

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

October 2025

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Phoenix School (Sheffield), and Forestwood (Bury) are DfE registered special schools, providing education for young people admitted to their co-located hospital services.

Our schools are regulated by OFSTED you can read their last inspection via the websites.

[Forestwood School](#)

[Phoenix School](#)

New staff

This month we welcome Sara as an Education Officer to Phoenix School.

We hope you enjoy your new role and settle in quickly.

What we've been up to

At Forestwood School, **we are dedicated to nurturing therapeutic relationships with young people who struggle with attending school or lack motivation.**

By engaging young people in activities and projects while they are on the ward, we can provide opportunities for skill-building and communication, essential for their growth which helps students feel connected and confident.

Friday is our options day, so during this, we recently introduced a hairdressing model to a young person who dreams of becoming a hairdresser or beautician. Whilst she initially faced challenges in braiding hair, through support and encouragement she can now confidently French braid.

Her excitement to practice further and share her new skill with her family is a testament to the progress being made and the potential for future success in her education.



This term we celebrated Black History Month during a number of lessons.

Young People celebrated **Gillian Blake as our science hero.** She is a great ecologist and so has been part of our termly topic of Ecosystems.

In honour of Black History Month 2025 students have also had the opportunity to learn about her inspiring career and explore her passion for ecology and the natural world.

Here are some highlights from our ecosystem learning:

Understanding Key Concepts: Students defined what a community, habitat, and ecosystem are, and even created their own ecosystems.

Exploring Interdependence: They used these ecosystems to explain the complex interdependence present in food chains and food webs.

Learning about the Carbon Cycle: As we wrapped up the term, students utilised decomposers to illustrate the carbon cycle, emphasising the importance of recycling materials.

We are so proud of the curiosity and enthusiasm our students have shown throughout these lessons.



In addition, **our young people engaged with the powerful poem "I Rise" by Maya Angelou.** They read the poem and also watched a performance of it on YouTube, presented by Maya Angelou herself.

Together, we explored the themes of resilience and strength that are central to the poem and discussed the incredible achievements of Maya Angelou throughout her life.

We also explored a number of quotes from Maya and each chose a favourite. The most popular quote was "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." This quote resonated strongly with lots of people working in this setting.

Our Young People also watched **Hidden Figures**, a film that not only highlights the important historical contributions of a number of black women in the USA achieving its goal of putting a man in space, but also has links to our math curriculum.



The students enjoyed popcorn during the viewing and participated in a mini quiz after to reinforce their learning.



We are particularly proud of one student who went above and beyond by writing a review of the film the next day in school.

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Finally, during **our inset day at the end of October our two schools took part in the Units United Conference 2025.** This was an inspiring and impactful event that brought together educators from CAMHS units across the country. This year marked a special milestone, as it was the first time Jayne Rowlands from Forestwood School had the opportunity to help organise the conference.

Teaching staff who attended, gained valuable insights from a line-up of exceptional keynote speakers. First up was Dr. Catherine Dakin, Autism Specialist and Consultant Psychiatrist. She offered a compelling exploration into the experiences of autistic young people, particularly how mental illness may present during adolescence.

Her emphasis on acceptance, empathy, and neurodiversity-affirming practices resonated deeply with our team and will undoubtedly shape how we approach inclusive education moving forward.

We were also privileged to hear from John Callaghan, Associate Principal at St. Benedict's Catholic College, who delivered an insightful keynote on harnessing AI tools without breaking the budget.

John walked the audience through the practical benefits of some platforms showcasing how these tools can be integrated into a student-centred, staff-friendly strategy.

The final keynote came from Thomas Beasley, an Expert by Experience, whose powerful and deeply personal talk explored the transformative role of lived experience in shaping mental health services.

Thomas shared his journey through CAMHS inpatient services, reflecting on how supportive educational environments played a crucial role in his healing. Now working to drive change, Thomas spoke movingly about coming full circle—using his experiences to empower others and advocate for more compassionate, inclusive mental health care.

Wendy Webster, Head teacher at Forestwood also led a packed and engaging session on the power of art and creativity across the curriculum. Her workshop explored how creative expression can support mental health, wellbeing, and emotional development—a message that resonated strongly with attendees.



We were also grateful to welcome Charlotte Kennedy-Gowers, Highly Specialised Dietician, who hosted a well-attended workshop focused on supporting children with disordered eating in the classroom.

Charlotte shared practical strategies and insights that educators found immediately applicable and deeply valuable – see feedback below

“The workshop on eating disorders and disordered eating was very informative and I enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere, where people were able to ask lots of questions”.

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In addition to these standout sessions, the conference offered a diverse and dynamic range of workshops, including:

- Creative writing and drama Strategies to engage children in our settings with emotionally driven non-attendance,
- Making use of Canva and AI
- Engagement in a low secure unit
- Learning from a STEM project with industry
- National updates for the sector

Great feedback from the event was received, with particular mention to Wendy who has received the following:-

“Good Morning Wendy

I hope that your return after the half term was a smooth one!

I was so delighted to meet with you at the conference, and I wanted to let you know how inspiring I found your session. Your passion was infectious and I came away feeling inspired to support the staff on my site to feel the same about their roles”.