CHILTERN LEARNING TRUST

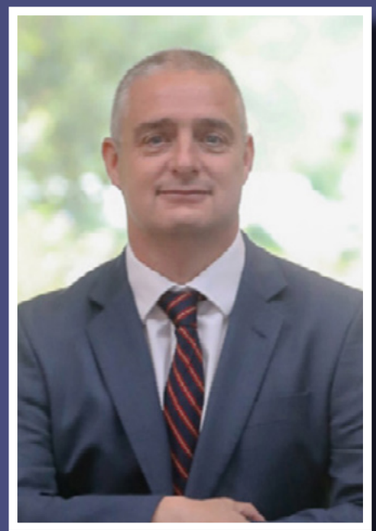
CHILTERN ACADEMY
INSPIRING MINDS · BUILDING FUTURES

HEADTEACHER UPDATE

FOR THE PARENTS OF CHILTERN | ISSUE 003 | AUTUMN TERM 2026

INSPIRING MINDS • BUILDING FUTURES

A Message from Mr Douglas, Headteacher



"What a busy and inspiring first half term it has been, particularly these last three weeks. I am proud to share some highlights below, each one a reminder of the talent, energy and kindness of our pupils...

Our first ever 'Celebration of Black Excellence' was a joyful evening of achievement, culture and community. Thank you to both pupils and guests who performed and spoke with such confidence, and to the families and wider community that joined us.

Congratulations to our dancers, who took second place in the CLT Dance Competition. Their hard work, creativity and teamwork were clear for all to see. A big 'thank you' to Miss. Bell who supported them.

It was wonderful to welcome so many prospective families to our Open Evening. Our pupil ambassadors were superb. Staff showcased all that we do so well at Chiltern Academy and, as usual, the feedback from families was splendid.

A group of pupils visited Silverstone for a STEM Careers Day, discovering the wide range of engineering and technology careers behind the world of motorsport.

Thank you to everyone who baked, bought and donated at our 'Macmillan Coffee Morning'. Together we raised over £1,000 for a fantastic cause.

As we head into half term, I would like to thank our staff, pupils and families for everything they contribute to our school community. I wish you all a restful break."

Y6 OPEN EVENING 2026

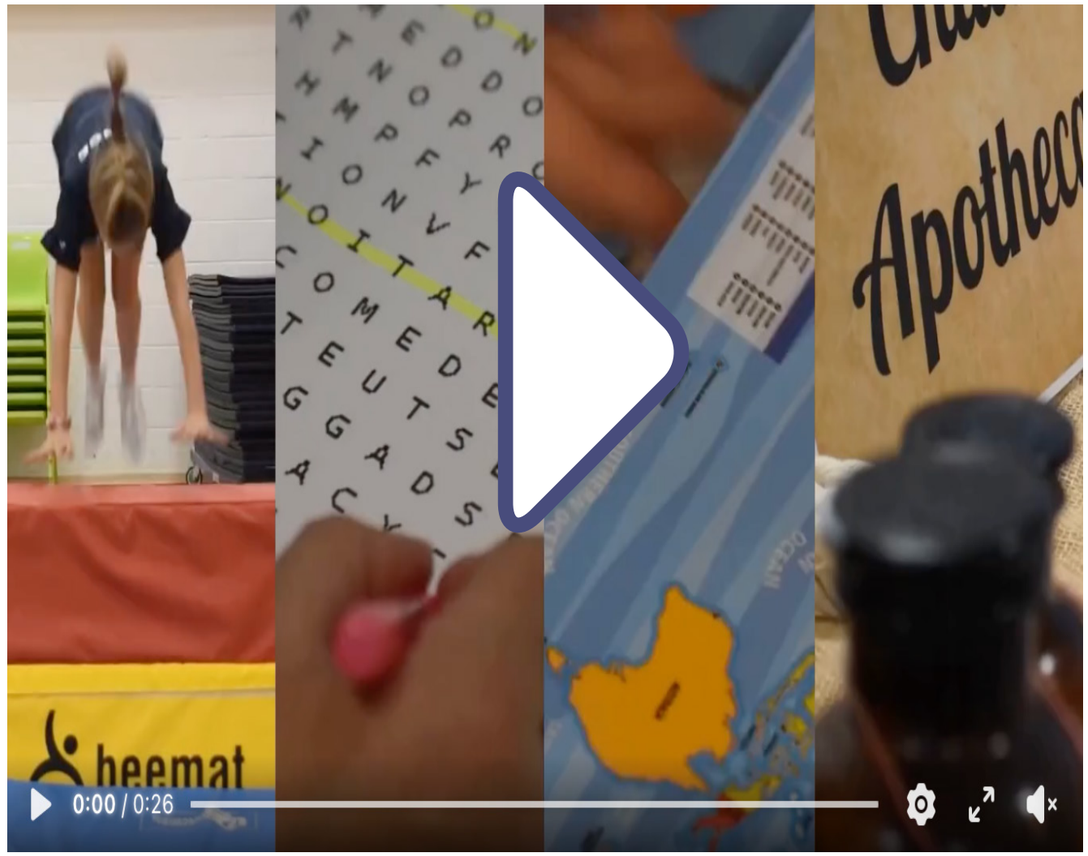
We had a truly fantastic Open Evening on Thursday, 22nd October, and were delighted to welcome so many prospective Year 6 students and their families!

The evening began with an inspiring presentation from our Headteacher, followed by insightful addresses from our Alumni and current students, who shared their personal journeys and offered a glimpse into the dedication, resilience, and spirit it takes to become a "Chiltern Champion."Their stories undoubtedly resonated with the audience, highlighting the diverse pathways open to our students.

Guests explored the building, immersing themselves in a wide array of activities thoughtfully prepared by our dedicated departments. In Physical Education, visitors tried their hand at trampolining and explored our well-equipped fitness suite, while Science and Maths were buzzing with curiosity-sparking experiments and mind-bending games. Meanwhile, English and French provided a feast for the senses, featuring a spectacularly themed A Christmas Carol grazing table alongside a lively French café where guests could brush up on their vocabulary. In History, staff got into the spirit with a "Guess the Teacher" dress-up activity and posed for selfies with Queen Elizabeth, while our talented Engineering students showcased their technical prowess with impressive VEX robots and F1 cars.

The energy throughout the night was infectious, with our current students doing a sterling job as school ambassadors.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the evening such a resounding success. We look forward to welcoming our next cohort of Chiltern Champions!



BHM: CELEBRATING BLACK EXCELLENCE

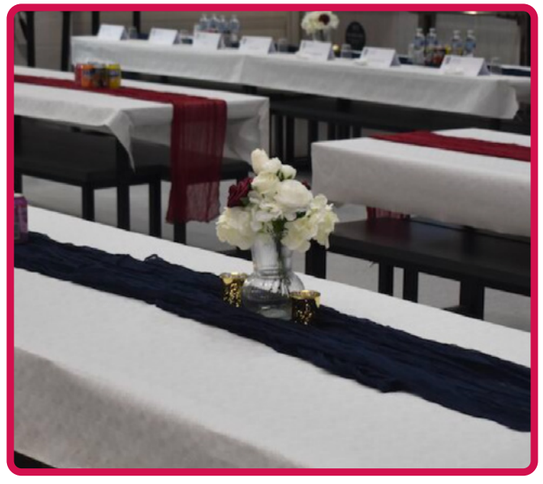
Our Black History Month celebration on Thursday, 15th October was a wonderful occasion as we came together to honour Black excellence under this year's national theme, "Honouring Our Communities".

The event showcased an array of outstanding talent from across our school, featuring expressive poetry performances from pupils, staff, and alumni, as well as inspiring speeches from local leaders, including Councillor Jacqui Burnett, Councillor Charmaine Isles, and Dr Patrice Evans. We were also proud to celebrate one of our own, Year 9 athletics county champion Zach, who shared his inspiring journey with the audience.

The main hall was brought to life through a vibrant mix of music, featuring dynamic Afrobeats routines from our dance leaders and uplifting songs by the Chiltern Academy Choir and Band. Adding to the atmosphere was a moving speech and violin performance from Oxford University student Blessing, one of our brilliant alumni.

Another standout highlight was a captivating steelpan performance by Ian Beckles, taking us on a rich musical journey through the history and culture of Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean.

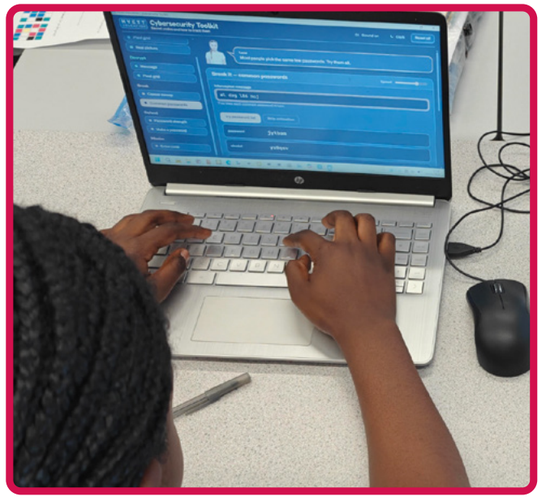
Thank you to all the parents, carers, and guests who joined us to support our young people and share in a delicious community feast of jerk chicken, jollof rice, and curry mutton.



CYBERSECURITY & CRYPTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Last week, the Maths and Computer Science departments collaborated to help host a successful Cybersecurity & Cryptography Workshop - helping promote cross-curricular learning for students. Throughout the day, Year 8s and 9s enjoyed getting hands on with equipment that helped with code breaking challenges. By solving practical challenges, they gained a much deeper understanding of how modern encryption works and why it is vital for protecting our personal data online every single day.

For the final task, students put their newly acquired skills to the test in a race against the clock to unlock a physical safe. The competitive element brought high energy to the room while promoting problem-solving, communication, and teamwork.



U13 GIRLS UTILITA CUP

Our U13 Girls put on a masterclass of grit, skill, and team spirit at the Utilita Girls Cup, battling their way to an incredible 3rd place finish in the Plate Cup!

The first time the girls played together as a team they showed determination against some tough competition with their quarter final and semi final games going to extra time. Narrowly missed out in the final with an extra-time goal, eventually losing to the Plate Cup final winners.

Some excellent teamwork between Wiktoria, Maria and Amayah led to some fantastic goals.

The Girls demonstrated fantastic passion throughout their games, a special well done to Lili and Ava who demonstrated fantastic skill by rotating in goal.

Lots of exciting time ahead for our Year 7 and Year 8 girls football teams, looking forward to the season starting after Christmas.

Team: Lili, Bouchra, Amayah, Zarrah A, Kimora, Ava, Maria, Wiktoria, Amira.

TABLE TENNIS TOWN CHAMPIONS

On Tuesday 6th October the year 7 & 8 girls and boys played in the Luton Schools Table Tennis Competition. Chiltern Academy has a rich history in this event seeing many teams qualify for the county competition and beyond. This year was no different; the girls finished 2nd overall with great performances against Icknield, Challney Girls, Denbigh and a loss against Lea Manor to seal their 2nd place.

The boys team played against Denbigh Challney Boys, Icknield, Lea Manor and Stopsley. The final was between Chiltern Academy and Icknield in the group it was a 2-2 draw with Chiltern Academy taking a narrow win to seal top spot on count back of points. In the final Chiltern Academy dominated to take the title as Table Tennis Town Champions and seal their place at the county round. Well done to all who participated.

Y9 GIRLS BASKETBALL WIN

Our Year 9 girls' basketball team put in a fantastic performance this week, coming away with a well-earned win against Putteridge.

The game started off pretty tight as both teams settled in and tried to find their rhythm. But as the match went on, the girls really grew into it. They adjusted well quarter by quarter—getting sharper with their passing, working harder on defence, and taking their chances as they came to pull ahead.

It was a proper team effort from start to finish, with everyone playing their part and supporting each other throughout. Special shoutout to our Player of the Match: Ashaya, who put in a solid, reliable performance all game with great movement across the court.

This strong result puts the girls in a brilliant position as they build momentum for the remainder of the season.

Huge congratulations to all the girls!

CLT DANCE FESTIVAL - 2ND PLACE

On Thursday 1st and Friday 2nd October, 15 Chiltern Academy dancers ranging from year 8 to year 10 took part in the CLT Dance Festival 2026. Thursday 1st October was our choreography day. We started the day off with a quick video call with all the other trust schools involved, to find out the theme for our performance. This year's theme was 'Ambition'. The dancers then spend 6 and a half hours in the dance studio creating their piece of choreography. The dancers worked so hard all day and managed to maintain their creativity and energy.

On Friday 2nd October, we headed to Putteridge High School for a fun dance workshop held by Laura from NGYT followed by the performances in the afternoon. The dancers represented Chiltern Academy unbelievably well, demonstrating resilience and determination throughout the day. This was reflected in their final performance which resulted in them pacing 2nd in the overall competition. We are immensely proud of the students' hard work during two very long, tiring days. We now look forward to next year's festival!

Y7 BOYS RUGBY WIN

On Thursday 15th October the year 7 rugby team travelled to Icknield for their first ever rugby match. The game started off with a great intensity and Icknield scored the first try with Chiltern Academy levelling the score shortly after. Icknield then scored two quick tries to take a 15-5 lead before Chiltern Academy showed great resilience to level the scores just before half time to make it 15-15.

The second half Chiltern began with a thirst for the tackle and dominated the ruck area turning the ball over and retaining our own possession scoring five unanswered tries to take a massive 15-40 lead before letting in a late try for the score to finish 20-40 for a fantastic win in their first outing a very promising performance for the season ahead, great effort and determination shown by all the side.

Y7 BOYS BASKETBALL WIN

On Wednesday 14th October the year 7 basketball team travelled to QES to play their Luton Schools Basketball fixture. Chiltern started off at a furious pace hassling and trying to regain possession of the ball at halftime Chiltern held a 0-10 lead of the hosts.

The second half started in a similar fashion and the boys continued to dominate the game in terms of possession and turnovers coming out victorious with a 6-23 win for their first victory of the season.

FOOD TECHNOLOGY LESSONS

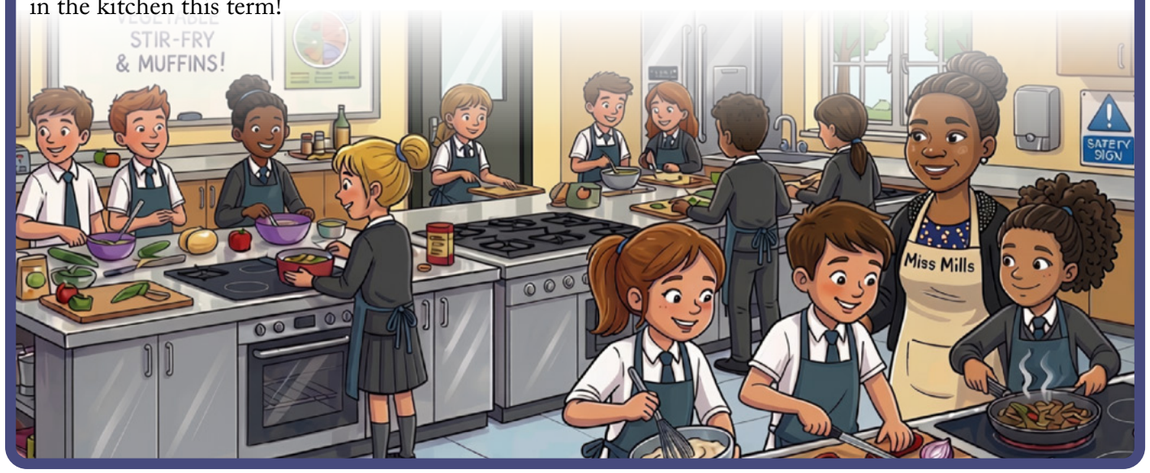
What a fantastic term it has been in the Food Department! Our students have been busy honing their culinary techniques and deepening their understanding of nutrition.

Our Year 7s took an exciting step by cooking individually for the first time in school. They demonstrated great independence while mastering basic knife safety and assembly skills to prepare fresh salads and savoury baked pocket dishes, as well as making sure they adhered to safety and hygiene standards.

In Year 8, students explored the essentials of macro- and micronutrients, putting their learning into practice by whizzing up smoothies, perfecting pan-control for omelettes, and practising delicate folding techniques for vegetable spring rolls.

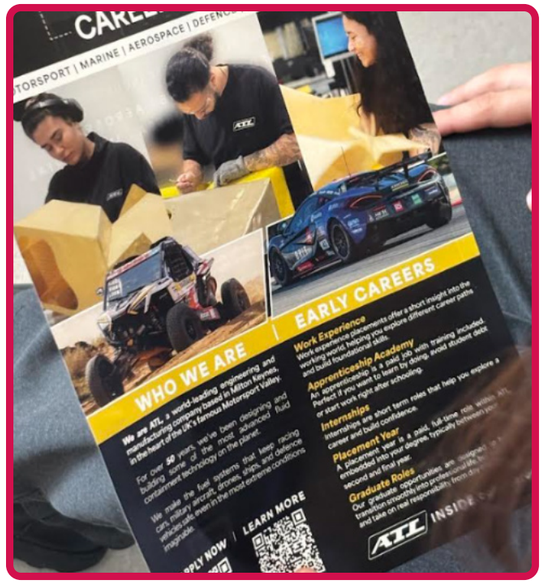
Year 9 revisited key nutritional concepts with an added focus on food allergies and safety. They put their hob-top cooking and layering skills to work, successfully crafting delicious pasta dishes and loaded nachos. Meanwhile, our Year 10s have been sharpening their precision knife skills, mastering slicing, dicing, and bridge-and-claw holds across a range of vegetables to construct a vibrant salsa.
Our very popular new cooking club has been a fantastic addition this term; members have already enjoyed making pancakes, scrambled eggs, and bruschetta, with toasties lined up for the next session.

We are incredibly proud of the confidence, creativity, and practical skills all our young chefs have shown in the kitchen this term!



SILVERSTONE MUSEUM CAREERS SHOWCASE

Our engineering students recently had the opportunity to connect with a host of employers and educators in the world of STEM at the Silverstone Museum Careers Showcase. One of the highlights for Joel, Y10 was speaking to the Silverstone University Technical College - helping him to identify a clearer understanding of how to secure a place with them after year 11.



'WHY GO TO UNIVERSITY' SESSION

During the Year 9 visit to the University of Hertfordshire College Lane Campus, 30 of our students took part in an inspiring and highly engaging day designed to offer a genuine taste of higher education.

The trip kicked off with an informative "Why Go to University?" session, which helped students explore the long-term benefits of degree-level study, career paths, and the unique aspects of campus life. Throughout the day, students actively participated in interactive taster sessions, allowing them to experience university-style learning firsthand and spark their interest in different academic disciplines.

In addition to enjoying lunch on campus alongside current undergraduates, the group went on comprehensive campus tours led by friendly student ambassadors. These guided walks gave our students an inside look at the campus's state-of-the-art academic facilities, modern learning spaces, and student accommodation, giving them a realistic picture of day-to-day university life before heading back.

FREE FILM AND SCREEN SUNDAYS

University Of Hertfordshire - Free Film and Screen Saturday Club for 13-16 Year Olds

CLUB DATES:
07 November 2026 - 10 July 2027

Saturdays, 10:00 - 13:00

University of Hertfordshire, College Lane Campus, Hatfield

To apply for a place, click the link here

POEM

I'm so incredibly proud to share "Ghost", a poem written by one of our pupils and based on a real day at school. Through the image of a ghost that trails behind them, they capture with honesty and courage what it can feel like to navigate busy corridors, a loud canteen and sudden noises on the stairs, all while wanting so much to be "the same" as everyone else.

The final line, where they walk back into class "unfazed" while the ghost "still feels it", stopped me in my tracks: it's a powerful reminder of how much our young people carry that we don't always see. I'm amazed by the talent, insight and bravery shown here, and so proud of the inclusive culture we're building together, where pupils feel safe enough to share their voices and staff who notice, check in and care make all the difference.

Thank you to everyone in #teamSEND for the work you do every day, and to this brilliant young writer for reminding us why it matters.

CLICK HERE TO READ

POST 16

Research local post-16 open events and course offers on the My Guide at 16 website.

CLICK HERE

SEND corner - Mr Mistry Associate Assistant Headteacher/SENDCo

Understanding Interrupting in ADHD: Signs, and Strategies for Home and School

Why interrupting happens

For many children with ADHD, interrupting is not rudeness. It is a symptom of how their brain manages impulses, attention and memory.

Impulsivity is one of the core features of ADHD, alongside inattention and hyperactivity. A child may know perfectly well that they should wait, yet the urge to speak arrives faster than the brakes. Weaker working memory adds to this: if the thought isn't said right now, it may be gone in ten seconds, and the child knows it. The graphic Signs of Interrupting captures nine ways this shows up in everyday conversation. Understanding each one helps adults respond with teaching rather than telling off.

SEND Corner SEND Corner SEND Corner

Most children with ADHD will show some, not all, of these. Many of the same signs also appear in adults with ADHD at work and at home.

Strategies for parents at home
The goal at home is to give your child tools for waiting, not just rules about it. Practise when everyone is calm, and keep the tone warm.

- Use the "hand on shoulder" signal. Your child places a hand on your arm or shoulder when they want to speak. You cover it with your hand to say "I know, you're next," then turn to them as soon as you can. It acknowledges them without breaking your conversation.
- Use a talking object at the dinner table. Only the person holding the spoon, ball or toy speaks. It makes turn-taking visible and playful.
- Practise waiting through games. Board games, card games, Simon Says and "Red Light, Green Light" all build turn-taking and impulse control in a low-stakes way.
- Agree a "pause" phrase. A calm, private cue like "bubble" or a gentle gesture reminds your child to check themselves, without embarrassing them in front of others.
- Praise the waiting, not just the stopping. "You waited until I finished talking to Grandma, thank you" teaches far more than repeated corrections.
- Model good listening. Let your child finish their own sentences, and narrate your own waiting: "I want to say something, but I'll wait until Dad's finished."
- Gently redirect tangents. Try "Great thought, let's park that and come back to it after we finish this." Then actually come back to it.
- Plan for high-risk moments. Phone calls and visits are classic interruption times. Before you start, set your child up with an activity and agree how they'll signal if something is urgent.
- Talk about the why afterwards. In a calm moment, explain how interrupting can make others feel, and ask what would help them wait next time.

Classroom strategies for teachers
In a busy classroom, the best strategies give every pupil a way to participate, which reduces the pressure a child with ADHD feels to call out.

- Make everyone answer at once. Mini-whiteboards, thumbs up/down, or "tell your partner" means the child can release the answer straight away without blurting.
- Use think–pair–share. Pupils think quietly, tell a partner, then share with the class. The partner step satisfies the urge to speak immediately.
- Try "wait time" with a visual cue. After asking a question, count silently to five with fingers visible before taking answers. A visual timer works well too.
- Provide a "parking lot." Sticky notes or a jotter on the desk where pupils write ideas or questions to raise later. Check it at the end of the lesson so it feels worthwhile.
- Agree a private signal. A tap on the desk or a look, arranged with the pupil beforehand, prompts them to pause without a public telling-off.
- Use talk tokens. Each pupil gets a few tokens per discussion and spends one to speak. It builds awareness of how often they contribute.
- Seat strategically. Near the teacher and away from distractions makes discreet cues easier and keeps the pupil connected to the conversation flow.
- Break up long teacher talk. Short bursts of input with regular chances to respond suit an ADHD brain that struggles with slow or lengthy delivery.
- Teach conversation skills explicitly. Role-play turn-taking, spotting a pause, and how to join a conversation politely. Display the steps as a visual reminder.
- Notice and praise. "I saw you put your hand up and wait, well done" is a powerful reinforcer, especially for a child who usually hears corrections.
- Work with home. Share the signals and language you use with parents, so the child meets the same expectations in both places.

SEND Corner SEND Corner SEND Corner

Patience, consistency and support
Interrupting improves with practice, consistency and kindness, not with punishment. Children with ADHD often already feel they are "always in trouble," so recognising effort matters as much as correcting mistakes. Pick one or two strategies, use them consistently at home and at school, and give them a few weeks before judging. Progress usually looks like fewer interruptions, not none.

SEND Reading Progress – Autumn 2026
We are delighted to share the excellent progress our students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) have made in reading. Over the past year, SEND students have made reading gains well beyond what we would normally expect in the time.

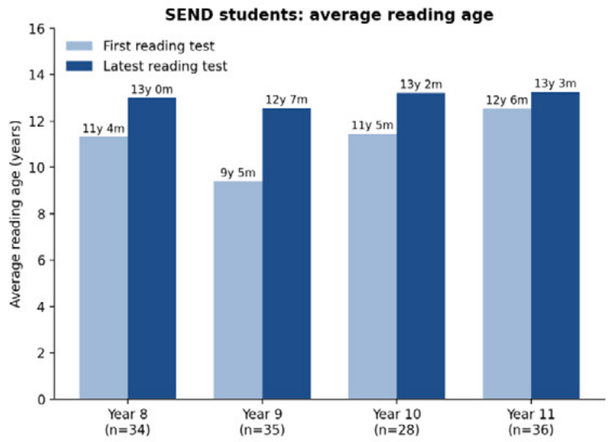
In Year 9, the average SEND reading age has risen from 9 years 5 months to 12 years 7 months. That is a gain of 38 months in about 15 months of school, so these students are improving at more than twice the expected rate. Almost every Year 9 SEND student (32 of 35) improved, and over half gained two years or more. One student's reading age rose by almost nine years.

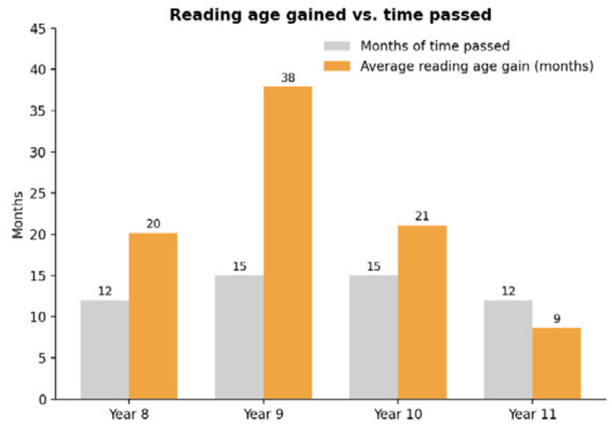
Year 8 SEND students gained an average of 20 months in 12 months, and their average reading age now stands at 13 years. Year 10 SEND students gained an average of 21 months in around 15 months, and three in five gained a full year or more. In Year 11, SEND students also continued to improve, with 16 of them gaining a year or more in reading age. Our Year 7 students have just taken their first test, which gives us a starting point for measuring their progress this year.

This progress matters. Reading is the key that unlocks every subject, from science and history to understanding a maths problem. Students who can read confidently can access the full curriculum, take part fully in lessons, and approach exams with confidence. For students with SEND, closing the reading gap can transform their experience of school and widen their choices for the future. These results reflect the hard work of our students, our staff, and the reading interventions in place across school.

With half term approaching, we ask families to help keep this momentum going. Reading skills can slip quickly during a break, while even 20 minutes of reading a day helps protect and build on the gains students have made. Any reading counts: novels, comics, magazines, news articles, recipes, or reading aloud together. You can help by setting aside a regular, quiet time for reading and by asking your child about what they are reading. Visiting your local library and showing that you value reading yourself also makes a real difference. Thank you for your continued support. Our students have shown what they can achieve, and with your help at home we are confident they will keep going from strength to strength.

Improvement in SEND Reading Ages by Year Group (first test → latest test)





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PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

! IMPORTANT - SAFEGUARDING !

Samaritans - Call 01582 720666

ChatHealth Luton - Text 07520 616070

KOOTH - Call 0203 984 9337

NSPCC - Call 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

Call 111 Option 2 - 24/7 ALL AGES

READ MORE

KEY DATES

w/c 26th October 2026 - Half Term

27th November 2026 - Staff Training Day

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@TheChilternAcademy

www.chiltern-academy.co.uk

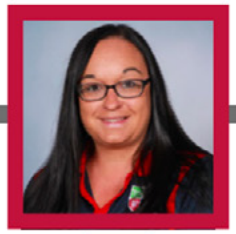
CHILTERN LEARNING TRUST

CHILTERN ACADEMY
INSPIRING MINDS • BUILDING FUTURES

Meet our SAFEGUARDING TEAM

PARVEEN AKHTAR
Designated Safeguarding Lead | Assistant Headteacher

CLAIRE JEWSON
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



LYNSEY HILL
Pastoral & Inclusive Learning Leader

SHAMILA SADIQ
School Counsellor

GILES SMITH
Deputy Headteacher

AMY MANSFIELD
Safeguarding Governor

Have a concern?

Report it to

safeguarding@chiltern-academy.co.uk

Useful numbers:

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub | 01582 547653 (For direct referrals to Social Services)
Luton Police Station | 01582 401212