



## CHADSGROVE SPECIALIST COLLEGE NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2 - CHRISTMAS EDITION 2025



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### WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Students, Families, and Staff,

As we reach the end of another incredible term, I want to take a moment to reflect on the year we've shared together. What a year it has been! Full of laughter, learning, and countless moments that remind us why our college community is so special.

Our students have amazed us with their determination and growth. Every day, we see independence blossoming - whether it's mastering a new skill, taking on a challenge, or simply showing kindness to a friend. These achievements, big and small, are the heartbeat of our college, and they make us proud beyond words.

To our families: thank you for your unwavering support and trust. Your partnership is vital, and together we've created an environment where every student feels valued and empowered.

To our staff: your passion and dedication shine through in everything you do. You put students first, always, and that commitment transforms lives. I am deeply grateful for your creativity, care, and resilience.

This term has been packed with fun - from festive craft sessions to community outings and celebrations that brought smiles to every face. These experiences aren't just enjoyable; they build confidence, friendships, and independence that will last a lifetime.

As we head into the Christmas season, let's celebrate the joy of what we've achieved and look forward to an exciting new year ahead. May your holidays be filled with peace, laughter, and time with those you love.

Thank you for being part of our college family. Here's to a bright and inspiring year to come!

**Deb Rattley, Principal**



## CHRISTMAS ENTERPRISE

Students have been very busy in their Enterprise sessions, coming up with ideas for items we could make and sell for Christmas.

They have thoroughly enjoyed creating and crafting the items, and the outcome speaks for itself. Students really dived in, producing a range of pieces designed to appeal to different ages and interests.

We have been able to sell our Christmas Enterprise items at Chadsgrove School, Bromsgrove Christmas Market, and Catshill Village Hall for their Christmas lights switch-on. We are very lucky to have such supportive community contacts who have welcomed us at these events.





## CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

Students across the College stepped into the festive season in style on 11 December, taking part in Christmas Jumper Day.

The day is all about spreading joy while supporting a great cause. By wearing their most eye-catching jumpers, students brought fun and colour to college, while also celebrating together as the term ended.

Thank you for your support with this.





## CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT THE SWAN

Students from both pathways enjoyed lunch at The Swan in Wychbold again this year.

Crackers were pulled and stomachs filled with carvery, nuggets, chips and puddings. A huge thank you to all the staff at The Swan, who always go out of their way to make our visit fun and relaxing.

This lunch is only made possible through the generosity of everyone who buys from our Enterprise sales throughout the year - thank you.





## CHRISTMAS SING AND SIGN PERFORMANCES

This term, our Seeker students have been working hard practicing Christmas Sing and Sign, and they have had a busy month performing in the local community.

Their first performance was at Bromsgrove Christmas Market in November, where we were joined by Alvechurch Middle School and Stoke Prior First School. The week before the performance, two Seeker students and staff visited Alvechurch Middle School to share some of the signs with staff and pupils.

The Christmas Market performance drew a big crowd, including local councillors and Bromsgrove's MP, Bradley Thomas. Students received many compliments about how fantastic the performance was.

Students also visited three local care homes to perform. Each home commented on how brilliant the students were and how much the performance brightened their day.

The next performance was at the Parents' Christmas celebration, where students were able to share what they had been working on with family and friends.

Their final performance was at the Catshill Village Hall Christmas meal on the last day of term - a wonderful way to bring festive cheer to the local community.

A massive well done and thank you, to all the students for their hard work. They have helped get everyone into the Christmas spirit.





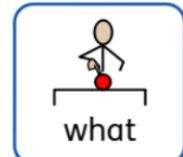
## COMMUNICATION: CORE SIGN OF THE WEEK



Students have been practicing their signing across the half term through a chosen 'word of the week'.

Each Monday, the word is chosen and then used throughout the week to link with lessons and activities.

This half term, the focus signs and symbols have been: "What?", "Different", "Learn", "Want", and "Celebration".



**DIFFERENT**

**LEARN**



## INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS: DECORATING COLLEGE

This term we have been building up to our Christmas celebrations through our Independent Living Skills sessions.

Students helped to decorate College, choosing colour schemes and decorations, and then assisting to arrange them on the Christmas tree. The sensory experience supported choice-making and participation and students did an amazing job.



## CATSHILL CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE

Students visited Catshill Methodist Church for an interactive Christmas experience, sharing the story of Jesus and the Christmas story through drama.

Students listened well and communicated with the story and the actors. Afterwards, we all sang a Christmas song chosen by the students.





## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

We marked International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3rd December with a celebratory afternoon to thank our Community Champions who have helped provide inclusive opportunities over the past year.

This year we also tied in the event with the national campaign promoting specialist further education (FE) colleges, and the life-changing work they do to build independence and life skills for adulthood. A write-up of our Community Champions event also appeared in the [Bromsgrove Standard](#) and can be read [here](#)

Among our guests were STEM ambassador Nicola Knowles, Bromsgrove Town Crier Kevin Ward, Jules Evans from the Royal British Legion, Bromsgrove District Council chairman Sam Evans, councillors Shirley Webb (Catshill) and Sam Ammar, Jo Slade, prison officers from HMP Hewell, and Tristan Harris (Editor of the [Bromsgrove Standard](#)).

Our Community Champions were presented with a certificate and a gift for their contribution to supporting students' educational progress and were treated to tea, coffee and cake prepared by the students. Students Ellie and Dylan spoke about the positive impact College has had on their lives and the progress they have made.

College Principal, Deb Rattley, spoke about the importance of freedom of choice in further education, and thanked both our Community Champions and our dedicated staff for the support they provide day in, day out.

We all had a fantastic afternoon and look forward to working with our Community Champions in the New Year on lots of exciting projects and opportunities for students.





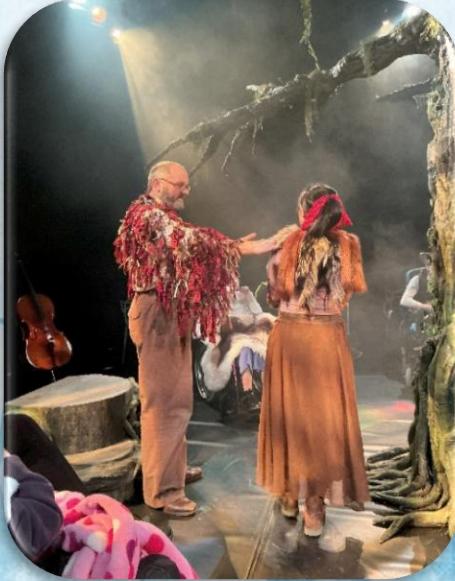
## THE ARTS: FROZEN LIGHTS TRIP

In November, many of our students had the opportunity to visit the Midlands Arts Centre to watch The Ancient Oak of Baldour by Frozen Lights - a folk tale of love, loss and the interconnectedness of all things.

This was a truly inclusive, interactive sensory story, with plenty of drama, singing, and beautiful costumes and set design - including a life-size tree at the heart of the space.

There were lots of opportunities to explore different sensory experiences throughout the performance, which helped to keep everyone engaged. The trip was thoroughly enjoyed by students and support staff alike.

# FROZEN LIGHT





## LINK PROJECT: CHRISTMAS STORY MASSAGE

This term we welcomed five visiting pupils from Chads Grove School as part of our link project program. Together, we planned and filmed a Christmas-themed Story Massage to a festive song, using a green-screen backdrop.

Story Massage uses a sequence of simple, agreed touch cues alongside spoken words and music. It supports shared attention, sensory regulation and communication, and gives students a meaningful role in a group performance.

Students took part in the planning stage by making choices, agreeing the actions, and practicing the sequence. Filming took place using our college camera, and the final video was edited in DaVinci Resolve.

All Story Massage activities took place in line with individual care plans and paying close attention to the need for consent. Throughout, staff ensured students were comfortable, happy and able to participate in a way that suited them. It was a brilliant example of creativity, teamwork and inclusive communication.





## STUDENT AMBASSADORS: VOICES UNITED WORCESTERSHIRE

We recently had the pleasure of welcoming Chanika, a Co-production Officer from Voices United Worcestershire, to one of our Student Ambassador meetings.

We pride ourselves on empowering student voice, so it was fantastic to hear how Chanika supports young people to be heard and valued in decisions that directly affect them.

We are excited to be involved in upcoming projects where our students' voices will help support young people living with disabilities across Worcestershire.

Our ambassadors have already created Christmas tree decorations which have been displayed as part of Hereford and Worcestershire SENIASS' 'All About Me Tree' at Worcester Cathedral's Christmas Tree Festival.



**YOUR VOICE IS IMPORTANT!**

We are Co-production Officers for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) up to 25 years old.

We would love to have children and young people with additional needs working closely with SEND services, to help inform decisions.

Chanika Boulton  
Amy Knight

Everyone working together on an equal basis to improve services

SENDCo-productionteam@worcestershire.gov.uk  
[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/SENDCoproduction](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/SENDCoproduction)

Herefordshire and Worcestershire NHS and Worcestershire County Council





## WELL-BEING: EXPLORERS

This half term, Explorers have been enjoying seasonal sensory stories as part of their well-being sessions. Each session has followed a familiar, calming routine, with students exploring a range of autumn-themed sensory experiences such as crunchy leaves, conkers, pine cones, cinnamon and other warm scents, soft fabric textures, wind sounds, gentle light effects, and autumn colours.

Students have been encouraged to communicate their preferences throughout, using their voice, facial expressions, gesture, symbols and assistive technology where appropriate. It has been fantastic to see clear communication about what they like and don't like, with staff supporting students to make choices, request "more" or "stop", and show anticipation as familiar parts of the story returned each week.

Everyone has been fully engaged throughout the sessions, with students sustaining attention for longer periods, exploring new stimuli at their own pace, and enjoying the shared experience with their peers. These sensory stories have supported emotional regulation, confidence, and purposeful communication, and have been a lovely way to celebrate the season together.





## WELL-BEING: SEEKERS

This half term, our Seekers have been taking part in dedicated well-being sessions designed to help them slow down, reflect, and build positive habits for both mind and body.

Each week, the class gathers for a calm and focused lesson centered around meditation and mindfulness. We begin by checking in with the group and celebrating the good things students have done.

Through guided breathing and mindful reflection, students are learning techniques they can take beyond the classroom. It has been wonderful to see them developing greater self-awareness and sharing their own views on how they are progressing and what they would like to improve.





# CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION EVENT

## A Joyful Afternoon at Our Annual Christmas Celebration

What a wonderful afternoon we shared at this year's Christmas Celebration Event! The Catshill Club was filled with festive cheer as families and carers joined us to celebrate the achievements of our incredible students.

The highlight of the event was the Student Achievement Awards, presented by Vice Principal Bec Gayden. Each student proudly received a certificate recognising their hard work and progress. A special congratulations goes to ED, our Student of the Term, for her outstanding transition into college life as a Year One student.

Guests enjoyed heartwarming videos showcasing students' community involvement and work-related learning activities, along with inspiring Christmas messages from our Community Champions. Adding to the festive spirit, everyone savoured delicious mince pies and hot drinks - courtesy of our Student Enterprise project.

One of the most memorable moments was the amazing Sign-along performance by students and staff, which truly captured the spirit of inclusion and celebration. Principal Deb Rattley expressed heartfelt thanks to families for their support, staff for their dedication, Community Champions for creating opportunities, and students for their hard work throughout the year so far.

The afternoon concluded with a lively disco hosted by Matty G, where laughter, dancing, and joy filled the room - an unforgettable way to end a fantastic celebration!





## ARTRIX PANTO

🎭 A Treasure of an Experience! 🎭

Students had an unforgettable visit to watch **Treasure Island** at The Artrix this week and what a performance it was! 🌟

A huge **THANK YOU** to the incredible Artrix staff for being so **accommodating, kind, and supportive** throughout our visit, ensuring everyone could enjoy the magic of the show.

Their efforts made the day extra special, and our students absolutely loved every moment!





## SEVERN TRENT VISIT

🎄 ⚡ 'WATER' wonderful splash of Christmas magic! ⚡ 🎄

We'd like to say a huge THANK YOU to Kevin and the brilliant team from Severn Trent Water, for their incredible generosity in bringing Christmas presents to all pupils and students at Chads Grove School and College on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December! 🎁

We're exceptionally grateful of their kindness and for being absolutely amazing inclusive community champions! ❤️





## CATSHILL VILLAGE HALL COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS LUNCH PERFORMANCE

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December Seeker students completed their Sing and Sign tour with a performance at the Catshill Village Hall Community Christmas event.

They were joined by local singing group Vintage Class and supported them with some fantastic signing to entertain the audience.

The final number was 'White Christmas'. Students taught the audience the signs and everyone joined in together singing and signing the song.

What a wonderful way to end our very busy Autumn Term, singing and signing with our community friends!





## IMPORTANT DATES

- Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December: College closes for students and staff
- Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January: College opens for students
- Monday 9<sup>th</sup> – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February: Mental Health Focus Week
- Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February: College closes for half term
- Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February: College opens for students



**Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year**

**We look forward to seeing you in 2026!**

