

The best of **Connected** 2021–2022




This special issue of Connected features reports on some of the Trust-wide opportunities, outside of the academic curriculum, that our students were offered in the year 2021–22.

Our programmes give children of all abilities wide scope to discover what they are good at and develop it: whether singing, public-speaking, STEM activities, or entrepreneurship. Bringing together children from across the country in creative competitions and projects, our programmes widen all our geographical and cultural horizons and give the opportunity to learn from well-respected professionals.

At Creative Education Trust we want our children to walk bravely and without impediment through any door, to sit confidently at the table and speak with agency and conviction. We aim to ensure that students don't just leave us with qualifications, or the knowledge required to move forward to their next stage in education or into the world of work, but with pride and confidence in where they're from, what they know and who they are. Through this publication I hope you will see this work in action.

Nicole McCartney
Director of Education

At Creative Education Trust schools we nurture the whole child

- 
- 1 Abbeyfield School, Northampton
 - 2 Ash Green School, Coventry
 - 3 The Bulwell Academy Nottingham
 - 4 Caister Academy, Great Yarmouth
 - 5 Ellis Guilford Academy, Nottingham
 - 6 Harpfield Primary Academy, Stoke-on-Trent
 - 7 The Hart School, Rugeley
 - 8 Lynn Grove Academy, Great Yarmouth
 - 9 Queen Eleanor Primary Academy, Northampton
 - 10 The Milton Keynes Academy, Milton Keynes
 - 11 Thistley Hough Academy, Stoke-on-Trent
 - 12 Three Peaks Primary Academy, Tamworth
 - 13 Weavers Academy, Wellingborough
 - 14 Woodlands Primary Academy, Great Yarmouth
 - 15 Wrenn School, Wellingborough
 - 16 Wroughton Infant Academy, Great Yarmouth
 - 17 Wroughton Junior Academy, Great Yarmouth



Carol, Thistley Hough, performs *Vieni, vieni o mio diletto* by Vivaldi. Accompanied by **Lee Dunleavy**



Teodora, Wrenn, sings *Sebben, crudele* by Antonio Caldara

SINGING AMBASSADORS 2021

Freya Browett, Abbeyfield
Sophie Lambert, Bulwell
Jasmine Dunn, Caister
Emilia-Mae Owen, Ellis Guilford
Elise Bolas, Hart
Annette Muthoni, Milton Keynes
Carol Idrisha, Thistley Hough
Emma Fairbrass, Weavers
Teodora Dusa, Wrenn

SONGFEST '21

An historic event marking 10 years of creative education, *Songfest* was also the long-awaited debut of the cross-Trust senior choir, originally scheduled for July 2020 in the depths of the Covid pandemic during which singing was forbidden.



Tutored online in advance by Dr Charles MacDougall, Choral Director of the Voices Foundation, the choir rehearsed together for the first time just one week before the performance. The pieces were chosen carefully to stretch our best singers and depart from the predictable school choir repertoire. Our choristers demonstrated their musicianship and rose to the challenge of performing in Lingala, 13th century English and Latin.

The choir is formed of 32 secondary students from across Creative Education Trust. Nine of these, appointed as Singing Ambassadors, were hand-picked to receive additional vocal training and represent singing as an aspirational activity in school. Coached as soloists by Voices Foundation tutor Camille Maalawy, the Ambassadors enriched the concert with works by Fauré, Britten, Handel and other composers.

Choral conducting is among the core components of the CPD for music teachers delivered by Voices Foundation since Chorus began in 2017. It was a natural progression of the project that these teachers should form their own choir. The inaugural Creative Education Trust Staff Choir performance featured a Hawaiian spiritual, urging us to 'do what we can to take care of the earth', and Cross the Wide Missouri, a traditional song with roots in both North America and Great Britain

Watch the concert online:

<https://knowledgeconnected.org.uk/SongFest21>

Dr Charles MacDougall
conducts the choir



Annette, Milton Keynes,
sings *L'ho Perduta, Me
Meschina!* by Mozart



Emma, Weavers, sings *Pie Jesu*
by Gabriel Fauré.



Jasmine, Caister, performs *O Waly Waly*,
arr. Benjamin Britten



Freya performs *Già il sole dal
Gange* by Alessandro Scarlatti



At the eleventh hour, the 8th annual Creative Education Trust Shakespeare festival was paused for safety. But in recognition of what's gone into producing eleven punchy, 30-minute retellings of the Bard's stories – not to mention to keep our audiences baited for the postponed event – here is a tribute to the hard work and expertise of the companies of pupils and staff.

A choice of expertly abridged versions, which bring each play down to a sharp 30-minutes, always guarantees a good mix of comedy, tragedy and history. But how do you go about choosing which play for your students – especially when, for five schools, this was to be their eighth performance in the festival? **Abbeyfield** production director and Head of Sixth Form, **Rachael Dedman**, was keen to choose something new, and in fact, picked a work that many teachers will not immediately be familiar with: *The Winter's Tale*. **Hannah Lucas**, Drama Teacher at **Lynn Grove**, took a different approach: "After the rough two years we have had, I wanted a play with a happy ending: *The Tempest* was the one."

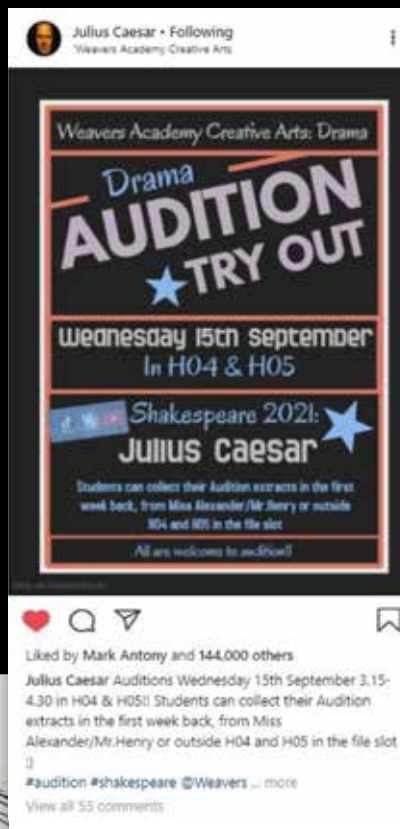
Choosing a play wasn't Hannah's only challenge as a new member of staff, and an early career teacher (ECT): "Nothing puts the fear into an ECT like introducing Shakespeare in the first term! But I found the students already had a good grasp of some Shakespeare plays and responded to my introduction to *The Tempest* with a great level of interest."

With the plays decided, it's time to build a team. "We 'advertise' but it's mainly face-to-face conversations with students that engages their interest", said **Lynsey Alexander**, Acting Head of Creative and Visual Arts at **Weavers**. "Our biggest draw is showing previous performances to students or, even better, hearing other students' feed back what a great time they had doing it. We develop a 'drama family' with the students who work on extra-curricular projects like this with us."

"The whole experience has really heightened the profile of drama in the academy."

SPEAKING THE BARD

It can't be denied that Shakespeare can be hard, and it can be daunting. Performers and their teachers benefit from a full day workshop led by a theatre professional (recruited by our partner agency HMDT Music), to develop their vocal delivery and interpretation of text. Actor Ryan Early left quite an impression on the students of **Caister**. "It was such a privilege for them to be able to work with a professional", said **Philippa Everett**, Drama Teacher. "They had the time to really delve into the text, which certainly benefitted our rehearsal process and overall experience of making a show."



BACKSTAGE WITH

SHAKESPEARE

Costume designs for **Milton Keynes'** production of *The Tempest*.



The cast of *Romeo & Juliet* rehearse at **Hart**.



Weavers' dress rehearsal of *Julius Caesar*. **Kieran** as Brutus.

Dec
2021



A colourful crown for **Ash Green's** *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Watching a school's performance, you're only seeing half of the participating students. Behind the scenes of each, a design team has considered how best to convey scene, mood, character and action with limited time, money, and means. **Mark Friend** (another HMDT Music recruit) is the designer we send in to support them. His crash course in Key Concept Meaning always starts with costume. Sketches are made, placing characters side by side to explore relationships and connections, to be expressed in what they wear or carry. Mark argues keenly for a reason behind every decision: "Everything seen on stage must be in support of the storytelling," and nothing should be purely decorative.

Milton Keynes' production of *The Tempest* places the action on 'Refugee Island' in the year 2051. Pulling off this bold concept required a close, working relationship between the drama and art departments. **Kristal Watkins**, drama teacher, explains: "The design team, enthusiastic volunteers in years 9 and 10, meet regularly to refine ideas and create the props and costumes. They check in with the director to take in any new developments and make sure we're all on the same wavelength."

Some schools take design in a different direction. "We want to make our audience feel uncomfortable", explained **Chris Collington**, Assistant Principal and director of **Ellis Guilford's** production of *Othello*. "People should feel something in a theatre, but the feeling doesn't have to be a nice one!" With a decision to deliberately unnerve, and a strong music technology programme, Chris and his students set about creating a soundscape. A single line of text, pulled and stretched using computer software to fifteen minutes, underscores the entire performance. Tense and dramatic moments are enhanced by increasing or decreasing the volume of the distorted noise – manipulated live, according to the pace of the action on stage, so that no performance is ever the same twice.



Mark Friend works with **Abbeyfield** sixth form students, **Saniya** and **Kyrat**.



Costume planning and insignia design for **Ellis Guilford's** *Othello*.

Meet the experts

HMDT Music devised the Shakespeare Days of Performance for Creative Education Trust in 2014.

Twice winner of the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Education and recipients of the 2020 Music and Drama Education Award for Excellence in Music Theatre, HMDT Music is a leader in developing inspiring arts projects that support other areas of learning. Projects in partnership with Creative Education Trust since 2013 include: New Folk in Town, a folk-song writing, composition and performance project for the centenary of the composer Benjamin Britten; We'll Meet Again, a music theatre piece commemorating the Second World War, accompanied by art exhibitions; and in 2018, Theory of Everything Creative, a new song-writing project prompted by the six key concepts of Knowledge Connected. HMDT Music has also worked with all the Trust primaries on its most recent national project STEM Sisters, which celebrates historical women in STEM through a multi-media puppet musical, science workshops and supporting resources.



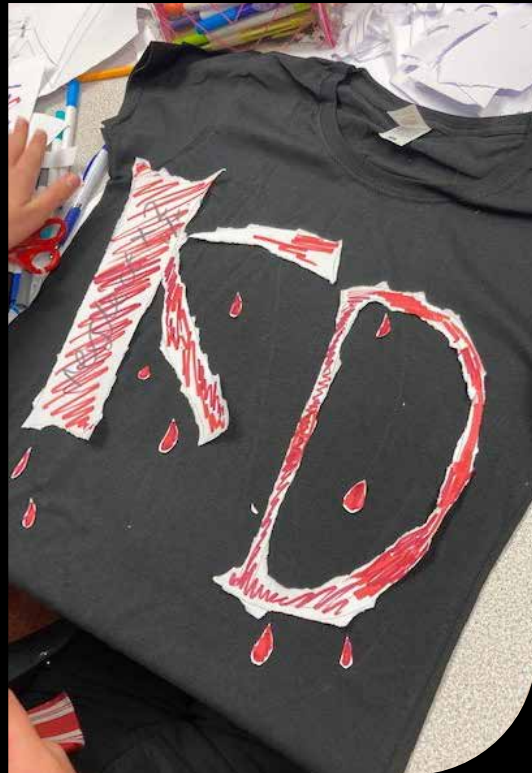
Mark Friend

As a theatre design graduate from Wimbledon School of Art Mark Friend worked as Associate Designer to Alison Chitty on many productions, including Peter Hall's Bacchae at the National Theatre, and for the Festival of Epidavros, Greece. He designed King John for Sir Trevor Nunn after assisting John Napier on Nunn's Wars of the Roses. He will be directing Ody and Penny in 2022 as co-artistic director of the Paint the Lyric Festival in Ithaca, Greece along side fabrication and performance workshops.



Ryan Early

Ryan trained as an actor at Drama Centre London and has worked extensively in theatre, television and film. He has performed in over 50 plays for BBC Radio 4 and 3 and has played Lee Bryce regularly in the BBC's longest-running drama, The Archers.



Katie Lewis

Katie trained at Birkbeck College on the MFA in Theatre directing. She has worked as assistant and resident director for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Theatre Royal Bath and National Theatre and has directed plays at the Library Theatre Manchester, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Old Red Lion Theatre and Arcola Theatre.

Humanutopia Confidence to be Heard

Creative Education Trust schools have recently been opening their doors to *humanutopia*, providers of motivational courses for young people. Year 6 and year 11 are the first years in the Trust to get a taste of the programme.

'The Big Jump' is a day of activity for year 6, which aims to get pupils excited about their hopes and dreams and not to be afraid to try new things – invaluable attributes for the sometimes-daunting move up to secondary school. It's all about empowerment and providing a positive experience to help support a smooth transition.

But it's not just about looking forward, it's also about looking back at the experiences they've shared together. One year 6 pupil from Harpfield reflected that the day helped them "realise that we haven't got that much time left together as a class and we need to make the most of the time that we do have."

For year 11, a day titled 'The Final Push' aims to help relieve some of the pressure students can feel as they near the end

of their secondary school journey. Encouraging them to express and then rationalise their fears and worries, students are supported to reassess their priorities, setting new and achievable goals.

With the first part of the day focused on considering their own feelings, confronting self-esteem issues, and openly discussing how others have made them feel, it's easy to imagine a room full of silent teenagers looking downwards. But this is not the case. Students are being empowered to stand up and speak for themselves.

Caleb, year 11 at Lynn Grove, was encouraged to step out of his comfort zone and stand up to talk about his feelings, without worrying about others' opinions: "A lot of people wouldn't stand up because none of their friends were, so they [humanutopia's facilitators] split us up so those people wouldn't be held back by not wanting to be the first person [to stand up]. The experience encouraged me to be more confident."

Creating a safe environment where confidence can flourish is paramount to the success of the day, and confidence is exemplified by humanutopia's team of facilitators, many of whom are former participants of the programme. It's a personal journey, and they know the power of speaking out and being listened to.

"It made me feel more confident to do the things that I want to do instead of thinking about what others might think about me."

Year 6 pupil, Harpfield



ON THE TOWN

Members of the Rugeley community enjoying performances from bhangra dancers as part of The Hart School's jubilee event.

Creative Education Trust's strategic goal under 'community' is for schools to become 'active and valued participants in their localities'. A new initiative agreed by the board in 2021 supports this endeavour, providing each school with the opportunity to submit a bid for a student-led project that delivers benefit to the community beyond the school. After the disruption of the pandemic, the projects are an opportunity to bring communities together and create a long-lasting impact.

To launch the Our Town Community Fund the Programmes team joined forces with the Edge Foundation, experts in Community Connected Learning, to deliver training to all project leads in September 2021. Laura Hay, Strategy and Partnerships Manager at Edge Foundation, presented case studies and activities that utilise the power of young people and enable them to connect the classroom to the world around them. "It comes down to what we value in education. If we believe students should not just learn about the world but also have opportunities to actively engage with and shape it, then we have to design for that. These experiences help students develop the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and habits to participate meaningfully in the local story, and most importantly, to realise their potential to play a positive and valued role in change," Laura said.

The **Bulwell Changemakers** delivered a presentation on their Our Town project to Alex Norris, MP for Nottingham North. The students gave him a tour of the community garden, talked through their plans, and interviewed him for their podcast.

Activities developed by the Programmes team and Edge helped students consider what issues they care about, the root causes of the problems they see in their community, and the impact they wanted to have. The bids submitted by each school show a range of brilliant ideas developed by Creative Education Trust students, including a reading project offering texts mirroring the diversity of the community, community gardens to address food poverty, initiatives to support positive mental health and wellbeing, proposals to protect the environment from litter and pollution, and projects promoting equality and allyship. We've been impressed by the fantastic contributions and enthusiasm shown by the students. Sandip Dosanjh, project lead at **Hart**, reported that her students are "absolutely dedicated to becoming changemakers in their town". The Hart School joined forces with Rugeley Town Council for the jubilee street party on 4 June 2022, transforming Anson Street into "Equality Street" for the day to tackle inequality and celebrate diversity through food, dancing, positive conversations, and community pledges.



Engaging with the local community is an essential requirement of the Our Town community projects. The Caister team are working closely with a local group, Caister Cares, made up of representatives from local charities, enterprises, and churches. The school team, Caister Kids Care, run events every half term to promote intergenerational relationships and tackle loneliness in the community. Archie, Year 8 at **Caister**, spoke warmly about "a time where we can come together, getting all our ideas into one to make Caister a better place." Woodlands is working with Bradwell Parish Council on protecting the environment from the dangers of litter. The winning designs from the school's poster competition may feature on the new Bradwell bins!



Caister Kids Care host their summer event with community members, enjoying arts and crafts, board games and a raffle.

The funds for each project have now been confirmed for each school, and we look forward to releasing a publication later this year to showcase each of the projects. We're excited to see the difference that each school project group makes. Lynsey, year 11 at **Bulwell**, captured a widespread feeling of creativity and hope: "I feel this can last, and really give us something to be proud of as a school. Most importantly, we'll be helping our community."

Students from **Harpfield** share their visions for a reading bus.



Over 30 changemakers from **Thistley Hough** met at Potbank, Spode, to plan the next steps for their project which focuses on taking action to promote and foster allyship in the local community.



The **Wroughton** group: "If we tidy this space, we can use it to grow healthy food."



The steering group for **Lynn Grove's** project, "Spread a little happiness", met to plan questions for NHS mental health professionals.

The "Going Greener" map, produced by **Weavers' Eco Ambassadors**, to drive forward the "Good to Grow" initiative. The initiative uses the community fund to invest in a greenhouse and poly-tunnels for fresh produce and cooking classes, improving wellbeing and promoting healthy eating in the community.



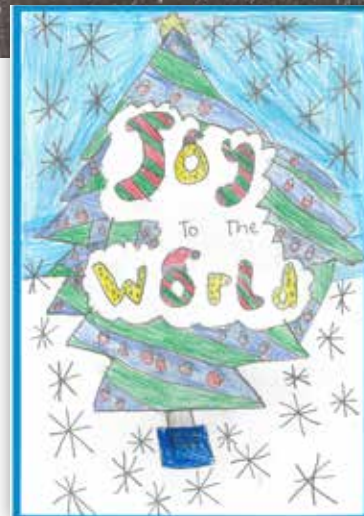
Joy To The World

Exceptionally joyful lettering by **Alayna**, Year 3 at **Harpfield**.

The Trust's inaugural card competition is here to fill hearts with festive joy. A call was put out to all students in all schools for a card design bearing either the phrase 'joy to the world', or 'peace on Earth'. A judging panel comprising the Directors of Education and Programmes, **Nicole McCartney** and **Emily Campbell**, and designer of *Connected*, **Nick Vincent**, had a tough job choosing a single winner.

The winning entry by **Madison** from Year 7 at **Milton Keynes** was praised by the judges for the steady hand with which she created a design that embodies the joy of the words it carries. Madison's work was produced as a card to send out to friends of Creative Education Trust.

A bold concept carried off well by **Angel**, Year 8, **Hart**.



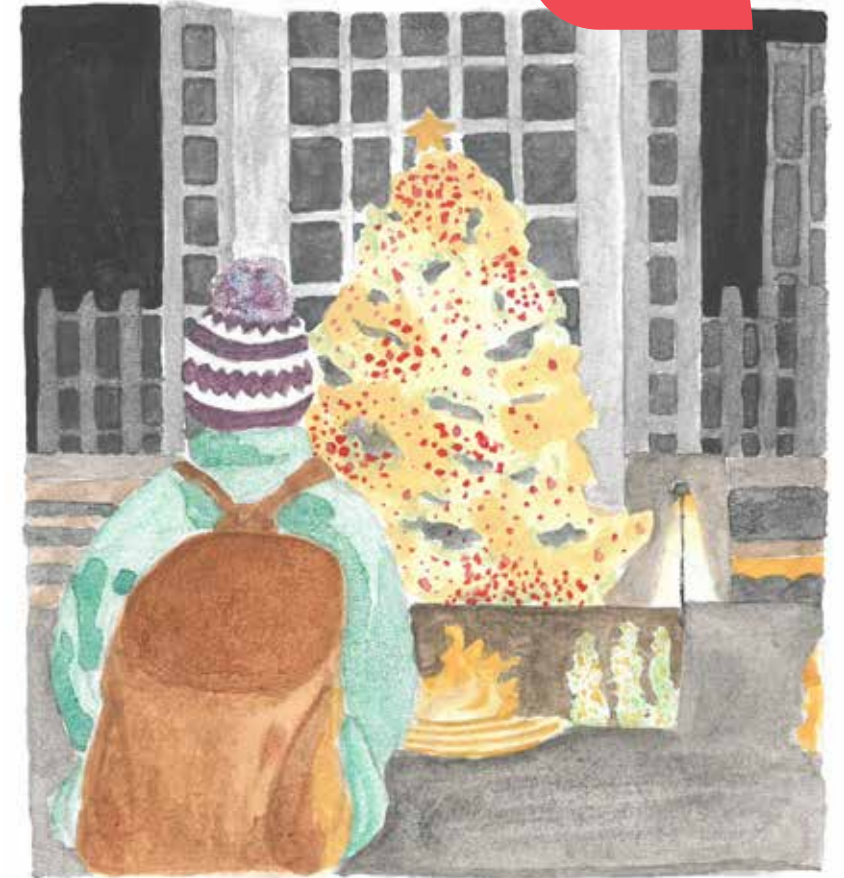
Great organisation of elements by **Elsie**, Year 3, **Wroughton**.



Wonderful line work from **Ellie**, Year 9 at **Bulwell**.



Lovely lettering and a quality illustration from **Nancy**, Year 8 at **Ellis Guilford**.



A beautiful, tonal reimagining of a scene from a festive film favourite from **Charlotte**, Year 10 at **Ash Green**.



Lovely crayon illustration by **Evelyn**, Year 12 at **Wrenn**.

SHARED Experience

In 2021 we marked a decade of Creative Education Trust by releasing the publication 'Ten Years of Creative Education: Alumni Tell the Story', and by launching our alumni network in collaboration with the education charity Future First.

We wanted to harness the power of alumni, knowing that they can be the best role models for current students. Alumni can now stay in touch with their former schools through the Future First hub online platform, where they can find out about upcoming ways of getting involved. We've seen alumni across the Trust return to their schools to deliver talks, participate in workshops and attend events. Former pupils have shared their stories, offered advice to current pupils, and supported with Future First workshops on a range of topics including decision-making, wellbeing and resilience, and bringing the curriculum to life.

Alumni have now also become a core part of our cross-Trust events. Former pupils have taken on the role of judges at our cross-Trust competitions, with Olivia Taylor, Abbeyfield alum and Cambridge graduate, judging our 2021 sixth form prize and Nade Ward, Caister alum and co-founder of Socker Share, joining our Primary Day of Change as the guest speaker and judge. Our first science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) Prize also involved a Q&A opportunity with three alumni: **Quincy Bastow**, Abbeyfield alum and Teaching and Research Technician, **Zainab Fadhil**, Thistley Hough alum and medical student, and **Dev Mistry**, Wrenn alum and engineering student. Alumni have acted as fantastic role models, helping pupils connect their learning with life beyond school.

We also wanted to provide a space for alumni to network and access professional development opportunities. Through termly virtual meetings, alumni have heard from guest speakers Mary Creagh CBE, former MP, and Ben Francoise, founder of the Northampton-based social enterprise Saints Coffee, as well as hearing about the journeys of other alumni. The core network group has played a valuable role advising on the direction of the network, offering guidance for careers and employability, sharing what

Weavers alumni returned to support students considering possible career pathways, sharing experience from a range of fields including medicine, software engineering and psychology.



Olivia Taylor, Abbeyfield alum, has delivered talks to Abbeyfield students and the alumni network and was a judge of our 2021 Public Speaking Prize.

Bulwell alumni supported year 12 workshops on decision-making, next steps and transferable skills.



they wished they'd learnt whilst in school, and what opportunities they'd like to see offered in schools. We look forward to hosting our first in-person event next academic year!

We wanted to say a huge thank you to all alumni who have been involved – whether you've signed up for the hub, delivered a talk or workshop, joined a network event, shared your stories, or joined a cross-Trust event. To find out more about how to get involved, or how to get alumni involved in a school event or activity, please email alumni@creativeeducationtrust.org.uk



Zainab Fadhil, former Thistley Hough student, answering questions on her experience as a medical student at the STEM Prize.

Nade Ward, Caister alum, inspires a group of primary pupils at the Day of Change 2022.



The 2021 final of Creative Education Trust's sixth-form public speaking prize took place just before the Christmas holidays. Seven finalists delivered 10-minute speeches in response to this year's theme 'Strong and Silent'.

Their interpretations included speeches on bullying, the rainforest in crisis, conditions for Afghan women, silence as an ethical position, and the widespread phenomenon of 'network extroversion bias' (the tendency of social networks to be over-populated by communicative and demonstrative people). In their feedback, the judges acknowledged **Abi Ford** from **Abbeyfield** for being "a natural presenter and a very good advocate, with a solution-oriented speech", **Rebekah Embling** from **Wrenn** for her "mature, academic approach", **Yassine Abdou** from **Bulwell** for his "powerful call to action and good use of rhetoric", **Eadie-Rose Clarke** from **Weavers** for being "funny, compelling, and for using language in such a visual way", **Tinaya Wood** from **Bulwell** for "a gripping start to a very personal but controlled speech, with language full of rhythm", to **Jordan Green** at **Abbeyfield** for demonstrating "such maturity in response to this big, complex issue around climate change and for making it so accessible", and finally to **Alicia Astle** from **Hart** for her "incredibly well-crafted speech around the three pillars of persuasion; ethos, pathos and logos".

After an exhilarating morning of speeches and a tough decision for the judges, **Tinaya Wood** from **Bulwell** emerged triumphant. Tinaya carried the audience along wonderful streams of images and provocations that morphed subtly into blank verse and artfully integrated the history of race relations.

The winner of the 2021 public speaking prize was **Tinaya Wood** at **Bulwell**

The judging panel included Nicole McCartney, Director of Education, Kirsty Dias, Director of Priestman Goode (and a member of Creative Education Trust's Education Standards Committee), and Olivia Taylor, Abbeyfield alum and winner of the 2016 public speaking competition. This year's guest and keynote speaker was Mary Creagh CBE, former Labour MP and Shadow Cabinet member known for her prominent campaigning on social justice and carbon reduction. In her own speech, Mary shared her experience of learning from failures, building on success, and figuring out how to step into leadership. Her key tips for successful campaigns included listening to your gut, considering what you can commit to in the long-term, and to build alliances and acceptance for what you want to do. Finally, Mary emphasised the importance of practising ahead of speeches. "It's not a speech until someone can hear it, and they're hearing the right thing...and when you do win a campaign, make sure you celebrate".

Strength and Silence



"I can tell from the speakers today that we have people of passion who will change the world."

Mary Creagh CBE
Guest judge and keynote speaker

For the first time, we had an alum representative on the judging panel: **Olivia Taylor**, who won the competition as an **Abbeyfield student in 2016**



The winner of the essay competition was announced at the same event by Marc Jordan, Chief Executive. The prize, which invites students to submit 1,500 words on a topic or question of their own choice, drew 50 entries this year. Marc acknowledged the range of this year's shortlist, which contained essays on bereavement, epidemiology, technology, teenage stress, the Indian judiciary, international relations, medicine, equality, and the philosophy of ethics. The judges enjoyed careful considerations of whether HIV-Aids has a cure, whether zoos should be abolished, and whether the ancient Romans were as technically advanced as they're cracked up to be. Our judging panel comprised Anjana Ahuja, a contributing writer on science for the *Financial Times*, Jonathan Katz, Lecturer in Classics and University Public Orator at Oxford, and Sarah Ardizzone, a literary translator with over 40 titles to her name.

The judges unanimously agreed on **Rachel Puk** of **Weavers** as the winner.

Rachel's essay addressed the proposition that 'immigrants are bad for the UK', in an easy, natural writing style that was a captivating blend of wide context and personal story. Her list of the contributions of immigrants stretched from kebab shops and football to world-leading universities, science, engineering, and the National Health Service.

Congratulations to all our shortlisted writers and speakers, and a big thank you to everyone who entered the competition. As Mary Creagh said "I can tell from the speakers today that we have people of passion that will change the world."

"If I compare my experience to my grandparents', who were unwillingly taken from their homes in Poland to a refugee camp in England during WW2, I've had a great experience growing up in this country. They were put in this country with nothing, and, after working in a refugee camp for over 10 years, they finally made their way out, but they had very little money to find their way through a country they'd been thrown into in a hurry. It taught them a great work ethic; they managed to buy their own house, have a son – my dad – and, after searching for years, be reunited with the rest of their family."

Immigration gives the UK a richer, more productive economy. We don't just rely on immigrants for kebab shops and NHS staff though. Without immigration, our world-leading universities would no longer be world-leading. Over half of research staff in science and engineering subjects are not from the UK. London would no longer be a global financial hub – or Cambridge a centre for biotechnology. If you need one more example, think about football. The Champions League and Europa League were an all-English affair, yet many clubs are managed by foreigners, and each has a remarkably diverse set of players. Beyond just economics, without immigrants, the country would look and feel very different. Almost all of us would be White. We would be much more mono-ethnic, mono-cultural, and mono-lingual. We would be less connected, less global, and more insular."



THE ROYAL LITERARY FUND

The 2021 essay prize competition marked the start of a new partnership for Creative Education Trust with the Royal Literary Fund.

In July and September 2021, virtual versions of the RLF's Bridge writing workshops were integrated into the induction of year 12 students to all seven sixth forms. 'Bridge' refers to the original concept, to help students bridge the transition between A-level and university, which arose from the common challenges in students' writing observed by RLF Writing Fellows in universities. They resolved to "ensure that no school pupils were put off future opportunities by a belief that they couldn't write."

The workshops gave sixth formers an opportunity to develop their skills with the support of a professional writer, and to understand writing as a skill that can develop continually. Our judging panel member, **Sarah Ardizzone**, literary translator and RLF Fellow, stated her position clearly: "First and foremost, writing is a craft. Meaning that it is a skill rooted in practice. No one is born writing perfectly composed sentences. So, just like sport or music or any number of activities that require practice to improve, the more writing practice you put in, the better a writer you become."

In addition to the workshops, the RLF supported every stage of our elective essay competition. Their Fellows gave half-hour, 1-1 tutorials to every entrant – a total of 47 tutorials in one week. Every student who submitted a second draft received written feedback from the judging panel, who then identified a shortlist of 14 essays. Sarah, a member of that panel, has shared her top tips for developing your writing style here:

- 1 Read as widely as possible (don't just stick with what you already know and like).
- 2 Keep a note of short, interesting examples of writing where the style inspires or surprises you.
- 3 It's all about the re-writing. Invest in planning; don't underestimate how long the rewriting and editing will take.
- 4 One hat at a time! Avoid doing everything at once: decide whether you're planning or writing or editing. Walk away from your work when you've finished one mode. Come back with a fresh intention (wearing a different hat).
- 5 Short spurts are better than sitting and stewing. All the neuroscience points to bursts of brain activity punctuated by short rests being more effective.
- 6 Read. Out. Loud. (This is the mantra for all RLF Bridge Fellows – it is the single action that most improves all of our work!).

Excerpt from Tinaya's winning speech:

Someone once asked me.
Why are you so strong?
Yet so silent?
Hmm...
Well, I said.
You tell me?
Why am I?
Such an easy question but so many answers.
But maybe you should tell me,
Why am I?
If I speak my mind?
Will you listen?
If I speak my mind?
Will my point be heard?
Such a simple question with so many reasons.
Why should I speak?
If I have no one to listen
Why should I speak?
If I have no one to care.
But I wrote this,
because maybe you will.
"you're black you should be picking cotton"
A phrase that was once said to me a few months ago.
Under a post that gave me the little bit of
confidence I gained.
And the little confidence I lost.
A phrase that changed the way I view myself.
A phrase that made me who I am today.

Sarah Ardizzone



Knowledge Connected

Students in their first two years at a Creative Education Trust secondary school experience special days dedicated to the key concepts of Knowledge Connected.

Knowledge Connected is a framework of six big ideas that are important to consider in any undertaking. Because one or

Year 7 students at **Hart** use their understanding of Meaning to write persuasive adverts for undesirable products.

more of the six key concepts – **structure, pattern, meaning, human interaction, performance, and practice** – influences any situation, the framework gives us a way to connect or compare one situation with the next. This ability to spot or make connections is the essence of creativity.

Year 7 days in **structure, pattern, meaning and performance** are off-timetable days packed with activities; drawing, building models, or writing speeches, these are fun and varied opportunities to explore.

Meanwhile, for one day a term, Year 8 step aside from regular lessons and experience their subjects through the lens of a single key concept: **structure, pattern, or human interaction**. They may consider **pattern** by learning about international migration in geography, the periodic table in science, or minimalist composers in music. The single thread of **pattern** allows students to draw connections between subjects they may otherwise miss.

Our aim, through Knowledge Connected, is to develop young people whose creativity gives them agency and choice; the resilience that comes from a broad perspective; and the skills and resourcefulness to change what is around them.



Abbeyfield students make card linkages and improvised marble runs in a day devoted to key concept Performance, as they discover 'how things do what they do'.



Students of **Wrenn** show a panel of tiles created by year 7, each individual piece an infographic representing a classmate's life and experience.

WORLD- CHANGING IDEAS!

On 23 March 2022, 15 teams across our 5 primaries gathered at the Milton Keynes Academy for one of the highlights of the Creative Education Trust annual calendar – the Day of Change. This was our fourth competition in collaboration with **8billionideas**, with our last competition taking place in 2019. Everyone was excited to be back together in person again!

Since their launch events in January, pupils across our primaries have been busy developing world changing ideas. The competition took them through different stages, from identifying problems they want to solve, generating ideas and potential products to address these issues, and creating a prototype for their proposed solution. All finalists were invited to showcase their ideas at the event final, where they hosted a stall with their posters and prototypes (constructed from a cardboard box) and delivered a presentation on their project.

The range of proposals provided a fantastic insight into the concerns of year 5, with ideas including an app to promote relaxation and good sleep, underwater drones to protect sea creatures from litter, anti-misting glasses, fitness pedals to generate electricity in classrooms and encourage exercise, and holograms to ensure students can have good attendance when they can't make it to school.

As part of the day pupils heard from inspiring speakers, including Gordon Farquhar, Principal of Milton

Keynes Academy, representatives from 8billionideas, and our guest speaker Nade Ward – Caister alum and co-founder of Socker Share. Nade shared key lessons with our year 5 students, including to always ask questions, to seek solutions to problems, to reach out to others, and to always believe in yourself.

Congratulations to all the finalists, and to the winning team from Woodlands for their O2 rocket, which ensures space travel is environmentally friendly by converting water into rocket fuel. Thank you to all our judges for this year's competition – Nade Ward, co-founder of Socker Share, Gwayne Webb, Director of Learning and Teaching, Kate Ward, Head of Programmes, Gordon Farquhar, Principal of The Milton Keynes Academy and Jo Oakley from 8billionideas. Our judges were impressed by the quality of the research carried out by pupils, and by the hard work put in by all our finalists. It's clear that our pupils have what it takes to make a positive change on the world, and we can't wait to see where it takes them.

First prize – The O2 rocket, by Woodlands. The O2 rocket is carbon neutral, converting water to rocket fuel to ensure space travel is environmentally friendly.



March
2022

Best Stall – Healthy Eat by Queen Eleanor. The healthy eating app helps you to change your diet and lifestyle, with supportive coaches and rewards built in.



Second prize – iFridge by Wroughton. The smart fridge lets you know when your food is out of date, and which ingredients you need for different recipes.

Third prize – Happy Hologram by Harpfield. The device enables students to attend school when they are unable to be in the classroom due to illness, injury, or other reasons. A small box placed on the student's desk projects their image into the room in real time, allowing them to interact with the lesson as usual.



Best Prototype – Robodog by Wroughton, a medical bot that monitors your health and the environment to protect the user from illness and accidents. It has a built-in defibrillator and can call emergency services when in need.



Best Poster – Sleeping Beauty by Woodlands, for their device and app to support healthy sleep, allowing you to set goals, choose relaxing sounds, and use a variety of scented facemasks to aid rest.



Music makers

This year, more than 100 instrumentalists from nine of our secondary schools met to form our first cross-Trust orchestra.

With beginners sitting next to more experienced players, this was a crash course for students, few of whom will have experienced music-making in this way before. Whilst reading new music, students also learned how to follow a conductor and how vital it is to listen to those around them.

Attendees of the Heads and Principals meeting, falling on the same day as the second orchestra workshop, were treated to performances of Camila Cabello's "Havana", and "Habanera" and the "Toreador Song" from Bizet's *Carmen*. The notes were confident, the music a triumph. We all look forward to next year, when the orchestra will perform to a full audience for the first time.

The days are organised and programmed by **Valerie Miller**, with the orchestra conducted by **Rachel Salton (Lynn Grove)**. Sections are led by the following: woodwind, **Michelle Reading (Weavers)**; percussion, **Stephen Waterhouse (Wrenn)**; brass, **Emily Askey (formerly Hart)**; strings, **Deborah Noakes (Weavers)**.

Main picture: The Creative Education Trust Orchestra rehearse in the gym at Wrenn, conducted by **Rachel Salton (Lynn Grove)**.

Inset pictures, clockwise from top right: the brass section, the strings section, led by **Deborah Noakes (Weavers)**; violinists from **Abbeyfield** and **Ellis Guilford** work together; cellists deep in concentration; flautists of **Abbeyfield**.



NEW FRONTIER

Year 9 students from across our schools gathered at the National Space Centre in Leicester for an exciting day of science, maths, and rockets, and to compete to become the first recipients of the Creative Education Trust STEM Prize.

The National Space Centre is a fantastic place to discover that a future in STEM can be a thrilling prospect. With artifacts from exploration, two actual rockets, and a lunar lander it is perhaps easy to get lost in space, but our day also served to remind students that there are plenty of options down here on Earth with representatives of our Alumni Network on hand to answer questions about studying and working in STEM. **Quincy Bastow** (ex-Abbeyfield) was able to talk about their Laboratory Science apprenticeship and **Zainab Fadhal** (ex-Thistley Hough) about her medical degree at Leeds University. Our maths and physics teaching interns of **Lynn Grove** and **Wrenn** were also on hand to answer questions about university life and study.

Hosted by Trust leads for science and maths, **Pav Aujla** and **Craig Latimir**, and supported by science and maths teachers from our participating schools, the competitive elements of the day ran in three parts. The first challenge was the science quiz, with questions from biology, chemistry and physics, and even picture and music rounds. This truly tested all teams, but it was **Caister** who won out in the end.

Next up, a practical contest. The education team of the National Space Centre stepped up to challenge each school to design and make a rocket, to be launched using compressed air. Fired at a moon-shaped target, points were awarded for accuracy but, with a strict budget for materials and fuel, students were forced to make hard decisions and compromises which would affect the performance of their projectiles.

The teamwork was evident, with teachers lending a hand to support their students from the moment the engineering brief was issued. Once all ten rockets had been launched and the points totted up, it was the **Caister** team who took the second event win for their school.

The final challenge of the day was a maths quiz: forty minutes of tricky questions, delivered relay style, with a new question only issued after completion or forfeit of the previous one. The competition was fierce, with the last 2 minutes being a blur of pencils and hurried sums. It was **Milton Keynes** who were awarded the most points and won the maths challenge – an outstanding achievement for a team of just three students.

A special Spirit of STEM Award was presented to **Thistley Hough** for consistent results across all three competitions and an overall second placing in the competition. But with just one overall prize to present, it all came down to points – at the end of our day out, a very proud **Milton Keynes** team carried the Creative Education Trust STEM Prize trophy home with them. Congratulations to **JC, Kasparas** and **Kaydie**, and the maths and science team at school who coached them.



Kasparas, JC and **Kaydie** of **Milton Keynes** are the first team to receive the Creative Education Trust STEM Prize.



An Ode to Poetry

The fifth annual Primary Poetry Prize returned for an in-person gathering for the first time since 2019.

Our guest judge for this year's competition was writer, translator, and editor of *Poetry London* magazine, **André Naffis-Sahely**. André was joined by Trust Lead for English, **Samantha Davey**, to judge the original poetry submissions, and Chief Executive **Marc Jordan** for the poetry recitalists at the live final.

First stop on our schools' trip to London for our ten finalist recitalists was a visit to Voiceover Soho, a professional recording studio in the heart of London, to record their performances.

When it came to the prize final, held at the Foundling Museum, this year's competition was fierce. The judges announced Highly Commended results for two runners-up: **Sam, Three Peaks**, whose recital of *Reading* by Jacqueline Woodson was praised for adding drama and expression to a complex text, and **Leah, Woodlands**, whose writing created wonder in *An Ode to the Forest*.

The winning recitalists were **Harley-Kaite, Three Peaks**, whose rendition of *Young and Old* by Charles Kingsley conveyed both the enthusiasm of the young and the slowing down of age; and **Lily, Harpfield**, who gave movement and optimism to Kae Tempest's *The Point*.

Our writers were charged with submitting an ode: poems in praise of an event, person, or thing. This year's finalists chose to write about subjects as wide-ranging as feelings, midnight, and chocolate cake. Our winners of the original poetry prize this year were **Jaxon, Wroughton**, for *An Ode to the Forgotten*, a poem of two quite different stanzas held together by the fantastic atmosphere he crafted; and **George, Woodlands**, who tackled a big subject and explored it expertly with his *Ode to Space*.

Caption: Poetry Prize 2022 winners: **Lily (Harpfield)**, **Leah (Woodlands)**, **Harley-Kaite (Three Peaks)**, **Jaxon (Wroughton)**, **Sam (Three Peaks)** and **George (Woodlands)**

An Ode to The Forgotten by Jaxon

A word, a whisper,
A wispy wind whips through the unremembered valleys,
A breath, a murmur,
Each quarter of neglected land tells dire stories.
A shout, a screech,
The distant memories of disregarded relief,
A yell, a speech,
The ghostly shadow of the moon absorbs the grief,
Discreet on his feet,
The remorseless memory thief,

The sunlight seeps in, yet, still dark,
No flickers, no streaks, no spark,
The bitter air like the bite of a shark,
It's morning still, yet no signs of dawn,
The moon shines, yet the sky is forlorn,
The hollow trees screaming out in pain,
The death, it is all in vain,
The light may be its bane,
The fulgor is their nemesis,
The land descends towards the abyss.

An ode to The Forest by Leah

The air as fresh as can be,
Leaves falling down from the tree,
As the tree smiles down at me,
I run in my happy place.

When I feel sad,
I go to my calm place,
To hear the birds sing,
To the rhythm of the wind.

As the trees get chopped down,
All I can do is sit there,
As more get chopped down,
The air starts to melt.

I shouted for them to stop!
But they wouldn't listen,
Now our world is nothing.

Ode to Space by George

Space, a pitch-black void covered in discoveries,
Large boulders surrounding a hot fiery light bulb,
Eight worlds all which have mysteries,
One about to break, on the brink of extinction,
Scared atmosphere its lungs full of gas,
Big chunks of metal sent to explore the void,
The eerie-silence scares humans who are braver than bears,
One trip to a red boulder is equivalent to an unlockable door.

Trapped in quarantine, trapped in the void,
trapped in space...





This year's choral project culminated in a fantastic performance from our cross-Trust senior choir, performed in the theatre at Abbeyfield and livestreamed to parents, teachers and friends back home.

The choir, comprised of both long-time members and new voices, provides the "combination of energy and experience that makes for a great choir" says Charles MacDougall, Choral Director of Voices Foundation and our choir master. This is evident in the performance, but it's not just choral work that makes up this activity. Chosen by teachers and coached as soloists by Voices Foundation tutors Camille Maalawy and Richard Robbins, our Singing Ambassadors of 2022 performed classical pieces by composers such as Schubert, Scarlatti and Ireland.

Singing Ambassadors 2022

Noah Hall, Abbeyfield
Tahlia Greensmith, Bulwell
Elle Pendle, Caister
Isobelle Walker, Ellis Guilford
Charlie Bird, Hart
Harriet Collingwood, Lynn Grove
Chennai Pink, Weavers
Cristhian Noite, Wrenn

Taking us on a journey around the globe in song, the choral pieces included the touching Ani Ma'amin, a traditional Jewish song about belief, and the rousing and emotional Three Native American Chants. We also heard two songs in praise of mothers (Thula Mama and Bele Mama) and the moving 'Yonder Come Day' – a spiritual from Georgia, USA. The concert finished with the appropriately showstopping Zadok the Priest by Handel.

Watch the full concert:
<https://knowledgeconnected.org.uk/Songfest22>



Raised voices

Sir Robert Buckland (top left) and Marc Jordan (top right) open the competition, and team Thistley Hough, our competition runners-up, prepare for one of their debates. Photographs by **Jessica, Ellis Guilford**.

This year, Creative Education Trust held the first cross-Trust debating competition, involving **Abbeyfield, Lynn Grove, Milton Keynes, Ellis Guilford, Hart School, Thistley Hough, and Weavers**.

Before the competition started, each of our participating schools ran four "Introduction to Debate" classes for their year 9 students. The interactive sessions inspired by Debate Mate activities introduced over 1000 students to advocacy, debate, and key public speaking skills. Students could then put themselves forward to represent their schools, with 6 from each school being invited to form a team.

The competition involved debate coaching for every team from barristers through our partnership with the Kalisher Trust, two virtual rounds of debates, and a final event at Conway Hall in London. Across the competition students debated a range of topics, including whether humans should focus on building a civilisation on another planet rather than fixing the problems on earth, whether AI should make political decisions, and whether historical artefacts should be returned to their countries of origin.

Following the virtual sessions our teams were excited to meet each other in person on 13 July 2022. At the start of the day students heard from Marc Jordan, Chief Executive of Creative Education Trust, and the Rt Hon Sir Robert Buckland KBE QC MP. Sir Robert emphasised that students should not let self-doubt be a barrier and encouraged students to consider all the options open to them for their futures. Staff from Creative Education Trust and Debate Mate then enjoyed hearing from all teams across the day. Everyone was impressed by the quality of debate, and by how much students had improved over the course of the competition.

The two top-scoring teams, Thistley Hough and Hart, competed in one final debate to determine the winner of our first debate prize. The motion was "This house believes we should prioritise academic attainment over creativity in schools". However, as Marc Jordan acknowledged in his closing speech, at Creative Education Trust we certainly believe both can be a priority and one does not preclude the other! Congratulations to team Hart for winning the competition, to our runners-up Thistley Hough, and all of the teams for representing their schools so brilliantly.



The **Hart** team are awarded the trophy. Photograph by **Hamza, Ellis Guilford**.

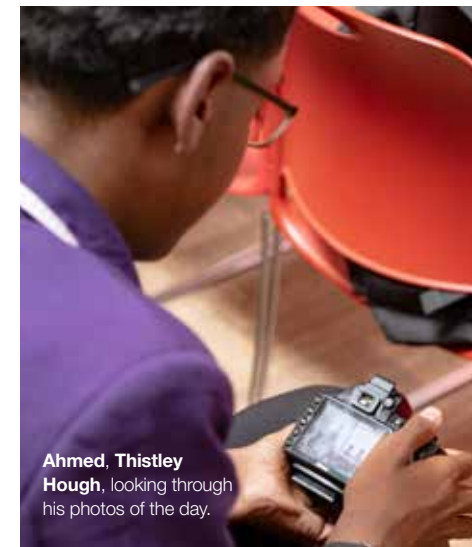


The photographs featured in this article were captured by a team of Key Stage 4 photographers, coached by professional photographer Becky Mursell. The five students, put forward by their art and photography teachers, were selected for their aptitude for photography: Hamza and Jessica (Ellis Guilford), Aimee (Weavers), Ahmed (Thistley Hough) and Jacob (Hart). All students received a briefing on what professional photographers needed to prepare before they took on the challenge of being our event photographers.

Thank you so much to all of the students who took part and the teachers who supported them, to our student photographers, to Sir Robert Buckland QC MP for being our guest speaker, and to our competition partners, the Kalisher Trust and Debate Mate.

Debate Mate activities in action are captured by photographer **Aimee, Weavers**.

The attentive audience. Photograph by **Hamza, Ellis Guilford**.



Ahmed, Thistley Hough, looking through his photos of the day.



The concentration of final debate preparation. Photograph by **Jessica, Ellis Guilford**.

Debate Mate with the winners from **The Hart School**. Photograph by **Becky Mursell**.



Jacob, Hart, photographs the Hart team preparing for their final debate.

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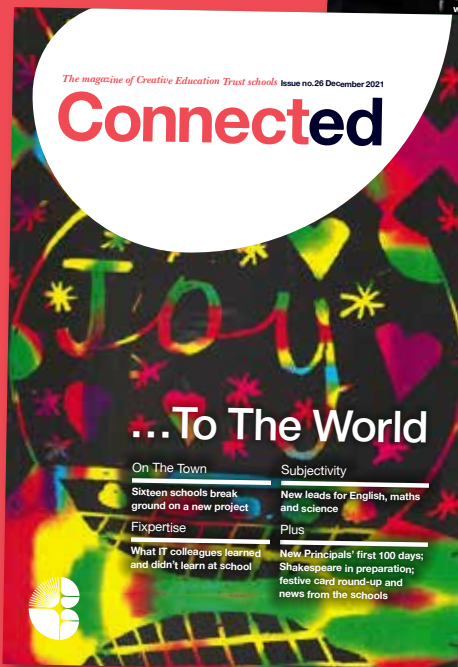
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Front cover image:

The student photography team in the library at Conway Hall for the Debate Prize.

Photograph by Becky Mursell

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<https://knowledgeconnected.org.uk/Connected>