtrack and backing video. They used ‘green screen’ technology and video editing software to bring their story to life, learning how to sequence events, apply special effects, and edit their final production. This hands-on project helped develop problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills, while also encouraging creativity and independent decision-making.

Following the success of this first video, students will be creating a series of Story Massage videos to be shared on our College’s YouTube channel. We are incredibly proud of their achievements and look forward to showcasing their amazing work soon!





## Poetry visit from Spoz

Students were treated to a fun-filled, laughter-packed poetry session when award-winning poet and performer Spoz paid a visit to College. With his infectious energy, quick wit, and expert guidance, he took students on a creative journey through poetry and rap.

From the moment he stepped into the room, Spoz had everyone engaged! He demonstrated how words can be playful, powerful, and deeply personal, encouraging students to express themselves freely.

One of the main themes of the session was happiness, and what better way to explore joy than through chocolate!

After enjoying Spoz's performance, it was time for the students to take centre stage. Under his expert guidance students had a go at crafting their own poems.

Laughter, learning, and lyrical brilliance filled the room, leaving students feeling inspired and energised. Spoz's visit proved that poetry can be about having fun, playing with language, and finding joy in the creative process.

Students felt so inspired from the session that they collectively created a 'thank you' poem about Spoz to send to him! We'd like to say a special thank you to Spoz for an unforgettable experience - one that proved poetry is truly for everyone.



## Health and Personal Target Sessions

In our health and personal target sessions, we have been focusing on out-of-chair time and physiotherapy stretches, ensuring these activities are both engaging and beneficial for students.

These sessions support physical well-being, mobility, and independence, while also providing opportunities for students to develop coordination and movement skills.

Students have been using a variety of equipment, including the Acheeva bed, standers, benches, and mats to aid their stretching and positioning.



To make these sessions more enjoyable, we have introduced different styles of music, allowing students to experience a variety of rhythms and beats while engaging in movement.

We have also incorporated sensory elements such as pom-poms, making the sessions more interactive and encouraging participation in a fun and stimulating way.



# Work Related Learning

## Explorers' Work-Related Learning Trips

This half-term, students visited our local garden centre, Willowbrook, to research the best crops to grow in the College garden.

They considered foods they enjoy eating while also looking at planting and harvesting dates to ensure the crops fit within the College year.

This planning will help ensure a successful harvest in time for our Summer Fete, where the produce will be sold.

Students have also visited local shops to gather materials for their Valentine's Day enterprise project.

They have been busy creating cards, chocolate bags, flowers, and heart-shaped bird feeders, which they will sell to staff and students alongside the weekly tuck shop.



# Work Related Learning

## Cosy Cafe

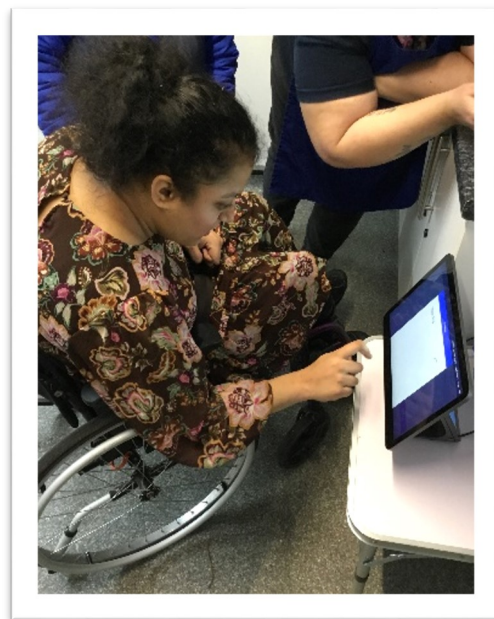
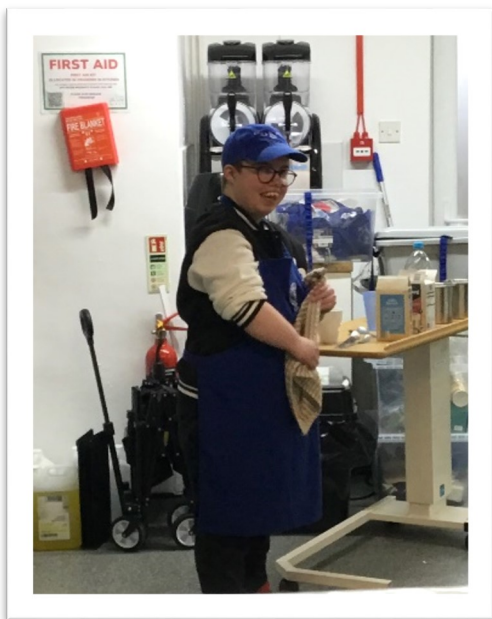
Chadsgrove Cosy Café is open during term time only  
@ Catshill Village Hall:

Tuesday's 10:30am - 12:30pm

Wednesday's 11:30am - 12:30pm



Serving a range of drinks, hot and cold sandwiches, jacket potatoes and some sweet treats!



## Everyone is welcome



## Seekers

### Cosy Café Compliment

Seekers students have continued to have work experience opportunities at Chads Grove schools Cosy Café on Tuesdays this term.

We are delighted to share some amazing feedback from Jacki Ellison who runs the café, about one of our students, Ellie:

***'Ellie has attended the Cosy Cafe now for two weeks and I have to say that she has been outstanding. Everything I have asked of her she has done for me and more.***

***She has taken orders from customers so confidently and professionally; you would think that she has been doing it for years! She has then noticed that I have been busy in the kitchen and has just come in and started helping me.***

***She has helped with big orders without being phased, made drinks while I carried on with food; she learned how to use the till after only being showed once or twice.***



***I really cannot say enough about her - apart from she is absolutely amazing!'***

Congratulations Ellie, thank you for representing the College so brilliantly! It's great to see how dedicated you are to your work related learning.

Thank you Jacki for providing our students with this valuable hands on learning opportunity.

# Work Related Learning

## Seekers

### Poppy Gets Smart!

One of our Seeker students had the opportunity to experience one of his selected job roles this half term with assistance from College Therapy Dog 'Poppy'.

The wonderful Jane at local dog pamper parlour 'Absolutely Grooming' demonstrated all the steps needed to help Poppy look fabulous and keep her coat and nails healthy.

Our student assisted with washing and blow-drying as well as clearing away Poppy's clipped fur. He did a fantastic job following all the health and safety requirements, wearing a uniform and being careful with the water around Poppy's eyes. He also listened carefully to all instructions from Jane and worked hard at all tasks. I am sure you will agree, Poppy looked fantastic after her pamper session!

Thank you Jane for providing a bespoke opportunity for our students to engage in.





# Community

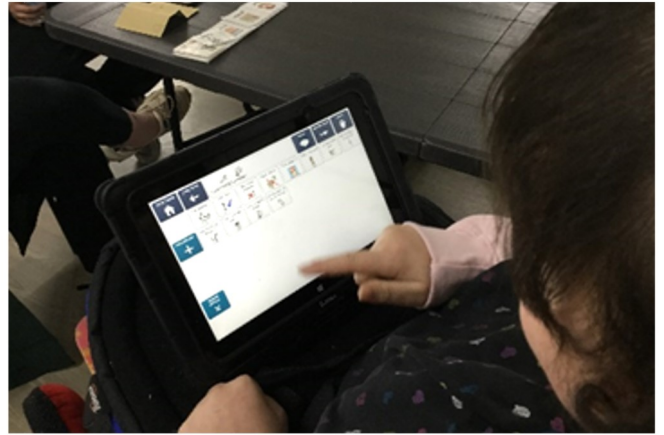
## Supporting Our Local Community

We have continued to support our local community and strengthen friendships within our College by visiting Chadsgrove Cozy Café at the village hall. Enjoying a warm hot chocolate and cake has been the perfect treat, especially during the wet and windy weather!

Beyond the social aspect, these visits provide valuable real-life learning experiences.

Students have the opportunity to practice their preferred methods of communication, interact with others in a community setting, and develop essential maths skills, such as handling money and making transactions.

These experiences help to build confidence, independence, and practical life skills, all while enjoying a well-deserved treat!



## Frozen Lights – A Magical Theatre Experience

This half-term, some of our students had the exciting opportunity to attend an interactive theatre production by Frozen Lights.

*The Ancient Oak of Baldor* is a beautiful 'circle of life' story, brought to life through words and music in an enchanting forest setting.



This multi-sensory theatre experience allowed students to engage with the story in a fully immersive way. Performers guided them through a world of sights, sounds, textures, tastes, and scents, helping to bring the changing seasons of the forest to life.

The hands-on approach made the performance accessible, engaging, and memorable for all involved.

Unfortunately, some of the scheduled performances had to be postponed due to cast illness.

However, we are pleased to confirm that we will be re-booking the experience so that more students can take part in this wonderful and unique production in the near future.





## SIGN OF THE TERM



### Sign of the Term: Work

The seeker students are currently working towards their sign-along qualification and adding signs to their workbook. They are learning signs to enable them to communicate in work based settings, including appropriate greetings and to aid communication with customers.

The students have also chosen 2 songs to learn to sign to, and to perform to the rest of the college.



## Lunar New Year – The Year of the Snake



This half-term, students celebrated Chinese New Year with a variety of engaging activities that brought the traditions and culture of the festival to life.

Students on the Explorers' Pathway explored Chinese New Year through a sensory story experience. They engaged with Chinese lanterns, the scents and tastes of traditional Chinese food, and the sounds of ringing bells, helping them to understand the traditions and beliefs associated with the festival in an interactive way.

As 2025 marks the Year of the Snake, students had an exciting opportunity to meet 'Tex', a pet corn snake, brought in by Claire.

They had the chance to hold Tex and learn fascinating facts about snakes, making this a truly memorable and hands-on learning experience.





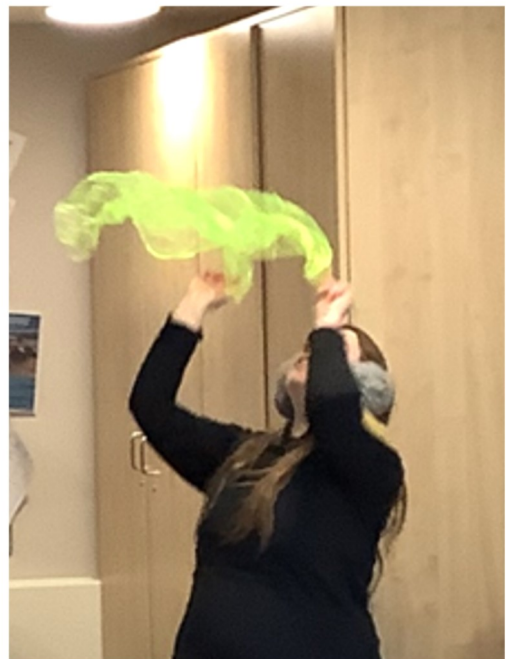
## Enrichment Day - Wellbeing

**On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February, we had our Enrichment Day which was mental health/wellbeing focused.**

In the morning, the students enjoyed lots of uplifting, music and movement with poms-poms, scarves and other props.

We explored a new prop called an 'Octoband' – big enough for everyone to use which gave a sense of connection between us all, working together as team to move it in different directions to the music.

In the afternoon, some of the group took advantage of the beautiful sunshine and went for a mindful walk, looking for signs of Spring. To finish the day, we watched 'Inside Out', a film about managing all of our different emotions when change happens.



# Independent Living Skills

Students on both the Seekers and Explorers Pathways have been working hard to develop their independent living skills by practicing essential household tasks.

By following two-step instructions, they have been learning how to make beds, vacuum, dust, and clean.

These activities not only help students become more confident in completing everyday tasks but also play a vital role in building independence and preparing them for adulthood.



Through regular practice, students are improving their problem-solving, coordination, and ability to follow instructions, all of which are key skills for independent living.

Their hard work and determination are helping them gain the confidence they need to take on more responsibility in their daily lives.



## Exploring Emotions Through The Arts

It has been a busy and creative half-term in The Arts! Students have been working on an exciting project focused on expressing emotions through visual art, music, and poetry.

Over the past few weeks, students have been exploring artwork, discussing the emotions conveyed in different paintings and reflecting on how they make us feel. This has encouraged thoughtful discussions on color, expression, and mood in art, helping students develop their understanding of emotional storytelling through different mediums.

We were also treated to a fantastic live music performance by first-year music students from Kidderminster College, who are currently touring schools and colleges across Worcestershire.



Staff and students thoroughly enjoyed the experience, especially when everyone joined in to dance and sing along to Blur's Parklife!

It has been a wonderful half-term of creativity, self-expression, and musical inspiration. We look forward to seeing how students continue to develop their artistic and emotional expression in the coming weeks!



# Dates for your Diary

## Spring Term 2025

- ◆ Monday 17<sup>th</sup> – Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February: College closed - Half term
- ◆ Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February: College reopens to students
- ◆ 25<sup>th</sup> March: Student Ambassadors Meeting
- ◆ Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April - Enrichment Day
- ◆ 11<sup>th</sup> April - Students last day at College
- ◆ Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April: College closed - Easter holidays

## Summer Term 2025

- ◆ Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April: College reopens to students for Summer Term
- ◆ Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May: College closed to students - Bank Holiday
- ◆ Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May: College closed to students - INSET day
- ◆ Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May: Student Parliament
- ◆ Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May: Student Ambassadors Meeting
- ◆ Monday 26<sup>th</sup> May - Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May: College closed to students - Half Term
- ◆ Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June: College reopens to students
- ◆ Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June: Student Ambassadors Meeting
- ◆ Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June: College closed to students - INSET day
- ◆ Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> July: Enrichment Day
- ◆ Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July, 6.30pm-8.30pm: Leavers' and Achievement Event (Catshill Social Club)
- ◆ Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> July: Students' last day in College