



# South Cumbria Multi-Academy Trust

## NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026

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



Excellence



Respect



Innovation



Celebration



Ambition



Support



# UPDATING OUR PARENTS AND CARERS

## Easter brings new beginnings

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the Easter break, I would like to thank you for your continued support and to share some important updates from across our Trust.

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Caroline Vernon to Vickerstown School. Caroline brings over 25 years of experience, along with great energy and vision, and will take up her role as Executive Headteacher after the Easter break. I am confident she will be a valuable addition to the school community. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Mick Cull for his dedication, professionalism and leadership since the start of term, including his work overseeing the recent Ofsted visit. Mick will now return to Ormsgill Primary School full time, and we are very grateful for the commitment he has shown during this period.

There has been much to celebrate across the Trust. Congratulations to colleagues involved in the Booktastic initiative, led by staff from Ormsgill and South Walney Juniors, who were named category winners at the Love Barrow Awards. We were also proud to see Chetwynde pupil Tilly Lawson recognised with a Citizen of the Year award—an outstanding achievement.

This term has also seen a wide range of enrichment opportunities for our pupils. Year 5 children from across our schools took part in masterclasses in science, maths and humanities, delivered in partnership with Lancaster University at Chetwynde. My thanks go to Deputy Headteacher Reece Edwards for organising these events. Alongside this, we have enjoyed sporting successes, World Book Day celebrations, Mini Police activities, family events, school showcases and performances across the Trust. These opportunities enrich our pupils' experiences and would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of our staff.

Happy Easter to you all



## VICKERSTOWN HEAD APPOINTED

We're delighted to announce the appointment of Caroline Vernon as Executive Headteacher, starting after the Easter break. Caroline brings more than 25 years of experience in education, including successful headships and school improvement work across the region. Having already supported Vickerstown in an advisory role, she said the opportunity to return to full-time leadership at the school was one she couldn't turn down.

"I can see there is so much we can achieve for the pupils by working together," she said. "The dedication of the staff and the enthusiasm of the children make this a school where great things can happen, and I'm incredibly excited to be part of that journey."

Acting CEO Steve Jefferson said Caroline's experience, energy and commitment will be invaluable as the school continues to build on the positive progress already underway. He also thanked Mick Cull for his professionalism and leadership since the start of term as he returns to Ormsgill Primary School full time.

Caroline will be supported by Deputy Headteacher Fern Hayes and the wider leadership team. **Full story [here](#).**



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

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Excellence



Respect



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Congratulations to staff and pupils across the Trust who enjoyed success at the Love Barrow Awards 2026.

Two SCMAT school leaders - Laura Reid from Ormsgill School and Michelle Banks from South Walney Junior School - were the driving force behind the Booktastic Barrow Children's Book Festival, which proudly won the Oak Tree Award sponsored by University of Cumbria.

We are equally delighted to celebrate Chetwynde School pupil Tilly Lawson, who won the Young Citizen of the Year category sponsored by Kimberly Clark - a fantastic achievement recognising her dedication, kindness and positive impact on the wider community.

We know many staff from across the Trust were nominated for their contribution to our community in these truly special awards - well done, we are incredibly proud of you all!



Love Barrow winners from across the Trust. Top, Booktastic Barrow and below Tilly Lawson



Pupils from Vickerstown School were proud to present a donation of more than £150 to CancerCare Barrow raised during the Dalton Christmas Tree Festival through contributions to the Trust Tree. This year's festival theme Our Town - All Kinds of Everything saw pupils across SCMAT schools create an amazing selection of decorations inspired by the local area. The creativity on display helped make the Trust Tree a real highlight of the festival while raising money for a very important cause.

Vickerstown, which took part and nominated the chosen charity, welcomed Hayley Pritchard, North Lancashire Community Fundraiser for CancerCare, who visited the school to receive the donation from pupils.

She met Rosie, Cayden, Ronnie and Lily from the school and thanked them for their support. Hayley said: "We're so thankful to the pupils for their brilliant fundraising and for choosing CancerCare. Their creativity and kindness will help us continue our work supporting local people and families when they need us most."

## Swimmers secure national final spot



Chetwynde Primary swimming team has made it through to the national finals in June. The team triumphed in the regionals in Blackpool and they were wonderful ambassadors for the school.



A team from Newbarns was among our schools taking part in the inaugural Georgia Stanway Tournament. They were part of 300 girls from over 20 schools playing at Barrow Celtic Juniors' Peace Pitch. This event was staged to celebrate International Women's Day and organised by the 'Step up and Play' social initiative with Central Barrow schools working together via the Furness Education and Skills Partnership.

## Sporting success on show



South Walney Junior School Year 6 basketball team recently took part in an FSSP competition at Hoops and represented the school superbly throughout the tournament. The team played with great determination and teamwork, successfully reaching the final after an extremely close and exciting semi-final match. The final was a very tough game and, despite giving their very best effort, the team narrowly lost 2-0, with only one basket making the difference. All of the players showed excellent behaviour, attitude and sportsmanship from start to finish, making everyone at South Walney very proud. Well done to the whole team for a fantastic achievement!



## CHILDREN MEET FAVOURITE AUTHOR

Year 5 pupils from Ormsgill School and South Walney Junior School had an exciting opportunity to meet author Tom Palmer during a special visit organised with Moorfield Learning Centre. The children listened carefully as Tom shared his experiences, including how he developed a love of reading and what inspired him to become a writer.

Both groups of pupils were highly engaged throughout the session and asked some fantastic questions, showing great interest in Tom's books and his journey to becoming an author.

As part of the visit, the children were also given the opportunity to take part in an art competition, with the chance to win a signed book by Tom Palmer.

The pupils thoroughly enjoyed meeting him and were a credit to their schools. Thank you to Moorfield Learning Centre for organising this wonderful experience.



Surprise  
helps grow  
imagination



Year 2 pupils at Vickerstown School were surprised to find a giant beanstalk had grown in their classroom overnight. The initiative, part of World Book Day, helped to bring the story of Jim and the Beanstalk to life for the class who enjoyed hearing this alternative to the traditional version.

Newbarns School celebrated World Book Day 2026 with a special visit from Cathy the librarian from Barrow Library. Cathy spoke to the whole school about the importance of joining the local library for free and how borrowing and sharing books can help grow our love of reading. She also shared her favourite story and watching Miss Foxen (Paddington Bear's) World Book Day assembly! It was a fantastic day filled with stories, imagination, and a celebration of reading.



A big thanks to the PTFA at Newbarns School who organised a spectacular hamper raffle. It takes so much effort to pull this together with Headteacher Victoria Fitzgibbons saying "We are so lucky to have such wonderful people supporting our school community."



**ORMSGILL  
FAMILY FRIDAY  
CELEBRATES  
SCIENCE WEEK**





# Music Festival '26

Talented young performers from Trust schools have enjoyed success at the annual South Cumbria Music Festival

Pupils from Cambridge Primary School and Chetwynde School scooped an array of prizes for music, speech and performance.

Both choirs from Cambridge School topped their classes with the infant choir securing 83 and the junior choir scoring 84 – both building on last year's wins in the event at the Coronation Hall in Ulverston.


At Chetwynde School pupils celebrated success across a wide range of categories.

Cambridge Primary School Headteacher Jenny Lavery congratulated the pupils and thanked the staff involved for their hard work in preparing them.

"Our pupils were thrilled to return to school with two first places, both with high commendations. They sang their hearts out and listened very carefully to all that Mrs Brown and the adjudicators had to say. We are incredibly proud of their enthusiasm and commitment to learning and performing."

Katherine Parkinson, Head of Creative Faculty at Chetwynde School, said: "It has been fantastic to see so many of our pupils take part in this year's festival and perform to such a high standard.

"Their success reflects not only their talent, but also the dedication they have shown in rehearsals and lessons.

[Full story here](#) 



# Iconic designer inspires creative careers



A renowned British fashion designer helped inspire the next generation to pursue creativity in their lives and careers. Year 10 and 11 pupils from Chetwynde School enjoyed an audience with Wayne Hemingway MBE at the University of Cumbria's new Barrow campus.

Speaking on a wide range of topics the co-founder of trailblazing fashion retailer Red or Dead spoke about his love of going out dancing, attending gigs and travel and the importance of doing things for fun.

"Never let anyone tell you where you're from can affect your future," said the Morecambe-born designer.

He then challenged them to tell him their views on what the town needs to attract talent and for them to feel good about the town. The pupils spoke about their love of music, skating, sports and the need in Barrow for a space to gather socially.

Wayne, who is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Cumbria, outlined how as part of the Team Barrow project, under the banner of Barrow Rising, the town has the most investment of any other town in the country.

"The ambition of the town has to go up and if you rose up together and have ideas they have to listen."

Chetwynde Teacher Charlotte Strafford said the message linking creativity, community and responsibility had really resonated with students and they were thrilled to be invited to attend by the University's Pro Vice Chancellor for Growth and Development Claire Aindow, who is also a school governor.

"One of the highlights of the day was seeing our pupils confidently voice their own opinions about Barrow, its identity and its future. It was fantastic to watch them engage thoughtfully with big ideas about place, people and how design can improve lives," she said.



The mud kitchen at Cambridge School is proving very popular with pupils who are serving up an array of dishes!



Chetwynde Primary had a wonderful week undertaking experiments and joining in activities to celebrate British Science Week. The theme this year was 'Curiosity - What's your Question?'



Year 3 pupils at Vickerstown School have been getting hands-on with new coding robots donated to the school through BAE Systems. The children are thrilled with the technology, eagerly learning how to programme and control the robots which helps them to experiment, problem-solve and develop their STEM skills in such a fun and engaging way.



# Amazing artwork inspired by Barbara Hepworth

Pupils at South Walney Junior School have been busy creating stunning 3D artwork inspired by Barbara Hepworth, one of Britain's most important 20th-century artists and a leading figure in modern sculpture.

Through hands-on making, they've explored form, texture and abstraction, using techniques such as decoupage to investigate the colour wheel, alongside paper mâché and clay to build and refine sculptural forms.

A brilliant blend of art history and practical skills in action! We're so impressed by the creativity, focus and craftsmanship on display.

## MARKING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

An inspiring group of Year 8 pupils from Chetwynde School are leading a week-long programme of events to mark International Women's Day.

Alongside a writing competition, whole school assembly, presentations to primary children, non-uniform day, raffle and bake sale they will also interview pupils from selected year groups to capture views on gender equality.

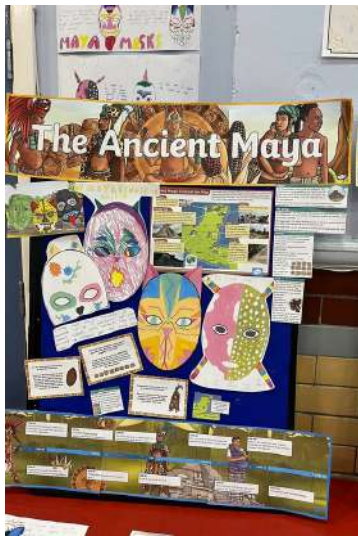
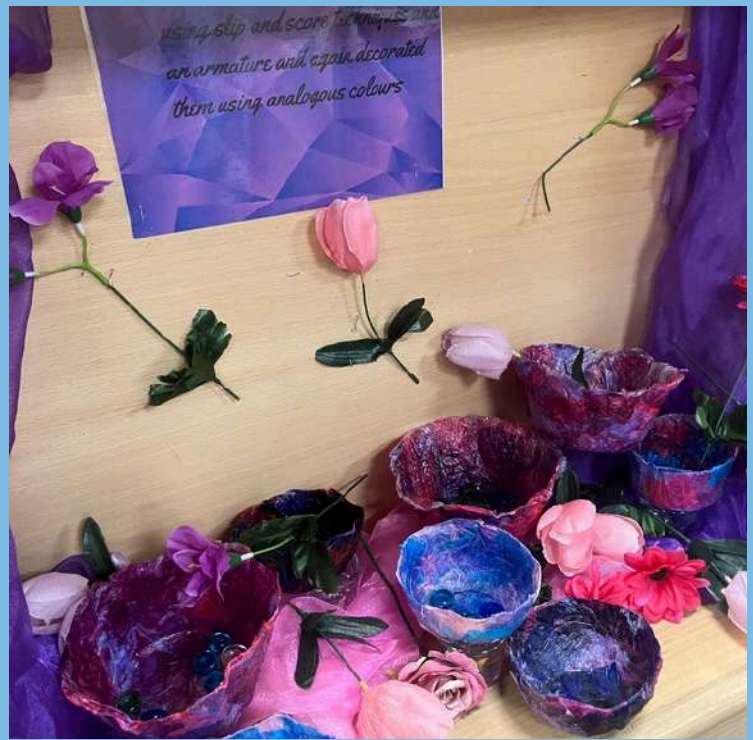
The initiative, starting Monday 9 March, is the brainchild of Lilia Sparkes, Erin Caine, Sienna Corrie and Gabrielle Burns.

Lilia said they plan to involve pupils from primary, secondary and staff to raise awareness of gender equality.

"We did a project last year and wanted to follow up with something even bigger. We like being busy and it is important to educate people on real-world issues."

The project grew from the pupils' shared passion for equality and their desire to challenge views and educate others.

Funds raised through the raffle and bake sales will be donated to the Malala Fund, which campaigns globally for every girl's right to education.



Cambridge Primary School was delighted to welcome families into school once again for another successful History Showcase. Events like these play an important role in strengthening the partnership between home and school, giving children the opportunity to share their learning with the people who support them most. Bringing families into school helps pupils feel proud of their achievements and encourages meaningful conversations about learning beyond the classroom.

This term's showcase celebrated a wide range of historical topics, including World War 2, Toys from the Past, Ancient Greece, and The Great Fire of London. Classrooms were filled with fantastic work, creative projects, and enthusiastic pupils who were eager to talk about the facts, dates, and famous people they have been studying.

# Community-Minded Pupils Take Action on Speeding Drivers



Community-minded pupils from Ormsgill School who are part of this year's Mini Police team have taken to the streets to help tackle speeding drivers and promote road safety. The primary school pupils worked with Police Community Support Officer Michelle Jones on the A590 at Park Road, where they carried out speed checks on passing vehicles using a laser speed gun. Drivers travelling within the speed limit were rewarded with a green thumbs-up while those exceeding the limit were shown a red thumbs-down.

The initiative aims to raise awareness of road safety and deliver a strong visual message to motorists, particularly in areas close to schools.

Headteacher Mick Cull said the project plays an important role in educating drivers as well as developing pupils' wider skills.

"This initiative is about keeping our community safe, especially around school zones, while also giving our pupils the opportunity to develop confidence, leadership skills and strong community links," he said.

"The Mini Police act as positive role models and take great pride in making a difference."



## Report praises culture of belonging

Chetwynde School has been commended for its strong culture of belonging, positive relationships and inclusive ethos following a recent independent behaviour and culture review.

Positive Regard, which provides specialist education support services with a focus on placing children and young people at the heart of school improvement, worked closely with Chetwynde School to evaluate behaviour systems, classroom practice and wider school culture.

The report highlights that Chetwynde School is underpinned by a clearly articulated philosophy of belonging, which is not only embedded in policy but felt across the whole school community. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and starting points coexist positively, demonstrating respect for one another, while staff describe the school as a supportive and rewarding place to work with a strong sense of shared responsibility for pupils' wellbeing and success.

The review found Chetwynde's core values of respect, responsibility and resilience are visible in everyday interactions and are consistently modelled by staff. These values provide a strong cultural anchor and contribute to the school's calm, relational approach to behaviour.



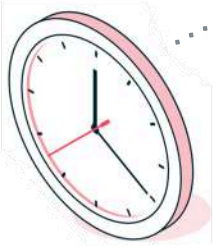
My Happy Mind  
& Children's  
Mental Health  
Week



Senior show success for Chetwynde School

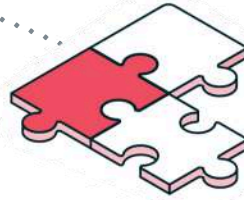
# PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

ENABLING BRILLIANT  
LEARNING IN OUR  
CLASSROOMS



## DAILY REVIEWS

How do you incorporate time to revisit and retain key knowledge?

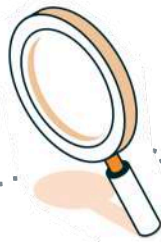


## NEW MATERIAL IN SMALL STEPS

How are lessons broken down into small steps across the curriculum? How do you avoid overloading your pupils' working memories?

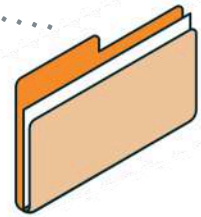
## ASK QUESTIONS

How do you use questions within lessons to check and secure learning? How are they used for assessment?



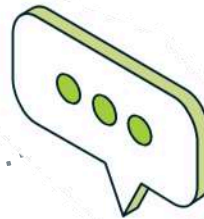
## PROVIDE MODELS

How do you use modelling to support learning? Do your children model for each other?



## GUIDED STUDENT PRACTICE

Where is time given for students to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new material? How do you build time into lessons for guided work?



## CHECKING STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

How do you use strategies to check students understanding, before, during and after a lesson?

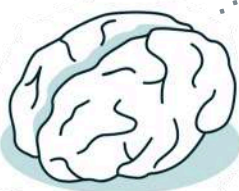
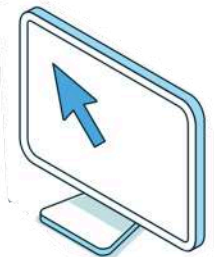
## OBTAIN HIGH SUCCESS RATES

How do you decide if children have been successful? How do children know? What is done with this information? How are gaps closed for those who do not achieve within the lesson?



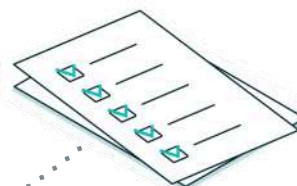
## SCAFFOLDS

What temporary supports do you use to assist learning? How do you incorporate them into lessons?



## INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

What are your independent practice procedures, where children recall and apply new material? How often? At what point in the learning journey - daily, weekly, at the end of a unit?



## WEEKLY & MONTHLY REVIEWS

How do you incorporate time to revisit learning that has happened recently. Does the school plan to revisit ideas that connect to new material?

# OUR STRATEGY

South Cumbria Multi-Academy Trust recognises that each school has its own educational character and ethos and we are passionate about retaining and nurturing this. Our schools have their own identities but all share a common approach to encourage pupils to reflect and embrace challenges, learn from mistakes and develop the resilience essential in our rapidly changing world.

## OUR VISION:

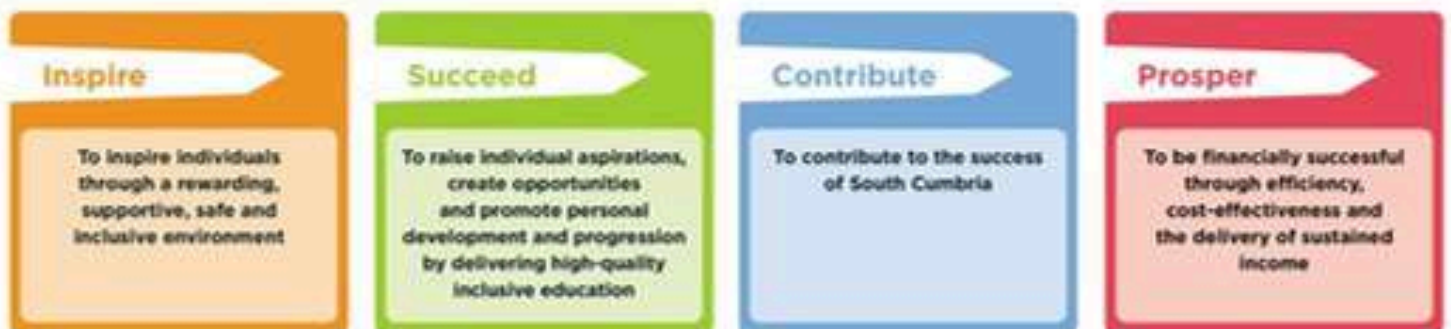
Inspiring young people and changing lives through excellence in education in South Cumbria



## OUR VALUES:



## OUR AIM IS TO:



Each of our schools has its own vision and values that make it unique but contribute to the overall SCMAT strategy above. Please take time to read the strategy to see how the values fit with the ethos of your school.