



SIGMA NEWS

For Students, Parents and Carers of The Sigma Trust

Greater than the sum of its parts



INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

- Sigma Sixth is launched
- Ofsted visit infant school
- Day devoted to languages
- Alternative provision launched at primary
- Official opening of Paxman Academy
- Football college for budding players

Welcome...

Welcome to the latest packed edition of Sigma News containing a wide range of articles celebrating the activities students have been engaged in over the past six months. Sigma is now in its fourth year and its collaborative way of working has become firmly established and enhanced in that time.

In this edition, you will find news of the creation of Sigma Sixth, the brand name for post-16 provision across the Trust.

This is an exciting development as it will enhance the range of courses and learning opportunities for all of our 16 to 18-year-old students. We hope this will also provide a high quality alternative to the existing provision for those students at our 11-16 schools.

It is great to see pupils from all the schools across Sigma supporting their community and having opportunities to enrich their learning outside of the classroom.

They have been inspired by a wide range of speakers and have excelled on the sports field, as well as in a range of other competitions. The Careers Fair, at the new Tendring Campus of Sigma Sixth, was a huge success and Year 11 students were

able to meet with a wide range of further education institutions and potential employers.

These are the days that you remember most when you leave school.

The Say Yes to the Prom Dress initiative at The Stanway School is a fantastic idea and one that hopefully can be rolled out across all schools.

This is a great way of cutting costs for parents for something that may only be worn once. I am sure other schools have similar schemes linked to uniform. Schools would welcome your views on how we can develop this further.

Finally, as you will see below, I will be stepping down at the end of this year, but will be looking to continue to support the development of Sigma in a different capacity and help to build on its continued success.

Jeff Brindle, CEO, The Sigma Trust



CEO of The Sigma Trust to step down

Jeff Brindle, CEO of The Sigma Trust, is stepping down from his role as CEO this summer.

The former headteacher of Clacton County High School led on the creation of The Sigma Trust in 2016.

Mr Brindle, who will continue to play a part-time role in the operation of the Trust, said: "We have had massive growth in the last 12 months, with The Philip Morant School and College and The Colne

Community School and College joining, The Paxman Academy opening and now two more primaries – Holland Park Primary School and Alton Park Junior School - joining the Trust.

"I am really proud of how Sigma has developed over the last four years. We have achieved our initial vision of creating a strong, collaborative partnership of local academies and have provided support and

leadership capacity to a number of schools facing challenging circumstances.

"While we are planning for a period of stability after significant recent growth, we will continue to strengthen the capacity of The Sigma Trust during this period of transition. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all colleagues for their contribution and support during my time as CEO."

WE ARE THE SIGMA FAMILY...



Enhanced sixth form facilities are being offered by The Sigma Trust from September



Following a consultation by the Trust, Clacton County High School and The Philip Morant School and College are launching enhanced sixth form facilities this September.

Under the banner Sigma Sixth, the sixth form will be set across two campuses –

- Clacton County High's sixth form will relocate to the new Sigma Sixth Tendring Campus at the Tendring Education Centre
- The Philip Morant's sixth form facilities are being expanded and enhanced to create the Sigma Sixth Colchester Campus

Jeff Brindle, CEO, The Sigma Trust, said: "The Sigma Trust has been working on this vision for quite some time in conjunction with the local

authority. We are extremely pleased it is finally becoming a reality.

"The two campuses will not only compliment other sixth form providers already available within the Clacton and Colchester areas, but extend the curriculum offer and range of courses to suit all levels of learners. We will also continue to work in collaboration with others, including the V16 Partnership supported by the University of Essex."



In recent years, demographic changes have led to a growing demand for places at secondary schools, especially within the Tendring area.

The sixth form move and the planned development to expand the Walton Road site of Clacton County High will allow for the creation of the additional school spaces required. The increasing

numbers will be accommodated in Sigma Sixth, with capacity for 600 students in Clacton alone.

Prospective students and their parents have already had the opportunity to look around the Sigma Sixth campuses and have been impressed with the development of a more adult environment, with rest areas, catering and serving points and sports facilities.

The Sigma Trust has also been able to extend the range of Level 3 courses available by utilising teaching professionals within the Trust's other secondary schools - The Colne Community School and College, Harwich and Dovercourt High School, The Stanway School, Thomas Lord Audley School, St Helena School and the brand-new Paxman Academy.



VIP event for sixth formers



Students keen to study at the growing sixth form at Harwich and Dovercourt High School were invited to a VIP event.

Having walked the red carpet, Year 11 students and their parents found out

more about the sixth form as it becomes part of Sigma Sixth.

Harwich and Dovercourt Sixth Form will retain its existing provision, including A-level and vocational subjects, and introduce new courses such as uniformed services,

ICT and performing engineering operations.

Known as the Tendring Campus, both Harwich and Dovercourt and Clacton County High School Sixth Form will offer students the chance to travel across both sites to access vocational courses, Chelsea Football Club Academy Training and a range of A-levels, including criminology and law.

Sarah Parker, head of Harwich and Dovercourt Sixth Form, said: "This is the perfect opportunity for our students who do not want to travel to Colchester or Suffolk to access even more academic A-levels, while remaining in Harwich. We are very excited about the new partnership across Sigma colleges and what doors this will open for our students in Harwich. The evening was a huge success. We look forward to seeing our sixth form grow and our students flourish."

Infant school is Good, says Ofsted

Ofsted inspectors have confirmed Monkwick Infant School is Good.

Inspectors visited in the summer, grading all areas of the school as Good.

Headteacher Claire Holmes said: "This could not have been achieved without the support parents and carers gave throughout the inspection and the lovely positive comments they shared with the inspectors.

"It was a wonderful end to the last school year and really recognised how hard everyone works to care for, and to teach, the children.

"It recognised how brilliant the children are too, and we were so proud of them. They behaved so well and were a real credit to the school."



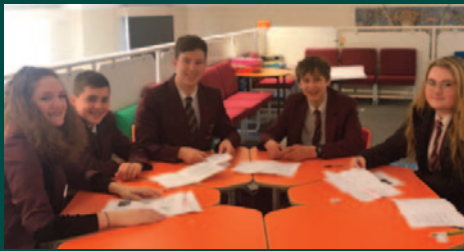
Mental health ambassadors offer support

Newly appointed mental health ambassadors have received training covering depression, anxiety, bullying, cyber bullying, autism and learning difficulties.

The Colne Community School and College has enlisted the help of Year 11 mental health ambassadors to offer support around school to students in all year groups.

They make and listen to suggestions and ideas on helping with mental health issues in school.

Ambassador Sophie Twigg said: "I knew being an ambassador would help me because helping others with how they feel and trying to make them feel better makes



me happy. I go home knowing I have helped someone who needed reassurance and that I helped them to feel more confident.

"I want to make people feel better about themselves and know they have someone they can talk to.

"Being a mental health ambassador will hopefully help me in my future career because I would like to work with young children.

"The experience and understanding I am gaining will help me to give extra support to the young people I work with.

"One of my goals is to have a positive impact on people's lives."

Mock interviews with potential employers

Teenagers soon to embark on the next step of their lives got the chance to practise their interview techniques.

Year 11 students at The Thomas Lord Audley School sat mock interviews with representatives from local, national and global organisations, including The Rotary Club of Colchester Forum, Greater Anglia, Ellisons Solicitors, Mersea Homes, SJC Design, Colchester General Hospital, Aon, HSBC, SwissRe and Mercury Theatre.

Students researched the job they were applying for, the company they had applied to and the relevant

industry sector before sitting the 20-minute interview.

They received feedback on the quality of their interview including their CV, dress code, speech, eye contact, handshake, confidence, response to the questions asked and if they had made a good impression.

Susan Green, careers leader, said: "No matter how many interviews somebody does, it is always nerve-racking.

"But, all the students handled the pressure and performed amazingly well.



"The overall view of the interviewers was that the students were very bright, well presented and confident."

Grand opening of brand-new school

The opening of Paxman Academy has been celebrated.

The brand-new school, which opened in September, welcomed local dignitaries and community members, including councillors, representatives from Essex County Council and Barnes Construction, The Sigma Trust trustees and board members,

secondary and primary headteachers and governors.

A number of community figures were also in attendance, as well as colleagues from MAN Energy Solutions, the company which took over the production of Paxman engines and donated the engine at the front of the school.

Staff from the former Alderman Blaxill School, which used to be based on the site where Paxman now stands, provided a trip down memory lane.

The evening included three students giving their accounts of the first few weeks at their new school.

Outdoor learning to build relationships

Children and their parents are heading into the woods on an adventure to take care of their mental health.

A new project launched in January saw pupils at Holland Park Primary School start intervention sessions with Essex Woodland Trust.

The six-week course encourages eight pupils and their parents to work together to build fires and enjoy the outdoors, while bonding and building their self-esteem.

Headteacher Matt Moseley said: "Outdoor learning is a big

push for us. We run sessions on the beach in the summer and use that resource as much as possible as it is just a two-minute walk from school. We want children and their families to see learning is about more than just what we do in the classroom.

"Children's social and emotional mental health is a concern everywhere. We are looking at ways we can compliment our curriculum offer and provide these opportunities. Wherever we can get parents involved is great.

"This is really exciting."

Say yes to the – prom – dress!

Families struggling to kit out their daughters for prom are being offered a lifeline – as The Stanway School stocks up on dresses for them to borrow.

The school has launched the Say Yes to the Prom Dress scheme, with a collection of 100 donated dresses – plus shoes and accessories - ready to be used for prom. After hearing about the idea, the Ford Britain Trust has donated 40 dresses and £250 in support.

The school now has so many dresses, it is opening up the new scheme to fellow schools within The Sigma Trust.

Luella Murray, head of English interventions, said: "It is our belief that prom should be an event that all Year 11 students should be able to be a part of and enjoy, regardless of any financial situation. We are lucky enough to have accumulated a selection of preloved or unworn dresses that are in an excellent condition. We are able to offer these to students to borrow for their special day. "Our aim is to make the celebration of the prom and the end of the students' school chapter something that is inclusive and accessible to all. Last year, we were able to help one student



attend the prom, and this is when we realised that maybe there are others that may need a little help with making sure they can get involved and enjoy the celebration."

The dresses, in various styles and sizes, are free to hire, with a donation requested for dry cleaning.

Pen pals improve letter-writing skills

Pupils at Alton Park Junior School have been writing to their peers at Summer Hill Centre of English in Greece for the last 14 years.

The project sees children write four letters to their pen pals each year, plus Easter and Christmas cards.

Pat Whalley, high level teaching assistant, said: "Pupils are

always very excited about sending, waiting and then receiving the letters.

"We have found, over the years, pupils from Alton Park improve their letter-writing skills because they receive letters that have been completed in a class situation, but they have to write their own letters independently at home.

"They follow the same format and presentation from the letters they receive and try to improve with each letter."

Hero schoolboy helps collapsed man

A teenager used his first aid training to help an elderly man who collapsed outside a supermarket.

Evan Theobald, a student from The Thomas Lord Audley School, saw the man outside Lidl on his walk home from school. He checked the man's vital signs before calling for an ambulance.

Evan said: "I went over and asked if he could hear me. He said he could, but then he collapsed. I asked him if he had hit his head. He said he didn't remember, but he clearly had. He said he had felt dizzy before falling. I asked the ambulance service to upgrade the call as he had pains in his chest and shortness of breath."

Evan said the man turned out to be diabetic and he believes he was having a 'hypo'. The man was taken to Colchester Hospital for further treatment.

Evan is a member of the Essex Army Cadet Force and has taken part in the St John Ambulance Youth First aid course. He has also had road traffic collision and seizure training.

He said: "I have dealt with quite a few first aid incidents, but I just take a deep breath. When you have the training, it's just muscle memory."



Students compete in maths contest

Mathematicians came together to take part in the annual NEMO competition.

The North East Essex Mathematical Olympiad brings together Year 9 students from The Sigma Trust and other schools. The 18 teams gathered at The Thomas Lord Audley School for the enrichment session.

Finlay Ridgwell, mathematics strategic lead, said: "A fantastic turnout of students came together to compete in the latest NEMO competition.

"Students competed in three rounds of mathematics to see who could answer the most questions correctly, with the quickest scoring points for each round. Each group worked really well as a team deciphering the best way to answer

problem questions. They really enjoyed seeing mathematics outside of the classroom. Impressively, six Sigma teams were in the top six!"

The winners – retaining their title from last year – were a team from The Stanway School.

Christophe Edin, from The Stanway School, said: "It was a great opportunity for our students to test themselves during three demanding rounds of some extremely atypical maths problems. All the students worked exceptionally hard and we were very impressed by all those who participated."

The aim of NEMO is to show students how maths can be applied outside of the classroom. Frazer Lamb, second in

department at The Thomas Lord Audley School, said: "It is excellent to see the enthusiasm shown by the students in applying their mathematical knowledge."

Claire Pretty, maths teacher at The Philip Morant School and College, said: "There is nothing more satisfying than watching a hall full of students working together to solve problems. Add in the fact they are competing in a maths competition, representing their school against other schools and I was in my element."



Never too early to think about the future

Students of all ages are being supported as they consider their future career paths.

Clacton County High School offers advice and guidance to its students via its Careers Hub micro-website which is full of information about possible careers.

Head of school Chris Taylor said: "It's never too early to start thinking about the future. Careers information is not only for our upper school students; even those in Year 8 need to start thinking about subjects that interest them. The knowledge we impart to students during their time

with us aims to empower each individual to discover what interests them. Ultimately, we endeavour to teach, advise and steer them towards further study in a subject area that stimulates their imagination and, subsequently, a career path and job they enjoy."

Early this year, Year 8 students will start the process of selecting the GCSE and BTEC subjects they want to study in Year 9 from September 2020.

The school's careers and outreach team are also available to talk to and advise students.

Pastoral support in Bloom room

Children are being equipped with the tools and strategies they need to enable them to cope with school life.

The Bloom room was established at Monkwick Junior School in September, with resources arranged into zones, including sensory, learning and calming.

Sue Wilson, SENCo, said: "The sensory area includes a black-out tent with light displays. The learning area includes a range of visual and kinaesthetic support resources and the calming zone provides a comfortable area to support the de-escalation of heightened emotions.

"Children are equipped with strategies to regulate their emotions, such as using mindfulness, zones of regulation, working together with Lego and socially speaking."



Developing our leadership skills

The impact students can have on the world around them was just one lesson received as part of National Democracy Week.

Students at St Helena School learnt about democracy as they took part in an interactive session with Essex County Council.

They got an insight into local and national democracy during the event in the Council Chamber, where they asked questions of members and took part in quizzes.

Jack, Year 9, said: "It was a mind-opening experience that really allowed us further insight into how the council works and makes its decisions which affect all of us. We can now use our new-found knowledge and skill set to further our great school's future."

Nurture unit opened at primary

Children with attachment issues or trauma in their lives will be supported at a new nurture provision.

Holland Park Primary School has opened a dedicated unit to offer extra support to pupils with behaviour, mental health or wellbeing issues. Six pupils will spend their mornings in the provision, which has been set up with a homely feel, including a dining area, kitchen and sofa area. A pupil behaviour and wellbeing lead has been appointed to oversee the project and four members of staff have undertaken behaviour management training.

Headteacher Matt Moseley said: "We are trying to really develop the pastoral support we offer to our pupils and families. We have been travelling around the county looking at other provisions, taking note of what is working and what is not working so well. This is a big piece of work.

"Pupils will take part in activities which will give them an opportunity to learn key skills, such as co-operation, how to regulate their emotions, building their self-esteem, teamwork, mindfulness and meditation. They will go to the shops to buy ingredients and cook for their teachers at a tea party."

Pupils, who will spend half the day in their mainstream class, will be reintegrated full-time after a term within the provision.

National recognition for reading school

A national news story promoting successful school reading schemes highlighted the work taking place at Harwich and Dovercourt High School.

The school featured in a BBC news report on PISA, the Program for International Student Assessment which measures 15-year-old students' reading, maths and science literacy.

This year, the focus was on reading and the BBC was keen to include details of the work carried out at Harwich and Dovercourt as a Reading School.

The school starts every lesson with a five-minute reading session, offers a guide to parents to get reluctant readers to

read, supplies a recommended reading list and includes a reading element in homework.

Headteacher Kate Finch said: "It's so important to me that these children can access conversation as they grow older and that's not just conversation towards their exams and things that will actually get them grades behind them. But, it's actually being a part of the world."



First aiders awarded for saving life

The actions of a team of first aiders who saved the life of a student have been recognised by a TV doctor.

Last year, a Year 9 student at Clacton County High School went into cardiac arrest after becoming unwell during a drama lesson.

Trained first aiders Rachel Blastock and Gary Winterford administered CPR and used one of the school's defibrillators to save the student's life.

Other school first aiders, Amanda Dullage and Nicola Nundy, assisted by contacting the emergency services and helping to co-ordinate the arrival of the paramedics and air ambulance.

The team's actions were honoured at the SADS-UK (Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome) National Lifesaver Awards night, recognising people within the community who have used CPR and a defibrillator to save someone's life.



They were presented with their award by Dr Hilary Jones, the health editor on Good Morning Britain.

Since the incident, all Clacton County High School teaching and non-teaching staff have completed a CPR and defibrillator introduction course and a third defibrillator has been purchased to ensure one is always close to hand across the school site.

Reading challenge is set

As the promotion of reading continues at The Colne Community School and College, students have been set a challenge.

Each term, students are urged to read six books which fit with their learning. In return, they receive points, a certificate and entry into a prize draw.

Year 11 prefects have been appointed to help their peers choose something suitable to read at lunchtimes and to ensure the library runs smoothly.

Jenny Fry, English teacher and whole school literacy lead, said: "Please encourage your child to be involved with the reading challenge - reading for just 20 minutes each day has a significant impact on all aspects of their school and social lives."

Supporting Colchester Foodbank

Since the brand-new school's opening in September, students at Paxman Academy have been supporting Colchester Foodbank.

Students have supported the cause in different ways, including creating leaflets and posters to give to family members and deliver to local residents.

During the last week of term, the school held a Christmas disco, which raised more than £250, and a Food Drive where students made a voluntary donation of the foodbank's most needed items in exchange for being allowed to wear a Christmas jumper.



Making friends with older people

Older people living with dementia have been befriended by junior school pupils.

Children from Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 at Alton Park Junior School visit Edensor Care Home each week to spend time with residents living with dementia.

Pupils join in with painting, drawing, talking to residents about their lives and reading.

Aimee Dawson, technician, said: "The visits aim to build on a sense of community.

"Residents benefit from a higher level of engagement. Residents who would normally sit quietly by themselves for extended periods of time become talkative and interact with the children.

"Children benefit from the visits by meeting people with disabilities which builds on their compassionate and caring natures and helps to improve social development."



How to cope in an emergency

A first aid club is teaching young people the tools needed to cope in an emergency situation.

Students at The Stanway School have learnt how to call 999, practised answers to the types of questions they would be asked and how to use the DRSABC (Danger, Response, Shout/Summon help, Airway, Breathing, CPR) action plan.

They learnt how to perform CPR, how to use a defibrillator,

when to use the recovery position, as well as dealing with choking, bleeding, asthma attacks and anaphylaxis.

Headteacher Jonathan Bland said: "Schools are not just here to achieve excellent exam results; they are here to provide opportunities for young people to be ready for the future. Learning about first aid and how to respond in an emergency is a vital life skill and I am proud the school can offer this fantastic opportunity for our students."

Language and vocabulary promoted in Nursery

Parents were invited in to Monkwick Infant School to learn more about Hungry Little Minds.

The Government initiative is aimed at parents of children from newborn to the age of five to help support

language and vocabulary.

The scheme was promoted in school by inviting parents to join their children for a Stay and Play breakfast or a picnic lunch in the Nursery.

STEM skills refined during competition

Skills learnt during science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) lessons helped students to win a robotics challenge.

Students from The Philip Morant School and College took part in a robotic programming day at BT, in Martlesham, Suffolk. They had the opportunity to refine skills learnt in STEM to successfully programme and race a robotic vehicle.

They were able to deepen their understanding of cultural capital through the investigation of real-world coding issues and creative problem-solving.

Students were given a range of skill building tasks to improve their coding and programming skills, before competing in race heats against five other schools.

Manuela Adehokey and Lily Heard were overall race winners.

Talent displayed in classroom concerts

Musical students who have been learning to play the keyboard invited their parents to watch a performance in class.

Year 7 students at The Thomas Lord Audley School took part in their first classroom concert in front of parents after proving successful in their music assessment.

Tracy Curd, lead teacher of music, said: "I was very impressed as all of these students played their pieces with two hands, which is very challenging. I was very proud of how well they all did.

"Some have now decided to sign up for piano lessons, so they can improve even further. I am hoping to showcase what students in different year groups have been doing in their music lessons on a regular basis."



Learning about life as a caveman

Cavemen Memma and Twig taught children what life was like in the stone age.

Year 3 and 5 pupils at Monkwick Junior School got to visit a makeshift caveman habitat set up by the visitors and explore what items within it might have been used for.

They also learnt how to make a fire and

discussed food which would have been eaten at the time.

Megan Houghton, admin assistant, said: "We had some very brave pupils who helped gut a fish. Once it was cooked on the fire, they all got to have a taste. The children and teachers thoroughly enjoyed the day."

Learning a foreign word each week

A school which teaches three foreign languages is helping students to learn new words each week. The Stanway School has launched Word of the

Week, with a new word in French, German and Spanish shared each Monday with its English translation. One example was rain; la pluie in

French, der regen in German and la lluvia in Spanish. The scheme will see students learn 120 extra words a year – 40 in each language.

Tales of an SAS officer in Iraq



Students were taken on a unique journey as a former SAS British Forces officer told them about his career – and escape from Iraq.

Chris Ryan, the now best-selling author, gave a talk to Year 8 students at The Philip Morant School and College.

He told them about the intense five-month SAS selection process, the jungle creatures he endured and the sadness of losing friends in combat.

He answered students' questions about his escape during a patrol mission in the Gulf War which went wrong in 1991.

Students also learnt more about his career as an author and his Special Forces Cadets trilogy, getting their own copies signed by the writer.

Members of the book club heard about his transition from Army life to civilian life as an author – starting with his first book, *The One That Got Away*, to his latest title, *Black Ops*.

Stepping back to Victorian times

The education of children in Victorian times was demonstrated during a museum visit.

Year 4 pupils at Monkwick Junior School have been learning about the lives of children in different eras.

During their focus on Victorian times, they visited Holly Tree Museum in Colchester where they compared artefacts from the time to items we have today, as well as looking at Victorian toys.

They also made a puppet and designed a puppet show and looked at school artefacts.



Communication app launched to parents

Classroom communication app Class Dojo has been launched at Monkwick Infant School.

The app is used to share information between parents and teachers and has been introduced into Year 2.

It enables parents to find out what is going on in class, as well

as read about news and events for the upcoming week or month.

Headteacher Claire Holmes said: "Class Dojo helps to increase parental engagement. We are planning to roll it out across the school, starting with Year 1 next."

Lanterns illuminate community parade

Creative students worked with artists from Harwich Arts Festival to help light up the Illuminate Festival.

The Year 7 students from Harwich and Dovercourt High School took part in a workshop and created eight giant puppet lanterns to be used in the parade.

The Illuminate Festival is a light festival connecting the destinations from the sailing of the Mayflower 400 years ago.

Rosie Good, head of art, said "This was a great enrichment opportunity for students to work with local artists towards a community project, helping them to understand how art can be used in a wider context."



Drone capable of detecting nuclear radiation

Teenagers who designed a drone capable of detecting nuclear radiation were crowned winners in a regional competition.

The team of Year 8 and 9 pupils at St Helena School fought off challenges from ten other schools at the Raytheon Quadcopter Regional Competition.

The group had been tasked with crafting their own quadcopter around a theme of Japan.

Their minds turned to the 2011 nuclear disaster in Fukushima and the team decided to design a drone which could be used to map background radiation.

At the regional finals, the group staged a presentation of their theme, showing off the modifications made to the drone before flying several difficult courses.

The team's quadcopter was steered through hoops and around slalom poles in the fastest time.

Josh Wallace, Tito Ahmed, Seb Jensen, Damian Rusecki and Taylor Munsen of the Land of the Rising Drones scooped first place.

William James, senior science technician, said: "I am so proud of the team, I have seen how hard they all worked and I

suspected they would do well."

They competed in the national finals in Birmingham.



Water way to support the planet!

Having learnt about the impact of poverty on the global community, a group of students are on a mission to bring clean water to the world.

Year 9 RE students at The Colne Community School and College watched a film by Charity: Water which seeks to provide clean water to developing communities.

The group decided to support the cause by establishing their own businesses - including Sweet Pong, student and teacher sponging, penalty shoot-outs, bake sales, face glitter cosmetics and tuck shops - and selling their wares in the school hall.



The initiative raised more than £1,300 towards their overall goal of the £7,500 needed to fund a water project for a school or village.

A non-uniform day has also been held and head of school Steven Crane and teachers Jon Taylor and Ben Cooksley completed a sponsored swim from East Mersea to Brightlingsea.

Mr Cooksley, subject leader RE, said: "I am so proud of what our students have done and are doing for others.

"They know they are part of a global and local community. They've shown they can make a difference."

Choirs perform around community

Two choirs at Alton Park Junior School took their musical talents on a tour of the community. The Year 3 and 4 choir sang at the Salvation Army in Colchester and at a care home in Clacton.

The Year 5 and 6 choir performed at the Princes Theatre's Victorian Christmas Market, at the Salvation Army and at the Volunteers Christmas Party at Clacton library.

Celebrating European Day of Languages

Events were put on across The Sigma Trust schools to mark the annual European Day of Languages.

Throughout the day, students could sample traditional foods from European countries, as well as take part in a language hunt and the Great European Bake-off run by Clacton County High School and Harwich and Dovercourt High School.

Students from across all year groups were challenged to bake cakes or biscuits with a European theme, with students, parents

and staff tasting and judging them during open evenings.

At The Philip Morant School and College, students started the day learning about other countries and practising some of the 23 European languages. They also sung karaoke in other languages and had a go at flamenco dancing.

Sylvia Perez, Spanish teacher, from Philip Morant, said: "The annual event has the purpose of promoting languages, supporting intercultural understanding and stimulating the rich linguistic and

cultural diversity of Europe. It also encourages lifelong language learning in and out of school. We believe language learning helps students to become successful individuals, promoting the importance of the different cultures across Europe and the world."



Sponsorship boost to STEM racing team

The sponsorship of a school STEM racing team has enabled it to triple in size.



The STEM Formula 24 Racing Car team at Clacton County High School have struck a sponsorship deal with the Pickering Group. The electronics company has funded a brand-new electric

racing car, which will take to the track for the 2020 Greenpower Formula 24 series. The new car has been built over the past couple of months by the team, who have devoted many hours after school to the project.

The racing team have taken the car for its first test run to ensure it was functioning correctly before they start to add the bodywork shell.

They also have a third car, a bespoke model made from aluminium, which they have been working on for the past couple of years. The team will be racing at least two cars next season and hope to have all three cars ready in time.

Future careers inspired by events

Hundreds of students have attended careers festivals to encourage and support their next steps.

More than 400 Year 10 and 11 students at Harwich and Dovercourt High School have attended careers events at the Tendring Campus of Sigma Sixth and the Suffolk Skills event in Ipswich. They were able to speak to more than 150 providers who gave careers guidance and advice.

Chris Herron, assistant headteacher, said: "Both events proved highly successful. In conjunction with teaching at school, student aspirations are being raised, making them aware they can achieve what they set out to do."



Spreading kindness and making friends



Inclusion ambassadors are on a mission to connect people through acts of kindness.

The team at Holland Park Primary School met with social movement United in Kind to discuss how they can help others to be kind.

They were set the challenge of demonstrating at least one kind gesture each day; holding the door

open for someone, asking how a friend's day is going or offering to help. They also signed up to the Small Great Things project and learnt about the variety of disabilities people have and how they are no barrier to success.

They learnt the power of doing small, kind things for each other and the impact they can have on the world around them.

Technology idea best in the country

A countrywide hunt for a product tackling a social issue using technology uncovered The Thomas Lord Audley School as the best.

A group of Year 9 students took part in a workshop organised through the Transformation Trust with Dell Technologies.

As part of the workshop, they had to focus on a social issue which could be improved with the use of technology. The team's idea was for glasses which would help to focus on work, developing GCSE grades and opportunities going forward.

Dell works with more than 400 schools on the project, picking three winning ideas at the end of the year.

The Thomas Lord Audley team – called Let's Focus – was picked as one of the top three, attending a final competition at Dell Technologies offices, in London,

where they had to develop their idea further.

They were then named as the overall winners.



A memorial trip to the battlegrounds

History lessons came to life for students who took a trip to Ypres.

The Year 8 students from The Colne Community School and College visited British cemeteries at Lijssenthoek and

Tyne Cot where there are more than 23,000 headstones of young men who gave their lives during the Great War 1914-1918.

They drew comparisons with a tour of

the German cemetery at Langemark which, with its huge spreading oaks and dark headstones, they felt had a different feeling to the British white Portland stone.

They also visited the Hooze Museum and its replica trenches and had an interactive lesson on a soldier's kit, as well as taking part in the Menin Gate memorial service which has taken place in Ypres town every night since 1928.

A drive across to France meant students also visited the battleground of the 1916 Battle of the Somme and lunched at Newfoundland Park, a Canadian memorial where the trench lines can still be seen. In Ulster Tower, they learnt of the bravery of Billy McFadzean VC who sacrificed himself to contain a blast of grenades.

The trip finished at Thiepval Memorial, where students laid a wreath to remember those who died on the Somme.

Heading to the forest to learn

The curriculum is being brought to life with lessons in the forest.

Two classes from each year group at Alton Park Junior School have attended Forest School for half a term each.

Pupils are given a choice of activities, including searching for and classifying animals in science; building dens, woodwork and cooking over a fire in design and technology; and creating natural pictures in art.

They are also learning life skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving and resilience.

Vicky Wrycraft, deputy head, said: "The children love the opportunity to explore the natural environment and build relationships with their peers and adults."





Experiencing Christmas in Germany

Students got to try out the local delicacies during a trip to Rust, in Germany.

The Key Stage 4 students from The Stanway School visited a Christmas market where they shopped at

decorated wooden huts to buy presents.

They spent a day at Europa Park theme park, eating at the Food Loop, where food arrives at the table via a rollercoaster track.

Packed schedule of fun events for Christmas

The calendar was jam-packed as Monkwick Infant School celebrated the festive season. Throughout the Christmas period –

- Year 1 and 2 pupils went to the Mercury Theatre in Colchester to watch pantomime Cinderella
- Nursery and Reception pupils welcomed a travelling theatre company who performed Search for Santa in school
- Reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils put on their own Christmas performances – Nursery Rhyme Nativity and Hey Ewe! - in front of an audience of family members

- Families were invited into school for a Christmas singalong with the Nursery children

- Every class had its own Christmas party, with visits from Father Christmas

- Year 2 held their annual Christmas market, selling goods they had made in class, raising £240 for school funds.



Help your children to revise



More than 130 students and their parents attended a session to support them with their revision.

Year 11 students at Clacton County High School and their

families were invited to the Family Focus engagement evening entitled Help Your Child Revise.

Head of school Chris Taylor and assistant headteacher Karen Loosley, spoke about various revision techniques and strategies for students to employ with the support of their parents. The evening also included interactive learning as families worked together to produce revision resources.

Mr Taylor said: "The evening was an outstanding success, with more than double the number of parents attending than was originally expected. Due to the popularity of the evening, more revision technique-based sessions are planned, with further opportunities for parents and students to work together."

The importance of standing up to hatred

Students learnt the importance of standing up to discrimination during a project.

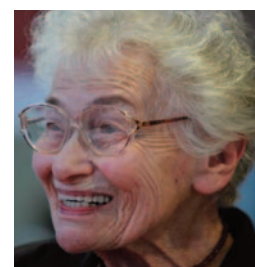
The Dora Love Prize project honours Holocaust survivor and educator Dora Love and teaches secondary school children about the links between the Holocaust and intolerance, discrimination and hatred.

Students from Year 7 to 10 at St Helena School took part in a series of workshops where they learned about how ordinary Germans viewed the deportation of their Jewish neighbours, how Holocaust survivors started new lives after the war and the Nazi genocide of Roma and Siinti people.

Holocaust survivor Frank Bright closed the event with a discussion about his personal experiences.

Mr Bright, who lost his family and many of his friends in the Holocaust, said: "Seeing these children reminds me forcefully of the past. They are alive, they expect to live life to the full and to achieve their ambitions through hard work.

"They remind me of my classmates, who had equal ambitions but who, instead of being able to achieve them, were murdered in the most cruel and barbaric way in their early youth."



Football college open to school leavers

The Colne Football Academy is helping potential footballers to realise their potential.

The Colne Football Development Programme is a venture between Brightlingsea Regent FC and The Colne Community School and College.

Places at the football college are open to school leavers who demonstrate a potential and flair for football and who are able to combine studies as part of the programme.

Combining top class football coaching with full-time education and other training opportunities, the BRFC Football Academy Programme offers a route for students to progress into the sports industry and further education.

Finley Mackman, first year student, said: "My start at the Football Academy has been brilliant! The training has been enjoyable, intense and I have learnt so much already. I feel like it will help me progress in anything I want to do in the future."

Student Ollie Shaplin said: "Looking back over my time at the college, I can safely say I have thoroughly enjoyed myself, making lifelong friends and not only progressing my football career, but also opening a pathway into many careers within sport."

The sessions prepare players for the U19s national league, as well as the professional set up.



Premier League footballer talks resilience



Former Tottenham Hotspur captain and England international footballer Ledley King spoke to students about his career.

The star visited Paxman Academy to answer questions and to watch the school's footballers in action.

Drew Nash, head of year 7, said: "He is someone who worked hard throughout his school years to reach the very top of his profession."

"Students asked him a series of questions in assembly and he spoke about the importance of being resilient, working hard, avoiding peer pressure and making good decisions. Students listened intently and got a lot from his visit."

NEWSBITE Strong start to netball tournament

A Year 7 netball team have stormed their way through the first round of the Colchester Schools Netball Tournament.

The girls at The Stanway School have won all four of their matches, against The Gilberd School, St Mary's School, St Helena School and Colchester Academy.

The ten players, who had not played together before, switched positions throughout the games to play to their emerging strengths.

Anna Hibben, PE teacher, said: "All the players were committed throughout the games and demonstrated fantastic skills, showing strong passes in the games and great decision-making."

"The wins highlight what a fantastic start the girls have made to this tournament."

The next round is in February.



Getting active in the community

Sporty students from Paxman Academy have been getting active at community events. Students supported the junior Parkrun and provided marshals for the Running Colchester Takeover event.

Girls' basketball teams praised

The girls basketball teams at The Thomas Lord Audley School have been praised for their effort and success this season.

Sophie Eversden, PE teacher, said: "All of the girls' teams this year have been training hard to improve on their skills on the court, with a fantastic turnout at all basketball training sessions.

"This hard work has really paid off for our Year 8 team. There is some great potential in the team and they have had a great start for their first season playing full court basketball.

"The Year 9 team have gone from strength to strength, getting some fantastic results; even beating some of their rival teams in recent weeks. We are hoping their hard work will pay off and they will make it to the finals.

"Our Year 10 team has been strong year on year; however, this season they have played absolutely brilliantly and are currently

undefeated and hope to put in a fantastic performance in the finals again this year.

"The year 11 team have been working well as a team to get some points on the board against some hard opposition. They have all improved a lot over this season so far, which is excellent for their GCSE grading coming up next year.

"A massive well done to all of our teams so far this season."



Play-off for third place in rugby tournament

The Year 8 rugby team at St Helena School are battling it out for third place in the Colchester Rugby Tournament.

Having won two matches, drawn two and lost two throughout the contest, they take on Thurstable School at Colchester Rugby Club in the play-off for third place.

During the tournament, they played Thurstable, St Benedict's Catholic College, The Gilbert School, The Stanway School, Thomas Lord Audley School and Colchester High School.



Sport buddies help peers to move

A charity has signed up students from Clacton to help promote a new initiative to get people with learning difficulties moving.

The All Move scheme by Mencap brings together young people of all abilities on an equal level, to learn new skills and try different physical activities as a team.

Students from Clacton County High School are working with Shorefields School, which caters for children with severe learning difficulties, to take part in sport sessions together throughout the year. Each Shorefields student has a Clacton County High buddy who will support them in team activities.



Chris Taylor, head of school, said: "Although our sports leaders have only been working with their buddies for two sessions, they are already building an understanding and rapport with them.

"The benefits of the programme are more than just inclusion of all within sport; our Year 8 leaders are already developing their communication skills, growing in confidence and learning how they can interact with others in various ways."

With Mencap chosen as the official charity for the 2020 London Marathon, the national media visited Clacton County High to promote the All Move project.

NEWSBITE

New after-school clubs for infants

A range of new after-school clubs have been launched for pupils at Monkwick Infant School. Clubs now include football, basketball, art and street dance for pupils to develop their skills outside of the traditional lessons.

Learning about bike safety

Pupils on the verge of gaining more independence have been learning how to ride their bikes safely.

Year 6 pupils at Monkwick Junior School completed the Bikeability course, learning about road safety and keeping their bikes in a safe condition.

They took to the roads to practise what they had learnt on the cycle training programme.

NEWSBITE

Boccia county finals for Holland Park

A sports team from Holland Park Primary School represented the district in a county final.

The team of four boys and two girls from Year 5 and 6 came first in a boccia tournament at White Hall Academy.

Headteacher Matt Moseley said: "To get to a county final in whatever you are doing is incredible. Their faces when they stood up in assembly were amazing."

Have you thought about a career in teaching at a primary, secondary school or special school?

We are now recruiting for **September 2020**

Alternatively, consider the Internship
programme to gain experience of working
in a school before training.

For further information on a career in teaching or the
Internship programme contact:

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