



"Staff share high aspirations for all" - GFAPS, Ofsted 2022

"Highly skilled specialist teachers help pupils to re-engage with learning" – SCAPS, Ofsted 2019

Parent & Carer Newsletter

December 2025



Welcome from the Director of Alternative Provision

It has been another busy but productive two terms at Altus School and as always, I am very proud of what staff and students have achieved together. The last few weeks have been full of festive cheer – there have been some naughty elves around the school, delicious Christmas dinners enjoyed, trips out and plenty of Christmas music played.



Since September, students have been hard at work across the school – it has been fantastic to see them contribute to making their centres look so positive and welcoming.



Staff have also been working hard throughout the two terms – our first two days back after half term were INSET days where staff worked together to look at how we support students in and out of the classrooms. A highlight was a talk from Ashley John-Baptiste, broadcaster and author of *Looked After*, who described his life growing up as a child in care. He reminded us all of the powerful opportunities we have to make a difference in school.



We wish you all a restful break and we look forward to welcoming parents, carers and students back to school on Monday 5 January.

Emma Gundry

News from Rutherford House



Centre Manager:
Mr Brad Simms

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01452 643008

End of term message from Mr. Simms

As we come to the end of another busy term, I would like to thank everyone in our school community for creating a supporting, nurturing environment that has allowed our pupils to flourish. This term has been filled with many positive moments, big and small and we are incredibly proud of the progress our pupils have made.

As the term draws to a close, we say goodbye to some pupils who are moving on to the next stage of their educational journey. We are incredibly proud of how far they have come and wish them success in their next chapter. At the same time, we are looking forward to welcoming new pupils in the new term. We are excited to get to know them and to support them as they settle in and begin their journey with us until they move onto their next school.

What's been happening during Terms 1 and 2

Term 1:

Miss Welsh and Miss Watkins led a trip to the Aerospace Museum in Bristol where our KS1 pupils got to board the world's first supersonic plane, the Concorde. Our pupils then compared the Concorde's unique design to other passenger planes and found out why it travelled faster than the speed of sound.

We said goodbye to Miss Harkess, our Ash class teacher, and welcomed Mr Roach to our ever-growing team.

Term 2:

We saw the successful opening of our satellite provision in Andoversford, where Mrs Kiely and Miss Coulter did an amazing job in ensuring our pupils had a smooth transition and are continuing to make a positive impact with these pupils.

After a very long and successful term the pupils were rewarded with trips to the Pantomime, Tubing at Gloucester Ski Slope and a tour of Gloucester Cathedral.



News from Russet House



Centre Manager:
Mrs Liz Rudge

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01452 528955

End of term message from Mrs. Rudge

I can't believe we're nearly at the end of 2025. It has been a busy two terms as the team work with our lively young people. We've had the pleasure of welcoming some new pupils and seeing a few move back to mainstream, which is great. It was lovely to receive positive feedback from a student at St Peter's about his time at Russet recently. I hope everyone enjoys a well-deserved break and returns next term refreshed and ready for new challenges.



What's been happening during Terms 1 and 2

- We have created an outdoor arts space and a new seating area in reception.
- In PE, students enthusiastically participated in badminton, quickly picking up key skills, working cooperatively, and showing visible progress.
- As part of Altus Impact Initiative, students collected apples from our local community orchard and pressed their own apple juice. They have also done several local litter picks.
- For Active Learning students have built their own dens and perfected their outdoor cooking skills. They reached new heights when taking part in indoor climbing, showing great courage and perseverance.
- In Maths students have been encouraged to think deeply using representations and real-life examples to build a secure understanding of their learning.



News from the Ryeleaze Centre



Centre Manager:
Miss Rebecca Allen

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01453 767353

End of term message from Miss Allen

Wow, what a fantastic start to the year, with so many opportunities for our students to engage with! We have welcomed lots of new students and said goodbye to some that have moved onto new schools. We have also welcomed 7 fish to the English room, with all pupils taking responsibility for their care, helping with cleaning and feeding. We hope that you all enjoy a restful Christmas break and look forward to seeing you all back in January 2026 with plans for another fun term.

What's been happening during Terms 1 and 2

We have had a busy 2 terms with lots of opportunities for students.

In term 1 we were lucky enough to visit Giffords Circus, where some of our younger students joined us from Rutherford, to watch the magical Laguna Bay production.

Students also welcomed the Narrative Alchemy onsite to perform two productions, "Chelsea's Story" and "Crashing" to raise awareness and empower young people in their relationships. Finally, we also received a visit from Gloucestershire Constabulary, Cyber Intelligence team to give the students guidance on internet safety .

In Term 2 our Y9 students went to visit the Careers Fair at Cheltenham where they were able to meet and speak with a variety of industries, gaining ideas for their future. They even managed to bring back some freebies! Students have been working with a local artist Marcus Walters, and Stroud Town Council to produce artwork that will be used to create an art installation on a local bus stop. This has been great for the students to feel that they are part of and giving something back to the local community.

We all visited Bristol's "We the curious" where great fun was had with hands on science and animation making activities, sparking lots of creativity and laughter. If that wasn't enough, students have been indoor climbing as part of their Active Learning lessons.



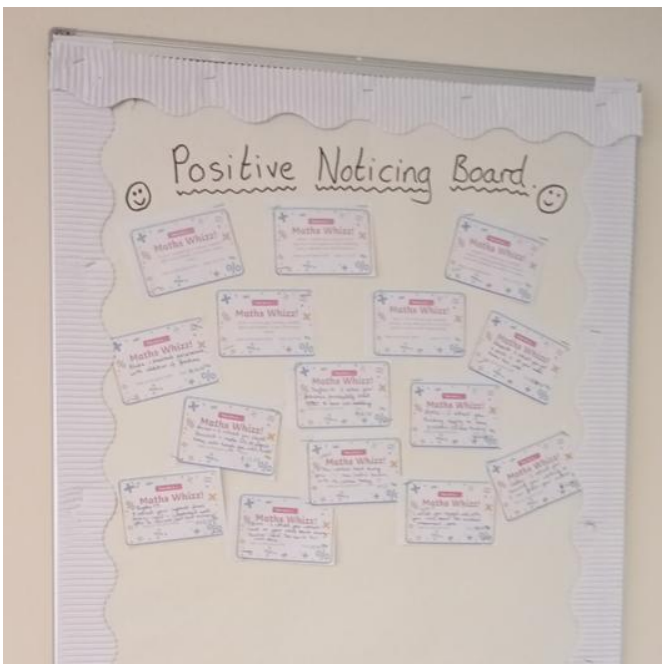


Positive Noticing Day



The Altus School
Together, we can make a difference

Positive Noticing Day gave the opportunity for students and staff at Ryeleaze to write messages of thanks and encouragement to all, promoting a feeling of well-being and appreciation. This also produced a wonderful display for us to share these uplifting messages.



At Russet House, Positive Noticing Day continued in Maths lessons with the daily noticing of 'Maths Whizzes' in class – celebrating successes in learning, as well as students' wider contribution to school life.

News from the Belle Vue Hub



Hub Programme Manager:
Mr Matt Brown

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01453 767293

End of term message from Mr. Brown

Our team continues to grow stronger, constantly adapting our work to meet individual needs. Each member brings unique skills that make us highly effective. I'm excited for the year ahead and to see Individual Learning Plans and Journals become fully embedded in our practice.

My vision for the new year is for students to take ownership of their learning, using the structure we've developed, and begin challenging staff to support their academic, skill-based and emotional growth.



What's been happening during Terms 1 and 2

Students at the Hub have started using personal journals at the beginning and end of each session to encourage self-reflection. They have also been provided with Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), which set personalised learning targets based on information from My Plans, Pupil Passports and school assessments. In addition, students have engaged in PSHE activities during Black History Month and explored global Christmas traditions, including foods from around the world. They have also participated in restorative practices and developed practical skills, such as repairing damage caused during moments of dysregulation.



News from the Horton Centre



Centre Manager:
Miss Sophie Ellis-Smith

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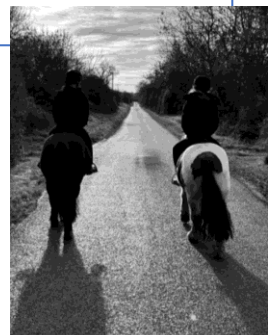
01452 643060

End of term message from Miss Smith

This September, the Horton Road staff were delighted to welcome all our new students. As a newly formed team, we've enjoyed working together, learning about each other, and celebrating the unique strengths each person brings. Our students have made an incredible start, and together we've quickly built a warm, inclusive community where everyone feels a true sense of belonging. We're excited for the journey ahead and look forward to continuing to grow and achieve great things together! It's great to share the fantastic experiences and achievements from the first two terms of the academic year below.

What's been happening during Terms 1 and 2?

- **Careers Engagement:** Our students had the opportunity to attend **careers visits** and a **careers fair**, helping them explore future pathways and gain valuable insights into the world of work.
- **Active Learning:** We introduced interactive and practical learning sessions designed to build confidence, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.
- **Functional Skills:** Testing in English and Maths has begun, ensuring students are on track to develop essential skills for life and employment.
- **Vocational Activities:** Students have enjoyed hands-on experiences in animal care, horse riding and boxing. These activities have been fantastic for developing resilience, discipline, and practical knowledge.
- **Celebrating Our Team:** A big thank you to our **Teaching Assistants**, who have worked incredibly hard to create **interactive display boards** in the centre. These boards are now **working spaces** where students can share their ideas and feedback using post-it notes—encouraging collaboration and student voice.



News from St George's Centre



Centre Manager:
Mrs Fiona Clarke

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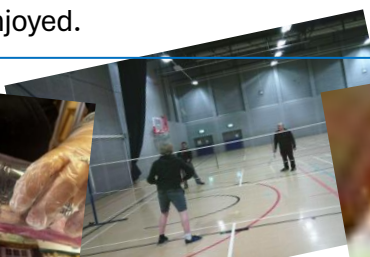
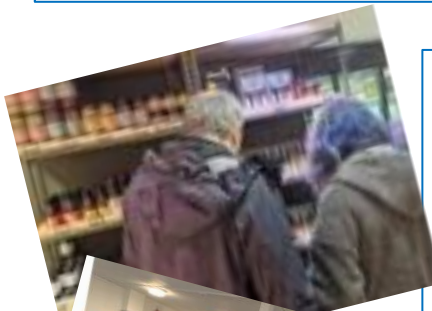
End of term message from Fiona

We have had a busy term here at St Georges, with lots of opportunities for our students both on and offsite. We have welcomed new students in both Year 10 & 11, who have settled well and become part of our school community.

We have also enjoyed getting to know new staff members who have quickly become part of our team. At the end of a long term, I would like to wish everyone an enjoyable and restful break and will see you all in 2026!

What's been happening during Terms 1 and 2

- Some of our Year 11s have successfully passed their Functional Skills English and Maths exams. A fantastic achievement!
- Both year groups in Cooking have shown resilience (and upper body strength!) deboning and filleting whole chickens. They have also enjoyed a trip to Gloucester Services.
- In Art and Creative Industries some amazing pieces of work have been created. Students have learnt how to create their own resin forms. They have experimented with colours, glitters, various moulds and decorations.
- During wellbeing, the students have enjoyed playing pool and table football.
- As part of the Creative Industries course, some students had the opportunity to attend Giffords Circus, which they thoroughly enjoyed.



News from the Eastbrook Centre



Centre Manager:

Mrs Ann Morris

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01452 309510

End of term message from Mrs. Morris

What a busy start to the academic year! I almost cannot believe that it is nearly Christmas and the end of 2025! It has been wonderful welcoming new students and staff to the Eastbrook/Altus family. I truly believe if we continue to work together we can go from strength to strength. Now it's time for a little rest over the festive period, ready to return in January with even more gusto! Wishing you all a happy Christmas and New Year.



What's been happening during Terms 1 and 2

- In Hospitality & Catering the students have been concentrating on Nutrition and exploring the different macro-nutrients. Practically, they have been perfecting the skill of presentation to make the dishes look appetizing to eat.
- In Art, our GCSE students have made a brilliant start on their portfolio and are currently focusing on their final piece.
- Our Creative Industries Pathways students have been focussing on Reduction Printing as part of their qualification. They have gained sound knowledge of Creative Industries, looking at global, national and local companies, along with exploring private, public and cross-sectors within the Creative Industries.
- In Sports & Fitness, our year 11 students have been enjoying their experience at a Fitness Gym and have been designing their own fitness workouts.
- Our year 10 students have been concentrating on their football skills and sportsmanship, which they will face the ultimate test this Thursday - their match against our other KS4 Centre – St Georges. Who will win the Altus Cup this year!?!



Careers News

Careers lead: Mr Clemow

Based at the Eastbrook Centre

Tel: 01452309510

Email: russ.clemow@altusschool.org.uk



We all have been busy over the last two terms, our KS4 centres have visited Gloucester College and SGS in Stroud. The year 11's and some year 10s walked around the campus and saw each faculty area. Lots of our students were enthused by the Hair & Beauty, mechanics, electrical, plumbing and building courses. A group of Y11s chose to attend our 'raising aspirations' visit to Hartpury University, they were very impressed with the campus and what it had to offer. Maybe this will inspire one or two students to think about attending University in the future?

Young Gloucester came in and ran a workshop for all year 11s, the theme was all about building team relationships. This will come in very handy in the working world. Alan Clark (from the Department of Work and Pensions) continues to provide our students with a wealth of careers knowledge. Alan attends our KS4 centres and provides careers advice, college application support, CV writing and helps students complete the Future Skills Questionnaire.

I hold regular meetings about each of our Year 11s with all the colleges, Gloucester County Council and many other external agencies. We discuss future employment, destinations and any extra support we can offer. Following these conversations a Youth Worker with a careers specialism is attached to one of our students giving that extra help and support.

All our Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 centres attended a huge careers fair at Cheltenham racecourse, around 2500 students attended. There were many companies talking to our students and offering mini challenges and 'freebies'. All the local Colleges & Universities were represented and students talked to them about T-levels and Apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship Facts



- It's a job where you learn, gain experience, qualifications.
- You are an employee and are **entitled to holiday leave** and other benefits.
- You will complete part time studying for a qualification linked to the job.
- Minimum wage for an apprenticeship **up to 17 is £6.40 per hour**.
- Apprenticeships have **entry criteria**, you need grades in **Maths and English** before being able to start.

Apprenticeship Support: www.apprenticeships.gov.uk

Safeguarding Information



Safeguarding Team

If you have a concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child, you should report this immediately to a member of the Safeguarding Team



Debbie Kirkham
Designated Safeguarding Lead
07715 669138
Safeguarding renewal: 21.11.26



Philippa Dancey
Safeguarding Lead Governor
01452 309510
Safeguarding renewal: 15.07.26



Belle Vue Hub
Matt Brown
DDSL
01453 767293
Safeguarding renewal: 24.06.26



Eastbrook Centre
Ann Morris
DDSL
01452 309510
Safeguarding renewal: 14.06.26



Horton Centre
Sophie Ellis-Smith
DDSL
01452 643060
Safeguarding renewal: 24.06.26



Ryeleaze Centre
Rebecca Allen
DDSL
01453 767353
Safeguarding renewal: 21.10.26



Rutherford House
Brad Simms
DDSL
01452 643008
Safeguarding renewal: 29.01.26



St George's Centre
Fiona Clarke
DDSL
01242 581519
Safeguarding renewal: 03.09.27



Russet House
Liz Rudge
DDSL
01452 528955
Safeguarding renewal: 21.05.27



School-wide
Nicki Boyle
DDSL
07720 089466
Safeguarding renewal: 09.07.26

Our Safeguarding Team is dedicated to ensuring that every child in our school feels safe, supported, and valued. The team works closely with staff, parents, and external agencies to promote students' wellbeing and respond promptly to any concerns.

We are always available to offer guidance, listen to worries, and provide specialist support when needed. If you ever have a concern about your child's safety or wellbeing, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the Safeguarding Team — we're here to help and to ensure that all children can learn and thrive in a secure environment.

Belonging Matters – valuing attendance



We know that it can be hard sometimes for students to come to school, especially when it hasn't always felt easy for some of our children. We value every day at Altus School and celebrate the attendance of every child, every day. We are a school where everyone belongs and so if you have any difficulties getting your child to school, you can reach out for help.

Our Deputy Director, Claire Greatbanks, is our **attendance champion**, and she works with Centre Managers to help overcome any barriers to a child coming into school.



In addition, our family support team, and in particular, Anita and Laura, are on hand for parents and carers to provide support, advice and guidance if you have any difficulties getting your child to school. Please reach out – we're here to help!

Keep Up-to-Date!



Don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up-to-date with all the things happening in school throughout the year.