



25.09.2026

Issue No: 1207

The Link

Charles Darwin School

Aspire - Endeavour - Achieve

Headlines

This week we held two information evenings for parents, focusing on how to support our Year 10 and Year 11 students throughout their GCSE journey. The evenings were also an opportunity to set the rhythm for the year and highlight key dates.

Year 11 Information Evening

On Tuesday, we welcomed Year 11 parents to our year 11 information evening, sharing practical advice and key information to help parents support their child over the coming months.

Year 10 Introduction to GCSE's

On Thursday, we welcomed Year 10 parents and students to our Introduction to GCSE evening, providing an overview of what to expect as students begin their GCSE journey and how parents can support them along the way.

For those unable to attend, the presentation slides will be available on the school website. Please keep an eye on your emails for important information throughout the year.

Year 7 Induction /Meet the Tutor

I am very much looking forward to welcoming our Year 7 parents next Tuesday, 29th September. If you haven't yet booked an appointment with your child's tutor, please do so. The event is a great chance to meet and talk about how your child is settling into secondary school life.

Charles Darwin Christmas Card Competition

It's time to launch the Charles Darwin Christmas Card Competition 2026! Last year's entries were fantastic, and I can't wait to see the creativity and talent our students bring again this year. Please do encourage your child to take part. Further details can be found on the poster included in the Link.

Aston Smith, Headteacher



Charles Darwin School

Operated by the Lumero Educational Trust
Headteacher: Aston Smith, BA (Hons) MA NPQH

Aspire - Endeavour - Achieve

Open Morning - Saturday 10th October 2026

Parents of prospective students are invited to visit our high performing school to view and sample the exciting opportunities we have to offer. Pre booking for a tour only (9am) or Headteacher's presentation followed by a tour (9am or 10:30am) is essential by midday on Thursday 8th October. Priority will be given to Year 6 children. Presentations will start promptly at the advertised time so please leave sufficient time for parking. There will be very limited on-site parking. Please email the relevant tour/presentation with **your name, your child's name, their current year group, their current school and the number of places required.**

Early Tour (No Presentation) 9:00am Email to book your place earlytour@cdarwin.com	Presentation 1 & Tour 9:00am Email to book your place hallandtour1@cdarwin.com	Presentation 2 & Tour 10:30am Email to book your place hallandtour2@cdarwin.com
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Open Week Tours - Monday 12th to Friday 16th October

If you wish to attend one of our Open Week tours you can pre-book a tour for 8.45am or 9.00am (max. 2 people per booking). Open week tours offer the opportunity to see the school in operation and to observe teaching taking place. This will be followed by a short Q & A session. No parking available on site. Pre-booking essential by midday on Friday 9th October. Priority will be given to Year 6 children.

Monday 12th October - mondaytours@cdarwin.com
Tuesday 13th October - tuesdaytours@cdarwin.com
Wednesday 14th October - wednesdaytours@cdarwin.com
Thursday 15th October - thursdaytours@cdarwin.com
Friday 16th October - fridaytours@cdarwin.com



Jail Lane Biggin Hill Westerham Kent TN16 3AU Tel: 01959 574043 Email: enquiries@cds.lumero.org Website: www.cdarwin.com

Calling all creative students!

Christmas Card Competition

*Design the Charles Darwin School
Christmas Card*



There will be 2 winners one
from KS3 and one from KS4/5



Submit your A5 size festive design
with your name and form on the back
to Reception



Winners will get an Amazon voucher
and their card professionally produced
as our official Christmas card, plus
prizes for runners up

Closing date 5th November



ASPIRE – ENDEAVOUR – ACHIEVE

New Staff who joined CDS

Ms L. Hamilton	My name is Ms Hamilton, and I am delighted to be joining Charles Darwin School as Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion. Alongside this role, I will be overseeing Year 8 and English as well as teaching English Language and Literature. Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to hold a variety of leadership roles, including Head of English, Head of Year, Head of Key Stage and, most recently, Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion. As an English teacher with additional qualifications and experience in Special Educational Needs, I am passionate about ensuring that every child feels supported, valued and able to achieve their very best. I firmly believe that strong partnerships between school and home are key to helping young people thrive. I look forward to working closely with students and their families to help every child fulfil their potential and, wherever possible, exceed it. Since joining Charles Darwin, I have been welcomed with open arms and have already been struck by the friendliness, kindness and positivity of both staff and students. I am incredibly excited to become part of this wonderful community and look forward to getting to know you all over the coming months.
Mr M. Stamato	I am delighted to have joined Charles Darwin School as Assistant Headteacher for Behaviour. Outside of school, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. I am passionate about supporting young people to make positive choices and achieve their full potential. I am really looking forward to becoming part of the Charles Darwin community and getting to know the students, staff, parents and carers.
Mr M. Holmes	I am delighted to have joined Charles Darwin School this September as part of my new role as the Attendance Lead for Lumero Educational Trust. I have worked in education for the past 14 years, most recently as an Assistant Principal at a secondary school in South London. Attendance has been a major part of my work in recent years, and I am passionate about ensuring that every young person has the opportunity to be in school, feel that they belong and achieve their potential. A big part of my role will be working alongside the team at Charles Darwin to support students and families with attendance. My approach is rooted in the belief that every student matters and every day matters. We want our young people to know that we notice when they are here, that their contribution to our school community is valued, and that we will work with families when there are barriers to attendance. Outside of school, I am kept busy by my young family. I enjoy running and completed the London Marathon earlier this year. Music has also always been a big part of my life, and in a former life I played and recorded jazz trombone. Going back even further, I was once an England Schools bridge champion – a claim to fame that doesn't come up particularly often. I am really looking forward to becoming part of the Charles Darwin community and meeting many of you over the coming months.
Mr D. Langdown	Hello everyone! My name is Mr Langdown, and I am thrilled to be joining the school community as a new member of the Geography Department. Although I was born locally in Bromley, I grew up living all over the world in places like Singapore and India. Experiencing such diverse landscapes and rich cultures firsthand is what truly sparked my passion for our planet, and it is the main reason I love teaching and learning about geography today. Outside of the classroom, I am a keen sportsman. I play as a scrum-half for Swanley Rugby Club and am a passionate football fan (up the Palace!). I am really excited to be here at Charles Darwin and cannot wait for the school year ahead.
Mrs G. Lloyd-Hakki	Hello, my name is Mrs Lloyd-Hakki and I am delighted to be joining the team as a Learning Support Assistant. I previously worked at King's College Hospital for 14 years within the Date and Finance Division. After many years I decided that I would like to do something more meaningful within my local community, where I could make a positive difference to others. I am excited about my new role and look forward to supporting and encouraging students in their learning and development. Outside of work, I enjoy travel, discovering new places and cultures.

Inktober Competition 2026

Each year we participate in Inktober, which is an international drawing challenge. **All schools across our trust will be competing!**

Using the prompts create a drawing everyday for the month of October.

Although it is called Inktober, you can enter in any medium, drawn or digital.

There will be finalists for best individual image, best portfolio and overall winners.



You can create your own grid or pick up one from the main reception.

Examples from last year

Have fun drawing!

Mrs Broad



Make a difference = at our school = Parent Governor Vacancy



Charles Darwin
School

Your voice
matters

A vacancy has arisen for a **Parent Governor** to join our committed Local Governing Body.



No special qualifications

You do not need any specific qualifications.



No prior experience needed

Just an interest in supporting our school and students.



Meetings

We hold 5 meetings a year, which take place at the school on a Monday evening.



A specific responsibility

Every Governor has a specific responsibility area.

We would like to actively encourage
our new parents to join us!



A formal election will take place
in the next few weeks.



In the meantime, anyone interested in applying should contact either Helen Hartley, Chair of Governors, (hhartley@CDS.lumero.org) or Julie Hodgkinson, Clerk to the Governors (jhodgkinson@lumero.org) for further details.

Menu for the week 28.09.2026

WEEKLY MENU Charles Darwin - Week One				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Chilli Con Carne served with Steamed Rice or Jacket Potato	Creamy Mushroom or Vegetable Pie	Roast Pork served with Roast Potatoes, Cabbage, Carrots & Gravy	Cottage Pie served with Seasonal Vegetables	Traditional Fish & Chips served with Chunky Chips, Peas or Beans
5 Bean Chilli served with Rice	-	Vegetable Balti with Pea Protein	Quorn Mince Cottage Pie	Vegetarian Pasty
Pasta Pot of the Day	Pasta Pot of the Day	Pasta Pot of the Day	Pasta Pot of the Day	-
Jacket Potato with a Choice of Fillings	Jacket Potato with a Choice of Fillings	Jacket Potato with a Choice of Fillings	Jacket Potato with a Choice of Fillings	-
Chocolate Cake with Chocolate Sauce	Vanilla Sponge served with Pink Custard	Treacle Sponge with Custard	Apple Crumble with Cream	Dessert of the day

Solid Bar is Available daily

HARRISON
food with thought



Congratulations and well done to the following 14 students who have been appointed Year 11 Prefects after successful applications. These students will be fantastic representations for the year group, and we were so impressed with all applications:

Niamh Paton
Jenson Ladd-Talbot
Jess Cummins
Jessie Osborne
Rosie Kelly – Johnson
Danielle Osafo
Poppy Mason

Leila Jones
Zach Horton
Millie Ford
Lola Clarke
Alfie Kent
Sam Young
Josh Clements



Miss Gillespie



Congratulations to Mia in Year 11 who had another super summer. She has won team silver at National Championships and had lots of wins and placings at the Derby Show in Wales.

Well done Mia - what an amazing achievement.

Miss Gillespie





Charles Darwin School

Preloved Uniform Shop Promoting a positive eco-friendly culture of reusing

Did you know we have a preloved uniform shop with a variety of nearly new school uniform and PE kits?

If you are interested in checking stock, please send an email with your requirements (size, gender, specific item) to preloveduniform@cdarwin.com

you can also use the link below or scan the QR code.

[Charles Darwin Preloved uniform requests 2026-2027](#)



Attendance

Attendance and Parental Survey

In week 3, attendance across Years 7–11 was **93.6%**. A special mention goes to Year 7, who achieved **98.0%** as a year group. Well done to **7EKa**, who had **100% attendance** for the week!

Our top five tutor groups for attendance so far this year are:

Tutor group	Attendance
7EKa	99.2%
7HJd	98.7%
7Jai	98.5%
7STi	98.3%
11RBr/KSa	98.0%

Thank you to the **200 parents and carers** who have already completed our survey. If you haven't responded yet, you can share your views at

[Help Us Improve Attendance at Charles Darwin – Fill in form](#) the link will remain open for the next 48 hours. If you have already responded, there is no need to do so again. Thank you!

One thing to try this week

If mornings are difficult, take it one day at a time. The night before, agree one small first step with your child, getting dressed, having breakfast or leaving the house. In the morning, focus on that step rather than the whole school day. If getting in is becoming a regular struggle, please tell us. We can work out the next step together.

Mr Holmes

Pupil absence line: 01959 574043

If you wish to report your child's absence, **OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS**, please call the school on **01959 574043** and when prompted to enter the extension number, please **dial 1** and you will be taken through to the student absence line where you can leave a message regarding your child's absence. This ensures we know your child is safe and their absence is authorised where possible.

Thank you for your support.



Parents should be advised that the school does not provide students with Paracetamol unless it is a medical emergency. We have a limited supply in school and prefer that medication wherever possible is administered at home.

Mrs Booth
Health Care Lead

**THIS SCHOOL
IS NUT FREE**



Several students and staff members live with **severe life-threatening nut allergies**. Even trace amounts resulting from minor contact or airborne exposure can potentially trigger a serious anaphylactic reaction.

Please ensure that no nuts or products containing nuts are brought into school.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us to maintain a safe environment for everyone.

Mrs Booth
Health Care Lead

Year 8 Duty Pupil

James Wilkinson	Alby Fowler
Ben Smith	Ellie-May Mustafa
Harper Cunningham	Layla Mai Lucas
Gracie Weston	Max Brocklehurst
Daniel Ings	Mason McCartney



Student Services Duty Pupils

Isla Comley
Harry Wilson
Dexter Davies
Sophia Bailey
Billy Visser

They have been fantastic this week, and their help has been invaluable.

Dates for the Diary

September

29th September - Trip: Sixth Form History Trip to Hampton Court

29th September - Year 7 Meet the Tutor, Hall

October

1st October - Sports Award Evening

9th October - Early close due to Open day

10th October - Open Day

12th-16th October - Open Morning Tours

20th-30th October - Half term

Term dates for **2026/27** can be found by clicking on the link below:

[Charles Darwin School - Term Dates](#)

November

2nd November - Inset Day

Early Bird tickets, before 13th October are just £8:
<https://friends-of-charles-darwin-school.sumupstore.com/> or £10 per ticket nearer the time.

We are introducing a new game "Play your Cards Right" as a teaser for a future event.

Hope to see you there.

PTA



Charles Darwin School

**Headteacher: Aston Smith, BA (Hons), MA,
NPQH**

**Jail Lane
Biggin Hill
Westerham
Kent TN16 3AU
Tel: 01959 574043
enquiries@cds.lumero.org**

**First Aider
One day a week (Wednesday), 38 weeks a year
£15.25 per hour (pay award pending)**

We wish to appoint a suitably qualified person to join our committed and hardworking Pastoral Team to provide First Aid one day a week (Wednesday). The successful candidate should be an enthusiastic and empathetic individual who will deal with all aspects of First Aid for staff and students and also for named students with specific medical needs. Ideally, we would like someone to work from 8.30am to 2.30pm but there may be some flexibility for the right candidate. The successful candidate will work closely with the school's Pastoral Team and our Health Care Lead.

Whilst ideally we are looking for someone with first aid skills, we are able to provide training where necessary.

We are a "good" school (Ofsted 2023) with an ethos that encourages academic rigour, high expectations and a well-disciplined approach to learning.

Application Forms are available on our website www.cdarwin.com – key information – vacancies.

Closing date: 12 noon on Friday 2nd October 2026

Please note: all applicants must complete the Lumero Educational Trust support staff application form which is available on our website: www.cdarwin.com about us/vacancies. CVs alone will not be considered.

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. Any offer of employment will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure with the Disclosure and Barring Service and full background and online checks.

Charles Darwin School is part of Lumero Educational Trust

