



## Head Teachers Message

Dear Parents, Carers, and Calthorpe Community,

As 2024 ends, I am filled with gratitude for our collective achievements and inspired by the resilience of our community during a challenging year. This term, we are looking forward to celebrating the opening of Oakland School, our newest satellite, which offers excellent facilities and expands opportunities for our learners. This reflects our ongoing commitment to support our city's need for placements and provide good quality education for more special learners.

We are especially proud to announce that Calthorpe Academy has achieved UNICEF's Gold Rights Respecting School Award, recognising our dedication to embedding children's rights into our ethos and curriculum. This is a significant milestone that highlights our values and commitment to empowering every learner.

In addition to this, we retained the prestigious IQM Flagship status for inclusion and the Quality Marks for core subjects. These achievements are a testament to the dedication of our staff and the vibrant community we have cultivated.

We also acknowledge that the education sector continues to face significant challenges, particularly around staff recruitment and retention, with increased workload and financial constraints impacting schools nationwide. Special schools, like Calthorpe, feel these pressures but we are working hard to find skilled professionals to meet the unique needs of our learners.

As proud members of Thrive Education Partnership, we benefit from a collaborative network of schools dedicated to excellence in special education. This partnership allows us to share resources, expertise, and best practices while accessing professional development and leadership programmes.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to all parents and carers for their invaluable partnership in ensuring our learners are safe, supported, and inspired to achieve their full potential.

Wishing you all a restful holiday season and a joyous New Year.

Best wishes,



**Mounir Meghalsi**

*Head Teacher*



Website:

[www.calthorpe.thrive.ac](http://www.calthorpe.thrive.ac)

Email:

[enquiry@calthorpe.thrive.ac](mailto:enquiry@calthorpe.thrive.ac)

Phone:

0121 773 4637



## Exciting Developments in Teaching and Learning

Last academic year, we took important steps to enhance the way we teach and support our learners. We identified a set of strategies from the Teaching Walkthrus that align with our school's vision and curriculum. Along with the Rosenshine Principles, these strategies guide us in understanding how our learners acquire new knowledge and how they can apply it in their daily lives.



These approaches focus on key areas such as building positive relationships, developing vocabulary, and reinforcing learning in meaningful ways. This helps ensure that every lesson we deliver is impactful and tailored to the needs of our learners.

To support our teachers, we've adapted our teaching and learning framework to emphasise continuous professional development. We use an instructional coaching model that provides teachers with targeted feedback on priority areas, ensuring their skills develop in ways that directly benefit our learners.



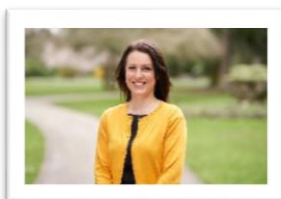
Through this model, we aim to:

- Enhance teaching practices and provide ongoing support for our teachers
- Promote evidence-based practices that are proven to work
- Increase learner engagement and success
- Build a reflective, collaborative culture among staff
- Encourage long-term professional growth

In addition, we are continuing to develop our curriculum provision. We're excited to share that Darek Katarzynski, who has been with us for several years, is now leading our ICT provision. Many of our learners truly enjoy this part of the curriculum, and Darek is working hard to expand and enhance it. This initiative is helping our learners develop the digital skills they'll need in the future.



We are proud of the progress we've made this term and are committed to ensuring that our learners receive the best possible curriculum provision to prepare them for success.



**Gemma Nicholls**

*Deputy Head Teacher*



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## Our Exciting New Provision



We are excited to share the news of our brand-new site, Oakland, set to open in early 2025, complementing our existing school facilities at Calthorpe and Belgravia.

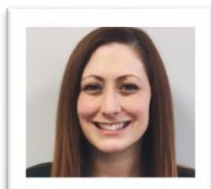
Designed to provide a highly specialised and supportive environment for initially Key Stage 3 learners with complex autism, this exciting new provision reflects our ongoing commitment to meeting the diverse needs of all our learners and creating spaces where every young person can thrive.



The new provision has been carefully planned to offer a tailored educational experience, focusing on the unique strengths, abilities, and requirements of our learners.

We are incredibly excited about the opportunities this new site will bring, not only for our learners but also for their families and the wider school community.

As we prepare to open our doors early in the New Year, we look forward to seeing this vision come to life and sharing in the success and progress of our learners.



**Laura Lee**

*Assistant Head Teacher*



**Andrew Blakeley**

*Assistant Head Teacher*



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## Our Learners Shine at the OT Conference

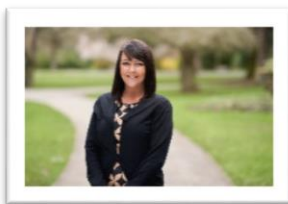
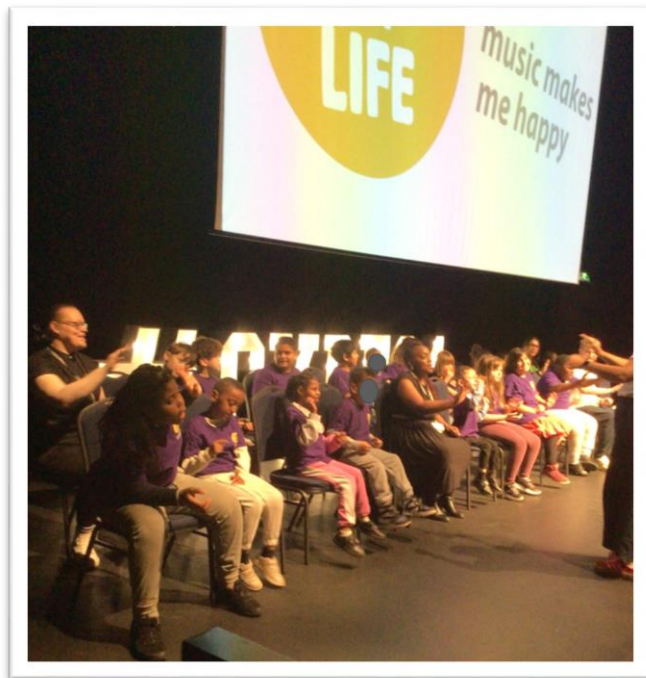
We are incredibly proud of our Music for Life choir, a talented group of learners who recently performed at a prestigious Occupational Therapy conference, a national event for practitioners from across the sector.

Our choir comprises of children from across our Learning for life pathway and they captivated the audience with their enthusiasm and love for music, with songs rehearsed at school on a weekly basis with the Music for Life team.

In addition to this achievement, the choir also showcased their performance for parents during a special event at school. It was heart warming to see the joy and pride on everyone's faces as our learners shared their talents with their families.

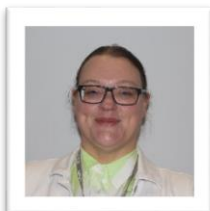
These performances highlight the creativity and resilience that our learners demonstrate and the powerful role music plays in their development and well-being.

Well done, Music for Life Choir—you've made us all very proud!



**Teresa Ward**

*Assistant Head Teacher*



**Mikeala Dowling**

*Performing Arts Lead*



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PE News

Students in the Learning for Life pathway have been developing their football and teamwork skills throughout the autumn term in a lunchtime club, led by a specialist football coach from Aston Villa.

They have also had the chance to demonstrate their skills in a monthly tournament at the new Brookvale Academy building in Aston.

The learners have enjoyed playing on a modern, state-of-the-art football pitch and have expanded their social circle by connecting with new friends from other SEND schools in the area.



Currently, the team ranks 5th in the league, with a total of 14 goals scored by various learners. Well done to the team!



**Danielle Carrick-Perks**

*Head of PE*





## Foundations for Life – My Outdoor School

It has been an exciting term for Foundations for Life within My Outdoor School.

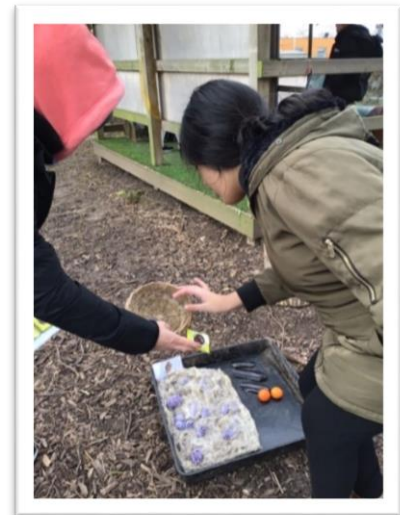
We have been fortunate to have spent last academic year working with Laura Wilson from Learning Journey's consulting to help develop and enhance our Outdoor School Area and our delivery of this subject / vehicle for learning.



Laura has recently returned and observed our sessions to see the wonderful progress we have made. Laura commented that *'it was a pleasure to return to see the staff and learners. The sessions were well planned and worked to support the different learning needs. Learners were all really enjoying the space and those who have attended for a while appear confident and relaxed in the space'*.

*'Calthorpe staff are demonstrating real confidence in the outdoor space and using relevant resources and a range of well-prepared workbooks. Sessions link well to the curriculum and desired learning outcomes'*.

It has been really positive working with Laura and enhancing our provision with a learner-centred approach. Learners are enjoying the space more, having access to wider learning opportunities and generalising a range of skills in an outdoor setting.



We are looking forward to continuing to develop My Outdoor School provision!



**Jila Chishimba**

*Extended Leader for Foundations for Life*

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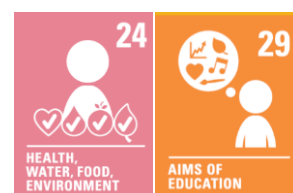
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Celebrating Creativity: Our Exciting Artsmark Journey

We are excited to share that we are working towards the prestigious Artsmark award, which celebrates high-quality arts and cultural education and awarded by Arts Council England. This journey is enhancing our Creative Arts provision, ensuring it is inclusive and accessible for all learners.



This term learners from our Student Council have actively supported the development of our Art curriculum, sharing their feedback on what they enjoy and their interests. Their input is helping shape the creative direction of our school.



This term, our Music of Life choir performed at the National OT Conference at the REP Theatre, showcasing their talents and representing our school. They have also featured in Shine a Light by Soundabout Choirs & Friends video (ft. Kate Nash, Alan Titchmarsh, Lost Voice Guy & LSC- this can be viewed via YouTube)! Additionally, Performing Arts students from Birmingham Ormiston Academy have been supporting music, movement, and art sessions across all curriculum pathways, enriching our learners' learning experiences.



Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that Jessie's Fund will be starting a CPD project to support the development of music teaching and learning within Belgravia and the Engagement for Life Pathway. We have also been selected for a 6-week SEND dance provision, funded by FABRIC and Sport Birmingham, starting in the Spring term.

As we continue on our Artsmark journey, we appreciate your ongoing support and look forward to sharing more exciting updates with you in the future.



**Laura Williams**

*Assistant Head Teacher*



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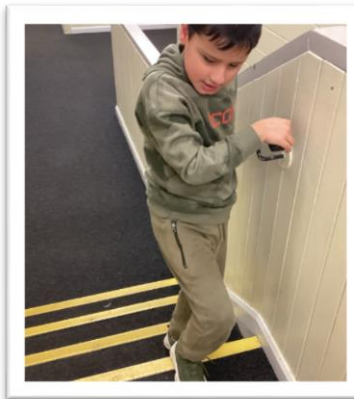
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## Engagement for Life News

This autumn term has been a busy and rewarding one for the Engagement for Life Pathway.

A key focus has been developing movement skills through the MOVE programme. To support this, we've been embedding opportunities for movement throughout the day, with a particular emphasis on sitting, standing, walking, and transitioning between these positions.



By increasing these movements both at school and at home, we aim to enhance learners' independence and their ability to explore the world around them.

We're incredibly proud of the progress made so far and look forward to an active and exciting year ahead!



**Aimee Prentice**

*Extended Leader for Engagement for Life*



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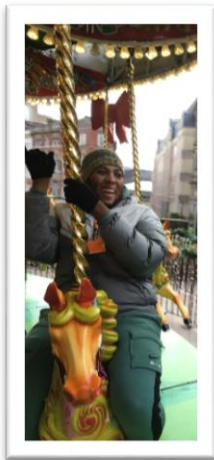


Post 16 at the German Market

As part of Birmingham's Frankfurt Christmas Market Special School Project; Post 16 learners visited the Birmingham Frankfurt Market in their Community Participation lessons. During the visit, learners enjoyed a ride on the carousel and a hot chocolate topped with whipped cream and marshmallows.



This experience provided an opportunity for learners to engage with their local community and practice skills developed in community participation lessons. From navigating a busy environment to interacting with others, the trip supported the development of practical life skills and encouraged greater independence in real-world settings.



It was a valuable and enjoyable experience for all involved and everyone returned full of festive cheer!



**Sarah Jobson**

*Extended Leader for Post 16*



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[www.calthorpe.thrive.ac](http://www.calthorpe.thrive.ac)

Email:  
[enquiry@calthorpe.thrive.ac](mailto:enquiry@calthorpe.thrive.ac)

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## Introducing Suraj Singh: Our New Extended Lead for Post-16

Dear parents and carers,

My name is Suraj Singh but my colleagues know me as Sunny, I have had the privilege of working at Calthorpe Academy for 11 years in the Engagement for Life pathway. I am passionate about supporting our special learners and feel incredibly proud to be part of the Calthorpe community.

I am thrilled to have been appointed as the new Extended Lead for Post-16 and look forward to work more closely with the school's leadership team. My aim is to make a positive impact on our Post-16 provision, ensuring the best outcomes for our learners as they transition into adulthood.

Building strong partnerships with parents and carers is a priority for me. I am committed to engage with families early and develop positive relationships to achieve our shared goals for the young people in our care.

I officially start this new role on 6th January 2025 and am excited to embrace this fantastic opportunity.

Thank you for your continuous support and will see you around very soon.



**Suraj Singh**

*Extended Leader for Post 16 from January*



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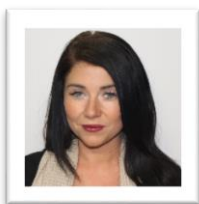
## 'Animal Man' Visits Belgravia

Belgravia School recently enjoyed a special visit from the Animal Man, who brought a variety of animals for the learners to explore.

The session was tailored to be sensory-friendly, with opportunities for the students to touch and observe the animals at their own pace.

The Animal Man brought along spiders, snakes, lizards and frogs, plus many other fascinating animals for our learners to explore. It was a wonderful opportunity for our learners to engage with nature, build confidence, and enhance their learning in a relaxed, supportive environment.

The visit sparked excitement and curiosity across the school!



**Leanne Maguire**

*Belgravia Head of Centre*



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[www.calthorpe.thrive.ac](http://www.calthorpe.thrive.ac)

Email:  
[enquiry@calthorpe.thrive.ac](mailto:enquiry@calthorpe.thrive.ac)

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## Parental Engagement

We have had a lovely term with very successful workshops these include, Communication workshop, Makaton workshop & coffee morning to meet our Speech and Language Therapist and Occupational Therapists based at Calthorpe Academy.



The turnout was amazing and I would like to thank all the parents who attended these workshops. Here are some very positive feedbacks:

- *"Very useful, helpful and informative session. Feel more at ease knowing the kind of help and support my child is getting."*
- *"Thank you, very useful"*
- *"It was very informative, I loved attending. It was very helpful"*

### Holiday club:

Bring it on Brum! Is running FREE activity clubs in Birmingham for those aged 4-16 who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. Throughout the summer school holidays.

Take advantage of these fantastic FREE holiday clubs across Birmingham so your child/children can have a fun-filled and safe holiday!

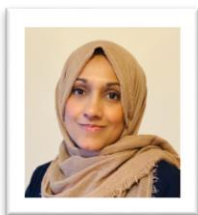
You will need this code to book your summer holiday activities through the Bring it on Brum! Website or directly with the holiday club of your choice. <https://www.bringitonbrum.co.uk>

Your summer Bring it on Brum! (HAF/FSM) code is: "330 7013"

For more information visit our school website:

[Bring it on Brum! Holiday club \(thrive.ac\)](http://www.bringitonbrum.co.uk)

Have a lovely winter break!!!!



**Masuma Rajwani**

*Family Support Coordinator*



Website:

[www.calthorpe.thrive.ac](http://www.calthorpe.thrive.ac)

Email:

[enquiry@calthorpe.thrive.ac](mailto:enquiry@calthorpe.thrive.ac)

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## Attendance update

Good attendance promotes great outcomes for children and young people!

Regular attendance helps children make the most of their education. It ensures that they don't miss out on important lessons, activities, and opportunities. Those who do not attend regularly may fall behind in their learning, leading to underachievement, both academically and socially.

Attendance Rewards:

We also celebrate and reward good attendance! Children who attend school regularly may receive certificates, prizes, to encourage them to keep up their excellent attendance.

### Pupil Leave of absence (Holidays in Term Time)

The two weeks school holidays are nearly here and many parents wonder about whether they can go on holiday early or during term time. We are really clear that going on holiday in term time is unlawful unless you have the advance permission of the head teacher to do so.

By law, Pupil leave of absence (holidays) can only be granted in exceptional circumstances and because of this, almost all holiday requests are denied and parents may be issued with a fixed penalty notice or court fine by the Council.

Some of our parents have had fines from the council for holidays taken during term so we encourage parents to

Please do not book holidays in term time. Every day in school is precious.

If you are struggling with your child's attendance and would like support please contact us on **0121 773 4637**

### Reporting absences:

If your child is absent for an unavoidable reason such as illness, please contact school on **0121 773 4637** to speak to us, or leave a voicemail.

### Medical appointments:

To reduce avoidable absence, please book routine appointments like dental check-ups outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, we encourage people to book appointments at the start or the end of the day to minimise disruption and maximise your child's time at school.



**Reminder of Term Dates:**

**Spring Term 2025**

Learners to return to school on: Monday 6th January 2025

Half-term: Monday 17th February 2025 to Friday 21st February 2025

Term ends: Friday 11th April 2025

**Summer Term 2025**

Term Starts: Monday 28th April 2025

Half-term: Monday 26th May 2025 to Friday 30th May 2025

Term ends: Thursday 17th July 2025

**Teacher Training Days**

Monday 24th February 2025

Friday 18th July 2025

Monday 21st July 2025

***\*The Academy will be closed for an additional Trust Training Day - The date for this has not yet been confirmed***

Wishing you a restful Christmas Break



**Rabia Hassan**

*Attendance Officer*



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