



Orchard Round-Up

FRESH FROM THE FARM



The Barn 2 before



The Barn 2 after

A LITTLE NOTE FROM LUDIVINE

Our Orchard Therapeutic Director

As we reach the end of another very rainy half-term, we are delighted to share that nothing has stopped our young people from getting stuck into every session with enthusiasm. Whether out on the farm or taking part in indoor activities, they have shown brilliant resilience, energy and good humour throughout.

Our Coffee Shop has returned to its Friday morning routine, and it has been wonderful to see our young people and Post-16 learners engaging in real work experience. From preparing drinks to welcoming customers, they have taken pride in every part of the job.

Gardening sessions are now back on the timetable, and although the weather has been slow to warm up, we are looking forward to seeing spring produce begin to grow over the coming weeks.

We are also excited to share that Barn 2 is now officially open and already being put to great use. Even more exciting is that work on Barn 3 has now begun. This next phase of development is progressing quickly, and we cannot wait to see it take shape.

As we head into the next half-term, we are delighted to welcome three new staff members to our team:

- **ALEJANDRO** - CATERING TUTOR
- **OLI** - TRADES TUTOR
- **ROB** - MECHANICAL ENGINEERING TUTOR

Each brings enthusiasm and expertise that will contribute greatly to the experiences of our young people.

PSHE sessions are now fully incorporated into our timetable. These age-specific sessions have been very well received, sparking thoughtful discussions and helping our young people develop important life skills, confidence and understanding of the world around them.

We have also introduced THRIVE into Orchard Therapeutic Farm. THRIVE is a nurturing, trauma-informed approach that supports children and young people in understanding their emotions, developing resilience, and feeling safe and ready to learn. It aligns beautifully with our farm-based environment, and we are already seeing positive benefits.

Finally, our new kitchen and catering areas are progressing at great speed. We look forward to sharing more updates as this exciting development continues.

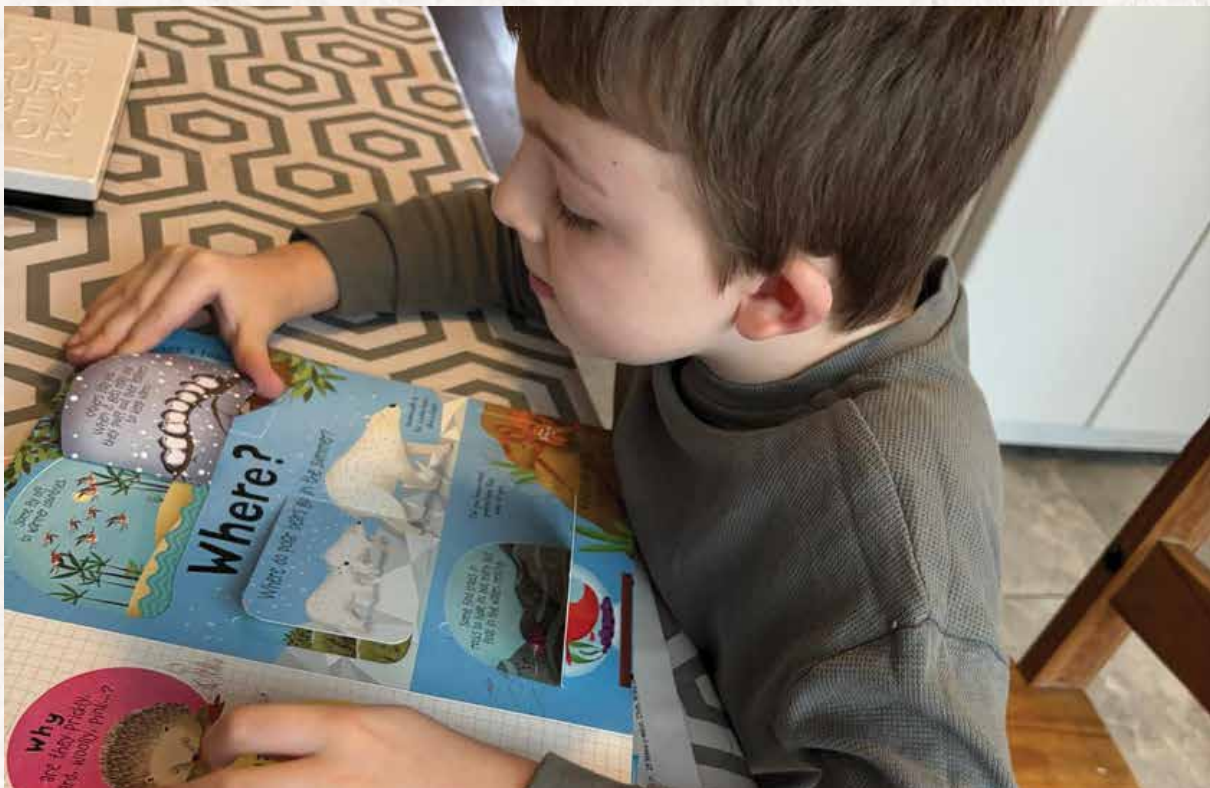
Here's to a brighter, busier and, hopefully, slightly drier next half-term.

Ludivine Parmentier

OUTREACH

Outreach Progress This Term

This term has seen meaningful achievements across all young people accessing Outreach, with each individual demonstrating growing confidence in communication, social engagement and emotional regulation. Progress has been evident not only in individual goals, but also in shared skills such as following structure, making choices and actively participating with adults and peers.



Haroon has shown sustained participation during sessions at Cowley Library, engaging with increasing independence in activities such as playing Uno, reading, and exploring book choices that support his developing interests. He has begun contributing ideas for future sessions, demonstrating motivation, forward planning and an emerging sense of ownership over his learning journey.

Lucas has made significant progress in maintaining joint attention and managing emotional frustration. He is now using independent regulation strategies, such as stepping away to calm himself when needed. Lucas has engaged enthusiastically in structured story work, science exploration and practical activities, including cooking and painting, showing increasing confidence, curiosity and enjoyment in learning.

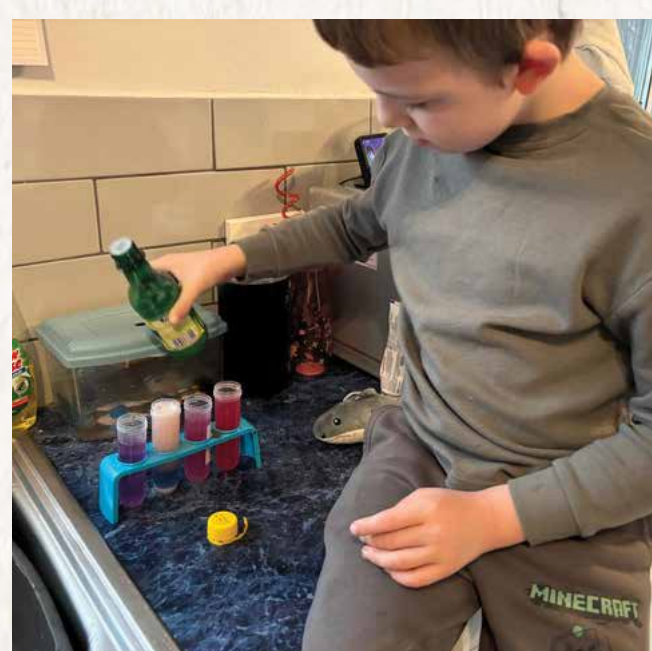


Jake has demonstrated growing confidence across both community- and Barn-based sessions. He communicates more clearly with his peers and shows genuine enthusiasm when interacting with animals and engaging in sensory-rich activities. Jake has also shown improvements in emotional awareness, expressing his feelings more readily and responding positively to new experiences such as cooking activities and group routines.

Across all students, the term has highlighted individual strengths, strengthened engagement and increased readiness for broader learning experiences. The progress seen reflects growing confidence, emotional awareness and positive participation, providing a strong foundation for continued development moving forward.

Looking ahead, the young people are well positioned to build on the momentum they have developed through Outreach this term. Haroon is ready to expand his engagement through increased exposure to structured literacy and practical activities, supported by his growing ability to plan and communicate his preferences. Lucas is well prepared to continue strengthening his communication, emotional regulation, and independence through community-based learning and sensory exploration, which have proven highly motivating and supportive for him. Jake is set to benefit from continued access to the Orchard Therapeutic Barn, where he has already shown confidence in meeting peers, handling transitions, and engaging in purposeful, meaningful tasks.

The next term will provide opportunities for each young person to deepen their skills through structured routines, social interactions, and real-life learning experiences. Their growing ability to express themselves, manage their emotions, and participate collaboratively lays a strong foundation for continued progress. Increasing involvement in cooking, animal care, and community activities will further support sensory regulation, communication, and independence. The students' shared achievements demonstrate their resilience and capacity for growth when provided with tailored, relationship-based support. With continued consistency and meaningful opportunities, they are well placed to make further strides in their personal, social, and learning development.



ORCHARD THERAPEUTIC BARN

From Foundations to Forward Steps

This term at the Orchard Therapeutic Barn has been marked by strong achievements across all young people, with each individual developing increased confidence, communication, and independence within a structured therapeutic setting.

Jacob has shown sustained engagement in practical, hands-on activities such as woodwork, animal care, and research tasks, often working independently following initial guidance. He demonstrated leadership when supporting a peer during chicken-coop cleaning and confidently took part in farm-based tasks, including mucking out pony and donkey stables. These experiences indicate a growing readiness for extended provision.

Izzy engaged positively in group discussions, managing interpersonal challenges calmly and completing a range of independent tasks, including craft projects, lunch preparation, and Functional Skills activities. She demonstrated empathy and maturity during farm visits, particularly when observing a recovering pig, and showed increasing self-advocacy around consent and emotional triggers.

Freddie has made steady progress in communication, early maths and literacy, and social interaction. He participated in games, shopping activities, and animal care with increasing confidence, demonstrating emerging emotional awareness by seeking quiet spaces for regulation and expressing his sensory needs during food preparation and cooking tasks.

Consistent routines, animal-assisted activities, and structured practical learning have supported resilience, emotional growth, and improved engagement across all our young people. These collective achievements reflect the Barn's success in providing nurturing, relationship-based learning experiences tailored to individual needs.

Looking ahead, the young people are well positioned to continue their therapeutic and developmental journeys as they begin or prepare for the transition from the Barn to the Farm. This next stage will allow them to expand their skills within a broader and more physically demanding environment.

Jacob is due to transition for a second day from the Barn to the Farm, as his strong participation in stable management and animal-care routines demonstrates readiness to extend his learning within the Farm provision. Izzy is currently engaged in ongoing conversations to explore her thoughts and feelings regarding a future Farm transition.

Freddie, who is due to increase from two to three days due to his exceptionally positive engagement, has shown increasing readiness through improved cooperation, growing confidence during off-site tasks, and developing responsibility in animal-handling and shopping activities.

Each young person's progress in emotional regulation, independence, and communication highlights their growing capacity to adapt to new environments and expectations. Transition planning will continue to be carefully paced to ensure predictability, safety, and success.

The Farm environment will offer expanded opportunities for physical regulation, teamwork, structured routines, and meaningful real-life learning experiences. With consistent relational support and clear expectations, the young people are well placed to thrive as they move into the next stage of the Orchard provision, building on the strong foundation established this term across both Barn and Farm settings.



ORCHARD THERAPEUTIC FARM

A Term Full of Wildlife and Wonder



There has been so much happening on the farm this term, and the children have been enjoying every moment. With spring just around the corner, the whole place feels full of life, movement, and excitement.

Our cheeky baby ferrets are about to celebrate their very first birthday! They've grown into confident little explorers who seem to believe the entire farm is their playground – and honestly, we can't argue with them.

The equine dentist stopped by to check on our lovely horses, and we discovered something new: Penny is 20 and Dotty is 13. Both girls behaved beautifully and, of course, enjoyed plenty of fuss and treats afterwards.

There's a gentle shift in the air as more and more birds arrive each morning. Their songs are filling the farm with a real sense of springtime, and it's lovely to see the children noticing these changes too.

Eggbertta, the chicken, continues her grand tour of the farm every day. She loves visiting all the animals, but the cows remain her favourites. She's becoming quite the celebrity with her friendly wandering!

This week, the vets visited the farm to carry out some of their routine animal care. The children had the option to watch from a safe distance if they were curious. Some stopped for a quick look before carrying on with their activities, while others watched for longer – all entirely by choice. The atmosphere was relaxed and positive, creating a lovely opportunity for those who were interested to see how vets help keep animals healthy. It added a little extra excitement to the week and sparked lots of thoughtful conversations afterwards.





ORCHARD THERAPEUTIC POST-16 PATHWAYS

Celebrating Skills, Success, and New Opportunities

This half term has been an incredibly positive one for our Post-16 provision, with lots to celebrate and even more to look forward to.

We have made real progress with the development of our Post-16 Catering and Hospitality area. A huge thank you goes to Toby and his team for getting this space up and running so quickly – it has already had a fantastic impact and is proving to be an exciting environment for our young people to learn and develop practical skills.

We have also been delighted to welcome Rob, Ollie, and Alejandro to the team. They will be supporting the delivery of Catering, Trades, and Engineering across our Post-16 provision, bringing a wealth of real-world experience that will be invaluable in helping our young people achieve their qualifications and prepare for future employment.

There has also been academic success this half term. Well done to Harry and Nate for completing and passing their Functional Skills English qualifications – a brilliant achievement and a fantastic start to the new year.

In addition, we are excited to announce our upcoming **Post-16 Open Day, taking place on 28th February from 10am to 1pm**. Please book your place if you would like to attend and explore our Post-16 offer for next year with the team.

Finally, several of our young people have been involved in supporting bingo events, open days, and marketing work experience opportunities. These experiences are a key part of our approach, as we focus on equipping our young people with the skills, confidence, and attitudes they need for the next stage of their journey into adulthood. We are incredibly proud of the enthusiasm and professionalism they have shown.



Health & Wellbeing

A safe space to be you

This term, our primary pupils have been exploring Health & Wellbeing, with a strong focus on keeping safe both offline and online. Through engaging, age-appropriate lessons, children learned how to assess and manage risk in different environments, understand online privacy and sharing, recognise unsafe pressures, and practice basic first aid for common injuries. Pupils also explored personal safety in public places, how to react in emergencies, and the effects of legal and illegal drugs on health. Across all year groups, children were encouraged to engage thoughtfully with online information, harmful contact, and household products. Our curriculum is carefully adapted to each year group, aiming to empower pupils with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to make safe, informed choices.

This term, our secondary students have been exploring Managing Feelings through a range of thoughtful and supportive sessions. Pupils developed a deeper understanding of emotions, including stress, anxiety, anger, and the causes of strong feelings. They learned to recognise when feelings may become overwhelming and explored healthy coping strategies, resilience, and ways to build self-esteem. Students were encouraged to engage in open discussions about mental health, reducing stigma, and understanding how to maintain wellbeing during challenging times, such as exams or periods of change. A strong focus was placed on healthy communication, supporting others, and knowing where and how to seek help.

Our young people have adapted incredibly well to this new and exciting area of learning. We have seen excellent engagement, with thoughtful group discussions and pupils showing real maturity in listening to one another. Many students have also shared personal experiences and reflections, demonstrating great courage and trust. This openness has helped create a safe, supportive learning environment and has further strengthened pupils' confidence, empathy, and understanding of themselves and others.



Art

Celebrating Chinese New Year

This term, the Art Hub has been alive with colour and creativity as our young people explored Chinese New Year through art. With 2026 marking the Year of the Horse, pupils immersed themselves in cultural storytelling, drawing, and clay work.

We began by learning about the Chinese zodiac, discovering the twelve animals and identifying each student's own zodiac sign. This sparked curiosity and lively discussion, before pupils created expressive drawings inspired by their personal zodiac animals. Each piece reflected both cultural learning and individual personality.

The project then moved into sculpture, inspired by the ancient Terracotta Army. Students sculpted clay horses, developing skills in shaping, joining, and adding decorative detail. Every horse had its own character, showing care, imagination, and growing confidence.

The finished artworks are now displayed in the Art Hub, bringing colour and cultural richness to the space. As we celebrate the Year of the Horse, we also celebrate the creativity, energy, and individuality of our young artists.

Animal Care

Hands-On Learning and Animal Wellbeing

Our Animal Care qualification groups have had an extremely hands-on few weeks, focusing on handling and moving animals safely. Learners have explored how to monitor stress levels, respond appropriately to animal behaviour, handle and move animals safely, and re-settle them in new locations.

Despite the rain, the students have shown great perseverance and care, committing fully to their learning while enjoying the therapeutic benefits of working with animals. Units such as this help empower our learners to feel confident when working with animals and ensure their safety and wellbeing. Next term, we will be focusing on preparing, cleaning, and maintaining animal accommodation.



Bushcraft



Exploring the World Through Maps

In Bushcraft, this term's focus has been on maps and navigation. Students have explored a variety of maps, including world maps, tube maps, and Ordnance Survey (OS) maps. They have learned about contour lines, the 16 points of the compass, and how to orientate a map and follow a bearing. Additionally, students have practiced calculating scale, using six-digit grid references, and reading the legend on an OS map to interpret real roads, paths, and landmarks.



Catering

Exploring flavour. Empowering futures.

It's been a full and flavour-packed half term in Catering, with our young people building confidence in the kitchen celebrating Chinese New Year by exploring traditional Chinese dishes, developing practical cooking skills while learning about culture and global food. The kitchen was alive with focus, teamwork and some seriously good smells.

Alongside cooking, learners have been strengthening their independent living skills by planning budgets and travel for a supermarket trip next term. They've been calculating costs, writing shopping lists, mapping bus routes and organising safe travel plans – all designed to build real-world confidence. We've also started preparing for next term's pasta unit, exploring different varieties and cooking methods.

A warm welcome to Alejandro, whose professional chef experience has already brought fresh energy to the kitchen. And a huge thank you to Nicky for leading Catering in the meantime and keeping everyone motivated and progressing so well.

We're incredibly proud of the independence, teamwork and growth shown this half term – and we can't wait to see what's next.



Gardening

Sowing Seeds and Exploring Nature

This half term, our learners have been working incredibly hard to get the garden ready for spring and the sowing season ahead. Our polytunnel received a thorough clear-out, including one particularly tough session scrubbing all the moss from the floor – well done to my fantastic team of primary learners!

We have been cleaning pots, removing finished plants, and cutting back to make way for new growth. Some early seeds have already been sown, including sweet peas and a range of herbs, bringing the promise of great produce and beautiful flowers to come.

Although the weather has presented its challenges and parts of the garden have become a mud bath, the learners have loved exploring in the colder conditions and particularly enjoyed discovering and cracking all the ice!

Life skills

Practical Learning for Everyday Life

Life Skills learning engages students by linking real-life experiences to practical activities, such as reading bus and train timetables and discussing how public transport is used in their own community. Through exploratory activities, learners investigate local maps, routes, and stops, practise telling the time, and plan simple journeys. These experiences build understanding of travel and time management, empowering students to become more independent and confident while supporting decision-making, problem-solving, and safe travel as they learn to navigate their surroundings and manage everyday journeys.

This term in cooking, pupils have been developing confidence and independence in the kitchen by preparing a range of familiar and new dishes, including mince quesadillas, sausage and mash, and homemade chicken nuggets. They have been actively engaged through hands-on cooking experiences, working safely with equipment, following recipes, and developing teamwork skills. We celebrated Chinese New Year and teamed up with the Art Department, linking food preparation with creative learning. Pupils prepared sweet and sour chicken balls, special fried rice, Chinese ribs, and chicken chow mein, allowing them to explore flavours, techniques, and cultural traditions while building practical life skills.

We explored healthy food options and compared prices to plan a meal within a £5 budget. We calculated the costs, made decisions about what to buy, and created a poster to show my healthy food choices and budget. Through this, our young people feel empowered to make healthier food choices and manage money confidently when shopping.



Reptiles

From Meerkats to Crocodiles: A Day to Remember

Our pupils enjoyed two brilliantly fun days visiting Crocodile World, and the excitement started the moment they climbed onto the mini-bus. They chatted happily about the animals they might see, setting a lively tone for the whole trip. The day began with the meerkat feeding, which brought lots of smiles as the meerkats dashed around gathering their food. The crocodile feeding proved just as exciting, with pupils watching in amazement as the crocodiles showed off their strength and speed.

Inside the reptile house, the children explored snakes, lizards, spiders, scorpions, and many other intriguing animals. They were especially fascinated by the fish and crocodile skulls on display and enjoyed learning about Latin names, habitats, origins, and endangered species.

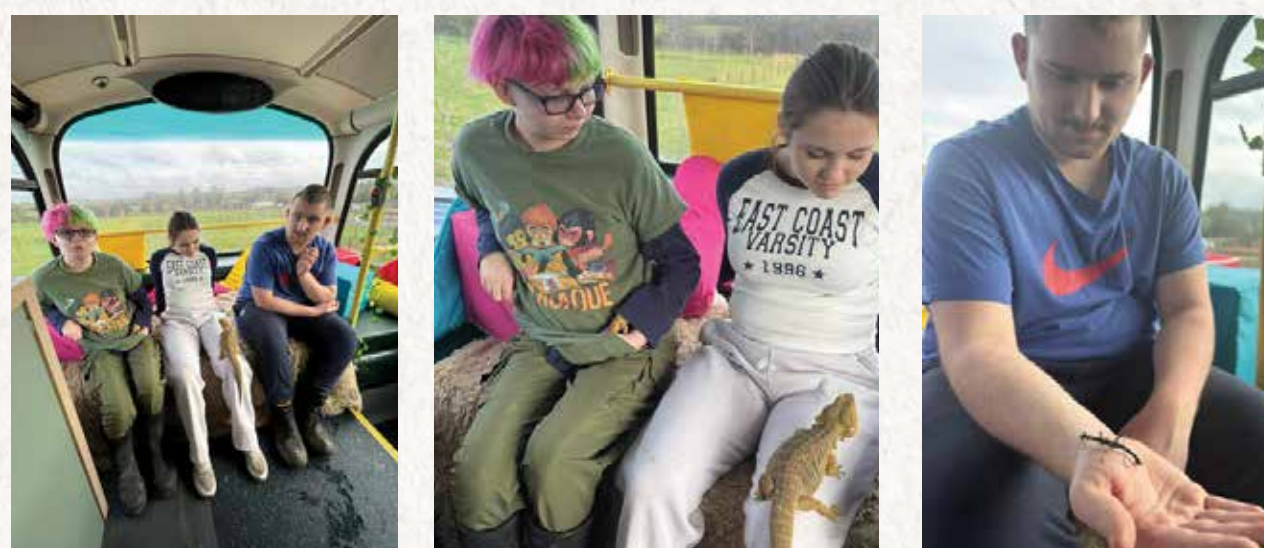
One of the standout moments was discovering how the Panther chameleon can change colour. The pupils loved discussing why this happens and were full of brilliant questions and ideas.

Throughout the trip, they took part in enthusiastic discussions about animal diets, confidently deciding which creatures were herbivores and which were carnivores, using what they had observed during the feedings.

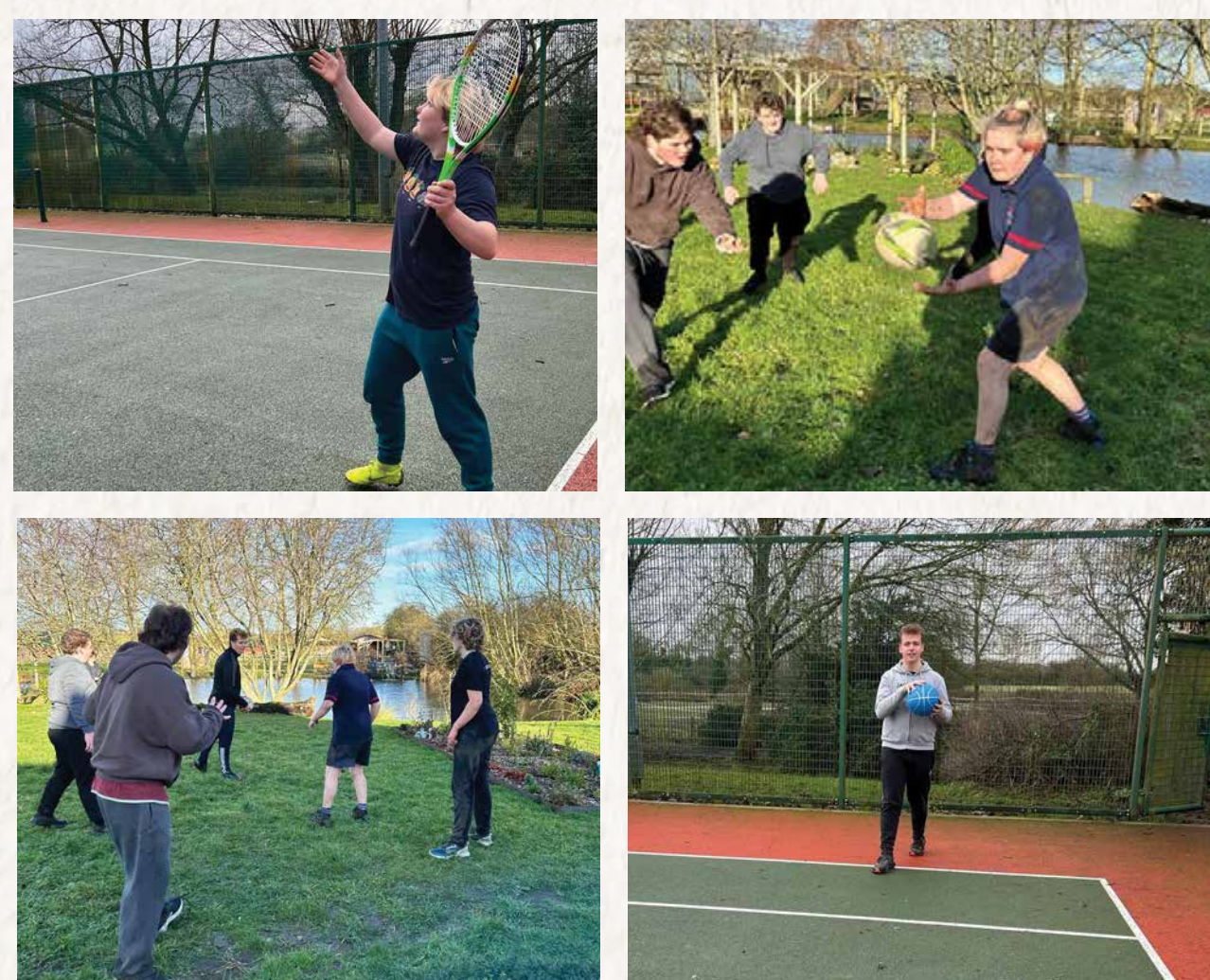
Back at the Orchard Therapeutic Farm, the adventure continued on the well-loved Reptile Bus. The children enjoyed comparing the animals they had seen at Crocodile World with the reptiles they recognised from the bus, proudly sharing what they knew.

After visiting the outdoor enclosures, including the crocodiles and the impressive Komodo dragon, the pupils enjoyed a cheerful outdoor lunch followed by plenty of fun in the play park.

To end the day, they stopped at the gift shop. The children were delighted to find souvenirs featuring animals they recognised from the Reptile Bus at the farm, excitedly pointing out their favourites and recalling what they had learned.



Sports



Building strength, skills, and team spirit

This half term in Sports, learners have been working through two units of the OCN qualification: Taking Part in Sport and Working in Sport and Active Leisure. Alongside developing practical skills, students explored a wide range of careers within the sports industry, creating meaningful cross-curricular links between Sports and Careers learning.

We made excellent use of community sports facilities, particularly the local recreation ground, where learners completed elements of their units while developing skills in real-world settings. A key focus has been on understanding how to keep fit and active for free, helping young people identify activities they can continue independently and carry into their wider lives and adulthood.

A huge well done to all our young people, who have worked incredibly hard throughout the half term and represented the provision brilliantly by conducting themselves as respectful, motivated, and positive individuals within the community.

Trades

Teamwork really does make the dream work

Trades has quickly become one of the most loved programmes at Orchard Therapeutic Farm – and in truth, it grew very naturally. Many years ago, before Orchard, I ran my own painting and decorating business, so returning to trades felt a little like coming home. The programme itself began simply because our young people asked for it. They wanted something hands-on, practical, and real – learning that involved moving, making, and seeing the results of their hard work.

And that's where Trades truly shines. Whenever we introduce something new at Orchard, we do it gently. We take time to listen, observe, and respond to the interests and needs of our young people. Trades was no different. At first, there was a mix of curiosity, nerves... and yes, a little reluctance. Some young people weren't convinced it was for them at all.

But it didn't take long for things to change. Before we knew it, the radio was on, laughter was flowing, and sleeves were rolled up. Young people were learning real-life DIY and trade skills that they could use beyond Orchard. We started with painting and decorating, moved into wallpapering, and then on to tiling – each step building confidence, pride, and independence.

The real magic happened when we took Trades into the barn. Together, our students worked on renovating a brand-new barn space, now used for our 2:1 provision within the Engage programme. This wasn't a practice exercise – it was a meaningful project with a real purpose. They were creating something that would be used and enjoyed by other young people in our community.



Along the way, our learners achieved painting and tiling qualifications, but just as importantly, they experienced what it feels like to contribute, work as a team, and take pride in doing a job well. Teamwork really does make the dream work.

It's been heart-warming to see how far the young people have come. Some of those who were hesitant at the beginning will now happily tell you they'd feel confident wallpapering the family front room!

Over to you, parents and carers... As the Trades programme continues to grow, I'll be stepping slightly sideways and handing the reins to Ollie, an extremely skilled and highly qualified tradesperson, who will continue to nurture the programme and support our young people to develop their skills even further.

Engineering

Grease, Grit and Growing Confidence

Ludivine will tell you that Trades is the most loved programme at Orchard Therapeutic Farm. I'm going to politely disagree. Because if you ask me, anything involving welding, angle grinding and full brake assemblies on staff cars has to be right up there at the top. (Yes – all very carefully supervised by the one and only Toby.)

Joking aside, if that mechanical language made your head spin, rest assured – your children took it completely in their stride. What I've had the privilege to witness is something genuinely special.

From the first bolt to the final check, the young people showed focus, resilience and commitment. Even in cold and challenging weather, they turned up, stayed present, and supported each other from start to finish. There were no half-jobs – just determination, patience and teamwork.

And that's where the real win is. Mechanical work doesn't always go smoothly. Things don't line up, parts don't cooperate, and sometimes you have to start again. What impressed me most was watching young people stick with it, help each other problem-solve, and celebrate together when a job was finally done.



So yes – Trades might claim the crown... but mechanics is giving it a very strong run for its money.

Either way, what matters most is that our young people feel capable, confident and proud of what they've achieved – and on that front, they are nothing short of absolute legends. Friendly competition aside... I can't wait to see what they take on next.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Term Dates Spring Term 2026

Term 4:

Starts: Monday 23 February 2026

Ends: Thursday 26 March 2026

Term 5:

Starts: Monday 13 April 2026

Ends : Friday 22 May 2026

Other Important Dates

Open Day: Saturday 28 February 2026

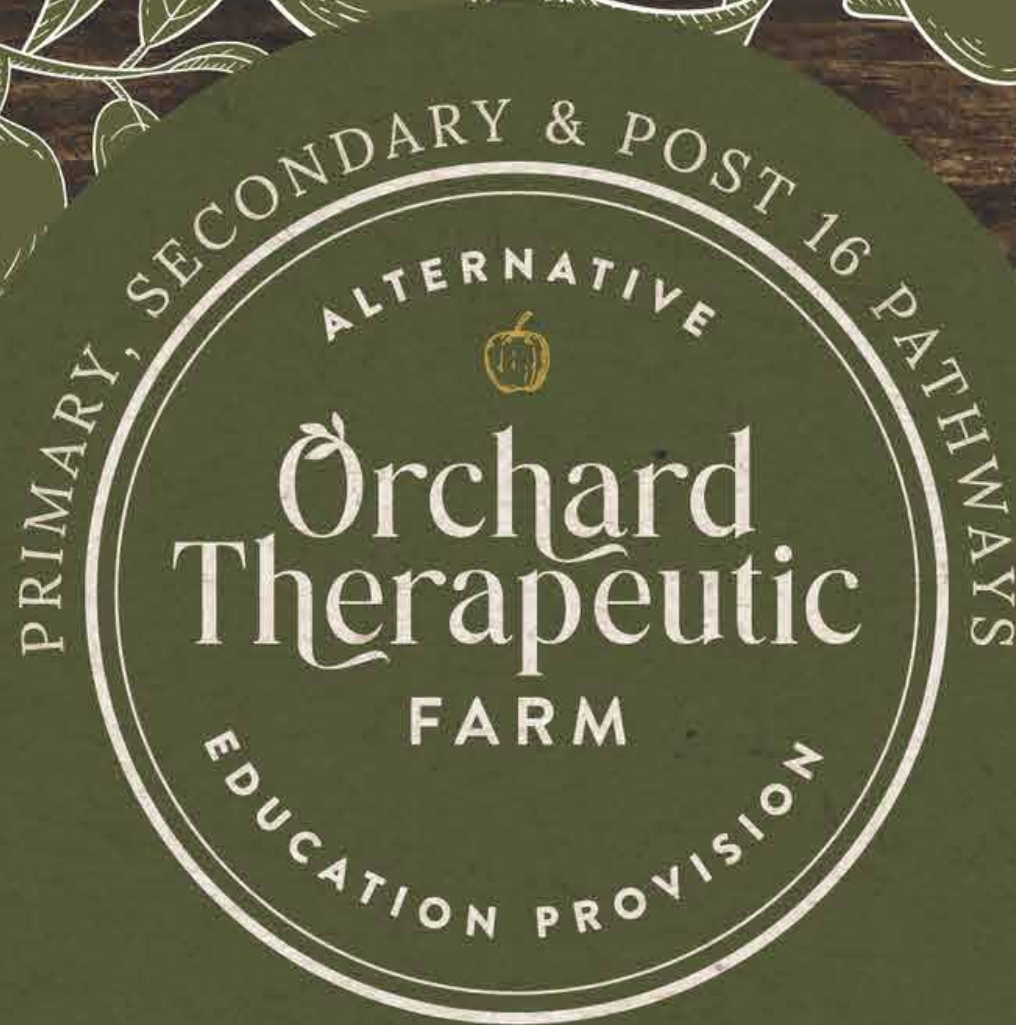
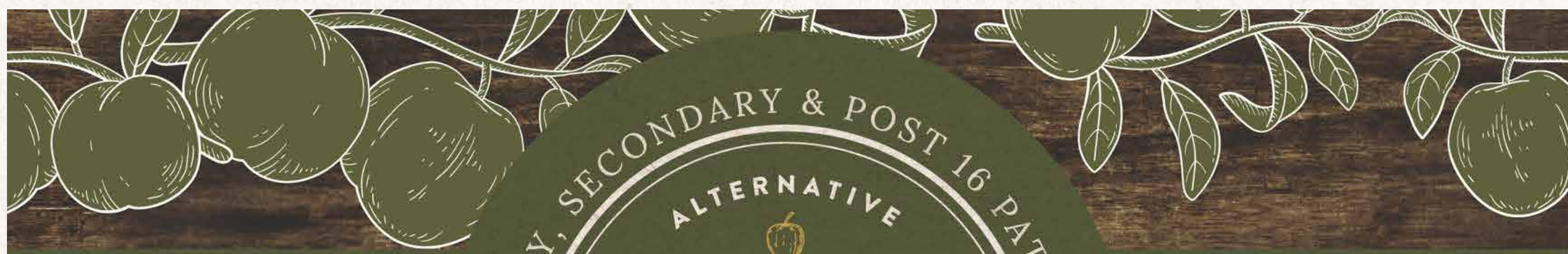
Open Afternoon: Thursday 19 March 2026

Red Nose Day: Friday 20 March 2026

Inset Day: Friday 27 March 2026



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND COOPERATION.



Alternative Education Provider
that's Practical, Purposeful & Personalised

OPEN DAY

SAT 28 FEBRUARY

 10.00AM - 1.00PM

Book your 30 minutes slot & chat with us

Orchard Outstanding Awards

☆☆☆☆
CELEBRATING SUCCESSES



WINNER

At the end of each half term, we come together in the Hitchcox Kitchen Tipi for a simple ceremony of recognition.

Guided by our values Explore, Engage and Empower, we pause to acknowledge growth, resilience and the journeys our young people are on. Here are just some of our awards from this half term...

Finlay

For engaging brilliantly with staff and growing in confidence to express his wants and needs. A fantastic step in communication, Well done!



Katie

Empowered to confidently care for our equines and share her knowledge with others.

Daniel

For exploring new challenges and empowering himself by building confidence with reptile handling and communicating his feelings clearly. Outstanding progress!



Jacob

Exploring a new provision and a great transition over from a different programme.

Karly

For exploring her passion for reptiles and empowering her peers by sharing her knowledge, helping others grow in confidence, and handling the geckos with excellence.



Olivia

For empowering her group of students that she teaches each week in cooking.

Caleb W

For engaging positively with peers and empowering others through consistent support; especially, offering to scribe in ASDAN Sports & Fitness. A true team player!

Casey

For always being engaged and ready to learn in life skills.

Harry

Empowering others by helping them when they are struggling.



Christopher

Empowered to confidently care for chickens and complete health checks.

Alicia

For exploring new recipes in ASDAN cooking.