

BeyondAutism Schools Newsletter

SPRING 2024

Dear parents and carers,

We have had a wonderful spring term, especially now the weather is starting to get a little warmer! As always there have been lots of special events running throughout the spring term at both schools. It has been so great to see the creative endeavours of the pupils for Mother's Day (celebrating women), World Book Day and Geography Week. As well as the pupils developing their life and vocational skills with STEM week, pancake day and the continuation of AQA enrichment for both KS3 and KS5 pupils - including work on the hospitality and catering and manufacturing strands. The pupils' joy in these events and activities is brought to life by the staff's continued engagement in them - and hopefully you enjoy the weekly snippets in the parents' newsletter.

As always it has been a busy time ensuring that pupils are accessing our local communities. Teaching our pupils these life skills is invaluable and staff play no small part in ensuring that our pupils are learning road safety skills, safe community helpers and learning to travel safe and smart. This term pupils at Park House have continued regular community access to swimming, Alfarthing School, horse-riding and Lady Allen Adventure Playground. Tram House pupils have continued to also access swimming, rugby and are even trialing tennis at Sixth Form! Pupils at Tram House have been accessing regular half termly trips, including a recent trip to Gambado's, an athletics competition and skiing! At Sixth Form, pupils have engaged in community work experience both at the stables and Odeon cinema.

The staff at our schools have been engaging positively with trauma-informed training and ensuring that all of our pupils have an emotionally available adult that they feel confident to support them at times of crisis. There is more training to come on INSET day and we hope that the impact of trauma informed practice ensures that the daily interactions with pupils are meaningful, empathetic and caring. In January 2025, we will reapply for the mental health award scheme and the on-going work we do towards promoting positive mental health is a pivotal part to the success to retaining this award.

After Easter, we will welcome Corey Bulmer as the new Head of Pastoral Care at Tram House, many of you will have interactions with him over the course of the summer term and we are confident you will enjoy working with him. We look forward to welcoming him to the team.

Wishing you all a wonderful spring break.

Emma Price and Matthew Le Blanc

School information

Term dates - Summer 2024

INSET Days: Monday, 15th April and Monday, 3rd June

Term starts: Tuesday, 16th April

Bank Holiday: Monday, 6th May

Half-term: Monday, 27th – Friday, 31st May

Term ends: Wednesday, 24th July (12:30pm)

Admissions

We have had a busy start to the year with applications and tribunals. We are in a position to say that we are full at Tram House and are working on doing the same for the rest of the schools for September 2024. We will be conducting open days and assessments until we become full. Bhavini Chotai is now in charge of admissions for the schools and Post-19 and is enjoying visiting the various sites and meeting the learners.

Staffing and recruitment

New starters

We've had a number of staff join the organisation this term! A big welcome to the following Teaching and Learning Practitioners and Mentors...

Shanae Spence, Ragaa Abdelhafiz, Siham Musa, Lydia Betton, Tamara Pryie Sheldon, Ermira Gjordumi, Adikabu (Adika) Egbirika, Sasha Cobbinah, Marina Trokana, Sandra Francis, Gabriel Olszewski, Amina Nur, Betty Mutohondza, Folafunjesu Isaiah Aderemi, Lutfu Begum, Montana Duncan-Johnson, Jade Newson, Gunes Kabel, Chloe Stephens, Helene Klingsheim Dovkien, Rammari Harrison-Carr, Maximiliano Meko Abeme, Lily Wong, Heidi Gee, Isaac Osipitan, Joy Ivie Odigie, Meenuya Rabendran, Martin (Yen Yin Hon), Desiree Cox, Samya Abdel-Aziz, Bupe Makweti, Jeena Raj and Ellen Fox.

We have also welcomed Abigail Naki Darko (Occupational Therapist), Bobbie Stone (Behaviour Analyst), Jackie O'Dwyer (Talent Acquisition Manager), Sharleen Zonke (Marketing & Communications Officer), Candice O'Sullivan (Head of HR) and Ban Balkot (Finance Admin).

Chris Pain joins us as Chief Operating Officer and Laurence McKell as Interim Assistant Director of Education.

Leavers

We're saying goodbye to the following Teaching and Learning Practitioners...

Riddhi Divecha, Jessica Barsoum, Lola-Lee, Kayleigh Turtle, Norris Onyibe and India Baird.

We are also saying goodbye to Michelle Frangos (Head of Pastoral), Rhianna Mobile (Behaviour Analyst), Nathalie Johansson (Head of Pastoral), Isabelle Naryan (Tram House School Receptionist), Samit Godhanian (Advanced Skills Practitioner) and Cameron Fontaine (Head of HR).

We wish everyone the best in their future endeavours!

Updates from around the schools

Woodlands Connections

Last term, over the course of six weeks, Class TH5 ventured into the heart of forest school education at Morden Hall Park, immersing themselves in the wonders of the natural world. Forest school philosophy guided their experiences, emphasising holistic development through play, risk-taking, and a deepening relationship with nature. Each week brought new adventures, from sensory explorations of the park's ecosystems to creative endeavours like crafting Christmas decorations from sawn wood. Through teamwork and risk exploration, pupils learned valuable lessons in resilience, collaboration and personal growth. Woodland Connections enriched not only their academic learning but also their independence, confidence and engagement with the world around them.



Athletics

Tram House pupils recently took part in an athletics competition over in Battersea Park, hosted by Enable Leisure. With grit and determination, they gave it their all alongside peers from schools in the borough in events such as long jump, shotput, javelin and 100m races, demonstrating their athletic abilities and team spirit. Bravo, team!



Rock Climbing

Pupils had fun at Parthian Climbing this February. During a private session guided by a climbing instructor, they learnt to rock climb safely. Rock climbing can be a great way to improve mental health and provides opportunities for learners to build on community access and get regular exercise to help regulate sensory needs.



Updates from around the schools

STEM Week

During STEM week, pupils entered the world of coding and learnt how to program a car. Through hands-on activities, pupils explored the fundamentals of coding, discovering which buttons propelled the car forward and navigating the intricacies of avoiding obstacles on the table. This experience not only introduced pupils to the principles of coding but also aided in developing problem-solving skills and collaboration as they worked together to navigate challenges and optimise their car's performance. By engaging with technology in a fun and interactive way, pupils developed a deeper understanding of STEM concepts and gained confidence in their ability to tackle complex tasks.



World Book Day

World Book Day proved to be a hit across the schools as our pupils showcased their love for reading by transforming into fun fictional characters for the day. From Cat in the Hat to Farmyard Hullabaloo, our classrooms were filled with imagination and excitement. Each class selected a book to focus on and enjoyed activities related to their books like planting seeds, face painting and storytelling, with red class ending the day by hosting a very special Alice in Wonderland themed tea party!



Geography Week

We explored the world during Geography and Languages Week. Each class voted for a country to dive into - Blue and Indigo embraced the spirit of Spain by cooking some patatas bravas and paella. Green class immersed themselves in the vibrant culture of Nigeria by painting the flag and grooving to Nigerian music. It was a great week of learning about cultures whilst building on key communication and independent life skills.



A word from the charity

Tracie Coultas-Pitman, CEO

It has been a short term, packed full of learning, activity and change. In January the organisation welcomed a new Chief Operating Officer (COO) Chris Pain, the interim Head of Post-19 Laurence McKell, and more recently Candice O'Sullivan as the Head of HR.

This term I have thoroughly enjoyed hosting networking sessions with our Teachers, Therapists, Behaviour Analysts and Advanced Skills Practitioners (ASPs)/Instructors where we were able to explore the leadership qualities found in each role. These events provided a rare cross-organisation opportunity for colleagues to spend an afternoon together, each person sharing a success story that reminded us all of why BeyondAutism exists – to ensure that autistic children and young adults access an education that empowers a life full of independence, choice and opportunity. I am looking forward to the next set of events in the summer term.

Our Research and Learning department have been driving continuous professional development opportunities for all staff, a fantastic suite of sessions that broaden our knowledge base and deepen our understanding to ensure we are leading autism education together. Our Lunch and Learn series has been a huge success reaching more than 1000 professionals and parents across England. These are available online once a month, so please look out for the summer term timetable and get booked in.

At the time of writing, I am looking forward to meeting with parents to discuss the steps we are taking to improve staff retention and to address any questions raised. There will be a summary of this meeting available to all parents at the beginning of the summer term.

I hope that you have an enjoyable Easter break.

Fundraising updates

This year we have a lot of exciting opportunities that you can get involved in!

Color Obstacle Rush: Saturday 18th May 2024

This summer, our staff will be taking on a new exciting challenge – but they'll need your help! Members of staff across the charity will go head-to-head in their teams to see who can raise the most donations. They will be taking part in the biggest run in the world that combines the fun of colour powdered runs, the thrill of an obstacle course, and the atmosphere of a music festival: The Color Obstacle Rush.

The team which raises the most funds will win a trophy for their service, individual medals, and endless celebrations as the undisputed winners of the #5kforBA Color Obstacle Rush fundraiser... until next year's victors take the trophy.

We would love you to get involved. We still have spaces available in our teams and by taking part in the run and raising funds, you can help your team take home the trophy. Sign up today and join us for our biggest adventure yet!

To sign up or find out other ways to support, go to: www.beyondautism.org.uk/support-us/fundraise-for-us/challenge-events/color-obstacle-rush/

A word from the charity

Quiz Night: Wednesday 8th May 2024

Tables are going fast, get yours today!

Join us this May for our annual Quiz Night fundraiser. This is a chance for you and your team to show off your knowledge and have fun in a friendly competition, with all funds raised going to BeyondAutism.

Hosted by broadcaster and journalist Jane Moore, the night features a silent auction, luxury prizes, a gourmet fish and chip supper and of course the quiz. Great for teams from work, families, friends, clubs and communities to get involved and make a difference.

The Quiz will be held at the Civic Suite, Wandsworth High Street, SW18 2PU and the tickets are £40 per person, in tables of 10. Interested? Register your team today at www.beyondautism.org.uk/quiz-night.

Parallel Super Sensory 1K: Sunday 7th July 2024

This summer we will be undertaking a new inclusive event, the Parallel SuperSensory 1K, and will be asking staff, families, and learners of all ages to join us in taking on this fundraising challenge.

Held in the grounds of the majestic Windsor Great Park and staged on the iconic Long Walk, Parallel Windsor is a festival of inclusivity with challenge events for all ages, health conditions and abilities. Parallel's innovative SuperSensory 1K, empowers participants with learning disabilities to exercise their senses over a series of challenges such as engaging with sound, taste, touch, and smell. Walk, push or run – 'Start Together, Finish Whenever'!

Sound like something you can get behind? Visit our website to find out more: beyondautism.org.uk/parallel-supersensory-1k/.

The Fundraising Team

We would like to thank all the parents, staff, volunteers and general public who make our work possible thanks to their generous donations. If you would like to become a regular giver and help support BeyondAutism, then please scan the QR code or visit beyondautism.org.uk/donate to sign up and be the difference for autistic children and young adults.



Thanks for reading! We would love to share your stories in the next issues of our newsletter. If you would like us to share your story or update, please get in touch with us by emailing our team at info@beyondautism.org.uk.