

# NEWSLETTER

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### CEO MESSAGE

Welcoming in the new year, a message from our CEO, Tammy Mitchell

### CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY

Celebrating good news from across the Trust, and good news for our children, young people, staff, and wider community.



# CEO MESSAGE

As we begin a new academic year, I want to extend a warm welcome to all our new pupils, students, and their families joining us in Reception and Year 7. Whether you are stepping into school for the first time or transitioning into secondary education, we are thrilled to have you as part of our community, our Trust family.

To our newest colleagues, thank you for choosing to share your skills, passion, and energy with us. Your commitment, along with that of all our staff, plays a vital role in ensuring that every child across our Trust is supported to thrive.

In this edition of our newsletter, we mark the start of the new year with a powerful reminder of what makes our Trust so special. We reflect on the creativity, dedication, and ambition that defined our summer term. There is so much to celebrate—and even more to look forward to.

Across the Trust, something exciting is quietly taking shape, something that celebrates our firm commitment to working in partnership with our families. Please keep an ear out at the school gates and an eye on school news through newsletters and social media. There is more to come, and we cannot wait to share it with you.

Thank you to every pupil, student, colleague, parent, carer, and partner for your continued belief in what we are building together.

Let's make this year our most inspiring one yet!

*Tammy Mitchell*

CEO



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# CELEBRATING OUR EKC COMMUNITY

## A EUROPEAN HONOUR FOR EKC SHEPPEY SECONDARY

We are incredibly proud to announce that EKC Sheppey Secondary (EKCSS) has been officially accredited as a European Parliament Ambassador School—a prestigious recognition of the school's commitment to civic education, student leadership, and democratic engagement.

This honour celebrates the outstanding work of both Senior and Junior Ambassadors, who have led a series of impactful projects that bring European values and democratic principles to life within the school community. From organising awareness campaigns to fostering student voice, their efforts have exemplified what it means to be active, informed citizens.

The school has received a commemorative plaque and certificates from the European Parliament Liaison Office in the UK, along with official branding to proudly display their new status.

This achievement places EKCSS among a select group of schools across the UK recognised for empowering students to engage with the world around them - and to shape it for the better.

Special thanks go to our student Ambassadors as well as Paul Murray, Community Engagement Leader and the wider staff team, whose leadership and commitment to active citizenship have been instrumental in achieving this honour.



European Parliament



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# NATIONAL GALLERY PROJECT - A CREATIVE TRIUMPH

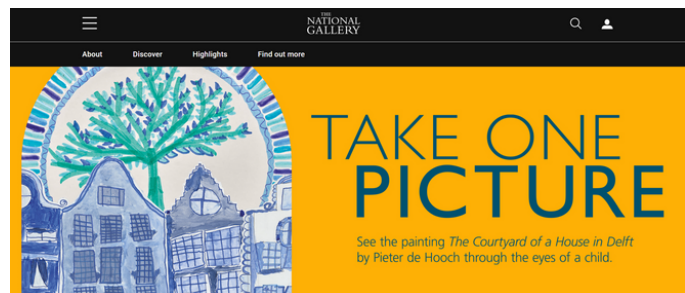
Last year, pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 at Queenborough Primary School and Nursery took part in an exciting nationwide competition hosted by The National Gallery in London—and we were thrilled to be announced amongst the winners! As part of the prize, our students' work was proudly displayed in the iconic gallery's Take One Picture exhibition over the summer months.

To bring our winning submission to life, The National Gallery visited our school and collaborated with thirty pupils to transform their ideas into an immersive augmented reality experience.

During the workshop, children imagined and designed a futuristic AI world for their sculptures to inhabit - blending creativity, technology, and storytelling in truly inspiring ways. Several pupils were even interviewed about their artistic journey and what it means to be featured in one of the world's most renowned galleries.

Across the Trust, we're incredibly proud of the imagination, teamwork, and dedication shown by every child involved. This is a moment of celebration not just for our school, but for the power of art and innovation in education.

This project is a shining example of the vibrant arts culture we nurture every day.



Queenborough School, Isle of Sheppey, ages 5–11

Over the Bridge

Students built a town out of cardboard, inspired by the Dutch invasion of Sheppey just a few years after de Hooch painted his courtyard.

Their cardboard creations were 3D scanned to allow them to be presented in life-size scale for visitors to explore.

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# BUILDING FUTURES: CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS ACROSS OUR TRUST

Across our Trust and our wider EKC family, purposeful partnerships are helping our pupils and students, and their older peers at the EKC Group colleges grow, connect, and make a lasting impact - and nowhere is this more evident than in two recent projects that brought together creativity, community, and hands-on learning.

At Aylesham Primary School, the newest member of the Trust family, students from the neighbouring EKC Group provision - EKC Aylesham completed a joyful Music Board project for the school's sensory garden. From planning and construction to installation, their students developed practical skills while making a meaningful contribution to our school, watching our pupils interact with the music walls, smiling, exploring, and creating sound - a moment of pure pride for them! Alongside handwritten thank-you cards from pupils, a touching reminder of the impact their work had.

**“Music holds a special place in our school community. It’s not just a subject we teach—it’s a key part of how we connect, learn, and grow together. Thanks to EKC Aylesham, our commitment to music has been strengthened in a way that reaches beyond the classroom.”**

Meanwhile, students from EKC Sheppey College took part in a work experience programme that saw them design and build bespoke mud kitchens for another of our school's outdoor learning spaces. Imaginative installations offering pupils exciting opportunities for hands-on play, nurturing communication, teamwork, and problem-solving in a natural setting.

These projects (of which there are many - see further highlights overleaf) are shining examples of our EKC Family Partnership!



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And we look forward to another year of inspirational experiences and partnership!

You can read more about the strength of our partnership with the EKC Group via [ekcschooltrust.org/about](https://ekcschooltrust.org/about)

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# JOINING THE NATIONAL CELEBRATION OF 200 YEARS OF RAIL

This summer, we proudly took part in Rail 200, a nationwide celebration marking 200 years since the first passenger train journey in the UK. Working with our friends at Southeastern and Kent Community Rail Partnership, through creative performances and community engagement, we helped bring history to

Of course, this is also a celebration of our sense of community and connecting learning with the wider world, empowering our children and young people to engage with history, community, and each other in meaningful ways.



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# CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE: EDUCATION SETTING OF THE YEAR 2025

We're proud to share that East Stour has been named Education Setting of the Year 2025 by the NEU South Kent District—a fantastic recognition of the dedication, creativity, and care that define our Trust's approach to education.

This award celebrates the school's outstanding commitment to its pupils, staff, and wider community, and reflects the values we hold across all our settings: inclusion, ambition, excellence and community impact.

Congratulations to everyone involved in this achievement - it's a moment of pride for the entire Trust.



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# A FOND FAREWELL TO GRAHAM RAZEY OBE

As we welcome new students and colleagues into our Trust this September, we also take a moment to say farewell to Graham Razey OBE, who steps down as Chair of our Trust Board.

CEO of the EKC Group from 2018 to 2025, and architect of the Trust, his unwavering belief in the power of education has shaped the very foundations of who we are today, and his legacy will continue to inspire us for years to come!

To that end, we are proud to introduce the Graham Razey Sporting Endeavour Award—an annual recognition gifted to students who demonstrate exceptional commitment, resilience, and passion in sport. Reflecting Graham's belief in opportunity, character, and excellence—and his love of sport, especially cricket—this award will celebrate the very qualities he championed throughout his career. We are delighted to feature the first recipients of the award, marking the beginning of a tradition that will continue to inspire future generations.

On behalf of our entire Trust community, we extend our deepest thanks to Graham and the future he helped us build.



The Graham Razey Sporting Endeavour Award  
First Recipients – Class of 2025

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# COMMUNITY WELLBEING

The wellbeing of our school community is uppermost in our minds.

Action for Happiness, a registered charity, have dedicated themselves to encouraging happier living.

There's a wealth of resources on the website [actionforhappiness.org](http://actionforhappiness.org) and we'll continue to highlight them here.

## 10 Keys to Happier Living

Everyone's path to happiness is different. Based on the latest research, we have identified 10 Keys that tend to make life happier and more fulfilling.

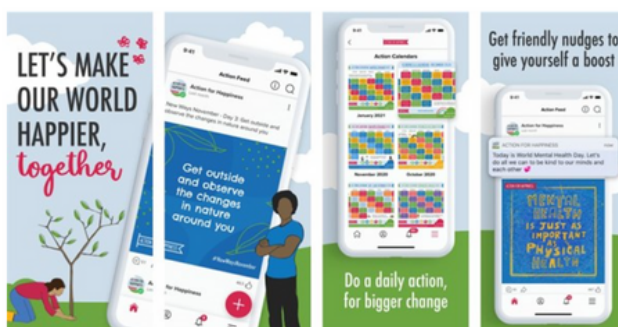
Together they spell GREAT DREAM and you can explore them below.



## Monthly Wellbeing Theme

Check out to day's daily action and give it a go, take some time for you!

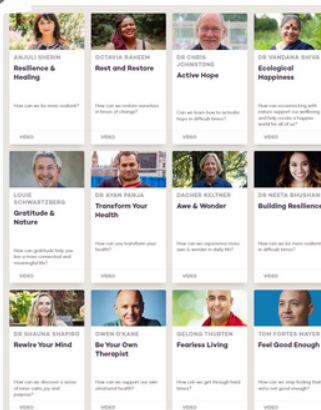
Why not sign up to be receive future themes and calendars right to your inbox. Or if you like your Apps, check out the Action For Happiness App.



## Online events and Talks Library

AfH hosts a regular series of free online wellbeing talks with world-renowned speakers offering insight and inspiration on happier living.

Register for upcoming events and browse their library.



Here is one of our past favourites:



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# LET'S ALL SAY A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR SCHOOLS

The national THANK A TEACHER campaign recognises all staff working in schools; school leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, and all support staff such as lunchtime supervisors, caretakers and cleaners. It celebrates the professionalism, passion and commitment of our schools.

Parents, colleagues and partners please take 5 minutes to thank an individual, team or school in our Trust (or other school/setting) for their hard work with a FREE Thank You e-card.

Not only is it lovely to receive a thank you but a card can be a springboard to entering the prestigious Pearson National Teaching Awards.

Please THANK A TEACHER today, it's simple, it's free and will make someone's day.

The THANK A TEACHER campaign is run by The Teaching Awards Trust and supported by Department for Education.

Simply go to  
[www.thankateacher.co.uk](http://www.thankateacher.co.uk)

and they will send a FREE  
personalised ThankATeacher card  
on your behalf

If you're feeling shy you can send a card  
anonymously!



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