



**Newsletter**  
**March 2026**

**Volume 5 | Issue 2**

# Welcome

Dear Families,

Across all four campuses this term, we have seen flourishing in action - in the calm, communication-friendly classrooms you'll read about, in the hands-on experiences of Careers Week, and in the growing confidence of learners discovering new skills, friendships, and possibilities. Every story in this newsletter reflects what we believe at West Lea: when people flourish, pupils flourish, and as a result our community flourishes.

From our youngest learners at Meridian Dysons Road, who are taking their first steps into communication and imaginative play, to pupils at Springfield discovering real jobs for the first time, each campus marks an important stage of growth.

At Haselbury, learners are building confidence and key life skills. At Learning for Life and Horizon, independence is beginning to blossom. Together, these campuses form different chapters of the same journey: breaking down barriers so every learner can grow, contribute, and feel they belong.

Our focus on communication and oracy continues to shape daily life. It helps learners express themselves, listen with confidence, and build the skills they need for adulthood. Through partnerships with Voice 21, local employers, Learning for Life Charity, and Enterprise Cooperative Trust, we are widening opportunities far beyond the classroom.

Thank you for your continued support, encouragement, and trust. Your partnership strengthens our work and ensures that every learner feels known, valued, and celebrated.

As we enter the Easter break, we hope you find time to rest and reconnect. We look forward to returning for another term filled with curiosity, joy, and opportunities to flourish.

**Paul Quinn**  
CEO

**Melanie Bignold**  
Director of Education

**Renee Flourentzou**  
Director of Education



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community  
**kindness**  
learning for life  
innovation inclusion

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London N9 9TU

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office@westleaschool.co.uk  
www.westleaschool.co.uk

# Helping every learner find their voice

We are proud of our inclusive environment where, no matter how you communicate, you will be heard, valued, and understood.

Some learners use spoken words, while others communicate through signs, symbols, gestures, or communication devices. Every form of communication is recognised and celebrated.

## CREATING CALM AND SUPPORTIVE SPACES



We create a calm, supportive, and "communication and emotion friendly" environment where learners grow in confidence. Positive relationships are central to this. Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas, make choices, and express their feelings. These everyday

moments help them build the skills they need to become independent and active members in their community.

## COMMUNICATION IN LEARNING

Communication is part of all learning here. Rather than teaching it as a separate subject, we build communication opportunities into lessons, playtime, social activities, and creative work. This helps learners practise listening, asking questions, taking turns, and using new words in meaningful ways.



Many families tell us they notice real changes at home, with children participating more in conversations, showing clearer preferences, or using new ways to communicate with siblings. One family said, "Using the PODD dinner plate has really supported our son with eating and staying at the table for family dinner." Another parent shared, "We use PODD when we go to the barbers, it makes it less scary and now we can take him out for haircuts."

## WORKING CLOSELY WITH SPECIALISTS

We work closely with our Speech and Language Therapy team to find the best strategies to suit each learner. This may include visual supports, Makaton signing, communication books, or carefully structured interaction approaches. The aim is always the same: to help learners communicate as independently and confidently as possible.



"Using the PODD dinner plate has really supported our son with eating and staying at the table for family dinner."

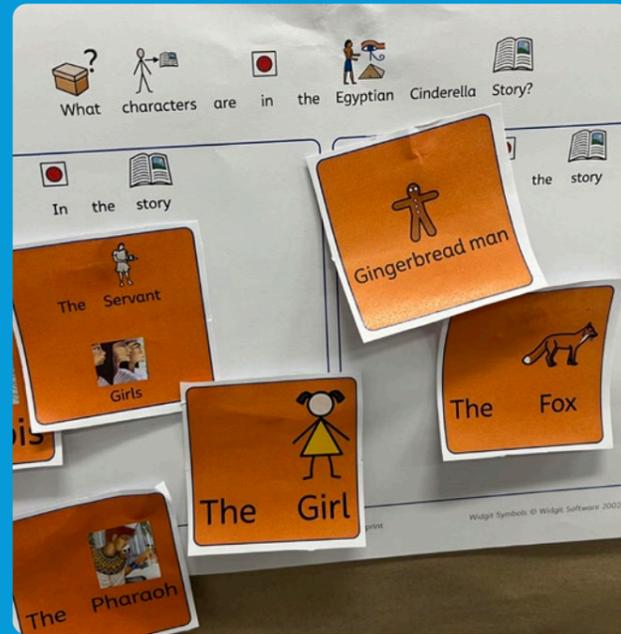
Parent



## DEVELOPING ORACY ACROSS THE SCHOOL

We are also continuing to develop oracy, and this work was celebrated recently by our visiting partner from Voice 21. They saw the progress Haselbury learners have made in their oracy skills, communicating and listening with confidence, kindness, and clarity. Learners are encouraged to develop skills across the curriculum to be able to self-advocate, share opinions, explain their thinking, and take part in respectful discussions.

For those who do not use spoken language, we ensure they have other tools that allow them to take part and express their ideas fully. Nicole North, Leader of Learning said, **“One of my learners found it challenging to participate during group discussions. But by using Voice 21 techniques such as ‘talk tactics’, they are now empowered to share their views with their friends.”**

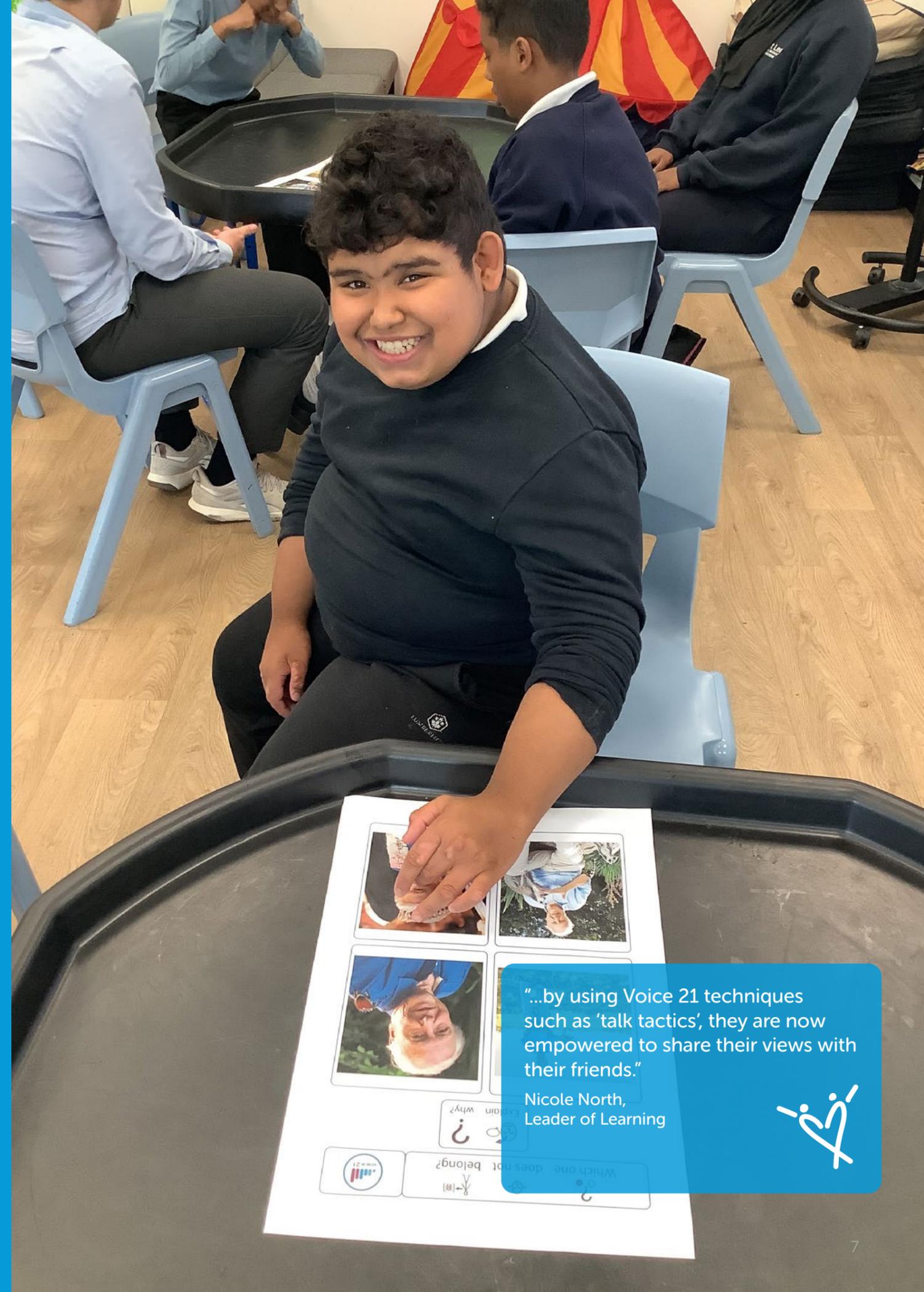


## SKILLS FOR LIFE AND ADULTHOOD

These skills are important for adulthood. Being able to greet others, ask for help, make choices, and share ideas helps learners during work experience, community activities, and future employment. Most importantly, it strengthens their sense of agency, the belief that their voice matters.

Our learners' voices, in every form, guide our work and inspire us every day. As we head into the Easter break, we hope everyone has a restful holiday. We are excited to return next term and continue supporting every learner to feel heard and confident in themselves.

**TANVELA HAIDAR**  
Head of Curriculum Development



**“...by using Voice 21 techniques such as ‘talk tactics’, they are now empowered to share their views with their friends.”**

Nicole North,  
Leader of Learning



## EXPLORING JOBS AND BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

Spring term has been full of exciting learning across our campus. In life skills, work skills, and catering lessons, learners have been practising everyday tasks that help them become more independent and ready for the future. These sessions also supported one of our biggest events of the year – National Careers Week.

Careers Week plays a key role in our personal development curriculum. It gives learners the chance to learn about real jobs, meet professionals, and understand more about the world around them. They get to see what adults do at work and what skills they might need in the future. Most importantly, it is fun, engaging, and meaningful for everyone.

At Dysons Road, the theme was 'People Who Help Us'. Learners met firefighters and explored their fire engine. They also met police officers and their horses, and a local vet who visited our play vet clinic to show how animals are cared for. Everyone enjoyed seeing the equipment up close and learning what each job involves.



'Trying out Real Jobs' was the theme at Springfield. Learners took part in a range of tasks, including:

- Litter picking
- Painting and decorating our school fences
- Planting and selling seeds
- Helping in the school office
- Completing jobs around the school building.

These activities help learners build independence, follow instructions, and work together. One pupil proudly shared, "I felt like I had a real job today," showing the confidence these hands-on experiences bring.



Springfield learners continued this journey by leading WestCo, our school shop. They ran the shop with support from SMILE therapy and our Speech and Language Therapist, helping them build communication, planning, and teamwork skills that prepare them for adulthood.

We are also extremely excited to share that Meridian Village is now open. After two years in the making, this play-based life and work curriculum is now ready at Dysons Road. This gives the learners the chance to experience real-life jobs and build independence through imaginative play.

It has been a busy term full of new opportunities and growing confidence. We're proud of everything our learners have achieved this term and look forward to seeing them after the Easter break.

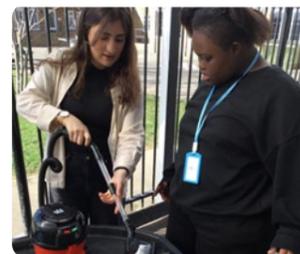


**EMMA DRIVER**  
Head of School

## CELEBRATING LITERACY AND LEARNING

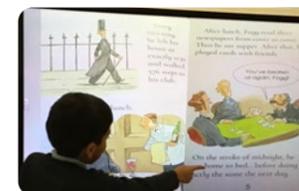
The term has offered many exciting learning experiences at our campus. With a strong focus on literacy, lessons felt more engaging. Events such as National Storytelling Week, World Book Day, and National Careers Week gave learners valuable chances to build their reading, writing, and speaking skills in meaningful ways.

Over the past year, we have continued to build our Voice 21 practice, helping learners become confident speakers who can share their ideas clearly. They use oracy skills across all subjects, and during Careers Week learners put their voice to work in meaningful, real-life situations.



Learners took part in a new programme to gain work experience within the school. This gave them opportunities to practise key skills in a safe and supportive environment, helping them prepare for future placements with local employers. Through a range of activities, they developed important communication skills - and had lots of fun along the way.

World Book Day gave us all the chance to be creative. Pupils dressed as their favourite characters and enjoyed a scavenger hunt, searching the campus for clues and capturing the moment with selfies.



For National Storytelling Week, learners discovered how stories spark imagination. Willow class enjoyed sensory storytelling, while Oak and Sycamore classes created props and simple scripts to perform with their friends.

Literacy remains central to learning as it helps every pupil express themselves, understand others, and take part in school and community life. Families can support this at home by talking during walks, reading signs, asking questions, and encouraging children to share their thoughts.

In a busy term, learners enjoyed performing arts workshops, art printing, museum visits, a trip to the zoo and our annual dance festival. We also launched the Year 9 vocational curriculum, including cooking sessions at Horizon with our new chef, Rose.



I will be leaving West Lea at Easter. As I begin my next adventure, I carry many happy memories. It has been a privilege to work with supportive families, a dedicated team, and incredible learners. Thank you for your kindness and warmth over the last two years.

I wish everyone a restful holiday and continued success in the months ahead.



**DARIA KOHLS**  
Head of School

## LEARNING NEW SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

We've enjoyed a busy Spring term on our campus and learners took part in many activities. From work placements and animal care, to music workshops and travel training, everyone showed enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

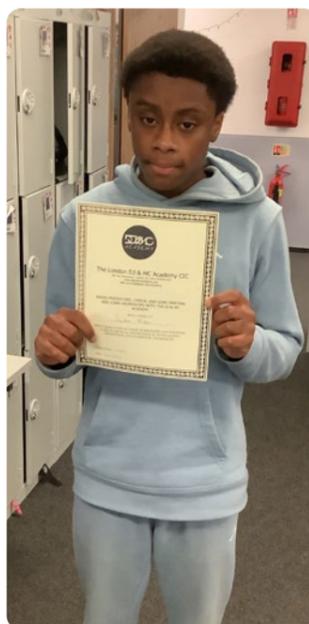
Expanding work-related learning continues to be a key focus. Wallace class completed individual placements in a hair salon, bakery, and nursery. These experiences helped them meet new people, support younger children, and understand what a workplace is like. As Julie Sullivan, Assistant Headteacher, said, "The learners have grown in confidence week by week. It's been fantastic to see them realise just how capable they are."



Year 10 enjoyed their World of Work Days at Hertfordshire Zoo, where they learned how animals are cared for and what it takes to run a large zoo. Behind-the-scenes sessions helped them see the variety of roles in animal care.

Some classes visited Capel Manor to learn about land-based studies such as gardening, landscaping, horticulture, grounds maintenance, and working with plants and outdoor spaces.

Workplace visits help learners see what's involved in real-life jobs and open their eyes to the types of work they might enjoy in the future.



We also welcomed back Thru Life and The British DJ & MC Academy for their popular music workshops. Learners explored rhythm, sound, performance, and music technology in a fun, encouraging space.

Across these activities, learners strengthened important life and work skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, decision-making, and confidence when speaking to new people.



A proud moment this term has been celebrating the progress of Year 11 learners who are now fully travel trained ahead of their move to Horizon Campus. One learner said, "I never thought I could do it on my own, but now I can," capturing how far they've come.

We wish you a happy Easter and look forward to an exciting summer term.



**THESPINA SKARPELLIS**  
Head of School



## CREATIVITY MEETS HARD WORK

This Spring term has been full of energy, learning, and proud moments. Learners have had many chances to build new skills, try different activities, and prepare for the future.

Senior interns enjoyed a trip to see MJ the Musical at the Prince Edward Theatre. They travelled together, watched the impressive performance and spent time socialising with friends and staff.

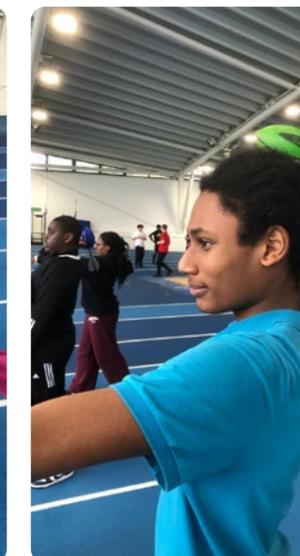


We also welcomed Chef Rose, who now teaches catering at our Ponders End site. With over 16 years of experience, including time at the Savoy Hotel, she brings strong industry knowledge. Learners have been gaining confidence in food safety, planning meals, using kitchen tools, and cooking on their own. They have already made dishes like banana bread, lemon drizzle cake, and tomato and halloumi pasta.

Preparing for employment continues to be an important part of our curriculum. Horizon Sixth learners and junior interns have taken part in work experience and learned teamwork, listening, and following instructions. They have also carried out tasks such as cleaning, stock rotation, sorting mail, and printing.



Learners have built confidence through speaking and listening assessments, sharing ideas on wellbeing, and digital responsibility. Families joined us for progress review meetings and the transition clinic, where they met teams from Enfield Council, local colleges, Our Voice, SENDIASS and others.



A sports trip to Lee Valley Athletics Centre gave our young people the chance to try sprinting, javelin, long jump, curling and boccia. Creativity was also celebrated, with artwork made alongside local artists now displayed in the Ponders End common room.



Senior interns continue to make progress in their work placements, and we are proud of those who have secured paid roles. Learners also attended a job fair and met employer partners including Greggs, Camden Council, Churchill Group, and others.

It has been a rewarding term, and we wish everyone a restful Easter break.



**KIKA CHARALAMBOUS**  
Head of School

# School Council update

This term, School Council representatives have been busy shaping school life and making meaningful contributions.

## LEARNER VOICE IN ACTION

Council members began the term by reviewing the expectations of their role and discussing what it means to represent others. They practised turn-taking, active listening, and sharing ideas respectfully. These skills have helped them grow in confidence when speaking on behalf of their classmates.



One of their first collective achievements was gathering suggestions from their peers about activities they would like to see in school. This led to several thoughtful ideas such as inviting families in for story sessions and creating quieter social spaces during breaks.

## IMPROVING THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The Council also focused on how pupils can help improve the school environment. Representatives carried out mini-audits of classrooms and shared areas, noticing where recycling could be improved, where outdoor spaces needed tidying, and where resources could be better organised.

They presented their findings during Council meetings and agreed on actions such as making awareness posters, reminding peers during form time, and introducing new recycling points. This initiative is now being expanded to outdoor areas too.



## EXPLORING CAREERS THAT HELP OTHERS

As part of Careers Week, members explored jobs connected to helping others and caring for the community. They interviewed visitors, asked prepared questions, and reflected on how these roles link to teamwork, kindness, and responsibility. These discussions help pupils see the impact they can have, both now and in the future.

Across the term, School Council representatives have shown commitment, creativity, and leadership. Their ideas continue to guide improvements across our school community, ensuring that pupil voice remains at the heart of everything we do.



# Pastoral update

## HELPING LEARNERS FEEL SAFE, HEARD, AND UNDERSTOOD

At West Lea, one of our key priorities is helping every learner feel safe, understood, and able to communicate in a way that works for them.

When young people feel safe, they are more able to engage, share their thoughts, and take part in learning. When they don't feel safe or things feel unpredictable, communication can become much harder.

That's why we put so much focus on creating calm, structured, and supportive environments across our campuses.

You might see this in simple but powerful ways, such as:

- Visual timetables that show what's happening throughout the day
- Clear routines and consistent expectations
- Taking time to explain what's coming next

These approaches help reduce anxiety and build confidence.

We use visual supports alongside spoken language (sometimes called "dual coding") to help learners understand and retain information more easily.

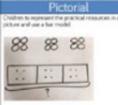
### Concrete to Abstract



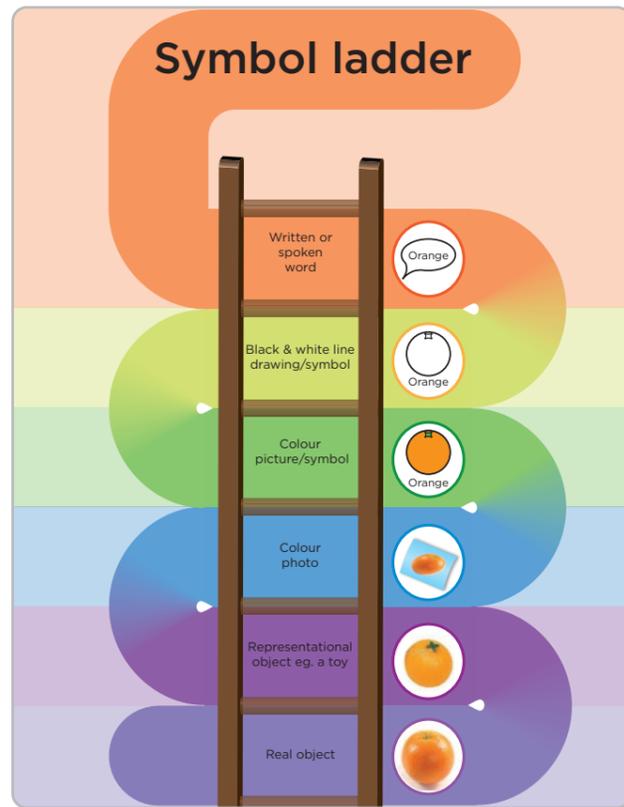
**Concrete**: an actual apple—it can be felt, manipulated, cut into, eaten, observed

**Less Concrete**: a picture of an apple

**Abstract**: the word apple

Concrete	Pictorial	Abstract
<p>Concrete grouping/functional action</p> <p>4 + 4 = 8</p> <p>Place 4 small groups, with 4 in each group</p> 	<p>Children to represent the practical resources in a picture and use that image</p> <p>88 88 88</p> 	<p>4 + 4 = 8</p> <p>4 + 4 = 8</p> 

Turning abstract ideas into concrete experiences



© Elkian Training Ltd

For some learners, having that visual reference makes all the difference.

Importantly, we also make sure learners are given the time they need. Some young people may need a little longer to process a question or instruction – and that's okay. Giving that space helps them access their "thinking brain" and respond more confidently.

Over time, these small, consistent approaches have a big impact. We see learners:

- Sharing their ideas more openly
- Asking for help when they need it
- Building better relationships with staff and peers
- Growing in confidence and independence

I often say that what works well for learners with special educational needs is good practice for everyone – and we see that every day in our classrooms.

This work is also something we share beyond West Lea. Through outreach and training, we support other professionals to better understand how to communicate effectively with young people with additional needs.

At the heart of it all is a simple aim: to help every learner feel safe, heard, and able to take part – in school, and beyond.



**CATH GOODWIN**  
Head of Pastoral Development

# Enterprise Cooperative Trust

## BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH #ENFIELDWORKS

Last year, Enterprise Cooperative Trust (ECT) successfully launched the #EnfieldWorks campaign in partnership with Enfield Council.

This was an important step in helping reduce youth unemployment in the borough. We were delighted to attend several council-led events at the Civic Centre, bringing together local employers, school leaders, community partners, and ECT Trustees. These events highlighted the council's commitment to supporting young people, and many organisations expressed strong interest in working closely with the campaign.

## INSPIRING YOUNG VOICES

At one of the events, pupils from Enfield County confidently spoke about their ambitions and hopes for the future, showcasing the talent and potential within our community. Their voices will also play a key role in the consultation for the redevelopment of Palace Gardens, helping to shape designs that positively impact daily life and strengthen a sense of belonging for young people.



## A BOLD VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Although the project is still in its early stages, our ambition is bold. We want to create thousands of meaningful work opportunities for young people in Enfield by 2030, especially for those who face disadvantage or with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Schools are continuing to work closely with the Council to build more capacity across the Trust. Together, we are planning and organising high-quality work experience opportunities that support the hopes and goals of all learners.



**JANET LEACH MBE**  
Chair of ECT

# Learning for Life Charity

On 27th February, we relaunched the Baking & Barista Project at St Aldhelm's Church. This was a proud moment that celebrated our learners' hard work and marked a new beginning for the project.

With the generous support of the RSA Trust, we were able to buy new equipment and resources. This has already helped our pupils make better coffees and baked treats, which they are very proud of.

## BUILDING SKILLS THROUGH REAL EXPERIENCES

The project now runs every Tuesday from 11am to 1pm. During this time, learners help in the café by welcoming customers, taking orders, and chatting with people. These conversations help them grow in confidence, improve communication, and learn how to work well with others. The skills they build here support them not only in school, but also in future jobs and everyday life.



Moving the project from West Lea to St Aldhelm's Church has made the experience even richer. The church is a warm, welcoming place where learners can meet more people from the community. This gives them a natural chance to practise their social skills and learn how to interact with different types of people in a relaxed, friendly environment.



## LEARNING PRACTICAL SKILLS

Learners are taught by a trainer who is a former baker with many years of industry experience. They learn key skills in baking, food hygiene, barista techniques, and customer service. Each week they prepare freshly baked goods and practise making coffees while learning how to work safely, responsibly, and confidently.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

We would love your support to help the project grow. More visitors mean more real-life practice for our pupils. Whether you come in for a quick coffee, bring a friend, or hold a small meeting at the church café, your visit really helps. Every customer gives our learners another chance to improve and shine.

As we get closer to Easter, a time of hope, renewal and togetherness, your support feels even more special. A simple visit or a small offer of time through volunteering can bring a lot of encouragement to our learners during this season. If you would like to get involved, please contact the Learning for Life Charity team to find out more.



Thank you for supporting our learners and our community.

Scan to register your interest



**OLIVIA WITTICH**  
LFLC Operations Director

# West Lea in the news

## FROM INTERN TO EMPLOYEE: BRADLEY'S JOURNEY

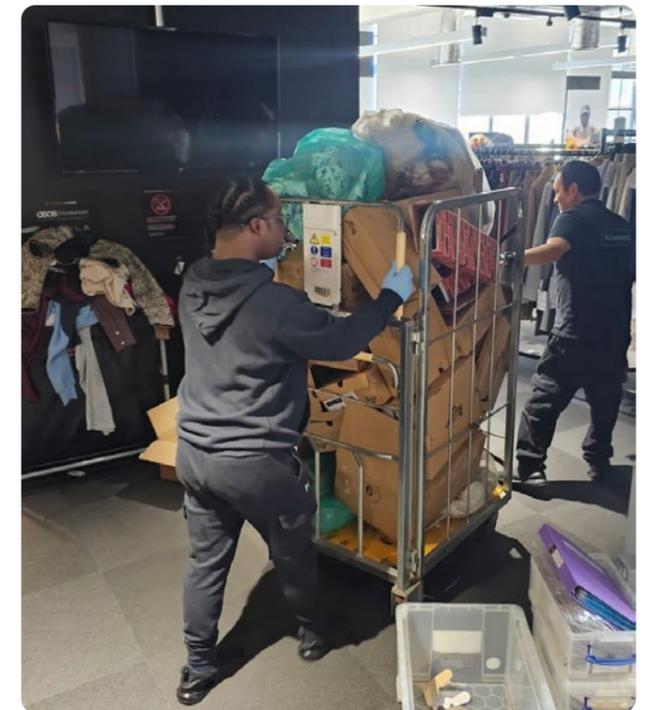
We were delighted to see Bradley's journey recognised by our employer partner, Portfolio Services (part of the Churchill Group), who deliver cleaning services at ASOS.

Bradley joined our supported internship programme after completing his junior internship year. He was keen to gain real experience in the workplace.

He began his placement with the housekeeping team at ASOS and quickly became a valued member of the team. His positive attitude, reliability, and willingness to learn stood out from the very beginning.

One team member shared: "Bradley has brought great energy to the workplace. He is always positive, eager to help, and has become a valued part of our team."

During his placement, Bradley supported the team in keeping shared spaces clean and welcoming, while building his confidence and developing important workplace skills.



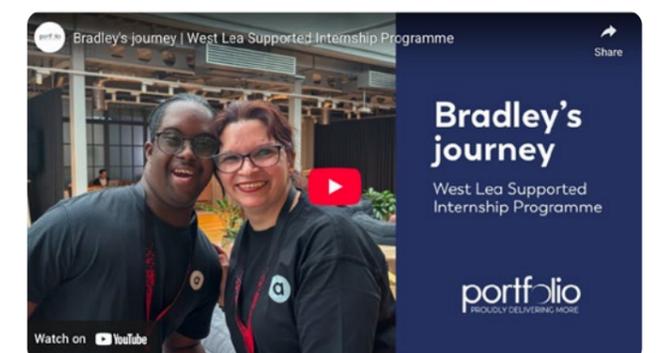
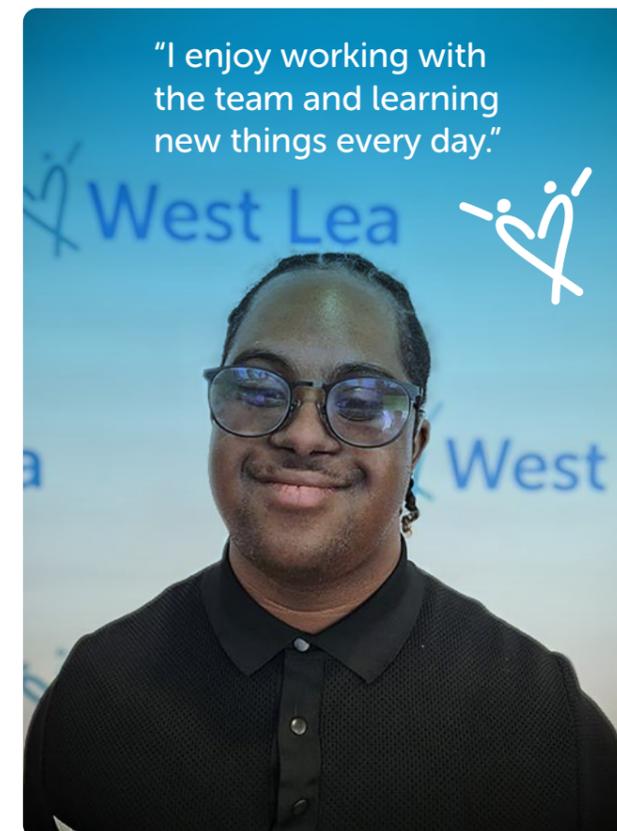
Bradley said, "I enjoy working with the team and learning new things every day." His family have also shared how proud they are to see him growing in confidence and independence.

This is exactly what Employment for All is about – creating meaningful opportunities and helping young people take their next steps with confidence.



We are incredibly proud to share that Bradley has now moved from an internship into paid employment at ASOS – a fantastic achievement and a well-deserved next step.

Scan the QR code to watch Bradley's journey and learn more.



# Our campuses



**West Lea**  
MERIDIAN CAMPUS

**Dysons Road**  
174 Dysons Road, Edmonton,  
N18 2DS

**Springfield Road**  
Springfield Road,  
New Southgate,  
N11 1SP




**West Lea**  
HASELBURY CAMPUS

**Haselbury Campus**  
Haselbury Road,  
Edmonton,  
N9 9TU




**West Lea**  
LEARNING FOR LIFE CAMPUS

**Laurel Park School**  
Wilmer Way,  
N14 7HY




**West Lea**  
HORIZON CAMPUS

**St Mary's**  
Lawrence Road, Edmonton,  
N18 2HN

**Ponders End**  
219-221 High Street,  
Ponders End, Enfield,  
EN3 4DX



# Key term dates 2026

## SUMMER TERM

### Monday 13th April

First day of Summer Term 1 - Learners return to school

### Wednesday 15th April

Horizon Works Open Evening at Ponders End:  
5pm - 6pm

### Monday 4th May

**Bank Holiday - School closed to learners**

### Wednesday 20th May

Horizon Works Open Evening at Ponders End:  
5pm - 6pm

### Friday 22nd May

End of Summer Term 1

### Monday 25th May - Friday 29th May

**Half Term - School closed to learners**

### Monday 1st June

First day of Summer Term 2 - Learners return to school

### Wednesday 10th June

Horizon Works Open Evening at Ponders End:  
5pm - 6pm

### Wednesday 17th June

Parent/carer meetings - School closes at  
12.30pm for learners

### Friday 3rd - Tuesday 8th July

Year 13 residentials

### Friday 10th July

Year 11 and 6th Form learners - Last day of  
Summer Term 2

### Friday 17th July

Reception to Year 10 - Last day of Summer  
Term 2

### Monday 20th July

**INSET Day - School closed to learners**

**Tuesday 21st July - Tuesday 1st September**  
**Summer Holiday - School closed to learners**

## AUTUMN TERM

### Wednesday 2nd September

**INSET Day - School closed to learners**

### Thursday 3rd September

First day of Autumn Term 1 - Learners return to  
school

### Wednesday 7th October

**INSET Day - School closed to learners**

### Friday 23rd October

End of Autumn Term 1

### Monday 26th October - Friday 30th October

**Half Term - School closed to learners**

### Monday 2nd November

First day of Autumn Term 2 - Learners return to  
school

### Friday 27th November

**INSET Day - School closed to learners**

### Monday 30th November

**INSET Day - School closed to learners**

### Friday 18th December

End of Autumn Term 2

### Monday 21st December -

**Friday 1st January 2027**

**Christmas break - School closed to learners**



community  
**kindness**  
**learning for life**  
innovation **inclusion**