

# news

SPRING 2025



## The reviews:

“This what makes NCW so special! The students were incredible! //”

“The show brought me to tears – to see my child perform, without their vision impairment being a barrier, was amazing. This would not have happened in his previous mainstream school. //”

*NCW Parents*



## Grease Is The Word!

**Rydell High Comes to NCW! After months of rehearsals, Grease (School Edition) finally hit the stage at NCW. For weeks, the corridors had been filled with “Summer Lovin’” and “Beauty School Dropout”, as students brought Rydell High to life.**

NCW has a long tradition of musical theatre, plays and performances, all cherished by students and alumni alike. This year’s production has been a huge hit, with actors perfecting their solos – and even their American accents!

For many of the cast, this was their first NCW performance and having the opportunity to

be part of a school production – without their vision impairment hindering them – has been an amazing experience for them.

**A word from the Director:** “Working with our cast and crew has been nothing short of inspiring.”

“Directing Grease has been an unforgettable experience. This musical is so much more than catchy tunes and iconic dance moves; it’s a story about connection, growth, and celebrating who we are. I have seen students discover hidden talents, take risks and push themselves to new heights, both onstage and behind the scenes. Their energy, dedication and enthusiasm has been a reminder of how powerful the arts can be in bringing people together.”

*Miss Chloe Elmes, Director*





# NCW in the **Spotlight!**

**NCW students featured on the ITV "News at 10" this term as part of a ground breaking "Sound of a Masterpiece" project.**

Amid a wave of excitement ITV News journalist Ben Chapman and a film crew visited our campus to speak with students about an extraordinary new musical project that's transforming how we experience art.

The visit centred around a multi-sensory album created specifically to enhance the experience of visual artwork for blind and partially sighted individuals. Partially sighted composer, Bobby Goulder, has reimagined iconic masterpieces – such as Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" and Edvard Munch's "The Scream" – as immersive audio experiences.

Our students were invited to share their thoughts and reactions to the project, reflecting on what it means to experience art

through sound.

This project represents a major step forward in making the arts more accessible and inclusive – and we're thrilled that NCW students could be a part of it.



## **A Magical Trip to the West End:** **"Matilda the Musical"**

**It's well known that musical theatre at NCW is extremely popular, so when the Activities Team organised a trip to the magical West End to see "Matilda the Musical," enthusiastic musical theatre fans couldn't sign up fast enough!**

Students quickly put their mobility skills to the test as they navigated the underground and the bustling streets to the theatre, where they were treated to a fantastic touch tour before the show. This interactive experience allowed our students to explore the set, costumes and props of the production, enhancing their connection to the performance. The students absolutely loved the engaging touch tour, which helped them visualise the set in a fun and meaningful way.

The show itself was wonderful! Student Zac said "It was a fantastic day out, the show was incredible, I gave them a standing ovation!"





# Layla's Foodbank Project

**Over the past few weeks, student Layla has taken the initiative to independently arrange a food bank collection for the Worcester Foodbank. Inspired by the generosity of people donating to charity over Christmas, Layla wanted to make a year-round impact, ensuring those in need receive support beyond the festive season.**

Determined to make a difference, Layla rallied NCW staff, friends and family in Hereford, researching which items the food bank needed most. Thanks to her hard work, donations quickly poured in and continue to do so.

Layla also took responsibility for organising transportation of the food and personally delivered it to the Worcester Foodbank with NCW staff, where she met Richard, the Duty Manager.

Layla's efforts resulted in a donation of over 80kg of food, which will provide vital support to families facing food poverty. The Food Bank was extremely grateful and emailed Layla



afterwards to thank her for all her hard work and dedication.

Mr Stark, who supported Layla's initiative, praised her dedication:

"Layla came to me with this idea and was determined to collect as much as possible to help those in need. We are extremely proud of her initiative and drive to make a difference in our local community."



## German Adventures

**We're over the moon that three of our Year 8 students and staff had the trip of a lifetime in Marburg, Germany, visiting our partner school!**

The students visited our partner school, Blista, where they were warmly welcomed by the Headteacher and a group of sixth-formers studying English. They shared experiences, chatted about learning each other's languages and enjoyed lunch together in the school canteen.

Whilst in Germany, the NCW party also explored the beautiful old

town of Marburg, strolling through its historic streets and stopping at a traditional café to enjoy some delicious Apfelstrudel and chocolate cake. They also visited the botanical gardens, where they toured the glasshouses and learned how cocoa is grown. Then, they teamed up with German students their age to grind cocoa beans and make their own chocolate!

To end the visit, they went to a Spanish restaurant with their new German friends. Lots of laughs, great conversations in both German and English and delicious food! What a fantastic adventure.





# Work, Work, Work!

It's been all work, work, work this term with a focus on careers, work experience and next steps.

We celebrated **National Careers Week**, exploring future pathways through careers guidance, work experience discussions and inspiring guest speakers. We welcomed back a former student, Anthony Clements, who shared his workplace journey and encouraged students to believe in themselves. Guests from the charity Blind in Business also joined us, offering expert advice on employment, interview tips and workplace strategies.

Mr Radford also took a group to the **West Midlands National Apprenticeship Show** – in Coventry. Students had an amazing day speaking with employers and training providers, discovering a world of apprenticeship and university opportunities! Year 11 student Zac said: "It was really informative – I learned a lot about different apprenticeships, which will help me in the future!"

Asal added: "There were so many different job roles to explore! Everyone was really helpful in explaining the details of apprenticeships and I also got great info about university courses."

A group of our Sixth Form students attended the **UCAS Discovery Worcester 2025 exhibition** at University of Worcester with Mr Radford and Mr Hinds. They had the opportunity to speak with representatives

from nearly 100 universities, exploring a wide range of courses and learning more about what each university has to offer to support their future aspirations.

Meanwhile, other students have been hard at it doing work experience. Ne-yo was able to secure a placement at the **Co-Op** for his work experience and Leo has been in his element during his work experience in the **NCW Library**. He's taking on several projects, including labelling and organising with accessibility in mind – a fantastic way to make a real impact. Finn has been able to contribute to two companies with his love of technology, completing two work experience placements in local businesses.





# Sports NEWS

## Belting up in Judo!

**This term students completed their Judo grading and earned new belts – proving that their vision impairment will not get in their way!**

Our NCW club is open to all students, regardless of prior experience in Judo. Judo is also included in the Paralympics.

Most of our current Judo club members have only been learning Judo for one term, but the experience has been a resounding success, with students enjoying the discipline immensely. There were plenty of cheers and joyful exclamations when our students received their new belts!

Carol, our amazing coach, has been working with our students for 10 years and is incredibly talented at making Judo accessible for those with vision impairments.

## Shoot to win!

**A huge congratulations to NCW students Len and Ellie for their outstanding achievements at the National Blind Shooting Championship in Wolverhampton.**

Len is now the British Junior Champion and also won gold in the adult Class C category, while Ellie earned bronze in the Junior category and silver in Class C! Fantastic!



## Ready for Showdown!

**The Youth Club has been buzzing with excitement as Mrs Price, our amazing Head of PE, unveiled a long-kept secret... the brand-new Showdown Table!**

Showdown is a high-energy game similar to air hockey and table tennis with a unique twist: players wear blindfolds, making it an inclusive sport for people with and without visual impairments. It's especially popular in Canada, South America, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe and is a competitive sport within the VI community.

# Support Special Schools Campaign

**This term NCW launched a campaign to Support Special Schools.**

We believe that special school education can be a lifeline for students who are unable to thrive in a mainstream environment but obtaining funding for specialist education is often a battle for those young people and their families.

We asked anyone who agreed that specialist education should be a priority for funding in



the UK in 2025 and beyond to sign our open letter to the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. The letter had over 400 signatures and was delivered to Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP and Rt Hon Liz Kendall MP at the end of March. Watch this space for the response!

## Skills Minister Visits NCW to Highlight the Role of Special Schools

**This term, we were delighted to welcome Skills Minister The Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern, Jacqui Smith, to NCW as part of a campaign to raise awareness of the vital role special schools play in helping young people with disabilities to achieve their potential.**

During the two-hour visit the Minister had

the opportunity to experience first-hand how NCW prepares students for later life popping into a variety of lessons including mobility, independent living skills and music before joining a Q&A session where students and former students discussed their experiences of attending NCW, the skills they have learned and their hopes and ambitions for the future.





# The High Sheriff of Worcestershire

We have also been honoured to welcome the High Sheriff of Worcestershire, Charles Moyle, for an inspiring and insightful visit to NCW.

The High Sheriff met with Principal Rachel Perks and Chair of Governors Pat Dyson, gaining a first-hand understanding of the exceptional work happening at our college. During the visit, the High Sheriff had the opportunity to tour the campus, engaging with students and staff and witnessing the vibrant atmosphere that makes NCW such a unique and inclusive educational environment. He was particularly impressed by a musical performance from students, showcasing the creative talents and dedication of NCW's student body.







# Vinchel Lodge is officially opened!

**This month we have had the honour of officially opening Vinchel Lodge, marking the completion of a major refurbishment of the ground floor of the Sixth Form accommodation.**

We were delighted to be joined by Alastair Tulloch, trustee of The Vinchel Foundation, along with other guests, who were inspired by the newly renovated space, designed to provide a bright, accessible living area for students who are blind or vision impaired.

The refurbishment has been made possible through the generous support of The Vinchel Foundation, which supports people who are blind or vision impaired in the UK and internationally, along with their families and carers. The Foundation has a focus on education of blind and vision impaired young people and on the advancement of scientific knowledge of causes and

treatments for vision impairment.

The new ground-floor space features a three-bay kitchen area, carefully tailored to different sensory and functional needs, encouraging students to build independence and essential life skills. A newly added games room with a pool table provides a social area for relaxation, while the spacious main living area, complete with six sofas and ambient lighting, creates a comfortable environment for students to gather and engage with one another.

Alastair Tulloch expressed his delight in the partnership.

**“We are incredibly proud to support the development of Vinchel Lodge and to see the positive impact it will have on the students’ learning and personal growth.”**



# Year 7 Out and About

**Year 7 have enjoyed some brilliant trips off campus this term.**

They had an exciting trip to Worcester Cathedral Library, normally off-limits to the public, and were able to touch 11th-century manuscripts produced by monks and even held King John's thumb bone and a silver coin from his reign. It was incredible to hear how 900-year-old manuscripts still have their colour preserved after all these years! They have also explored the Guildhall where Ed loved the shields, plates and the ball and chain, while Bella enjoyed the cells in the gaol, fire buckets and chandeliers. At the Tudor House Museum, Jake and Ed gave valuable feedback on how to make the museum more VI-friendly. They've also visited St. Peters Garden Centre and said hello to the friendly pigs!



## Strictly Come **Darting!**

**Since the refurbishment of the Youth Club last summer, darts mania has officially taken over NCW!**

This term, darts-obsessed student Len organised a fantastic contest between himself, fellow student Dominic, Mr Farr and Mrs Perks! The Youth Club was packed, the Maths Department ensured perfect scoring, Year 8 student Zac took on the role of compère and there was even impromptu halftime dancing to Sweet Caroline! Huge congratulations to our winner, Dominic, who was crowned champion of the night!





# Fundraising News

**Over the past few months, our fundraising efforts have been focused on reconnecting with past supporters and rebuilding relationships. With your help, we've started to regain momentum – but there's still much more to do.**

We're excited about some fantastic upcoming opportunities to get involved and show your support. The Worcester City Run is taking place on the 14th September – whether you're running, walking, or cheering from the sidelines, it's a brilliant way to raise funds and awareness for NCW.

Looking for something even more adventurous? Skydiving for NCW is available any time of year! Whether it's your first jump or your tenth, it's an unforgettable way to make a difference. We'll help you set up your fundraising page and support you every step (and leap!) of the way.

One of the most powerful ways to support NCW is through regular giving. Monthly donations, no matter the size, help us plan for the future with confidence and ensure our students continue to receive the specialist education, equipment, and opportunities they deserve. Setting up a regular gift is quick, easy, and makes a lasting impact.

We'd also love to hear from local businesses and organisations who might consider partnering with us as corporate supporters. Whether through internal fundraising events, charity of the year, sponsorship, employee fundraising, or gifts in kind, your support helps provide opportunities and resources for our students.

A huge thank you to the Eveson Trust

for their generous funding towards the purchase of a new NCW vehicle – this will make a real difference in helping our students access off-site activities and experiences.

We are also incredibly grateful to all our funders and supporters for their continued belief in our work and their ongoing support in helping us provide the very best for our students.

With your support, we can continue to empower, nurture and inspire our students every day.

**JOIN TEAM NCW**  
**WORCESTER CITY RUN**  
10K & HALF MARATHON - 14 SEPTEMBER 2025

Help NCW to inspire, nurture and empower young people who are blind or have a vision impairment.  
[www.ncw.co.uk](http://www.ncw.co.uk)

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# New Outdoor Play Equipment Thanks to National Lottery Community Fund!

**We are delighted to announce that we have received £18,500 from the National Lottery Community Fund for new outdoor play equipment for our students.**

This generous funding will enhance our outdoor spaces and provide students with greater opportunities for physical activity, sensory exploration and social interaction. The play area will include a variety of accessible, inclusive and engaging play structures, encouraging students to develop vital skills such as mobility, coordination

and independence, all while enjoying the benefits of outdoor play. The funding will also contribute to the creation of a safe and stimulating environment where students can interact with their peers, build confidence, and enjoy recreational activities. This project aligns with our commitment to providing a holistic educational experience that supports the academic, social and emotional development of all students.

## Brave participants take on the challenge!

**We are delighted to announce the success of our exhilarating Fire Walk event, which saw brave participants walking barefoot across a bed of glowing hot embers, raising funds to support vision-impaired students at NCW.**

Alongside the fire walk, attendees were treated to delicious wood-fired pizzas from and lively fire themed vibes were amplified by the disco. Thanks to the courage of our participants and the support of everyone who attended, the event raised over £4,500. All proceeds will go directly toward supporting NCW's vital refurbishment programs, services and facilities, helping the school continue its mission to empower students with visual impairments to achieve their academic and personal goals.





# And Finally...

## Easter Treats!

**Our students are getting excited about Easter - and the chocolatey treats that come with it!**

Ruby and Zannah recently whipped up some delicious Easter Rice Crispie cakes in Bradnack, topped with mini chocolate eggs! The best part? Licking the spoon, of course!

## End of Term Mexican Vibes!






**Our students are getting excited about Easter - and the chocolatey treats that come with it!**

With the end of term just around the corner, Mr Hinds and Mr Lungley took their form groups out for a celebratory meal at local Mexican favourite Chesters Restaurant & Bar.

Great food, even better company - the perfect way to mark the countdown to the Easter holidays!

The last few days of term were 'Egg-cellent', with Easter themed activities taking place, a whole school Easter lunch and a staff versus student football match. Mrs Price shared the news that the students won the match 1 - 0, in unexpectedly hot conditions! Well done to Zakki, Dominic, Zannah and Maxwell!



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