

## Introduction

Richard Chapman, CEO



As we come to the end of another busy and fulfilling term, I want to thank every member of our Thrive community. Your dedication, creativity, and commitment to our learners continue to shape the inclusive partnership we're so proud to be part of.

This term has brought many reasons to celebrate. **The Warwickshire Academy** and **Kingsbury Academy** received strong Ofsted reports, recognising their inclusive practice, strong leadership, and the dedication of staff. At **Corley Academy**, national recognition for excellence in autism support highlights our collective drive to meet the needs of every learner.

We're also excited to welcome **Lea Hall Academy** into the Thrive Education Partnership later this year - a natural next step that reflects our shared values and learner-centred approach.

After Easter, we'll come together for our annual conference on Friday 2nd May. With the theme *Leading with Kindness*, it's a chance to reflect, connect, and celebrate what we've achieved together.

Until then, I hope you find time to rest and recharge. The impact of your work is felt every day - and it truly matters.



## Leading with Kindness Annual Conference 2025

Our annual Thrive Education Partnership Conference is just around the corner, taking place on Friday 2nd May at the **Coventry Building Society Arena**. We're looking forward to bringing our community together once again for a day of connection, reflection and inspiration, all under this year's theme: *Leading with Kindness*.

We're delighted to welcome two outstanding keynote speakers - **Dave Whitaker**, a respected voice in inclusive and relational leadership, and **Jaz Ampaw-Farr**, known for her powerful message of human-first leadership. Their insight and energy promise to leave us feeling inspired, challenged, and more connected than ever.

Arrival on the day is from 08:30, with the event starting promptly at 09:00. If you're travelling by car, please remember to check parking information here: <https://thriveconference.squarespace.com/>

We can't wait to come together as a community and celebrate everything we've achieved - and all that lies ahead.



## Ofsted Applauds Kingsbury Academy

We're delighted to share that **Kingsbury Academy** has received the highest rating in all key areas by Ofsted.

Since joining Thrive Education Partnership in 2020 - after previously being rated 'Requires Improvement' - Kingsbury has made remarkable progress. It is now recognised for its inclusive ethos, high-quality teaching, and tailored support that meets the needs of every learner.

**Richard Chapman**, CEO of Thrive, said: "Something truly special is happening at Kingsbury Academy. This recognition is well deserved and a reflection of the staff's unwavering dedication."

Ofsted praised the school's nurturing environment, commitment to communication and independence, and its creative curriculum—highlighting a standout reading programme and real-world learning opportunities through partnerships with local businesses.

Headteacher **Amjid Zaman** added: "We've worked incredibly hard to create a space where every child can thrive. This is a proud moment for our entire community - and just the beginning."

Congratulations to the entire team on this **outstanding** achievement!

## Katie Greenwood Head of Therapeutic Services

Mornings are lighter, days are longer, and the landscape greener. Spring is nature's reminder that transformation takes time, warmth, and the right conditions.

This year, the focus is relational practice. Our Senior Leadership Teams continue their Compassionate Leadership training. **Professor Kathryn Riley** has begun projects with **Baginton Fields** and **Corley** on belonging. In February, I was invited to participate in a Global Leaders for Belonging roundtable, working with practitioners, researchers, and experts from around the world to explore how a belonging strategy can be meaningfully embedded in education.

In March, our **Mental Health Champions initiative** launched - a way to bring mental health conversations into the open and positively shift the culture around talking about how we feel. And, of course, our conference theme is **Leading with Kindness**.

So why is relational practice so central to our vision? Well, if spring reminds us that it takes time, warmth, and the right conditions to bloom, so too do our children, young people, and staff. As **John Bowlby** said, "The propensity to make strong emotional bonds... is a basic component of human nature." In other words, emotional connection is the soil from which we grow. Research shows that the quality and strength of our relationships are linked to optimal development, emotional regulation, sense of self, agency, and our capacity to learn and explore. For children and young people who've experienced trauma, it takes just one consistent, attuned relationship before the age of 18 to mitigate the effects of early adversity.

Quite simply: the single most significant factor for positive outcomes in therapy, education, and recovery is the quality of the relationship. Those tiny moments of connection - a smile, eye contact, validation - may seem small, but they are everything. In the end, it is our way of being, not just our doing, that makes the difference.

"Relationships heal relationships" (**Dr. Karen Triesman**)

## Corley Academy Achieves Advanced Autism Award

More good news! **Corley Academy** has been awarded the Autism Specialist Award at Advanced Level by the **National Autistic Society** - a prestigious recognition of its exceptional work in supporting autistic students and creating an inclusive, nurturing environment.

As part of Thrive Education Partnership, Corley Academy caters to secondary-aged pupils in Coventry, most of whom have a diagnosis of autism and an Education, Health and Care Plan. The award reflects the academy's long-standing commitment to tailoring support around individual needs, particularly in social communication and life skills.

Headteacher **Mark White** said: "We are incredibly proud of the service we provide to all of our students with autism. This award is a testament to the hard work and passion of the entire team."

## Thrive's Mental Health Champions

We're proud to introduce a new initiative at Thrive Education Partnership: **Mental Health Champions**. This dedicated group of staff members will play a vital role in embedding mental health awareness and support into the everyday fabric of our school communities.

Trained in partnership with Self Space, our Champions are equipped with the tools to raise awareness, challenge stigma, and create safe spaces where conversations about mental health are not only welcomed but encouraged.

Their work will help ensure that mental wellbeing is treated with the same importance as physical health - openly, respectfully, and without judgement.

From offering a listening ear to signposting support and driving whole-school conversations, these Champions will help us continue building emotionally healthy environments.

We look forward to announcing who they are soon - and sharing the positive impact they'll bring across our schools.



## James Simoniti joins Thrive as Safeguarding Lead

We're pleased to welcome **James Simoniti** to Thrive Education Partnership as our new **Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Manager**.

This newly created role reflects our commitment to ensuring all pupils feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. James brings extensive experience from both the police and safeguarding consultancy, having worked closely with schools on compliance, casework, and inclusion.

Since joining, he's been working across the Trust to strengthen safeguarding practice, support attendance, and provide guidance to DSLs. Over the next year, James will introduce case management supervision - a new initiative designed to support staff wellbeing and provide a safe space for reflection on complex safeguarding cases.

James shared: "This role is about listening, supporting, and growing together - and I'm excited to build something that makes a real difference."

The Trust is delighted to have him on board.







## Embracing Cultural Traditions

This term, our schools marked two important occasions – **Chinese New Year** and **Eid al-Fitr** – with creativity, cultural learning, and joyful celebration.

To welcome the Year of the Wood Snake, students explored Chinese traditions through activities like lantern making, calligraphy, cooking, and storytelling. Classrooms were filled with colour and excitement as pupils learned about themes of luck, family, new beginnings, and cultural respect.

One standout celebration came from **Calthorpe Academy**, where pupils contributed artwork to **Southside Business Improvement District's** Chinese New Year posters. This wasn't just a creative activity – it was a powerful moment of confidence, pride, connection, and belonging, as students saw their work displayed in the heart of the community.

As Eid al-Fitr approached, schools across the Trust embraced the chance to reflect on the values of kindness, gratitude, empathy, and togetherness.

Pupils shared stories, created Eid cards, and enjoyed festive displays that honoured the end of Ramadan and the meaning behind this special celebration.

## TWA praised by Ofsted for inclusive curriculum

We're thrilled to share that **The Warwickshire Academy** has been praised for creating an ambitious and inclusive learning environment following a recent Ofsted inspection.

The report rated it good across all key areas, spotlighting the academy's caring and welcoming community, where staff build strong relationships with pupils, fostering a culture of respect, engagement, and achievement.

Inspectors praised the academy's caring atmosphere, strong staff-pupil relationships, and ambitious, well-structured curriculum that helps pupils build knowledge and confidence.

The school's personalised approach to learning, successful phonics programme, and rich PSHE curriculum - covering skills like travel training and external visits - were also commended.

CEO **Richard Chapman** described the outcome as "a testament to the dedication and passion of our staff," while Headteacher **Paul Hostead** reflected, "This report affirms the progress we've made in creating an environment where every pupil can thrive."

Congratulations to the entire team at The Warwickshire Academy on this well-deserved recognition.



## Kindness in Every Aisle Kingsbury's Spring Trip

This spring term, learners from **Kingsbury Academy** have been involved in a fantastic partnership with **Coventry Ricoh Tesco**, combining real-world learning with meaningful community engagement.

As part of their ongoing visits to Tesco, pupils applied their classroom knowledge in practical settings - restocking shelves, checking product dates, and scanning items. They also supported Tesco's Food Bank initiative, helping to collect, sort, and prepare donations for distribution.

These activities not only strengthened their independence and life skills, but also deepened their understanding of social responsibility. In addition, a special Mother's Day campaign, led by Tesco Community Champion **Michelle Walsh** and Team Manager **Marie O'Donnell**, brought extra joy to the school community.

Learners designed and decorated their own plant pots and carefully planted daffodil bulbs, which they have been tending to with pride in preparation for Mothering Sunday.



## Corley Creates Inclusive Pathways into the NHS

We're proud to celebrate the growing impact of our partnership with **University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust** (UHCW) and **Coventry City Council**, which is opening up real-world career pathways for students from **Corley Academy** through supported internships.

This collaborative initiative is designed to give young people with autism and disabilities meaningful experience in the workplace, supported by dedicated job coaches and tailored placements that reflect their individual strengths and interests.

One recent success story saw a Corley student make the leap from intern to full-time healthcare support worker - a journey that began with a one-day-a-week ward placement and quickly grew into a genuine passion for care. With encouragement from her coaches and NHS mentors, she built the confidence and skills needed to secure a permanent role - without even needing a formal interview.

"People with autism don't need lower expectations - they need someone to think a little differently," said **Mark White**, Headteacher at Corley. "This programme does exactly that. It's about adapting environments, not limiting ambition."





## Project 250 Tees Off at Corley and Baginton

**Corley and Baginton Fields Academy** welcomed **Johnny Ray Jr**, one of Europe's top disabled golfers, to Coventry as part of Project 250 - a nationwide initiative funded by the **Kate and Justin Rose Foundation** aiming to introduce 250 disabled children across the UK to the world of golf.

Johnny, who has PERT syndrome and plays competitively using a specially adapted glove, brought not only his skill but also his passion and resilience to the students.

His visit was about more than sport - it was about representation, opportunity, and the power of believing in every young person's potential.

The programme combines two weeks of classroom-based learning with hands-on golf tuition at **Stoney Deer Park Golf Club**, helping pupils build confidence, develop social skills, and learn in a new and engaging way.

We're proud to be part of this fantastic project, where every swing brings new opportunities for our students.

## Mary Elliot Students Shine in the Community

As part of their Community Engagement curriculum, students from **Mary Elliot Academy** recently enjoyed a valuable and engaging visit to **Sainsbury's** - and what a success it was!

The trip gave learners the opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge in a real-world setting. With confidence and focus, they navigated the store, followed instructions, and located specific items linked to other curriculum-based activities. They also made thoughtful, independent decisions about how to spend their money - practising essential life skills and building confidence in their own judgement.

From scanning products to using baskets, trolleys, and handling money, the visit offered a wide range of practical experiences. It also helped to reinforce social skills, communication, and independence in a supportive and familiar environment.

Staff were incredibly proud of how well the students represented the ASC department, showing maturity, enthusiasm, and a strong sense of responsibility throughout the visit.



## Calthorpe takes Centre Stage at the MAC

Students from **Calthorpe Academy** recently took part in a truly inspiring and immersive visit to the **Midland Arts Centre (MAC)**, where they experienced a unique sensory film event led by artist **Sarah Hamilton Baker**.

The session blended relaxed film screenings with interactive performance, inviting students to explore a vibrant collection of short films not just by watching - but by fully engaging their senses.

Through light, sound, touch, and even smell, learners were encouraged to experience storytelling in new and exciting ways.

MAC's spacious theatre was transformed into a sensory playground, offering a calm yet stimulating environment where pupils could explore at their own pace.

The experience promoted self-expression, curiosity, and a deeper connection to the arts - reminding us that stories can be felt, not just seen or heard.



## Driving Ambition: Nicolas Hamilton Inspires Corley

**Corley Academy** Post 16 students had an unforgettable experience during their supported internships at **Evtec Automotive**, where they had the chance to meet **Nicolas Hamilton** - racing driver and the first disabled athlete to compete in the **British Touring Car Championship (BTCC)**.

As an Ambassador for Evtec, Nic took time to speak with students, share his personal journey, and celebrate their progress in the workplace. His openness and encouragement made a lasting impression, reminding everyone of the power of resilience, ambition, and the importance of inclusive opportunities in education and beyond.

The supported internship programme itself offers students invaluable hands-on experience, helping them to develop practical skills, build confidence, and explore future career paths in a real working environment. Meeting someone like Nic - who has overcome challenges to achieve success in a competitive field - helped bring these values to life in a truly meaningful way.

A huge thank you to Nic Hamilton and the brilliant team at Evtec Automotive for welcoming our students, recognising their potential, and making this internship programme such a positive and inspiring experience.