

Empowering futures: for a better tomorrow

CEO Newsletter

December 2025



An update from our CEO

Dear Colleagues,

As we draw toward the end of another remarkable term, there is indeed much to celebrate. From outstanding achievements in classrooms to innovative projects and community events, the momentum across our Trust has never been stronger.

I'm delighted to welcome our new Chair of the Trust Board - Dr Stephen Lee - whose experience and vision will be invaluable as we continue to strengthen and grow our organisation. Stephen worked in education for 25 years and was one of His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMI) at Ofsted. Stephen's last role at Ofsted was as assistant regional director in the South West region. His appointment comes at a time when so much great work is happening across our schools, and he is looking forward to visiting you all over the course of the coming months.

This September, we launched our **Game Plan**—our three-year Strategic Plan outlining a bold and ambitious vision for the future. You should have received your personal copy via email during the first week of November. We've already achieved a lot together, and this Autumn 2025 newsletter includes more details on the progress we've made against our key priorities.

Looking ahead, plans are well underway for our next Staff Development Day on **13th February 2026** – a day that will centre around our Game Plan, with the theme “One Trust – doing more together, doing more the same”. The day will feature sessions linked to our **Game Plan**, offering opportunities to connect, collaborate and help shape the future of our Trust.

Meanwhile, following the success of these events in their inaugural year last year, I'm pleased to share that we will be celebrating these again in 2026! So here are the key dates for your diary:

- **Ivy Music Festival – 26th March 2026 at The Langstone Cliff Hotel**
- **We Are Ivy Week – w/c 27th April 2026**
- **The 2nd Annual Ivy Games – 20th July 2026 at The Exeter Arena**

These events continue to showcase the creativity, spirit, and unity that define our community and those that we serve.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of you for the energy and commitment you bring every day.

As we approach the festive period, please enjoy a well-earned break - wherever you are and whatever you're doing - and we look forward to welcoming you back, refreshed and re-energised, in January.

Merry Christmas!



Katy Quinn
CEO



Hello from Dr Stephen Lee

Hello everyone,

It's a pleasure to introduce myself as the new Chair of the Ivy Education Trust Board. I am genuinely honoured to take on this role and to work alongside such a dedicated and talented community of staff, leaders, governors, and trustees. Over the past few weeks, I've had the opportunity to learn more about the incredible work taking place across our eight schools, and I am truly inspired by the commitment you show to giving every Ivy child the very best opportunities.

My focus as Chair is simple: to support our Trust to thrive, to champion the values – Courage, Compassion, Collaboration, Commitment - that make our organisation so special, and to ensure that our strategic direction remains ambitious, purposeful, and grounded in what is best for our pupils. I'm excited to collaborate closely with our CEO, the Board, and all of you as we move into the next phase of our journey, including the development and delivery of the Game Plan - our new three-year strategic plan.

Thank you for the warm welcome I've already received. I look forward to meeting many more of you in the months ahead and to celebrating the achievements—big and small—that make our Trust such an exceptional place to learn and work.

With best wishes,



Dr Stephen Lee

Launching Our Game Plan:

A Three-Year Journey of Growth Autumn Term Update

Ambitious and forward-looking, the Game Plan sets out what we aim to achieve over the next three years. In this first year, we are focusing on five priority areas—those we believe will have the greatest impact—while staying true to our core principle of “doing more together, doing more the same.”



High Quality Inclusive Teaching

Front and centre of this work is developing an Ivy ‘set play’ for High Quality Inclusive Teaching (HQIT). Featured as Game Changer 2, Power Play 2 in our plan, HQIT reflects what we all know to be true: the single most influential factor in a child’s progress is the quality of teaching they receive. By strengthening inclusive, high-quality classroom practice, we ensure every learner—regardless of background, ability, or need—has the opportunity to flourish.

We are delighted that Eliza Pierce, Deputy Headteacher at Dawlish College, has been appointed to lead this vital area. Eliza will head up our Professional Learning Community and collaborate with leaders across all Ivy schools to shape The Ivy Way of teaching.

Progress update: work is already well underway. This term, the group has been collaborating with colleagues from Windsor Academy Trust to refine our shared core principles, ensuring they are meaningful and effective for pupils aged 2 to 19 across the Ivy family. Looking ahead, the Spring Term will see this work brought together and finalised with our Professional Learning Community and Trust Leaders. Our aim is to share the completed framework with all staff across the Trust in the Summer Term.



Reduce Absence

Our next key priority is to **significantly reduce pupil absence** across the Trust, with a particular emphasis on our Secondary schools. This work will centre on proactive strategies that help us identify and address the root causes of absence—whether related to engagement, wellbeing, or access to support services.

By supporting our schools to build a culture that truly values regular attendance, we aim to strengthen every pupil’s participation in school life. Progress will be monitored through clear, termly attendance benchmarks, ensuring all pupils benefit from consistent learning experiences and the continuity they need to thrive.



Strengthening SEND provision across the Trust

A key priority within our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) work this year is to ensure that Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision (OAIP) is clearly understood and consistently implemented across all our schools.

To achieve this, we are committed to strengthening SEND provision through early and accurate identification of needs, high-quality interventions, and personalised support that helps every pupil thrive—academically, socially, and emotionally.

We are pleased to share that Fran Townsend, SENDCO at Teignmouth Community School, has been appointed to lead this important programme of work. It is a significant role, and we are fortunate to have her expertise guiding us. Our SEND Professional Learning Community is already demonstrating strong collaboration across schools and phases, setting a positive example for the Trust as this work gains momentum.

Progress update: this term, much of our work has focused on operational support—working closely with all schools to ensure pupil plans are accurately meeting individual needs and are appropriately funded. Looking ahead, January 2026 will mark an exciting next step. Our SEND Professional Learning Community will join colleagues from Windsor Academy Trust for a dedicated SEND Summit, where they will begin co-constructing our core principles for SEND provision across the Ivy family.





Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning

We now move into central developments under Game Changer 4 – Thrive Financially.

At the heart of unlocking every Ivy child's potential is building financial strength that turns ambition into action. **Power Play 1** focuses on effective financial planning. By embedding **Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP)** across our secondary schools. With this we are shaping long-term curriculum strategies and ensuring we are ready to anticipate challenges and seize opportunities—maximising investment where it matters most: in the classroom.

Progress update: This term, our efforts have centred on loading secondary school curriculum plans into the new software platform. This gives school leaders a clearer view of the future, enabling early and strategic budget planning. This work will continue throughout the year and will be a critical component in shaping budget assumptions alongside Trust Leaders.



Streamlining Systems and Processes

Financial strength alone isn't enough. To turn strategy into action, Ivy must ensure that all systems and processes are fully aligned across the Trust. **Power Play 2** focuses on standardising processes and harnessing digital transformation to create clarity, consistency, and efficiency in everything we do. This alignment ensures resources are used wisely, decisions are made with confidence, and every part of the Trust works seamlessly toward our shared vision.

Progress update: This term, we have explored organisational design and begun automating key processes. Phase 1 of finance centralisation is complete, along with consolidation of some key cost centres. Looking ahead, we will implement process automation in finance systems for accounts payable and purchasing, and migrate the entire Trust to a single, unified operating system—streamlining operations and strengthening collaboration across all schools.

Get Ready for...

Trust Development Day 2026!

Exciting plans are underway for this year's Trust Development Day on Friday 13th February 2026. Our day will celebrate the Ivy value of 'Collaboration' under the banner "One Trust: doing more together, doing more the same" and will feature sessions linked to the three key priorities from our Ivy Game Plan of High-Quality Inclusive Teaching, Reducing Absence, and improving SEND provision.

It's always great to get everyone together and there will be opportunities to connect, collaborate and help shape the future of our Trust.

Newton Abbot College will be kindly hosting the event again this year, and we are looking forward to seeing as many of you there as possible; all staff are warmly invited to attend.

More information will follow early in the New Year but for now, make sure the date is in your diaries! Friday 13th February 2026.



Spotlight on our Schools



Cockwood Primary – Centre of Excellence!

This summer, Cockwood Primary School was awarded a **Voice 21 Oracy Centre of Excellence**, making it the first centre in Devon to achieve this status! This recognition celebrates the school’s dedication and commitment to developing oracy (speaking and listening skills) through a whole-school approach across its vision, culture, curriculum, learning, and impact on students, and this award recognises Cockwood Primary as a leader in providing high-quality oracy education, serving as a model for other schools. Martin Wrigley MP visited in November to find out more about the award and Cockwood’s innovative approach to language acquisition, embedded talk protocols and routines. Communication is such an important skill in life and congratulations to Cockwood for keeping it at the heart of learning.



Dawlish College – moving faster to go slower!

The Student Body at Dawlish College have been busy campaigning! In the Summer Term, I had the pleasure of participating in the Citizens UK project with their Student Leadership Team, and this important work continues. The **‘20 is Plenty’ road safety campaign** is a fantastic example of one of our key priorities in action – **Game Changer 3: Anchored at the Heart of the Community**. Students at Dawlish College have come together to tackle a significant issue affecting both the school and the wider town: traffic speed along Elm Grove Road. DC welcomed Dr. Sebastien Chapleau, the new Citizens UK Assistant Director for the South of England in November to see the students’ outstanding work first hand. And last week, I attended a panel discussion led by the Student Body with members of the local community, Dan Thomas and Nigel Flower (the Road Safety Officer), both from Devon County Council. The pupils managed the meeting brilliantly and it was wonderful to see such a tenacious group of young people demonstrating all 4 C’s that are at the core of our Trust values. There is a further site visit now planned for the new year and so I will keep you updated!





Kenton Primary – Creating space for brighter futures!

The new hall installation began over the two week half term, and the children were able to explore it from 24th November. By the end of that first day, the food service had been moved out of Willow Class and into the New Hall. Energised by excitement, momentum continued the next day as a fantastic team of parents, pupils, and staff relocated the library, creating a wonderful space for the children to immerse themselves in books and spark their imaginations. This is their first proper library space since the catastrophic flood at the old Kenton School location in September 2023, and it's been a joy to see the children once again able to enjoy the simple pleasure of sitting on a beanbag with a book. With a Bikeability cycle training programme in the hall the following week, swiftly followed by the annual flu vaccinations and a rousing drumming workshop, the new hall at Kenton Primary School has already become a well-used and much-loved space.



Teignmouth Primary – Celebrating Excellence in Inclusion!

Our congratulations to Teignmouth Primary who have been given a prestigious national award in recognition for its strong and sustained commitment to inclusion. The school has not only achieved the Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) but has also been designated as a Centre of Excellence. The IQM is the UK's only national award for inclusion and evaluates how effectively schools create environments in which all children can thrive.

Gaining the award involves a rigorous assessment process across several key areas (including Leadership, Values and Behaviour). Pupils, parents, LA partners and staff were all consulted by the IQM Assessor, who praised the school throughout their report. "It is very evident that the school goes above and beyond to cater for children and there is a clear commitment to care in a pastoral way."

The report also highlighted the school's rich range of enrichment opportunities, strong Outdoor Learning provision, excellent behaviour, and the relational approach embedded across its expert staff team.

The team at TPS say they are proudest of the view that the school "finds the magic that works for every child." That is something we can all be proud of.



Kenn Church of England Primary – Exploring nature up close

In November, the KS1 children of Kenn enjoyed an unforgettable visit from Animals 2U South West, who delivered a ssssssssimply ssssssstunning interactive workshop. From the moment the animals arrived, the children were utterly captivated.

Their curiosity was sparked as they explored and discovered a wonderful variety of creatures, including mammals, reptiles, and invertebrates. Together, they considered questions such as: What makes each animal unique? Where in the world do they live? In what habitat? Are they nocturnal or diurnal? Fascinating facts about growth, lifecycles, and the natural world were shared, and the children showed real courage as they got close to the animals—very close indeed! The wide eyes said it all.

Animals 2U commented on how thoughtful and enthusiastic the children's questions were, and it was clear just how much they were learning while also thoroughly enjoying themselves. It was a fantastic example of high-quality, hands-on learning in action.



Starcross Primary – Resilience in the rain

Despite the torrential downpours and high winds, our Starcross Primary Years 3 and 4 children were undeterred and took the challenging weather in their stride during their recent residential at Pixies Holt, nestled in the heart of Dartmoor National Park. Their determination truly shone through, and it was wonderful to see the school values of teamwork, ambition, resilience, self-awareness and success come to life in such a vivid and practical way.

Throughout their visit, the children threw themselves enthusiastically into a wide range of activities around the camp. From navigating muddy moorland trails and taking part in team-building challenges to exploring woodland habitats and learning vital outdoor skills, every experience offered opportunities to grow, collaborate, and discover new strengths. Even in the toughest moments, they supported one another, celebrated small victories, and showed remarkable positivity, making the trip a memorable and enriching adventure for everyone involved.




Teignmouth Community School, Dawlish College and Newton Abbot College – United on Court!

At the time of writing, we are eagerly awaiting the inaugural match of the **Ivy Netball Team**, due to take place on 9th December.

Players from our three secondary girls' netball teams have come together to form the Ivy Netball Team, who will play their first match against Westcountry Schools Trust. Just forming an Ivy Team demonstrates our values: **collaboration**, as the girls have moved from three separate school teams—who may have been rivals in the past—to unite as one; **commitment**, in dedicating their time and energy to something bigger than themselves; **courage**, in stepping into a new team environment and facing new challenges together; and **compassion**, in supporting one another and fostering a positive, inclusive team spirit. This new team of Under 13s is a wonderful example of how working together with courage and care can create something truly special. Wishing them luck for the big match!





Wishing all our
colleagues in our
Ivy family a very
Merry Christmas and
a happy, healthy and
peaceful New Year.



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