

December 2025: CEO News & Updates

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the end of another busy and successful term, I want to share some news and updates from across our Central England Academy Trust schools.

Collaboration

Our schools have been working together in lots of ways this term:

Staff have been coming together to share expertise, ideas and plan for continued development across key areas including: behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, inclusion and teaching and learning.

Our headteachers have been meeting regularly to ensure we are all working closely together to best serve our school communities.

We have run a number of Trust events to bring our schools together. We recorded a Christmas Song that involved the choirs from all of our schools, organised a trip to Bedworth Civic Hall to watch a pantomime performance of Aladdin, and also ran a Trust-wide Christmas Card design competition.

Our students have come together to collaborate in their celebration of key events, including: Remembrance Day, Anti-Bullying Week, Positive Noticing Day and many more.

We look forward to lots more **collaboration** next term, our events will include: a Trust Bake-Off, British Science Week, Neurodiversity and Disability Awareness and World Book Day.



Winning Card Design by Kaylie (Higham Lane School). Runners up: Ivan (Oak Wood Primary), Ruby (Higham Lane North), Martha (Michael Drayton) & Archie (Oak Wood Secondary)

News

Holy Trinity Church Christmas Gifts

We would like to say a huge thank you to Holy Trinity Church who donated Christmas gifts to a number of our Oak Wood Primary and Secondary school families. This very generous gesture will make such a positive difference to so many of our children; we are extremely grateful for their kindness and support.



First term at Higham Lane North

Higham Lane North Academy have had a fantastic first term with their founding year 7 group of students. There have been lots of exciting firsts, notably this month the Christmas Spectacular (a wonderful display of performing art talent!) and the Christmas Fayre where the Year 7 students showcased their leadership and service skills by running the Fayre themselves!

Past Student Success

We are so proud that to hear that a former Oak Wood Secondary pupil has been awarded a GOLD medal in Hairdressing! Sawda completed the Oak Wood vocational curriculum in Hair & Beauty before progressing to a mainstream Hairdressing course at North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College. She went on to compete in the World Skills Competition where she was awarded Gold! This is an incredible achievement, and it's wonderful to see that her journey in her vocational specialism began at Oak Wood Secondary!

Higham Lane School in the News

We are delighted that Higham Lane School has been named in The Sunday Times Parent Power 2026 Guide. The school was crowned the eighth best in the top ten comprehensive secondary schools in the West Midlands!

Watling Meadows Primary School

It's been an exciting time for our Trust, progressing our plans to open a brand-new primary school in September 2026. We worked with the local community to name the school (Watling Meadows Primary), we've been busy choosing uniform, setting up a brand-new website, ordering amazing resources and delivering a number of events for our prospective families. We are also excited to share the news that Darren Barrow has been appointed as the school's Headteacher. This month we also attended the Ground-breaking Event where we enjoyed seeing the site and receiving an update on progress so far.

Contingency Plan – we have been informed that, whilst works are progressing well, the school building will not be ready in time for September 2026. The plan is therefore that Watling Meadows will still open to Reception students, however this will be temporarily on the Higham Lane North Academy site – most likely for the autumn term – whilst works are completed. Warwickshire are working with us to set up a specialist early years space that will enable us to ensure that students from the two schools are kept separate at all times whilst both benefiting from use of the site.



Fundraising

During a conversation at school, Joseph (a year 5 pupil at Michael Drayton), learned that cancer patients have to contribute £80.15 towards their temporary wig – he decided that he wanted to do something to help. Through his Mum's workplace, boxes of sweets were donated for him to sell at school. A Just Giving page was also created, which alone raised £242. Well done Joseph!



£242

raised of £81 target by
18 supporters



A group of Higham Lane North Academy students invited members of staff from across the Trust to attend their Coffee & Cake sale. We were really impressed by their confidence in helping organise and host the event in the Specialist Resource Provision.

Staff at Higham Lane School have been fundraising to create a Therapy Garden in the school grounds to be accessed by staff and students as a quiet place to reflect and to support students with mental health or SEND needs. The space will become a key part of the school's pastoral provision.



Expansion Projects

Oak Wood Primary School's building work is well underway for the addition of new classrooms and specialist spaces for students. The work will be completed by the start of next academic year.

Oak Wood Secondary School was due to open its offsite post-16 provision this year, however due to building work delays it will not open now until next academic year. This remains an exciting project for the school, alongside its plans to develop outdoor spaces and learning for students as part of 'Project Playground.'

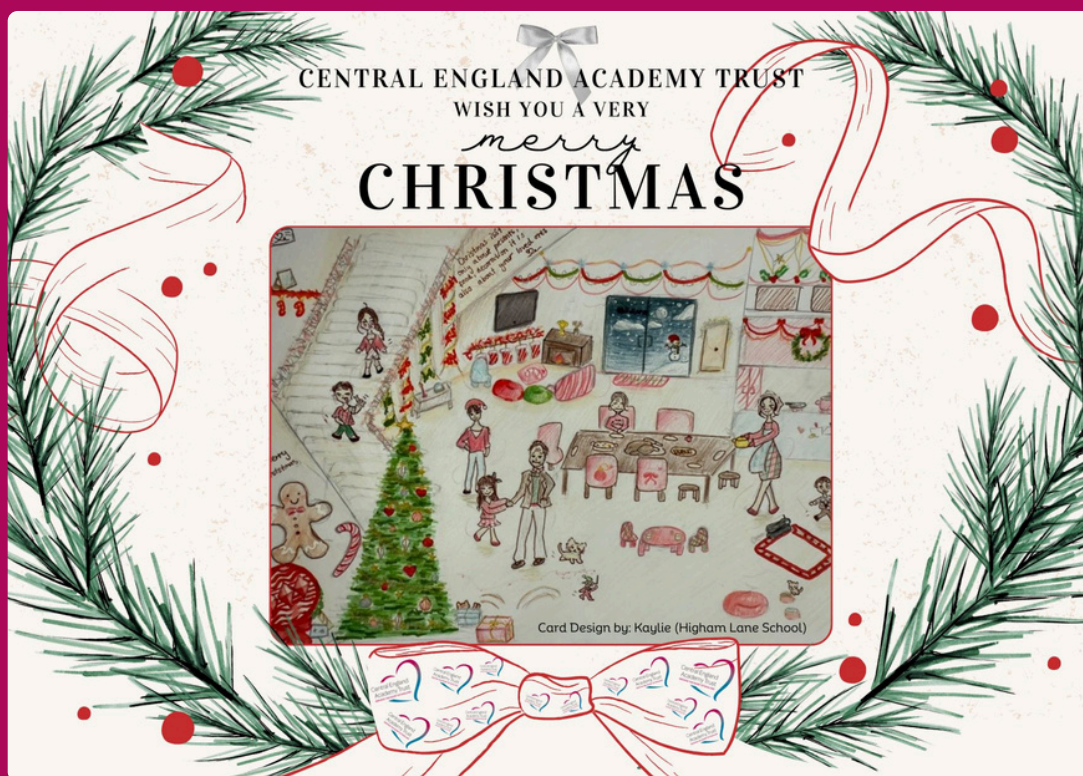
Christmas Performances

All of our schools have held wonderful events in the run up to Christmas, and the students have been fantastic and a credit to their schools. I have been privileged to attend at least one at each school: Higham Lane's Christmas Concert, Higham Lane North's Christmas Spectacular, Michael Drayton's Christmas Music Concert, Oak Wood Primary's Communication at Christmas and Oak Wood Secondary's Carol Concert at Holy Trinity Church. These events have got us all in the mood for the festive season!

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year – thank you for the continued support you show to our schools. We look forward to welcoming you back at the start of January.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Dickinson
CEO



Oak Wood
Primary



Oak Wood
Secondary



Higham Lane School
Work Hard | Be Kind | Take Responsibility

