



"Staff share high aspirations for all" - GFAPS, Ofsted 2022

"Highly skilled specialist teachers help pupils to re-engage with learning" – SCAPS, Ofsted 2019

Parent & Carer Newsletter

April 2025

Welcome from the Director of Alternative Provision

Easter is finally upon us, and I remain optimistic that our recent good weather will continue over the holiday!

I know that this break is a particularly important one for our Y11 students who return to the start of GCSE exams in May. Many of our Y6 students will have an opportunity to complete their SAT assessments as well next term. We know that, just like the staff team, you are proud of the progress your child has made to get to this point in their educational journey.

Welcoming new team members

Our school is growing and we will be welcoming a number of new staff over the next few terms. We are delighted that since Christmas, Ms Palmer and Ms Welsh have joined us as permanent members of the Rutherford House team. We have also welcomed Charlotte Bridge-Williams to the team at Belle Vue, Caroline Dickinson and Paul Thorpe-Williams at St George's, and Ambika Victor at Ryeleaze. Finally, Martyn Lowe has joined the team as a site assistant working across all centres.

Expanding the school

Many of you will know that we moved out of the former Raikes Centre in September last year. We are re-opening this site at Horton Road as a new KS4 centre and are pleased that Sophie Ellis-Smith has taken up the Centre Manager role, building on her previous KS4 experience. Liz Rudge will be starting as Centre Manager in September at Russet House and in the short term, Brad Simms from Rutherford will support the team as interim Centre Manager.

As always, this newsletter is a fabulous celebration of all that our young have achieved in school. I hope you feel as proud as I do when you read all about what the students have done for the last 2 terms.

Emma Gundry



What's been happening across the school?



Rutherford House – KS1 & 2



Centre Manager: Mr. B Simms

SLT link: Mr. C Ellyatt



Oak Class

This term in Oak class we have been busy learning about our new story *The Gruffalo*; going on scavenger hunts to find him, making Gruffalo crumble and role playing with character masks! We also have had the pleasure to introduce Fluffy and Sonic, our new class Guinea Pigs, where they have been happily pampered and fed by Oak class!



Ash Class



In Ash class this term we have looked at poetry in English with the children writing a selection of poems in different styles including some about our teachers here at Rutherford! In Maths we have looked at multiplication and division with a focus on our 2, 5 and 10 times tables. In Science we have focused on living things and habitats and done experiments on what plants need to grow. In our main topic we have really enjoyed finding out about where in the world chocolate is made, the impacts of fairtrade and designing and making our very own chocolate bars! Lots of fantastic work has been produced by Ash class this term!





Beech Class

Beech class have had a very busy term full of lots of learning. Our topic has been 'Bean to Bar' and the children have learnt about the production of chocolate from a Cacao bean growing in the Ivory Coast to a bar of chocolate in Tesco. We were excited to taste and smell real cacao beans and nibs. The children drew very detailed observational drawings of their favourite chocolate bars. In Maths the children have been working on their understanding of fractions - converting improper fractions to mixed numbers and vice a versa and working out equivalent fractions and adding and subtracting fractions. A highlight of the term has been the children performing a poem 'The Ocean's Blanket' in front of an audience. The children worked collaboratively in groups and performed the poem beautifully despite some nerves. The children also loved writing narrative poems of their own. Science has involved learning all about the planets which everyone was very interested in. Finally, reading is very important to us in Beech class and we are all currently reading three novels that have been shortlisted for children's book of the year for the 'Federation of Children's Book Groups' as we have been invited to help judge the books.



End of Term reward trip to Slimbridge

Students and staff enjoyed a reward trip to WWT Slimbridge Wetland Centre on the last day of term in the sunshine. All had a great time.



Russet House – KS3



Centre Manager: Sophie Ellis - Smith

SLT link: Debbie Kirkham

Transition

At Russet, we're proud to have launched the Altus Impact Initiative (All), a pupil-led community group making a difference. Our team of eight has already been busy with litter-picking sessions, helping to keep our local environment clean and welcoming.

We've also connected with Cheltenham Animal Shelter, where we saw their incredible work supporting animals in need. Inspired by their efforts, we'll be fundraising for the shelter next term, alongside building partnerships with other local charities to support their vital contributions to the community.

All focuses on raising community awareness and encouraging pupils to get involved in the local area.



Our little plot

In cooking, pupils have been busy creating raised beds and planting seeds, laying the groundwork for a sustainable food journey. During terms 5 and 6, they will care for these plants as they grow into ingredients we can use to prepare lunches. This hands-on experience teaches the value of locally sourced food and its benefits for health and wellbeing. By nurturing their own produce, pupils gain a deeper understanding of where food comes from and the importance of fresh, nutritious ingredients. It's a fantastic opportunity to combine practical skills, healthy eating, and environmental awareness in a fun and rewarding way.

Gloucester Youth Project



GLOUCESTER YOUTH PROJECT

EMPOWERING YOUNG MINDS WITH PRACTICAL SKILLS! TODAY, THESE GIRLS ARE LEARNING HOW TO WIRE A PLUG, GAINING HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE.



Reward Trip

Lucky students were taken to watch Cheltenham men vs Doncaster men, as a reward for being top in the attendance record for term 4. It was an amazing day with students being ready, respectful and safe throughout. Unfortunately, Cheltenham did lose, but we did get to see some great goals.



Ryeleaze – KS3



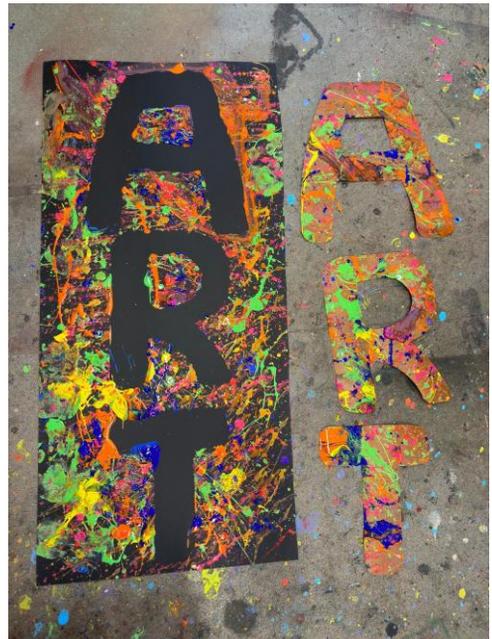
Centre Manager: Rebecca Allen

SLT link: Claire Greatbanks

This term our KS3 have been super busy! They have had visits from the recycling company where they took part in utilising a variety of recycling materials to create their very own theme park in teams! We also had a visit from the Army where students were split into 3 groups. Each group had a turn at hearing information around the army as well as a demo on weapons used, an escape room and a team building activity, guiding their team members through an assault course and retrieving survival equipment.



In Art, students have been hands on with splatting, sculpting and graffiti work. They have worked on projects together as well as creating their own individual work letting their creative side guide them.



The Hub – KS3 & KS4



Centre Manager: Matt Brown

SLT link: Claire Greatbanks

Outdoor Learning

Students at The Hub have enjoyed outdoor learning in the sunshine at The Heavens. They participated in outdoor cooking over an open fire, connected with their environment and developed their problem-solving skills.



Shanice did an amazing job designing an Easter bonnet for one of our team member's son to wear at nursery. Becky, who is part of our operations team, was very grateful for all of Shanice's hard work.



Designed and made by one of our students from The Hub for a nursery school Easter Parade



Handcrafted

St Georges – KS4



Centre Manager: Fiona Clarke

SLT link: Mr John Rothwell

It's been a very busy term in Food Technology with the Year 11 students trying to finish off their Level 1 or Level 2 portfolios for the Home Cooking Skills Qualification. Three students had just three hours to complete a two-course meal under examination conditions. Everyone was superb and some of the dishes included chicken ballotine with duchess potatoes for the main and carrot cake or Wispa cheesecake as the dessert. Another student made loaded fries as a starter, followed by Jerk Chicken Rice and peas as a main.



The year 10 students completing the WJEC GCSE have been studying jobs roles in the Hospitality and Catering Industry with a focus of front and back of house employment opportunities. They have developed knowledge of personal attributes and types of conditions they will encounter including pay and working hours. The students have also been exposed to some high-level skills in the practical element of the course producing dishes such as Hunters chicken, home made pizza and smashed burgers to name just a few.



PE at St George's



Students have been doing a number of sports this term including Short tennis, tag rugby and football including perfecting their free kicks.



GCSE Art

Students have worked really hard this year and have produced a wide variety of art, ranging from plaster casting from handmade clay moulds, graphic design, Pop Art portraits to Anime characters, combined with work based on Japanese Abstract Expressionism. Staff are really proud of the students and the work that they have produced since September. Many of them have stepped out of their comfort zone and really challenged themselves artistically. It has been a pleasure to work with these young people and to see their confidence grow.



Year 10 girls were presented with a scenario to create a style for a ballet recital – great job!

BTEC Level 1 Introductory in Hair and Beauty

This term year 10s have continued to work towards achieving their HB9 unit – carrying out a treatment. The girls have been busy demonstrating techniques in creating a range of styles for their ‘styling hair’ task, before moving on to skin care next term.



A year 11 student has created an eye catching French Manicure with a difference, demonstrating both freehand and polish-secure nail art

techniques

Year 11 students have just completed their final practical assessment in nail art and are working hard to complete their theory tasks to achieve their qualification. Well done for all your effort girls!

Eastbrook Centre – KS4



Centre Manager: Ann Morris

SLT link: Mr Alex Breeze

Our recent Eastbrook Centre school trip to **Blaise Castle Estate** on Tuesday 18th March was a wonderful opportunity for students to embrace the fresh air and explore the first signs of spring. Our group set off on a scenic trail around the estate's beautiful grounds, soaking up the sunshine as we looked for blooming flowers, budding trees, and chirping birds — clear signs that spring is on its way.

Blaise Castle itself holds a fascinating history. Built in 1766, this picturesque folly was designed to resemble a medieval castle. Perched on a hilltop, it offers stunning views across the Avon Gorge. The castle has long been a popular destination for walkers and history enthusiasts alike.

All students thoroughly enjoyed the outdoor adventure, and it was fantastic to see them engaging with nature. Spending time outside has proven benefits for mental well-being, helping to reduce stress, improve mood, and boost concentration — all of which are so important for young people in our centre.

The trip was a perfect reminder of how stepping away from screens and immersing ourselves in the natural world can leave us feeling refreshed and re-energised.



Fantastic Opportunity For Eastbrook Students

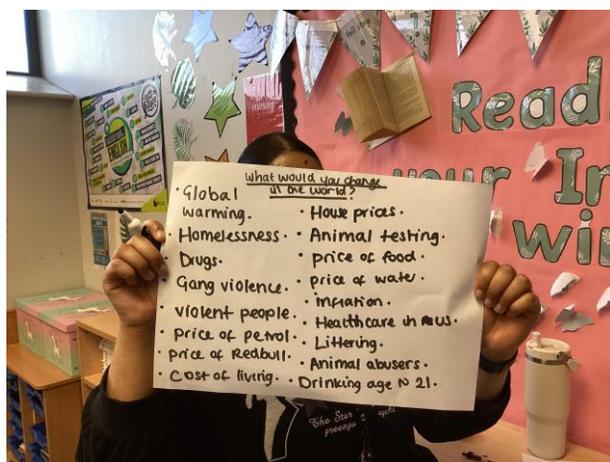
Our school was chosen by the Cheltenham Festivals to work with writer and poet, John Bernard. He is the Poet Laureate for Coventry and is a successful and highly regarded spoken word performer and performance artist who leads creative workshops, empowering young minds to find their voice and express themselves through the art of poetry and music.

John delivered a writing workshop for three of our Eastbrook Centre students at the Gloucestershire Resource Centre. The group discussed themes that were important to them such as family, friendship and music. They each created a piece of writing based on these themes, which John is planning to record with the students as spoken word in his next session in May.

John has really enjoyed working with our students and has been impressed with their engagement and the quality of their ideas.

Eastbrook win to tie in the Altus Cup Competition!

In the most recent match against St George's, the Eastbrook team secured a 5-3 victory. The next round will decide which centre finishes the year as the Altus champions.



MEET YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL TEAM!



We are excited to introduce our expanded School

Council Team at Eastbrook Centre! Our dedicated Altus School Council Team plays a vital role in ensuring that every student's voice is heard. These passionate representatives work hard to bring positive change to our school community, whether by organising exciting events or improving student well-being; they are committed to making Eastbrook a better place for everyone.

Take a moment to read the introductions from each of our council members. They're here to listen, support, and make a difference!

Skye – School Council President

Hello, my name is Skye, and I'm the School Council President. I am currently in Year 11.

My role is to listen to students' voices and help organise activities such as World Book Day and Red Nose Day. As President, I also arrange School Council meetings and communicate with Ms. Gundry about any Student Voice suggestions.

I was involved in setting up the School Council at Eastbrook alongside Mrs. Henderson, and my goal is to make our school a more fun and engaging place, where students feel motivated in their learning.

- ❖ **Fun fact:** I love horses and enjoy galloping through the fields in my free time!
- ❖ **Our Mission:** As a School Council Team, we want to create exciting events that inspire and motivate students. If you have ideas or concerns, please speak to me or leave a note in our Student Voice suggestion box!

Amelia – School Council Representative

Hi! My name is Amelia, and I'm in Year 10. As a School Council Representative, I help organise and promote events, such as World Book Day and Red Nose Day, while also raising awareness of important issues at Eastbrook Centre. I attend regular School Council meetings to share ideas on making our school an inclusive and supportive space where every student can be themselves.

- ❖ **My message** to students: Be proud to be part of the Altus Team—you are supported here, you will learn a lot, and you can still have fun!
- ❖ **My goal:** I want to encourage my fellow students in Year 10 and Year 11 to focus on their studies so they can achieve the best possible grades in their exams.

Ashden – School Council Representative

Hi, I'm Ashden, and I'm in Year 10.

- ❖ **My goal** is simple: to help make Eastbrook Centre a better place for everyone.
- ❖ **Passion:** I love making music, and I'd love to hear from students about how we can improve your experience here at Altus. Feel free to chat with me anytime!

Grace – School Council Representative

Hello, my name is Grace, and I'm in Year 11.

I joined the School Council to represent student voices and promote school events at Eastbrook Centre.

Safeguarding Information



Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Debbie Kirkham. She is supported by a wider safeguarding team. If you have any concerns about your child's safety or wellbeing you can contact Debbie or her team who are there to support.



Family Information Service

The Family Information Service (FIS) directory offers a wide range of information, advice and signposting to support families, children and young people from 0 – 19 years of age (or up to 25 years for young people with SEND).

The Glos Families directory www.glofamiliedirectory.org.uk brings together information, services, resources, and things to do in Gloucestershire. The directory also holds information to Support Families with SEND, Gloucestershire's Local Offer and Future Me, Young People's Local Offer.

Being a parent isn't always easy which is why the Glosfamilies Directory is a great place to access a wide range of organisations available both across Gloucestershire and nationally, who provide advice and support to families.

W: www.glofamiliedirectory.org.uk



Save the Date!

On **Thursday 26th June at 10:00am** we have Simon Williams, Cyber Intelligence, Protect, Prepare & Prevent Officer for the Digital Intelligence Investigations Unit joining us at our primary provision, Rutherford House, Quedgeley.

Gloucestershire Constabulary are offering a comprehensive presentation designed specifically for parents and carers, providing them with the tools and insights to keep their children safe online. The session lasts approximately 1hr 15 minutes and contains topics such as:

- Understanding Online Risks** – Identify the various dangers your children may encounter online, including cyberbullying, predators and harmful content.
- Social media and Apps safety** – Learn best practices for social media and applications. How to configure privacy settings and protect your child's information.
- Parental Control Tools** – Explore tools and settings to monitor and control your child's online activities.
- Encouraging Open Communications** – Gain tips on fostering honest conversations about internet use and creating a supportive environment.



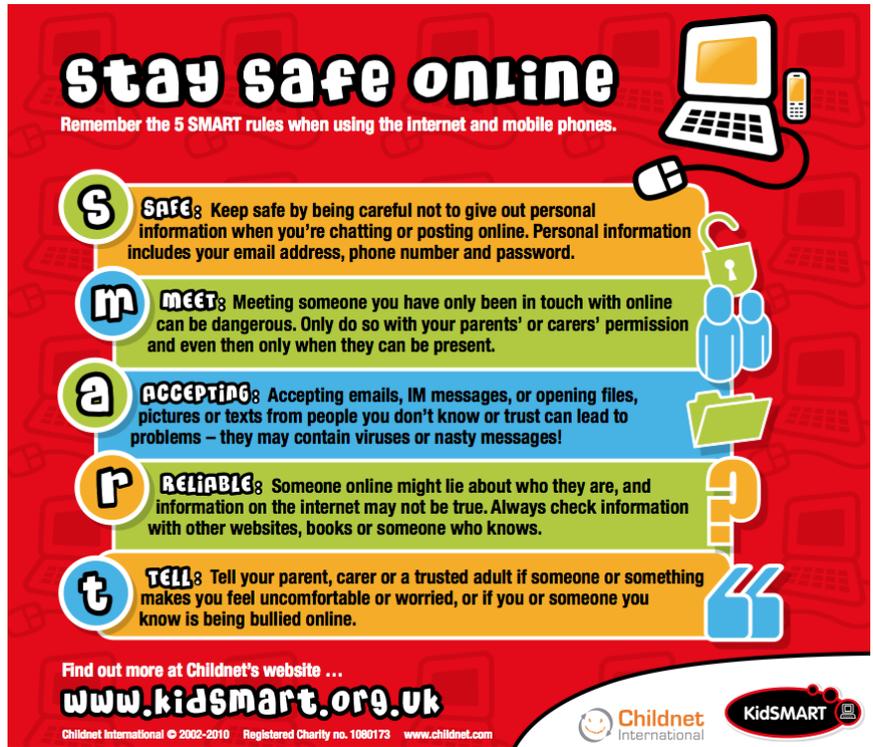
Termly Focus – Online Safety

The focus of this term has been Online Safety. Staff have attended training to ensure they continue to safeguard students appropriately and are aware of the continuing challenges children face.



Roblox – New Parental Controls and Safety Features

- Direct Messaging Restrictions
- Parental Accounts
- Content Labels
- Screen Time Limits
- Experience Restrictions



Stay safe online
Remember the 5 SMART rules when using the internet and mobile phones.

S SAFE: Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information when you're chatting or posting online. Personal information includes your email address, phone number and password.

M MEET: Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Only do so with your parents' or carers' permission and even then only when they can be present.

A ACCEPTING: Accepting emails, IM messages, or opening files, pictures or texts from people you don't know or trust can lead to problems – they may contain viruses or nasty messages!

R RELIABLE: Someone online might lie about who they are, and information on the internet may not be true. Always check information with other websites, books or someone who knows.

T TELL: Tell your parent, carer or a trusted adult if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, or if you or someone you know is being bullied online.

Find out more at Childnet's website ...
www.kidsmart.org.uk

Childnet International © 2002-2010 Registered Charity no. 1060173 www.childnet.com

Childnet International KidSMART

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing During Exam Season

Exam season can be a particularly stressful time for children and young people, putting extra pressure on their mental health and emotional wellbeing. The added stress of exams can lead to issues such as anxiety, depression, sleep problems, and low self-esteem. The fear of failure, unrealistic expectations, and the pressure to perform well can weigh heavily on young minds, making it important for parents to recognise the signs of emotional distress and provide support. It's crucial to encourage children to talk openly about their feelings and any worries they have about exams. Parents/carers can also help by promoting healthy routines during exam season. Ensuring that children get enough sleep, eat balanced meals, and engage in physical activity can support their mental and emotional resilience.

[Exam Stress | How To Deal with Exam Stress | YoungMinds](#)

YOUNG MINDS





Looking ahead to Term 5



We look forward to hearing all about Mr Allen’s success over Easter in taking part in a sponsored ride, raising money for Birmingham Hospice, a cause close to his heart.

Staff & Students return to school on Monday 28th April. It is a short term and we will finish on Friday 23rd May for half term.

Stay connected!



You can find out what’s happening in school throughout the year by following us on social media. You can find us on Facebook and Instagram.

By following us you can easily stay up to date with what staff and students are up to, as well as get more information about school holidays, local support and emergency closures for example.

For more general information about the school , you can visit our website www.altusschool.org.uk



Do you want to get more involved in school life? We are looking for volunteers!

The Management Committee oversees the running of the school. It is a volunteer body who work alongside the school’s leaders to agree the aims, policies and priorities of the Altus School. We would welcome any parents and carers who would like to join this group.

Our chair of the management committee is Lyn Dance. Lyn has worked in special schools in Gloucestershire for over 30 years and brings a wealth of leadership experience to the role.

You will also work alongside staff members, as well as volunteers from the local community, including our Vice Chair, Philippa Dancey.



Wishing you all a Happy Easter.