

# connect

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL

After 20 years of dedicated leadership, Dr Vanessa Ogden shares her final message as CEO of the Mulberry Schools Trust.

## A message from the CEO



This edition of *Connect* marks an important moment in the evolution of the Mulberry Schools Trust. After many rich and rewarding

years working alongside committed colleagues, students and partners across our schools, this will be my final message as CEO.

When the Trust was formed in 2017, our strategic vision was to build a family of 10-15 schools working together to provide outstanding education and opportunities for young people. Almost ten years later, we have achieved this vision together. I am particularly pleased to have welcomed five schools in East Sussex into the Trust community, strengthening our collective capacity and impact.

It has been a privilege to serve a community that places such value on education and opportunity. Together we have built a strong and thriving family of schools committed to outstanding achievement for all – supporting young people to develop academic ambition, rich personal development and the confidence to shape their futures.

This *Connect* reflects that shared endeavour. Thank you to the many students, staff, families, governors, trustees and partners who contribute so much to this work every day. Thank you for your support and for the opportunity to serve as the founding CEO of the Trust. I will miss you all.

Dr Vanessa Ogden CBE  
CEO

## Five new schools join the Mulberry family



We are excited and proud to have welcomed five schools in East Sussex into our growing Mulberry family on 1st March 2026.

Mulberry Academy Hastings, Mulberry Academy St Leonards, Mulberry Baird Primary, Mulberry Silverdale Primary and Mulberry West St Leonards Primary joined the Trust community – a significant stage in the evolution of our work across London and the South East.

Along with its commitment to the local community it already serves, each new school shares in our ambition to provide high-quality education for every child, whatever their background or circumstances. By working together within the Mulberry Schools Trust, all our schools benefit from collaborative leadership, shared professional expertise and the wider opportunities created through Trust partnerships and programmes.

This development reflects our belief that schools achieve more when they work collectively – learning from one another and strengthening practice across the system.

We are delighted to welcome students, staff, families and governors from all five schools and look forward to all the work we will be doing together in the years ahead.



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## Introducing our new family members ...

We're delighted to introduce the five new East Sussex schools joining the Mulberry Schools Trust. Each school has its own character, history and a strong connection to its community. We're looking forward to learning more as they settle into our thriving family.



### Mulberry

Academy Hastings

“ Mulberry Academy Hastings is proud to be part of the Mulberry Schools Trust. This partnership strengthens our shared commitment to ambition, opportunity and excellence for every young person. By working together, we can draw on collective expertise and values to ensure that our students, families and staff benefit from a truly collaborative and aspirational community.”

**Simon Addison**, Principal



### Mulberry

Academy St Leonards

“ St Leonards has been working with the Trust for a year and the impact has been massive. Attendance is now above national figures and exclusions have reduced by 92%. With Mulberry we're creating amazing experiences for our students. The photo shows the first of our Societies, which we launched on 5th March – the Medicine Society welcomes girls from Years 8, 9 and 10.”

**Jon Francies**, Principal



### Mulberry

Baird Primary

“ Our commitment to high-quality education, delivered by staff who genuinely care, is strengthened by the strong, positive relationships we build with our students, their families and the wider local community. Becoming part of a Trust that not only aligns with these principles but also offers exceptional leadership, unwavering support and a proven commitment to top-quality education, feels like a natural and inspiring next step for our school's future.”

**Carly Welch**, Principal



### Mulberry

Silverdale Primary

“ Our school is a vibrant, inclusive community where high expectations, strong relationships and a love of learning drive every child's success. Joining the Mulberry Schools Trust strengthens our commitment to opportunity, aspiration and wellbeing, ensuring our students, families and staff benefit from wider collaboration, shared expertise and a rich, supportive partnership.”

**Jonathan Morris**, Principal



### Mulberry

West St Leonards Primary

“ We have joined a family that shares our pedagogical values and our commitment to enriching the whole child – while remaining proudly rooted in our own community. Mulberry West St Leonards' strengths lie in its students and staff, who demonstrate exceptional inclusion, with expertise in supporting complex physical disabilities and medical needs, enabling students to access the whole school setting. The school also offers strong creative enrichment and delivers the nationally recognised Talk for Writing programme.”

**Dominic O'Regan**, Principal



## Celebrating cohort 5

Students, families and partners came together to celebrate the graduation of cohort 5 of the Mulberry STEM Academy – a programme that continues to inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers and innovators.

Students took part in hands-on workshops, problem-solving challenges and technical learning over the programme, delivered through the partnership between Mulberry Schools Trust and Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix Ltd. They worked throughout with colleagues from both organisations to develop confidence, curiosity and teamwork.

This year's celebration also marked an exciting milestone with the official opening of the new STEM Lab at Mulberry UTC. The facility was formally opened by colleagues from the Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team and will provide an inspiring environment for future cohorts to explore engineering, design and technology.

The graduation ceremony recognised the commitment and achievement of every student involved, as well as special awards for those who demonstrated the PRIDE values championed by our partners and closely aligned with the values of the Mulberry Schools Trust.



NEWS FROM OUR TRUST



## Alumnus shares engineering journey

One of our alumni, Mas'ud from Mulberry Academy Shoreditch, recently returned to meet and speak to current Mulberry STEM Academy students. Mas'ud is completing an automation engineering apprenticeship with Amazon, specialising in automation and control systems. He shared insights from his journey into engineering and how automation fits within the wider STEM landscape, raising awareness of apprenticeships and their benefits. He also outlined what employers typically look for in applicants.

## Year 12 university engineering challenge

On Saturday 10th January, all Year 12 students from across the Trust gathered to compete in their mBot robotics engineering task at Mulberry Academy Shoreditch, and present their posters to a panel of teachers. Students worked to build and programme robots to follow a black line and avoid obstacles. They then created university-style posters to document their work, including how they demonstrated the Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix Ltd PRIDE values. We were very impressed by the students' communication in their presentations, as well as their problem solving and resilience when programming the robots.

## Young scholars aim for SuperStardom

Children at Mulberry Canon Barnett Primary have been working towards the CREST SuperStar Award – a series of six challenges including racing rockets, saving the ice caps and responding to a volcano emergency. The CREST Awards are nationally recognised qualifications and our youngest Mulberry STEM Academy scholars take part in SuperStar in Year 5, followed by Bronze at Key Stage 3, Silver at Key Stage 4 and Gold at Key Stage 5.





## Evolution of the Mulberry Production Arts Academy

Mulberry Production Arts Academy is a Mulberry Changemaker Programme delivered in partnership with the National Theatre and The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, providing specialist training in production arts for students across the Mulberry Schools Trust.

Since launching in September 2022, the academy has evolved from a single programme for students aged 14-16 into an umbrella framework encompassing multiple strands of creative technical training and engagement.

The original offer to 30 students is now known as Mulberry Creative Technicians. Additional strands include Mulberry Designers; Key Stage 2 curriculum-linked workshops; Year 7 and 8 production arts workshops; STEM x Arts; and embedding production arts within the wider curriculum.

By extending beyond a single specialist programme and embedding production arts learning into multiple year groups, the academy now engages students at different stages of their education, creates clearer progression routes, increases participation and enables more young people to develop creative, technical and transferable skills linked to the cultural and creative industries.

## Mulberry Theatre Company is back at the Fringe

In August 2026, the Mulberry Schools Trust is taking two productions to Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Our seventh visit builds on a tradition that includes winning a Fringe First Award in 2009. *One House on Brick Lane* will feature a Trust-wide cast, while students from Mulberry School for Girls will perform the brand-new *O Brave New World*. Both shows will be supported by a Trust-wide student production team. The Fringe is a unique opportunity to see our students take their rightful place on stage at the world's largest arts festival.



## Cohort 3 Creative Technicians graduate ...

We proudly celebrated the graduation of the third cohort of Mulberry Creative Technicians at a special ceremony at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, attended by family, friends, staff and special guests. This marked the culmination of a year of hard work and achievement, recognising students' growth into confident and ambitious emerging production arts professionals. It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on their successes and celebrate their journey together. Thank you to alumni Charli and Lara, our industry partners and all the teachers and support staff whose dedication makes the programme such a success.



## ... as we launch cohort 4

The fourth cohort of Mulberry Creative Technicians officially began their journey at a launch event at the National Theatre on 23rd January. Students heard from leading industry professionals, took part in a speed mentoring and networking workshop, and enjoyed a backstage tour of the theatre. The event marked the start of an exciting year of learning, collaboration and growth for the newcomers.

## Making global connections on India study tour

The first Global Girl Leading International Study Tour to India was an unforgettable experience for everyone involved.

Hosted by St Mark's Group of Schools, students took part in Anjali International Friendship Week, joining 176 students from 20 countries in a vibrant celebration of culture, collaboration and leadership.

From breathtaking dance performances and multilingual exchanges to thoughtful discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals, students embraced every opportunity to learn and connect. The week concluded with the colourful Global Friendship Fiesta, celebrating identity, creativity and lasting international friendships.

Students also explored the former homes of Indira Gandhi and Mahatma Gandhi, deepening their understanding of India's history. They finished with a visit to the magnificent Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri in Agra, experiencing first-hand the grandeur of India's historic imperial architecture.

This was a truly inspiring journey into leadership, learning and global sisterhood. We are grateful to St Mark's Group of Schools for their hospitality and we look forward to welcoming their students to our summit in October.



## Celebrating women and girls globally

International Women's Day (IWD) was, as usual, marked by inspiring events across the whole Mulberry community.

Global Girl Leaders led a dynamic presentation and workshop at a Mulberry Canon Barnett Primary assembly, inspiring students to advance gender equality. Our IWD seminar included an engaging conversation with Rothna Akhtar, a candidate from BBC's *The Apprentice*, and an interactive workshop run by Amnesty International UK. Celebrations culminated with a small group of students and staff attending the WOW (Women of the World) reception at St James's Palace, hosted by Her Majesty Queen Camilla.

## Working on global development goals

Sayyeda Salam, Executive Director of Concern Worldwide (UK), visited Mulberry School for Girls to lead an engaging workshop on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Drawing on more than 20 years in the humanitarian sector, she shared insights from her international work and encouraged students to explore global challenges. Participants discussed which SDGs they think will be achieved in the UK over the next five years, compared with elsewhere in the world, reflecting on inequalities, climate action and poverty. Students left inspired to consider their own role in shaping a fairer, more sustainable future.

## Students gather for Human Rights Festival

Mulberry Schools Trust students attended the Girls Human Rights Festival, a vibrant multi-day celebration of the power and potential of young women, led by the Girls Human Rights Hub. The festival created a welcoming space for students to hear from inspiring activists, legal professionals and changemakers, and to join interactive workshops and discussions. Students explored global challenges facing girls, built confidence in their own voices and left feeling energised, connected and motivated to play an active role in promoting human rights and gender equality.



## Making waves with giant whale

Students have been working closely with professional artist Miyuki Kasahara as part of the Bow Arts Access to Creative Careers programme.

Within the Wonder 7 afterschool club, they are collaborating on an ambitious, five-metre metal whale sculpture, inspired by the twentieth anniversary of the stranded bottlenose whale that swam past the Thames-side site where our school would later be built. The project has involved students researching the whale itself, the local environment and the impact humans have on wildlife.

They have explored creative ways to respond to this research, transforming their ideas into Jesmonite castings that will be attached to the whale using magnets. These castings act as colourful 'portals' into the students' local environment, linking their work to the natural world. Working towards a professional brief, students are learning how to develop ideas within set parameters, solve problems and respond creatively to a real-world project. Alongside artistic skills, this approach reinforces the school's values of Diligence, Open-mindedness, Kindness and Citizenship, while giving students hands-on experience of collaborative creativity.



## Celebrating creativity in Tower Hamlets

We're incredibly proud to celebrate Abhi in Year 8, whose self-portrait won the KS3 Gold Award at the Tower Hamlets Reimagining Exhibition at the Mile End Art Pavilion.

This brilliant achievement recognises the creativity and skill our students have developed since joining us in Year 7, and highlights the exciting opportunities available to explore their artistic voices.

Building on this success, a group of students recently took part in a printmaking workshop at the exhibition, exploring themes of ecology and endangered species. Led by A Team Arts Education, students experimented with texture, pattern and layered imagery to create designs inspired by wildlife and habitats at risk. The workshop encouraged reflection on environmental issues and the role of art in raising awareness, while visiting the exhibition allowed students to see professional and student work, inspiring them to develop their own creative voices and understand the impact of art on the wider community.



## Showcasing careers at London's Guildhall

All Year 7 and 8 students recently attended the Livery Showcase at Guildhall. Part of the London Careers Festival for National Careers Week, students enjoyed meeting and interacting with professionals across a wide range of trades, crafts and careers. They watched skilled experts at work and tried exciting practical tasks themselves. Many stalls featured young trainees and apprentices who shared their personal journeys and explained how they chose their career paths, inspiring students to explore new opportunities and consider the variety of routes into different professions.



## Exploring architectural impact

Year 8 students continued their architectural journey by working with the inspiring team from JTP architects from our local community, building on last year's work with Archtype. The team introduced students to career opportunities in the sector and explored how design can make a positive social and environmental impact. Students learned about sustainable spaces, solving problems through design, and the current challenges from technology, housing and climate. Each speaker shared their own career path, and students are excited at the prospect of spending time in the JTP offices close our school in future.

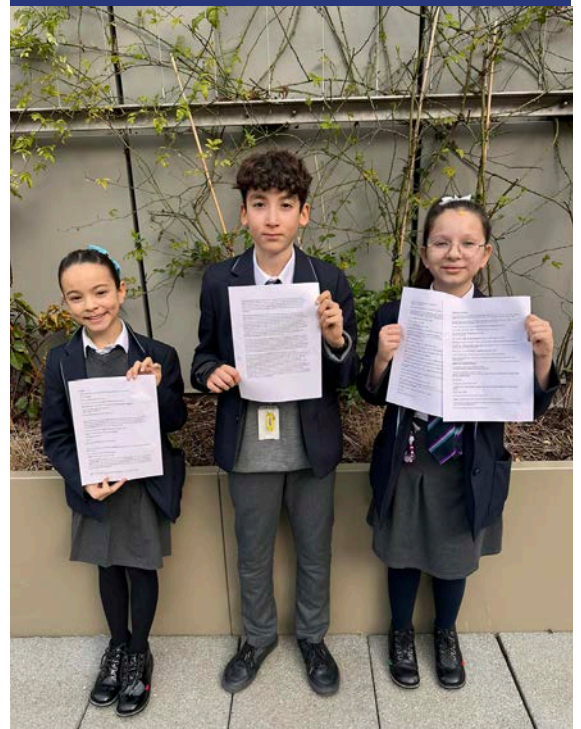


## Growing together

We launched our Urban Roots gardening club this term, giving students the chance to cultivate plants while developing essential growing skills. From sowing seeds to nurturing young plants, members are learning how to manage our rooftop growing spaces with care and confidence. As part of the Royal Horticultural Society's Plants for Wellbeing project, students have begun growing sweet peas for classrooms. They've also been busy planting a variety of herbs and cucumbers, ready to bring new life to our school garden.

## Storytelling with words and music

Students recently took part in the National Literacy Trust's National Storytelling Week, 'Soundtrack Your Story'. They reflected on the songs they love, everyday soundscapes and the soundtracks of films and games, exploring the idea that everyone has their own musical story to tell. In English lessons, students discussed how music connects us to words and helps us express identity. In a special session with writer Jeffrey Boakye, they examined lyrics through identity and popular culture, before crafting powerful creative responses to submit for publication in a national anthology.



## Cheer club takes off with high energy

Our new cheerleading club has kicked off with excitement this term, led by specialist stunt and tumbling coaches. This high-energy club focuses on developing strength, flexibility and control through progressive conditioning. Students are building core, upper-body and leg strength while practising dynamic poses, partner stunts and acrobatic floor skills. Their confidence is growing as they refine balance and power, making each session a display of teamwork, determination and pride.



## Exploring CERN, Switzerland

On Tuesday 3rd February, 14 Physics students, Mr Murphy and Dr Suhanan visited CERN in Switzerland, to learn about the science and 70-year history behind the Large Hadron Collider.

The world's largest underground particle accelerator smashes hadrons together to recreate conditions just after the Big Bang.

Students toured exhibitions, the control centre and the plant producing the superconducting magnets used in the accelerator. They also learned that the World Wide Web was invented there and is now shared freely with the world.

The group also explored Geneva, visiting Lake Geneva and the harbour's famous Jet d'Eau, which shoots water 150 metres into the air at 200 km/h. Evening highlights included the city's illuminated flower clock. Thanks go to Mrs Holden and Ms Gibson for making this unforgettable experience possible.



## Skiing in Sestriere

Our recent ski trip was an unforgettable adventure packed with snow, smiles and spectacular progress on the slopes.

From first-time skiers to confident improvers, students threw themselves into the experience with enthusiasm and determination, making impressive progress over the course of the week. Each day was filled with professional ski lessons, fresh mountain air, plenty of laughs and the occasional tumble! Students showed real resilience, encouraging one another and celebrating every achievement - from mastering turns to tackling steeper runs by the end of the trip.

Off the slopes, evenings were just as enjoyable, with organised activities, games and plenty of opportunities to relax and socialise after a busy day in the snow. Students represented the school superbly, demonstrating their independence, teamwork and maturity.



## The Nobel Awards 2026

Our annual Nobel Prize Awards event in February was a real success - a wonderful celebration of our students' achievements in Science, Maths and Computer Science. There were live experiments and lots of awards presented by proud teachers, and it was also lovely to see so many parents and carers here to support the children. With congratulations and thanks to everyone who organised the event, the students, staff and the catering team who served delicious food after the awards.



## London Assembly shares its investigations

On Monday 19th January, the Politics Society hosted three London Assembly members, including the Chair of the Police and Crime Committee, to speak to our students about their investigation into violence on public transport in London. The students asked insightful questions, were able to talk in depth about their own experiences and offered suggestions on how our current systems could be improved. The Members were hugely impressed with the way in which our students articulated themselves and noted down several of their ideas. Our students did the school proud.



## House benchball competition

On Thursday 29th January, more than 40 students participated in our House benchball competition, showing great teamwork and energy throughout. The final saw Globe House face Tate House in a closely fought match. After an exciting game, Tate House emerged as the overall winners - well done to all competitors!

## Talking careers with Ipsos

On Thursday 8th January, we were delighted to welcome Alice and Aaliyah from Ipsos, global leaders in market research, to speak to our Year 12 students. They explained how Ipsos collects and analyses data to help organisations and government make informed decisions. Alice outlined the company's values and career pathways, including apprenticeships, internships and graduate schemes. Aaliyah shared her experience on the degree apprenticeship programme after Sixth Form, encouraging students to persevere despite setbacks. Students gained valuable insight into careers in market research and asked thoughtful questions throughout.



## Operatic exchange with Bexhill Academy

As part of our ongoing exchange programme, Wednesday 28th January saw students from Mulberry Academy Shoreditch and Bexhill Academy gathering at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, for an amazing performance of *La Traviata*.



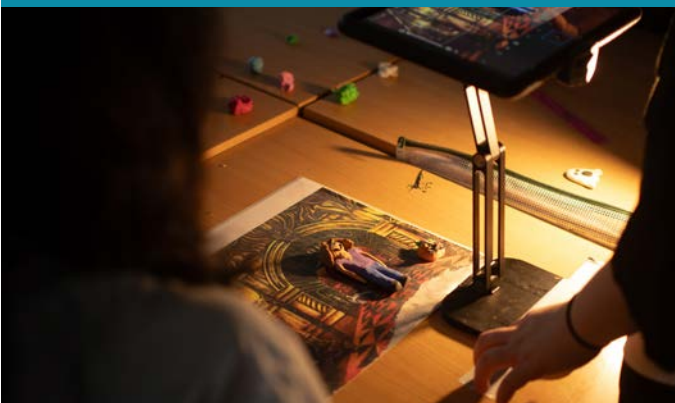
## Animating stories

For this year's Woodside Film Festival, our Year 9 students took part in a stop motion animation workshop led by industry practitioners.

Students learned how still images become moving stories. In small groups, they planned storylines, shaped characters from clay and built detailed miniature sets. They explored lighting, camera angles and timing, capturing each frame with care and precision. The process required patience and close attention to detail as scenes developed step by step.

The workshop strengthened creativity, resilience and problem solving. It also developed teamwork, as students shared ideas, divided roles and made decisions together. For many, this was their first experience using professional animation software, and confidence grew quickly as projects took shape.

We screened completed films in assembly the following week, giving students the chance to see their work on a larger stage. The workshop set a strong tone for the festival and highlighted the power of imagination and collaboration.



## Power House Day at Woodside

Our first Power House Day took place this term. The surprise event was announced on the Tannoy on the day, giving students the chance to compete in a range of activities for their Houses, bringing extra energy and friendly competition to lunchtime across the school. We aim to run these days twice every term.

Students who took part earned double praise points, with double House points for the winning House, making the challenge even more exciting for everyone involved. Activities included basketball shootout, speed stacking, a crossbar challenge, 1v1 contests, table tennis and trampolining.

House captains played a key role, helping to organise events, encourage participation and record results. Students earned double praise points for taking part, with additional points awarded to the winning House. Staff carefully recorded names to ensure all contributions were recognised.

The event gave students a chance to represent their House with pride, support one another and enjoy positive competition during the school day.



## Turning pages in 2026

2026 marks the National Year of Reading, with a focus on building strong reading habits and encouraging students to read for pleasure.

To support this, the school will have newspapers available in the hub every day for students to read before and after school, and during lunchtime. Alongside this, a recommended reading list for Key Stage 3 students offers a broad range of fiction and nonfiction books suited to different interests and reading levels.

These initiatives aim to promote independent reading, strengthen literacy skills and help students discover books they genuinely enjoy.

## Connecting with families on 'Brew Monday'

Brew Monday offered a positive and welcoming alternative to Blue Monday, creating space to pause, connect and talk.

Families joined us for informal conversation over a hot drink, enjoying a calm moment during a busy term. The relaxed setting encouraged open discussion and helped strengthen links between home and school.

Alongside these conversations, we shared information about wellbeing and the range of support available for young people and families. Keeping this support visible and accessible remains a priority as we continue working together to promote positive mental health across our community.



## Spreading kindness with roses

We continued our tradition of the Valentine's Day rose sale, filling the school with appreciation and positivity.

Held in the Snack Shack during break and lunch, the event saw an overwhelming response from students keen to buy roses for friends, family or themselves.

Excitement began early, with students asking to purchase roses as soon as they arrived at school. The sale created a warm atmosphere and encouraged simple acts of kindness at the end of term.

## Down on the farm

A few of our students enjoyed a valuable visit to the farm, where learning moved beyond the classroom.

They met a range of animals, explored how food is grown and took part in practical outdoor activities. Students travelled safely by coach, behaved responsibly and returned full of stories about what they had seen and learned. The visit supported curriculum learning while offering a memorable shared experience.



## Workshopping diversity

All Year 7 students took part in workshops delivered by Diversity Role Models. Sessions encouraged reflection on prejudice, discrimination and the nine protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

Students explored how to act as allies and considered how their words and actions affect others. Throughout, they demonstrated maturity and upheld our values of Pride, Kindness and Respect.



## Holocaust Memorial

Mulberry School for Girls marked Holocaust Memorial Day with whole-year assemblies led by students in Years 10 and 12, emphasising the importance of remembrance and the responsibility of future generations to reflect and learn.

Participating in the VR Testimony 360 project was central to the assemblies, enabling everyone to engage immersively with survivor testimony. Students reflected on how first-hand accounts deepened their understanding of the Holocaust's human impact and the dangers of hatred, discrimination and dehumanisation, themes they also explored in a reflective film they created.

Students were honoured to hear from Mr Milo Thursfield, who shared his grandmother Brigitte's experiences and the losses his family endured during the Holocaust. His testimony brought history to life, reinforcing the importance of personal stories in preserving memory. The event demonstrated exceptional student leadership and maturity and highlighted the school's commitment to remembrance, human rights education, and empowering students to become compassionate citizens prepared to challenge injustice.



## Gresham College lecture



Mulberry School for Girls welcomed more than 100 students from across the Trust for its seventh Gresham College lecture, led by Professor Peter Knight from the University of Manchester. A leading scholar in American Studies, Professor Knight explored conspiracy theories, arguing they are a symptom of declining trust in civic institutions rather than its cause. Drawing on American literature and popular culture since the 1960s, he challenged the idea that conspiracy theories are simply delusional, showing instead how they help people make sense of causality, agency and responsibility in an increasingly interconnected world. The lecture was another outstanding super-curricular opportunity for Mulberry Sixth Form students, made possible through the Mulberry x Gresham College partnership, which gives students regular access to leading academics and thought-provoking ideas.



## Taking up residence in Ullswater

Year 9 students enjoyed an unforgettable residential week at the Outward Bound Ullswater Centre in the Lake District. Taking part in a fully immersive wilderness adventure programme, they developed resilience, teamwork and independence while surrounded by stunning natural landscapes. Activities including hiking, canoeing and rock climbing encouraged students to step beyond their comfort zones, face new challenges and discover strengths they didn't know they had. Throughout the week, students embraced every opportunity with enthusiasm and determination. We are incredibly proud of the way they supported one another, grew in confidence and formed lasting friendships, creating memories that will stay with them for years to come.





## Year 12 Iftar

To celebrate Ramadan, the ninth and holiest month of the Islamic calendar, the Year 12 team at Mulberry School for Girls organised a joyful and welcoming community Iftar in the Mulberry and Bigland Green Centre theatre. As the sun set, students gathered together to break their fast with dates and water, followed by delicious biryani and deserts, filling the room with warmth and a sense of togetherness. The evening was filled with gratitude, reflection and celebration, as students shared this special moment and honoured the significance of this sacred month for Muslims.

## Second alumni tea party

Mulberry School for Girls proudly hosted its second alumni tea party as part of its 60th anniversary celebrations, welcoming 200 former students and staff back to the school. The evening was filled with delicious food and music; inspiring speeches from CEO of Mulberry Schools Trust Dr Vanessa Ogden and Principal Fatima El-Meeyuf; a lively photobooth; and a special memory tree where alumni shared their favourite moments from their school days. It was truly uplifting to see the joy and excitement on everyone's faces and to hear the wonderful stories of former students reflecting on their time at Mulberry. The atmosphere was one of celebration, connection and pride, with a powerful sense of history and belonging felt throughout the room.



## First Give inspires responsibility

Congratulations to 9E for winning the final of First Give and securing £1,000 for their chosen charity, the Young Carers Centre. It was a closely fought competition, with only two points separating them from the runners-up. The judges were impressed by the delivery and style of your presentation, as well as your strong understanding of and commitment to your chosen charity and its fundraising.

Year 9 Changemakers have been working with First Give, a charity that inspires social responsibility in young people through coaching and resources. In March, they hosted their first First Give Fair in the Main Hall to raise awareness of charities linked to causes they care about, and they will go on to lead social action projects to create a real impact.



## Children's fair for mental health

In celebration of Children's Mental Health Week, Mulberry School for Girls hosted a Mental Health Fair for all students in the Main Hall. The event featured organisations specialising in mental health support, including Tower Hamlets Early Help and Wellbeing Service (THEWS), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Place2Be, and the school's Learning Mentor team. Students also had the opportunity to take part in a range of wellbeing activities, such as colouring, painting and sports.





## Four days in the field

In February 2026, A Level Geography students travelled to Minehead in Somerset for a four-day compulsory fieldwork project forming part of their Non-Examined Assessment (NEA).

The trip provided an invaluable opportunity to apply classroom learning to real-world contexts while developing independent research skills.

Students designed their own enquiry questions and planned investigations exploring both human and physical geography. In Minehead, they conducted questionnaires and surveys to understand local residents' perceptions of place and how the town has changed socially, economically and culturally over time. This helped students appreciate the lived experience of coastal communities.

Along the coastline, students analysed physical processes and examined the impact of coastal management strategies. They collected data on beach profiles, groynes and engineering schemes, and carried out bi-polar assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of hard and soft engineering.

The experience strengthened communication, organisation, teamwork and leadership skills, equipping students with essential tools for success in their NEA and beyond.



## Online clicks for cookies and cream

Our Year 12 BTEC IT students recently visited local business



Cookies and Cream as part of their Unit 6 Website Development coursework.

During the visit, students took on the role of professional web developers, meeting directly with the client to ask a structured set of questions and gather detailed requirements for a new website they will design and build.

This valuable real-world experience deepened their understanding of client communication, target audiences and user needs. Students explored how business objectives can be translated into practical, engaging and functional website solutions. The visit also strengthened their confidence in presenting ideas and asking purposeful questions. Throughout the experience, students demonstrated excellent professionalism and maturity, representing the school exceptionally well.

## Folklore and photography at Whitechapel Art Gallery

French firm Amundi recently welcomed a group of Year 12 students to its London office, offering them first-hand insight into the asset management industry.

In collaboration with Whitechapel Art Gallery and artist Joy Gregory, students produced creative responses inspired by her photography and themes of female folklore and storytelling. During their visit, they explored the exhibition and developed ideas through observational drawings in handmade sketchbooks, experimenting with a variety of media. Building on this research, students trialled the 'photo batik' drawing technique, drawing into barrier cream before using chemicals to expose their prints, revealing richly textured, detailed and atmospheric final images.

# Compelling family story staged by the National Theatre

English students enjoyed a wonderful stage adaptation of Noel Streatfeild's best-seller *Ballet Shoes* at the National Theatre. The production offered a rich and thought-provoking exploration of complex family relationships and the challenges of growing up. This rich opportunity enabled students to analyse character interactions in depth and observe how movement, staging and subtle facial expressions can communicate emotion, tension and meaning with clarity and precision.



## Talent for shooting hoops

Our recent basketball competition for Years 7 and 8 showcased not only talent on the court but also the character and dedication of our students. Throughout the competition, students demonstrated effort, determination and teamwork, giving their best in every game. Beyond their athletic performance, they carried themselves with respect and discipline and showed true sportsmanship – encouraging teammates, showing resilience and representing our school with pride. We are incredibly proud of the way our students competed and conducted themselves, and we look forward to seeing their continued growth both on and off the court in future.



## Handball tournament

Huge congratulations to Mulberry Stepney Green for winning the Key Stage 4 Tower Hamlets Handball Tournament.

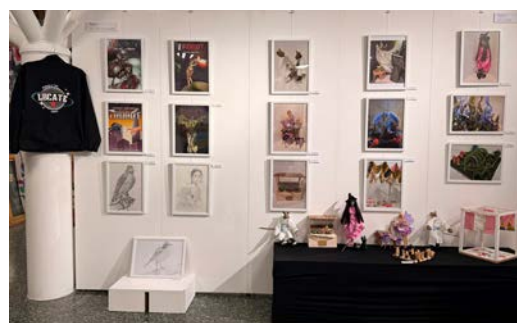
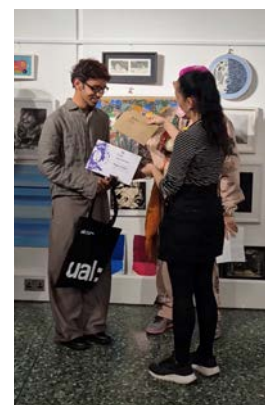
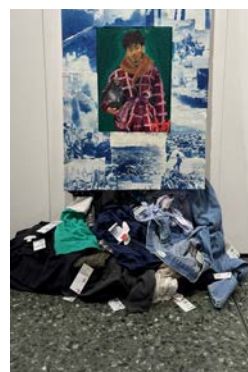
The boys were unstoppable – unbeaten in the group stages, scoring more than 30 goals, and finishing in style with a 9-2 victory in the final against Stepney All Saints School.

Special mention to Musa in 9C, who stepped up to represent the KS4 team playing alongside teammates two years older – an incredible achievement and performance. This was a proud moment for the team – champions through and through.



## Presenting at the Pavilion

Once again, artwork by our talented students is appearing in the annual THAT (Tower Hamlets Art Teacher) Network art exhibition at the Mile End Art Pavilion. This year's exhibition, Reimagining, showcases work from 15 schools across Tower Hamlets and celebrates imaginative problem solving, technical expertise and distinctive creative voices. We are immensely proud of our students and the consistently high standard of their creative achievements.





## iVamos a Valencia!

Sixth Form Mulberry UTC students recently returned from a tailored trip to Valencia, designed to combine learning, personal growth and cultural exploration.

Students participated in specific job placements aligned with their areas of study, gaining valuable insight into professional environments and experiences that directly support their academic and career aspirations. The trip also offered opportunities to develop communication skills by interacting with new people in an unfamiliar setting, enhancing confidence and adaptability.

Beyond work, students explored the vibrant city of Valencia, sampling local cuisine and immersing themselves in Spanish culture. A weekend excursion to Alicante added some shared fun, strengthening friendships and creating lasting memories. Overall, the trip encouraged independence, personal growth and a broader perspective on life and school, leaving students inspired and better prepared for their futures both academically and professionally. It was a perfect blend of learning, cultural enrichment and adventure.



## Applied Science dissection

Mulberry UTC Applied Science students dived into some hands-on fish head dissection this term, revealing the fascinating function of gills. This engaging session allowed learners to work in a professional scientific setting where they were able to sharpen essential practical skills, confidently handle scientific instruments and experience anatomy up close.

By investigating how gills extract oxygen from water, students connected classroom theory to real-world biology. The activity sparked curiosity, encouraged teamwork and strengthened problem solving as they carefully observed, identified and discussed each structure.

Experiences like this not only deepen understanding but also inspire future ambitions in science. Through practical exploration and active learning, students built the precision and critical thinking needed for continued success in their studies. It was an unforgettable experience that brought science to life for everyone involved.



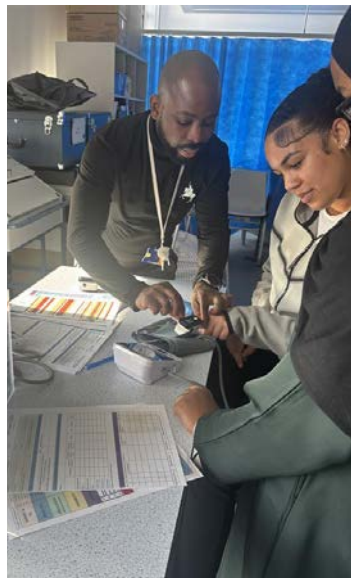
## Telling visual stories at Tate Modern

Our Film and Media students took their creativity to the next level with an inspiring visit to Tate Modern. They explored the power of visual storytelling and discovered how accessibility shapes contemporary art – highlighting how creative work can challenge perspectives, celebrate diversity and empower wider audiences. Immersed in real-world cultural practice, students connected industry theory to powerful artistic expression, sparking fresh ideas and deeper critical thinking about the role of media in society. This experience ignited their imagination and inspired them to create bold, inclusive stories of their own.



## Rumena101 at Futures Week 2026

We were delighted to welcome social media influencer and entrepreneur Rumena101 to Mulberry UTC to close Futures Week 2026. Rumena inspired our Level 2 students by sharing her journey to grow her online presence, as well as the challenges she faced along the way. She emphasised resilience and creativity, highlighting her entrepreneurial ventures, which include haircare, writing and events. Through demonstrating how to diversify a personal brand successfully, she helped students learn valuable lessons on balancing passion with business sense and how determination and innovation can turn social media influence into a thriving, multi-faceted career.



## Healthy collaborations for work experience

During Work Experience Week, Year 13 T Level Health students at Mulberry UTC took the lead in teaching Year 12 Health and Social Care students key practical skills. This peer-led approach allowed younger students to gain hands-on experience while reinforcing the knowledge of the older ones. Emphasising that health science is a collaborative field, the sessions highlighted the importance of teamwork and communication. By learning from each other, students are better prepared for futures in healthcare, where collaboration is essential for success.

## T Level Media lighting, sound and set design

Year 13 T Level Media students are stepping confidently behind the scenes, gaining exciting real-world production experience.

In practical sessions, they mastered safe rigging and de-rigging techniques for lighting and sound equipment, building both skill and confidence.

Students have also been putting their expertise into action by setting up the stage for future productions, transforming theory into practice. This hands-on learning has given them valuable insight into how live events are built, run and taken down safely and professionally, preparing them for thriving careers in live production.



## Showcasing Year 10 Performing Arts

Year 10 Performing Arts students recently took to the stage for Show Week with a powerful performance of *Hadestown*, a retelling of the ancient Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. The production formed part of their course assessment, showcasing their acting, dancing and stagecraft skills. In preparation, students also experienced a West End performance of *Hadestown*, gaining valuable insight and inspiration for their own impressive show.

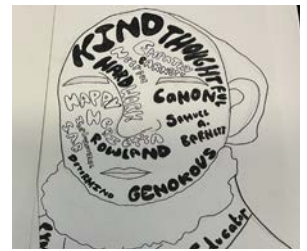


## Celebrating our foundation

We recently celebrated Founder's Day, a joyful community-driven occasion that launched our 75th anniversary, a significant jubilee marking the moment the school was renamed from Commercial Street School to Canon Barnett School in 1951.

Rooted in our 'Thankful for Our Opportunities, Proud of Our Community' theme, the day brought us together for reflection, celebration and shared pride. As our children entered the assembly hall to the uplifting sounds of 1950s music, a warm atmosphere of gratitude, belonging and collective joy was felt across our school.

A standout highlight was our storytelling assembly, where four children from Years 5 and 6 confidently narrated as our very own Canon Samuel Barnett, Henrietta Barnett and Edith, a fictional former student; bringing our history vividly to life and setting a wonderful tone for the day. In classrooms, our children explored the lives and legacy of the Barnetts through art, writing, discussion and historical reflection, producing thoughtful and creative work linked to our values of kindness, social justice and community. Workshops led by Ms Rachel Brown from Toynbee Hall enabled every child to contribute to a textile wall hanging - a collaborative piece we look forward to displaying proudly once it is finished.



## Cohort 2 en route to CREST Awards

We are thrilled to see our second cohort of STEM scholars making excellent progress towards their CREST Awards, led by our wonderful colleagues from Mulberry School for Girls. This programme brings science, technology, engineering and maths to life through enquiry-based, hands-on challenges. Our scholars explored themes from 'bacteria and the world around you' to 'surprising stains', developing confidence, curiosity and collaboration. Their dedication and enthusiasm remain remarkable, and we look forward to celebrating the innovative projects they will present as our STEM scholars continue their exciting journey.



## Nurturing a community of lifelong readers

As part of the National Year of Reading, we have been continuing to strengthen our whole-school culture of reading, where we read for pleasure and nurture readers for life.

Reading is embedded in the rhythm of each day and reflects our strong investment in fostering a genuine love of books. Every afternoon at 3 pm, Daily Storytime creates a calm and joyful atmosphere across the school, where adults model enthusiasm, expression and a deep appreciation for storytelling.

This term, we have further invested in our reading provision through our revamped library and the introduction of our Audio Space, ensuring inclusive opportunities for every child to engage with texts in meaningful ways. Our partnership with Brick Lane Bookshop is also enriching learning beyond the classroom, broadening our children's literary experiences and strengthening our vibrant, community-driven reading culture.



## An author visit to remember

Year 6 enjoyed an inspiring and enriching workshop with Sharique Zea, exploring his novel *Lionborn* and the craft of writing. Children were fascinated by his journey from planning and drafting to editing and publishing, emphasising perseverance and imagination. A captivating reading from his book sparked thoughtful discussion, with children asking perceptive questions about characters, themes and inspiration. The session powerfully strengthened creativity, confidence and our commitment to reading for pleasure at Mulberry Canon Barnett Primary. We are keen to facilitate more workshops of this kind with other year groups and authors to further enrich literacy and inspire our readers for life.



## Spring promise in action

Fantastic Friday assemblies are a wonderful opportunity for children to reflect on the week and celebrate their efforts. A standout assembly focused on living our motto, "Try our best ... be kind ... and look after each other". Children shared how they had tried their best in handwriting, Maths and History, and reflected on acts of kindness. We also introduced our new Spring Promise, encouraging friendly greetings and small gestures that help everyone feel welcome and valued.

## Toynbee Hall workshops continue to inspire play

We were thrilled to welcome Ms Rachel, Mr Simon and the Toynbee Hall team for another series of hands-on activities. Our children explored creative play through den building, making lanterns from recycled materials, and modelling with clay, while our Eco Warriors decorated plant pots and planted outdoors. These workshops sparked curiosity and creativity, giving children the chance to experiment, collaborate and celebrate their artistic achievements in a playful, inspiring way.



## Celebrating culture through hands-on learning

We have been busy cooking in EYFS over the spring term. Over recent weeks, children explored Chinese New Year through preparing Chinese-style noodles, deepening their understanding of cultures and traditions while practising taking turns, following instructions and using tools safely. They also enjoyed making their own pizzas, developing fine motor skills, independence and creativity through purposeful, hands-on experiences that strongly support the EYFS curriculum, particularly Understanding the World, Physical Development and Communication and Language. Exciting ideas are already in the pipeline for other traditions we can explore through cooking across the terms.



## A year of reading at the heart of our school

We have continued our joyful journey placing reading and storytelling at the heart of everything we do. During National Storytelling Week, children across the school joined live, interactive sessions with the National Literacy Trust, sparking imagination and a genuine love of stories.

The week began with a special visit from professional storyteller CJ, whose vibrant performance of *Monkey* and *Mr Crocodile* immersed students in rhythm, song and expressive storytelling. His praise for our students' enthusiasm and creativity was a proud moment for us all. As part of our Year of Reading, we have exciting plans ahead. We are delighted to be partnering with Canary Wharf Group, who are leading a book drive and promoting donations via our Amazon wish list to help stock our soon-to-open library. Year 3 students also attended inspiring storytelling workshops for World Book Day at One Canada Square, and we recently hosted our Mulberry Wood Wharf Book Swap. Next up: our cosy 'come in pyjamas and read day'.



## Year 3 bringing learning to life

Year 3 has been busy enriching their learning beyond the classroom. They visited the British Museum to take part in a Romans workshop, supporting their History topic.

The children explored real Roman artefacts and discovered fascinating facts, including how Roman soldiers trained, why Roman roads were vital for travel and trade, and how intricate mosaics were created from tiny coloured tiles. They even learned that the Romans introduced new foods and bathhouses to Britain.

They also visited the John Ruskin Prize exhibition at Trinity Buoy Wharf, where they explored a vibrant collection of contemporary artworks and developed their confidence as thoughtful, reflective young critics.



### DONATE A BOOK

CWG IS PARTNERING WITH MULBERRY WOOD WHARF PRIMARY SCHOOL ON THIS BOOK DRIVE

Building Libraries. Building Futures.

Every book you donate goes directly to Mulberry Wood Wharf Primary School – helping to build a new library that sparks curiosity, grows confidence, and gives every child a love of reading. Books shape the readers, thinkers, and dreamers of tomorrow. A single donation could be the story that changes everything for a child.

CAN YOU HELP US REACH 1,000 BOOKS

BY 30 SEPTEMBER 2026?

DROP OFF YOUR DONATION:

CIRCLE COLLECTIVE  
Jubilee Place, Level -1 | London, E14 5NT  
Mon - Sat: 10am - 7pm | Sun: 12pm - 6pm

MULBERRY WOOD WHARF  
20 Brannan Street, London, E14 9ZR  
School Reception: Wednesdays 12-1pm during term time only



Alternatively, you can donate via Amazon wish list. Scan the QR to find out more.



## A theatrical treat for Year 2

Year 2 visited the Half Moon Theatre to watch a production of *Brave Bettie*. The students thoroughly enjoyed the performance and were captivated by the imaginative storytelling brought to life on stage. They were particularly impressed by the actors' energy, expressive characters and creative use of props and staging. The visit provided a wonderful opportunity to experience live theatre and deepen their appreciation of storytelling in a different form. It was a memorable trip that sparked conversation and creativity back at school.



## Game, set, match!

This term, our children are budding Wimbledon champions in the making! Through weekly sessions with a professional tennis coach, they have been developing key skills including grip, control, rallying and serving. They have shown fantastic focus, determination and sportsmanship as they practise and improve. It has been wonderful to see their confidence grow on the court as they learn the rules and techniques of the game. Game, set, match - well done everyone!

## Rainy day explorers at the Soanes Centre

During the spring term, Reception children were incredibly adventurous as they headed out in the wet weather to the Soanes Centre for an Environmental Explorer workshop. Undeterred by the rain, they embraced the outdoors with curiosity and excitement. The children learned all about habitats, wildlife and the natural world around them, deepening their understanding through hands-on exploration. We were so proud of the confidence they showed on the trip and the enthusiasm with which they approached new learning experiences. It was a wonderful opportunity to grow as young explorers.



## Children's Mental Health Week: Being Me in My Place

During Children's Mental Health Week, we explored this year's theme, 'Being Me in My Place', which links beautifully to our core value of community. Across the school, classes shared and discussed a range of inspiring books, encouraging reflection and open conversations. Each student created a small tile representing who they are and what makes them unique. These tiles are now displayed together in school, forming a powerful visual reminder that every individual belongs and strengthens our community.



## Year 1 visit Christ Church

Year 1 visited Christ Church as part of their RE learning about places of worship. They were warmly welcomed by Vicar Tom Pyke, who shared the history of the church, explained its importance and showed the children many of its special features. The children noticed intricate details, including pictures that told stories and a huge organ, which they were lucky enough to hear Tom play. The children completed a thoughtful drawing and writing activity about a chosen feature. Lion and Panda classes demonstrated exemplary behaviour throughout the trip too.



## Twilight sparks collaboration and equity

The Mentor Development Twilight this term brought energy and collaboration as mentors and Beginning Teachers (BTs) from across the partnership came together with the Mulberry College of Teaching's Director and university tutors.

The session focused on PGCE Module 2 and created a valuable space for mentors and BTs to work side-by-side to design a collaborative intervention aimed at supporting the progress of a specific community of learners.

Throughout the evening, the partnership's strong commitment to evidence-informed practice was clear. Drawing on research, professional dialogue and shared expertise, participants explored how carefully designed interventions could strengthen outcomes while maintaining high expectations for all students. The session also highlighted the crucial role mentors played in guiding the development of Beginning Teachers and in sustaining reflective practice across the partnership.

The twilight also strengthened collaboration between the college, our partnership schools and the university PGCE provider, reinforcing the power of partnership working. Framed by this term's theme, 'Equity and Expectations', the session kept inclusion at its heart, championing the shared ambition that every learner is supported and challenged to succeed, whatever their background or circumstances.

## New settings, new learning for Beginning Teachers

From 23rd February, our Beginning Teachers began their five-week complementary placement in a second partnership school.

Working in a new setting gave them the chance to learn alongside different colleagues, experience another school community and view familiar challenges from a fresh perspective.

During this period, they also started their second PGCE module, rooted in classroom practice and focused on collaborative planning, teaching and reflection to strengthen inclusive practice.

Training across multiple schools helped build confidence, expertise and a deeper understanding of teaching in varied contexts – a valuable experience for teachers at the start of a rewarding profession.

## Welcoming our new NPQ cohort

We were delighted to welcome our ninth NPQ cohort in January for their first in-person events with East London Teaching School Hub.

NPQ Leading Literacy colleagues described sessions as “engaging, balanced and motivating”, highlighting how they “weave together research and practical literacy leadership”. Others praised the programmes as “rigorous and accessible”. We are proud to support local teachers and leaders as they grow in confidence, skills and leadership across our NPQ programmes.

Practitioner Insights remain a distinctive element of our NPQs, and we welcome senior leaders interested in contributing. Please contact: [npq@eastlondontsh.org](mailto:npq@eastlondontsh.org)

## Practitioner Inquiries for Year 2 early career teachers

Year 2 early career teachers (ECTs) started their 18-week Practitioner Inquiries this term. These are small, classroom-based investigations that apply key early career framework (ECF) principles to real teaching challenges. This unique UCL-designed element strengthens research skills, deepens pedagogical knowledge and supports teachers in developing a confident professional voice. Our ECTs are already reporting enriched practice and improved outcomes for their students.



## A legacy of leadership and collaboration



## Place-based leadership

A defining feature of Vanessa's leadership has been her belief that schools sit at the heart of their communities.

Throughout her time as CEO, she championed a place-based approach to education – one that values local knowledge, partnership and collaboration with families, civic organisations and employers.

This work has strengthened the connection between Mulberry schools and the communities they serve, while supporting staff to respond thoughtfully to the needs of their students. Vanessa has helped ensure that Mulberry schools remain ambitious, inclusive and deeply rooted in their communities.

## A message from the Chair

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to Dr Vanessa Ogden for her outstanding leadership and dedication over the past 20 years.

Under her vision and commitment, the Mulberry Schools Trust has grown from strength to strength – building new schools, pioneering innovative programmes and partnerships and establishing a reputation nationally for excellence, inclusion and social justice.

Her contribution has been transformational, shaping the lives of countless young people and ensuring that Mulberry's values of aspiration, equality and community are at the heart of everything we do. While we are sad to see her go, we are immensely proud of her achievements and wish her every success as she takes on her new role with the Department for Education.

The Trust is in an exceptionally strong position, with a talented senior team and a clear moral purpose. We look forward with confidence to the next chapter of Mulberry's development, building on the remarkable legacy she leaves behind.

**Jane Farrell**

Chair of the Mulberry Schools Trust Board

## A lasting legacy for students

Vanessa's leadership has been shaped by a clear belief that education is a public good and a powerful force for social change. Through initiatives such as the Mulberry Changemaker Programmes, thousands of students have developed confidence, leadership skills and wider opportunities beyond the classroom. These programmes, alongside the continued growth of the Trust, form an enduring legacy that will continue to benefit Mulberry students and communities in the years ahead.






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