



# South Cumbria Multi-Academy Trust

## NEWSLETTER

Autumn-Winter 2025

*Inspiring young people and changing lives through  
excellence in education in South Cumbria*



Excellence



Respect



Innovation



Celebration



Ambition



Support



# UPDATING OUR PARENTS AND CARERS

## A term full of energy and creativity

As we come to the end of term across our schools, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the fantastic energy, commitment and creativity taking place throughout SCMAT. It has been an exceptionally busy time and, once again, our schools have shown exactly what makes our Trust so special.

There has been much to celebrate. In this newsletter, you will read about the success of pupils and staff at both the Golden Apple Cumbria-wide Education Awards and the Love Barrow Awards. Congratulations to all of the finalists – these achievements are thoroughly deserved.

Our pupils continue to excel in so many ways. Remembrance Day was marked impeccably across all schools, with pupils demonstrating genuine respect and understanding. Our sporting spirit has also been on display, with every school proudly fielding a team at the Furness Schools Cross Country event.

Generosity and community spirit remain at the heart of our schools. Fundraising efforts have included the Elf Dash in aid of St Mary's Hospice, Boxes of Hope for Romania, and the Trust Tree supporting CancerCare Barrow at the Dalton Tree Festival.

We have also marked important events such as World Mental Health Day and European Languages Day and pupils have enjoyed a wide range of educational visits, including trips to York, Rookhow and Tower Wood. There has been a real buzz of learning and enrichment across the Trust.

I am also delighted to share that we have officially launched our Primary Teacher Training Programme for 2026 entry, in partnership with the University of Cumbria, helping to train the next generation of primary teachers.

I am sure you will join me in thanking our dedicated staff, whose hard work, care and commitment make each day a success for our children. I would also like to thank you, as parents and carers, for your continued support. I wish you all a restful and enjoyable break.



**Steve Jefferson**  
Acting Chief  
Executive Officer  
South Cumbria  
Multi-Academy Trust

## SANTA EXPERTS GIVE THEIR VIEWS



*From cheeky elves to magic keys, carrots for Rudolph and dreams of the perfect present, pupils across our schools have been sharing their expert knowledge of Santa Claus and what Christmas really means to them. We spoke to children at Ormsgill Primary and Nursery School and Cambridge Primary School to find out what makes the festive season so magical.*

More on Page 2 or [Click here to read the full story.](#)



Excellence



Respect



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## NPQSL SUCCESS AT SOUTH WALNEY

South Walney Juniors are proud to celebrate the fantastic achievement of two members of staff, **Philippa McIntyre** and **Caitlin Bates**, who have successfully passed their NPQSL.

The National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL) is a demanding programme that develops the skills, knowledge and strategic understanding needed for senior leadership roles within schools. Completing it alongside day-to-day responsibilities is a significant accomplishment and reflects both Philippa's and Caitlin's commitment to professional growth and school improvement.

Steve Jefferson, Acting CEO of SCMAT, said "Their success is a testament to their hard work, dedication and passion for providing the very best education for pupils at South Walney Juniors. The expertise and leadership skills they have gained through the NPQSL will have a positive impact across the school community." Congratulations to Philippa and Caitlin on this well-deserved achievement.



Pupils at Chetwynde donated £44.67 of spare change raised across primary and seniors to the donation box at the Dalton Christmas Tree Festival to support Cancer Care Barrow.



Ormsgill Primary School pupils Rowan, Ruben, Ivy and Jacob

## Pupils' Xmas Wishes

At Ormsgill, five-year-old Ivy is already well prepared for Santa's visit – even if her elves cause a bit of mischief along the way.

"I have two elves called Pixie and Mixie and they scattered my toys and snacks on the floor," she said. "They make me cross but also excited about Christmas coming."

Ivy is confident she's on the nice list because she's been "sharing and caring" and has her heart set on a baby cry doll.

Jacob, also five, has a clear picture of Santa's journey. "Santa arrives in the sky on a sleigh from the North Pole," he explained.

"He fits down the chimney with his magic – he disappears then reappears in the house with the presents." Jacob believes

playing cards with his brother has earned him a place on the nice list, even if Santa's exact gift remains a mystery.

Over at Cambridge Primary School, reception pupils Jemimah and Joel shared their festive excitement. Jemimah, aged five, loves spending time with her cousins, building snowmen and opening presents. She is hoping for a "sparkly, rainbow unicorn" and has already been celebrating, after her elves surprised her with a mermaid costume for her birthday.

Four-year-old Joel has been puzzling over how Santa will visit his house. "He goes down the chimney but I don't have a chimney – he must open the door," he said. Joel is hoping for a Star Wars lightsabre and Sonic shoes and believes he's on the nice list because he's "good at phonics." [Click here to read the full story.](#)



Cambridge Primary School pupils Jemimah and Joel and Ivy and Ollie





## SOPHIE IS CUMBRIA'S TEACHER OF YEAR

We're delighted to share that Sophie Broadbent, Year 6 teacher and PE Lead at Newbarns Nursery and Primary School has been named Cumbria's Teacher of the Year at the Golden Apple Awards.

The awards celebrate excellence across education, recognising teachers and school staff who go above and beyond for their pupils. Sophie was recognised for her enthusiasm, inclusive approach to sport, and commitment to creating opportunities for every child. She has developed a rich and varied sports programme at Newbarns, introducing activities from netball and cricket to karate and chess, as well as supporting clubs and competitions in her own time.

Sophie said: "It was really unexpected - I couldn't believe it when my name was announced. I feel very grateful because every teacher in every school deserves recognition. We all put so much into what we do."

Interim Headteacher Victoria Fitzgibbons said: "Sophie is an exceptional role model who goes above and beyond for her pupils and colleagues every single day. We're very proud to see her hard work recognised."

Congratulations also to Olivia Mathers, pictured below, from Ormsgill Nursery & Primary School, who was a finalist in the Best Apprentice category - a fantastic achievement.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Well done to Chetwynde Primary Teacher Beckie Ripley who completed her first marathon in an impressive time of 3 hours and 27 minutes – nearly 20 minutes faster than she had originally set out to do. (below left). There's also still chance to see Chetwynde senior pupils' creative work on display at Signal Film and media as part of a project they were involved in called In the Footsteps of Killip – inspired by the renowned photographer.



## Rookhow Residential

Year 5 pupils from Vickerstown Primary School have enjoyed an action-packed residential visit to Rookhow, filled with outdoor learning, teamwork and plenty of adventure.

They had a truly amazing few days taking part in a wide range of activities designed to build confidence, independence and friendships. Pupils shopped for their own ingredients, prepared their own meals, and enjoyed games such as Hunted and a lively glow stick party.

Evenings were just as exciting, with marshmallow toasting around the campfire, listening to owls, and spotting wildlife including a deer and a fox. The group also took part in both day and night walks, played pooh sticks and completed a treasure hunt to find a special treat.

Their adventure ended with a meet-up with the second group in Grizedale Forest, where pupils shared stories from their trip before swapping over as some headed home for a well-deserved rest.



# Marking mental health day



From dressing with a splash of yellow or their cosiest pyjamas, to taking a brisk walk or run outside and joining in fundraising fun, pupils from across our Trust came together to mark World Mental Health Day.

This year's global message reminds us that mental health is a universal human right - and our schools proudly celebrated with positivity, kindness and community spirit.

A huge congratulations to Chetwynde Year 8 pupil Gabrielle Burns, who organised a duck raffle and raised an amazing £272 with help from her friends! Our senior school pupils also raised £170 (with more still coming in!).

Thank you to everyone who took part and helped shine a light on the importance of caring for our minds as well as our bodies.



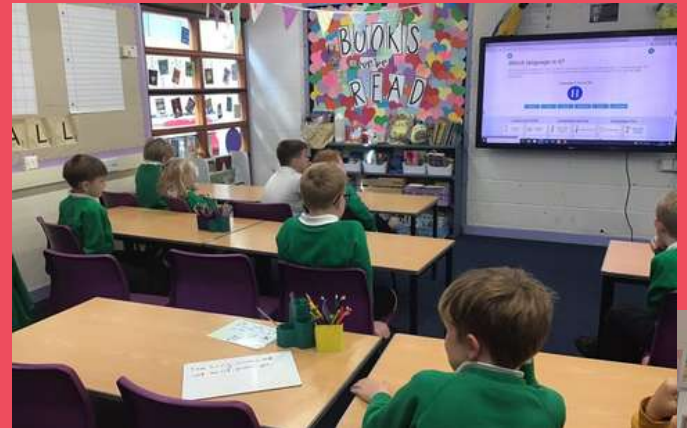
## Well done Wyatt

Wyatt Fitzpatrick, a Year 4 pupil at Newbarns Primary and Nursery School, has achieved outstanding success on the international sporting stage - earning runner-up in the Newbreed World Jiu-Jitsu Championship in Florida, USA.

Competing in the under 30kg grey belt division for 8-9 year olds, Wyatt faced 26 elite athletes from around the world - including Brazil, Japan, Russia, and the USA - at one of the largest grappling events held at the Orange County Convention Centre.

Wyatt made it all the way to the final without a single point being scored against him, showing incredible skill, focus, and determination throughout.

Reflecting on his experience, Wyatt said: "In Jiu-Jitsu you've got to stay calm under pressure and remember what you've learned." He credits much of his recent progress to the outstanding coaching at LOBO, particularly from his mentor Hayden Reay, a former Newbarns pupil.



## Pupils developing love for languages

Pupils have celebrated European Day of Languages with a fiesta of fun, food and flamenco dancing. Chetwynde School, South Walney Junior School and Ormsgill Primary pupils embraced the theme of Spain and Spanish-speaking countries and European languages in general.

In Early Years at Chetwynde, kindergarten pupils learned catchy Spanish rhymes, counted to ten en español, and even tried flamenco. Infants took off on a "mini world tour" of Spanish-speaking countries, bringing culture to the classroom with colourful crafts and creative displays while juniors joined lessons and activities organised by language teacher Paul Vaughan.

The day culminated in a special assembly in the school theatre, where each class took to the stage to showcase their newfound language skills and Spanish flair.

At South Walney Juniors, pupils also joined the European celebration - passport in hand! - exploring the languages and cultures of Germany, Belgium, Italy, and France. From croissants to conversation practice, they embraced Europe in true multilingual style.

At Ormsgill School there were lots of things going on for EU languages day. Year 3 guessed the language and had a dance to the international version of the Stick Song.

Paul Vaughan said: "It was fantastic to see the children so engaged in learning about other languages and cultures. Days like this really bring language learning to life and help pupils appreciate the rich diversity of Europe."





# Elf Dash Pupils on nice list

Pupils secured their place on the nice list when they took part in an Elf Dash fundraiser for St Mary's Hospice. Children from Vickerstown Primary and Nursery School and Chewynde primary and senior students completed laps of the school.

At Vickerstown the event, which also encouraged festive fitness, was organised by teacher Fern Hayes.

At Chetwynde it was combined with the Elf Dash with pupils speeding around the school field to collectively cover the 1,300-mile distance from Chetwynde to Lapland.

They were led and loudly cheered on by PE teacher and Chief Elf Angela Thornton who said: "We are very excited to incorporate the Elf Dash with our annual festive run to Lapland to raise money for St Mary's Hospice. It's fantastic to see the pupils so eager to sleigh the challenge!"

With every lap bringing them closer to Lapland, pupils are proving that Christmas spirit isn't just about presents - it's about presence, community and doing something good for others.





# Bright Stars Shine for CRY

Year 6 pupils from South Walney Junior School showcased skills from their Bright Stars Project with a special fundraising event in aid of CRY - Cardiac Risk in the Young.

Starting with an initial £50, the pupils worked tirelessly over several weeks, showing creativity, teamwork and determination as they designed and made beautiful heart-themed crafts. Their hard work culminated in a vibrant fundraising afternoon, enjoyed by families and members of the school community.

The pupils' efforts raised £505 for CRY, a charity that is very close to the hearts of everyone at South Walney Juniors. This fantastic total will fund seven heart screenings for local young people, helping to identify potential cardiac conditions and ultimately save lives.

The school was delighted to welcome Caroline and Millie Stevens from BAE Systems, who offered their support to the project, along with Lesley Mease, who works tirelessly to raise funds for local heart screenings and joined the celebrations.

South Walney Junior School would like to extend thanks to all families for their generous donations and continued support. Most importantly, congratulations go to the Year 6 pupils, whose compassion, hard work and commitment have truly made a positive impact in their community.



# Staff and pupils among Love Barrow finalists

Chetwynde pupil **Tilly Lawson** has been selected as a finalist for the Young Citizen of the Year category in the Love Barrow Awards 2026, sponsored by Kimberly-Clark. Tilly's commitment to school life and the wider community has made a remarkable impression on those around her. Katherine Parkinson, Head of Creative Faculty at Chetwynde School, praised Tilly's outstanding character and contribution, saying:

"Tilly is full of energy and enthusiasm for everything she does at school. She is thoroughly involved in Performing Arts and has a lead role in our next production (Fame the Musical). She is always thinking of others and how she can help and support her peers. She is a ray of happiness and positivity!"

We are incredibly proud of Tilly's achievements and the joy, kindness, and leadership she brings to our school community each day. Being named a finalist is a wonderful recognition of her dedication and spirit.

Staff are also recognised for their wider contribution with two SCMAT school leaders shortlisted. **Laura Reid**, Assistant Headteacher at Ormsgill Primary and **Michelle Banks**, Deputy Headteacher at South Walney Junior School have been recognised in the Oak Tree Award category, which honours individuals or groups who have gone above and beyond to support and strengthen the local community. It comes after the huge success of the BookTastic Children's Book Festival, which they helped bring to Barrow earlier this year.

The festival, held at Barrow Town Hall in June, welcomed a stellar line-up of award-winning children's authors and created an unforgettable experience for hundreds of primary pupils across Furness. In a truly pupil-led approach, children voted for their favourite authors from a longlist provided by top publishers. Their choices resulted in an inspiring programme featuring author-illustrator Sophy Henn, disability advocate Patrick Kane, multi-award-winning novelist Patrice Lawrence MBE, and celebrated poet and children's author A. F. Harrold.

The success of the festival - and the well-deserved Love Barrow recognition for Laura and Michelle - highlights the powerful impact that passionate educators and community partnerships can have on fostering a love of reading across Furness.

We wish them very best of luck at the Love Barrow Awards night next year.



## Love Barrow Community Awards

20<sup>YEARS</sup> ANNIVERSARY

The Oak Tree Award  
Finalist 2026

Booktastic  
Barrow

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## Love Barrow Community Awards

20<sup>YEARS</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Young Citizen  
of the Year  
Finalist 2026

Tilly Lawson

Sponsored by

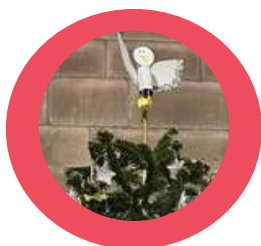


\*Kimberly-Clark



## Tremendous decorations

Here's a close up of some of the decorations pupils have created for the Trust tree at the Dalton Christmas Tree Festival, inspired by this year's theme *Our Town – All Kinds of Everything*. From local landmarks to community favourites, their imaginative creations are full of Barrow pride – how many local references can you spot? One of our favourites is from Vickerstown School who designed the fabulous Festive Seagulls – can't get more imaginative with this brief than that! We're also proud to share that our chosen charity for this year is CancerCare Barrow, supporting families across our community. See the full display on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays 2pm to 5pm to Christmas and 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> December 2pm to 4pm.





## KINDERGARTEN TEACHER LEADING THE WAY WITH NEW QUALIFICATION

Chetwynde School kindergarten teacher Laura Roberts is leading the way in early years education after becoming one of the first in the area to achieve the new National Professional Qualification in Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL).

An experienced teacher with over 25 years in early years – 17 of them at Chetwynde – Laura successfully completed the 18-month programme through Cumbria Education Trust, combining online learning with face-to-face sessions in Carlisle.

The NPQEYL is a landmark development in professional training for early years leaders, offering a government-funded, evidence-based framework to strengthen leadership in nurseries, schools and childcare settings across England.

Laura said she was motivated by the opportunity to contribute to the bigger picture in early years education while bringing fresh insights back into her classroom.

“Everything starts with us in early years and we have to get it right for our pupils,” she said. “This qualification gave me the chance to work alongside other passionate professionals, explore the challenges we face and develop new ways of working to improve learning experiences for children. It has also been really valuable to share practice with colleagues across the Trust through our professional networks.”



## Vickerstown values shine bright



**What a wonderful display of rainbow coloured self portraits representing everyone from reception to Year 6 at Vickerstown School. Every pupil has put their all into these pictures showing the school values of being respectful, responsible and ready to learn. Just the clouds from Brambles nursery pupils to add in now as the finishing touch!**



We love these first day at school gift bags (below) donated to parents of new starters by Newbarns Parent Teacher and Friends Association. We know families will have really appreciated the thoughtful treats and the reassuring words in the poem.



## SCHOOL COUNCIL HELPS SHAPE NEW BEACHSIDE PLAYGROUND

Members of South Walney Junior School Council had a fantastic time working with Polly from Westmorland and Furness Council to share their ideas for the new playground at Biggar Bank.

The children came up with some brilliant suggestions – from fun and imaginative play equipment to ideas that make the space welcoming for everyone. It was lovely to see their creativity shine and how well they worked together as a team.

Polly was really impressed by the children’s enthusiasm and thoughtful ideas.

We can’t wait to see how their contributions help shape the new playground for our community to enjoy!

# News from South Walney Junior School

Congratulations to Head Boy Jacob Stanton, Head Girl Olivia Herbert and their deputies Harry Knight and Maddie Herrington who have been appointed at South Walney Junior School.

Welcome to apprentice Elsie Lockley who has joined South Walney Junior School after expressing interest in a teaching career during her work experience in Year 10 at Furness Academy. Staff said Elsie showed maturity, eagerness and kindness during her placement and has kept in touch with the school, resulting in a role in Year 4 for her starting this month.

Family Funders of South Walney Junior School held a successful movie night for pupils who enjoyed the hit KPop Demon Hunters movie in the hall. They fundraised through the sale of tickets and a cinema treats tuck shop.

Poetry by Heart regional finalist Holly Dawes has been filmed in school by a crew making a documentary about the competition. The South Walney Junior School pupil was filmed in lessons for the upcoming show – watch this space for more details of when it is aired!



SWJS Head pupils above, Elsie Lockley left and the KPop Movie Night, below



Well done to the first set of Stars of the Week from Cambridge Primary and Nursery School who have been recognised for their hard work as they settle back into school after the summer holidays. It's always good to see SCMAT value of excellence and celebration in action in our schools.



## New SCMAT Trust Board Chair in role



Welcome to our new Chair of the Trust Board John Burgess. Mr. Burgess is an accomplished leader at BAE Systems with experience collaborating with local schools in STEM initiatives and development of local Multi-Academy Trusts. His engagement in these activities has fostered a broader interest in education. He has served as Chair of Governors at Chetwynde School for several years, building on from a role as Vice Chair at another Barrow school, and his children currently attend the school on Rating Lane. Mr. Burgess is committed to ensuring high-quality education across SCMAT and prioritising the wellbeing of all pupils and staff.

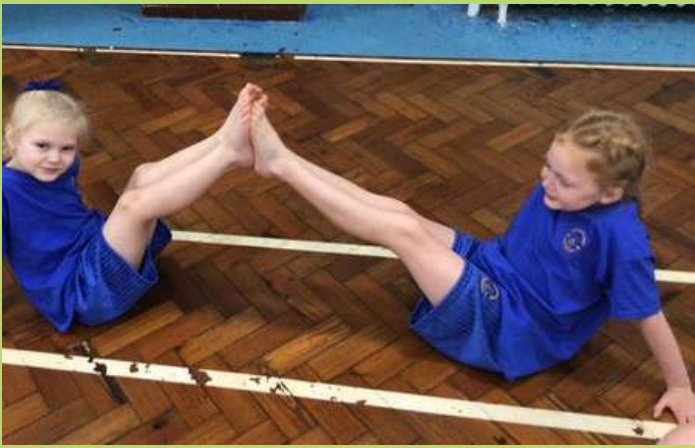
## Chetwynde names head pupils

Chetwynde School's head pupils have been appointed. Head Girl Chloe Sharp and Head Boy Milan Nair will be supported by deputies Ellie Walker and Oliver Wielkopolski to shape ideas that will enhance school life. Milan said one of his key aims was to strengthen the school council and ensure students' ideas are heard. "We want to be the student voice and put forward changes that pupils want, as well as new ideas," he said. Ellie added that she was excited to be a trusted voice of the school community and having a direct link with the teachers. Chloe said one area they were considering strengthening was the introduction of lunchtimes activities open to all students. "We would like to have clubs so people have more structured activities at lunchtime for example the chance to do sports they wouldn't necessarily do in PE, like tennis or cricket, and maybe start an art club run by the prefects," she said. Oliver said as a leadership team, they would be working together to set an example for others by championing the school's values. "We will be leading by example to promote respect, responsibility and resilience – making sure pupils across the school see how we incorporate these values into daily life."



Head pupils Ellie, Chloe, Milan and Oliver

# Dance like an Egyptian

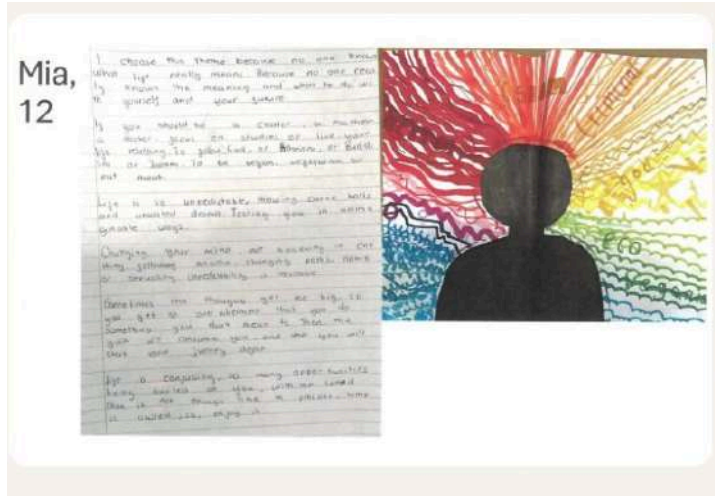


Year 3 pupils at Cambridge Primary School are learning through developing their dance skills in PE. They are working together on a group dance based on the Ancient Egyptians. What a great way to learn about history and culture.



## DRIVING UP GCSE STANDARDS

We received some positive news this month – Chetwynde School achieved the top combined English and Maths GCSE scores in the area. The school had the most students earning a grade 5 or above in both English and Maths – considered a 'strong' pass – at 46.4%. The Attainment 8 score, which measures of a pupil's average score across their best eight GCSE qualifications, was also the highest of the Barrow schools. This is a tremendous achievement and reflects not only the hard work of staff and pupils at Chetwynde, but the positive impact of our subject network groups across the Trust and shared knowledge. A heartfelt thank you to everyone driving standards forward.



Congratulations to School student Mia Purcell who has won a national award in the Spirited Arts RE Competition, organised by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE).

Her thoughtful and creative reflection on the theme 'Making Sense of Life' was chosen as a category winner, praised for its depth, imagination, and the way it captured the true spirit of Religious Education – a subject taught as a GCSE at Chetwynde.

Judges described the winning entries as inspiring examples of spiritual thinking and artistic expression.

You can see Mia's amazing work featured on the NATRE website as part of the national showcase.



Pupils from Newbarns Primary and Nursery School have filled 77 Boxes of Hope to go to children in Romania in time for Christmas. Meanwhile Staff from Co-Op Funeral Care has presented the school with donation of £150 to help develop the Forest School area. Thank you very much for the surprise and your incredibly generous donation.





## Furness Schools Cross Country Championships

A huge well done to all the cross country teams from across our schools who took part in the Furness Championships at Furness Academy.

Despite the wet and challenging conditions, every single runner showed amazing determination, resilience and team spirit cheering others on.

We also had some incredible performances across our schools with several pupils qualifying for the County Championships in January.

What a fantastic achievement.



# Minster a highlight of pupils visit



Pupils from Ormsgill Primary School recently enjoyed a wonderful educational visit to York. During their time in the city, the children explored the National Railway Museum, experienced the interactive exhibits at the Wonderlab, visited the magnificent York Minster, and took part in a fascinating ghost walk. The trip provided a fantastic opportunity for pupils to extend their learning beyond the classroom, discover more about the city's rich history, and share memorable experiences with their classmates. There's been lots of walking, plenty of learning, and loads of smiles along the way.



Year 9 Chetwynde pupils have been creating charcoal studies of the Abbey. Their aim was to create a chiaroscuro effect by focusing on contrast within their work.



Love Barrow Families Community Dads Group were delighted to help our friends from Cambridge Primary School by helping to build their new reading pod in the childrens playground



Cambridge Pupils enjoyed a taster wheelchair basketball session. They took the wheelchairs for a spin round the hall and discovered how perseverance and teamwork skills are so important in the sport.

