



# JOHN MILTON ACADEMY TRUST

## Autumn Term Newsletter



**Bacton**  
Primary School



**Cedars Park**  
Primary School



**Mendlesham**  
Primary School



**Stowupland**  
High School



**The John Milton**  
Sixth Form



**MENDLESHAM**



**STOWUPLAND**

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## 01 A message from the Trust

Welcome to the John Milton Academy Trust's autumn term newsletter.

It has been a very busy term and a great start to the school year, with lots going on at each of the Trust's schools.

As we enter the festive period, we shine a light on some of the artistic and dramatic ventures by pupils this term, as well as an amazing charity event which raised hundreds for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Across the Trust, children have been entertained by a travelling pantomime company, performed their own Winter Showcase for parents and carers, and even won a competition with their artistic skills.

We have also welcomed our new reception year pupils – and you can see their class photos overleaf.

In October we said a fond farewell to Karen Grimes, former headteacher at Stowupland High School and CEO of the Trust since its formation, and welcomed our new Interim CEO, Shaun Common.

We would like to thank all pupils, students and staff for their hard work and dedication this term and the brilliant support we have received from parents and carers.

Finally, we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



We wish you a  
**Merry Christmas**







## 02 Farewell to Karen Grimes

This term Karen Grimes, the CEO of the John Milton Academy Trust, retired after a nearly 40-year career in education.

Karen said farewell to trustees, local board members and present and former colleagues at an event celebrating everything the trust has achieved since September 2016.

Karen said: “We have achieved so much since those early years. I have always been a strong supporter of the arts and that is reflected in the culture, ethos and curriculum of our schools.

“I have worked with some truly wonderful professionals over the years and it was important to me that my retirement celebrated their achievements and contributions as well.”

During her time at the Trust, Karen has overseen the construction of the new John Milton Sixth Form building, the opening of two specialist provisions as well as seeing staff at Cedars Park and Bacton Primary Schools achieve ‘good’ ratings from Ofsted inspectors last term.

Karen added: “My retirement was delayed due to Covid, but I am now looking forward to having the luxury of time and being able to focus far more on family and friends.”



## 03 Our new CEO – an introduction

We are thrilled to introduce our new interim CEO – Shaun Common. Shaun has held leadership posts at schools across Suffolk for more than 20 years, including his current role as CEO of the Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust (GCET).



Here, Shaun talks about his teaching career, ambitions for the Trust and how a close relationship with parents and carers will be the key to our success in the future.

### **A thank you**

Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to Karen Grimes for everything she has achieved for the Trust.

As former headteacher at Stowupland High School and the founding CEO of the Trust, Karen has done a remarkable job and should be incredibly proud of her achievements. I wish her a very happy retirement.

On taking up the leadership of the Trust, I am keen to continue Karen's good work and keep JMAT's sense of identity and its core vision of Ambition, Aspiration and Excellence.

### **About me**

I grew up in Alnwick, Northumbria and started my teaching career nearby at Cramlington High School.

I moved to Suffolk in 2001 to take up the post of Deputy Headteacher, and later Headteacher, at Sir John Leman High School in Beccles. In 2008 I was appointed Headteacher at Copleston High School where I have been for the last 15 years, ten as Principal and five years as CEO of the GCET.

Although I'm a Northumbrian at heart, Suffolk is very special to me – it's a beautiful county and I'm proud to be part of it.

### **The future**

It is an exciting time at the Trust and I am thrilled to be taking on the role as interim CEO. I passionately believe the success of a Trust relies on a close relationship between its schools, its students and its parents and carers. My goal is to ensure all three work in partnership for the benefit of the children.

The close relationship between JMAT and GCET will help not only in the recruitment and retention of our excellent staff, but also in providing the very best education for our pupils and students.

I am excited for the future and believe that by working together, both Trusts will continue to flourish. Everyone here at JMAT is looking forward to a fantastic 2024!



## 04 Cinderella visits school after competition win

Pupils at Bacton Primary School were treated to a special performance of Cinderella this term – thanks to the efforts of a member the school's office team.

Chaplins Pantomimes performed their rendition of Cinderella to enthralled pupils on Monday 27 November.


Setting up stage in the school's hall, the theatre group put on a terrific show full of music, dancing and the odd 'he's behind you'.

Sarah King, Head of School, said: "A member of our office staff, Mrs Ferguson, had entered a competition to win a visit from the theatre group and we were delighted when we heard she had won.

"It was fantastic – our school hall was transformed into a theatre for the day. The pupils really enjoyed the performance and were joining in with the show – they absolutely loved it.

"We would like to say a big thank you to Mrs Ferguson for entering the competition and of course to Chaplins Pantomimes for putting on such an amazing show."

Following the performance, the children were keen to give their reviews:



*"It was really good, I loved it!" Lainey, Year 4*

*"Above and beyond my expectations...amazing!" Isla, Year 4*

*"It was absolutely amazing, good and funny." Harry, Year 3*

*"I liked the actions, dancing and the characters." Aiden, Year 6*







## 05 A successful Macmillan Coffee Morning

Children at Cedars Park transformed their assembly hall into the town's biggest and busiest café to raise an amazing £813 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The coffee morning saw pupils take on a variety of roles – from servers to chefs channeling their best Great British Bake Off vibes – and host their parents and teachers in the school hall.

Aisha Suhail, Headteacher, said: "It was an absolutely wonderful day. Everyone was having such an amazing time and really enjoyed the children's creations.

"There was an enormous sense of pride in the children among both the parents and the staff – they did such an incredible job."

As well as serving a delicious array of tasty treats, teas and coffees, the children also created their own games to raise extra funds for the charity.

This included a human fruit machine, where three children randomly selected a piece of fruit from a box for the chance to win a prize.

Aisha added: "The addition of the games really added to the atmosphere, it all made for such a special morning.

"Many of the children have personal experiences with cancer in their families and see it as their moral duty to support such a worthy cause. The children really get into their roles and it is so amazing to see.

"I am so proud of them all, our Year 5 staff and everyone in the school community for putting on such a fantastic event."



*"What an absolutely brilliant morning, it was so well organised. All the pupils were so polite and engaging. They were an absolute credit to the school."* Parent







## 06 Pupils chance to vote on their favourite lunch

Foodie pupils at Mendlesham Primary School have been given the opportunity to vote on what they want to eat for lunch.

The school's council have been going round the school with their clipboards, finding out which meals pupils would like to see on the menu.

Among the delicious treats pupils can vote for are a pasta bar, fajitas, macaroni cheese, hotdogs, stir fry and curry.

Tessa Sait, Executive Headteacher, said: "The idea, which came from our school cook Mrs Colman, is to get the children interested in food and to get the opportunity to have their say on what they eat at lunch.

"It is a chance for them to make decisions and feel they have a say on what happens at the school.

"The pupils have really got into the spirit and have enjoyed being given the responsibility to decide what goes on the menu.

"The voting has been organised by our school council – they have really stepped up to the role and have done a fantastic job finding out what pupils want to see on the menu."

Once the votes have been counted, Mrs Colman will serve up the chosen dishes next term.



## 07 Christmas card competition winner

Meanwhile, a Mendlesham pupil has been recognised for his artist skills, winning this year's East Anglian Daily Times Christmas Card competition.

Freddie Smy, 10, impressed the judges with his clever design and creativity – as well as a fantastic Christmas pun!

For his prize, Freddie has won £100 in Smyths Toys vouchers, while the school will receive £100 in Amazon vouchers.

Tessa said: "Congratulations to Freddie for winning the competition.

"His Christmas card design was brilliant - combining a great idea for an image and some artistic flair with some festive humour."





## 08 Students perform Winter Showcase

Students at Stowupland High School entertained a packed house when they performed their spectacular Winter Showcase this term.

Combining dancing and singing including solo acts, the showcase featured amazing performances by the school choir, the musical theatre group, the close harmony group, GCSE dance students and the Fusion Dance Club.

The show included a wide range of musical and dance styles – from hits by Dua Lipa to the Christmas classic, Walking in the Air.

Dance teacher Mrs Brand said: “We are really proud of what the students have achieved – they have worked really hard throughout the term to put together the showcase.

“They were brilliant on the night and put on an amazing evening of entertainment. We had some students who have never performed before, who were shown the ropes by the more experienced students, which was lovely to see.

“They put on a brilliant show and the audience of parents and carers loved every minute – bravo!”

Mrs Brand said the students had put together the show themselves - selecting the music, helping to choreograph the dance routines and even operated the stage lighting.

The showcase was supported by Mr Tanswell, Subject Leader for Music, who organised the event, Mrs Brand, who contributed the dance pieces, Mrs Pollard, who runs the musical theatre club and Miss Knights, who runs the close harmony group.

David Brewster, Headteacher, said: “The school’s Winter Showcase is always one of the highlights of the year at Stowupland High School and this year was no exception. The students have worked really hard on the showcase and you could see it on stage.

“They really rose to the occasion and put on a brilliant show. Congratulations to everyone involved.”







## 09 Contact details

### To contact the Schools or Trust:

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