EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

5th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Top stuff for Cuddington Croft

30 January 2024



Staff and students at Cuddington Croft Primary had reason to celebrate when the latest SAT results revealed that the school ranked within the Top 10 in the county.

The Department for Education Performance Table for Key Stage 2 2023 SAT results showed that the school – which is part of the GLF Schools Multi-Academies Trust – was among the 10 highest performers out of 476 Surrey schools, according to the combined percentage of children attaining the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths.

“This is a really impressive achievement, considering the size of county and number of schools in Surrey,” said Mike Skelton, who is Head Teacher at the school. “If there was a table for combined greater depth scores, Cuddington would have been in the top three.”

“Cuddington is proud to be a consistently high achieving school,” he continued. “Post-covid, this is the first results published, so we are proud they continue to be this high, despite the disrupted learning caused by the pandemic.

“It shows the hard work of the staff from Nursery to Year 6 to enable the children to be successful and achieve their highest potential.”

Staff and parents alike at the school were delighted with the results.

“The staff were extremely proud of the hard work and dedication to support the children to achieve the results they did,” added Mr Skelton.

“A parent of a child in that cohort said: ‘It really is amazing. It makes us so proud of our child and the school. It has given our daughter the best possible start to secondary school.’

“Well done to all the children and all the staff for their hard work.”

Cuddington Croft PR.

In the footsteps of the great man?

30 January 2024



The great orator **Sir Winston Churchill** was born in **Blenheim Palace** in 1874. 150 years later **Epsom**‘s own **Blenheim High School** became a nursery for the next generation of orators. Twenty-one students from four local schools took part in **Youth Speaks**: A Debate Competition on Thursday 11th January 2024 evening at the Longmead Road school. Many adults run shy of public speaking, so to see and hear students speaking with such confidence and assurance was wonderful.

This local heat of the national competition was once again organised jointly by the Rotary Clubs of Banstead, Epsom and Sutton Nonsuch. Teams from The Beacon School, St Philomena’s and Wilsons School took part in the Intermediate section (11 – 13 years old) with teams from Blenheim High School and Wilsons in the Senior (14 to 17) section. Each team consists of a Chairperson, a Proposer and an Opposer.

The team from The Beacon School got the Intermediate competition underway debating that ‘footballers’ income should be taxed at a higher rate’. St Philomena’s discussed whether ‘social media makes us less social’, an important topic that affects many of us today. The team from Wilsons gave us a lively discussion on ‘climate change being the most pressing issue facing us’. In her summary, chair of judges Ros Rokison said that the team were outstanding and they were adjudged the winners of the Intermediate competition.

In the senior section both teams provided the large audience, which included Epsom and Ewell Mayor Cllr **Robert Geleit** (Labour Court Ward), with lively debates. The proposal that ‘the extra-curriculum is more important than the standard

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

curriculum' was debated by an excellent team from Blenheim High School. The proposer of this motion was particularly persuasive.

Then the proposal 'this house believes extremism is inevitable' was debated by a team from Wilsons. Although they exceeded the time limit of fifteen minutes, all three students were outstanding for content and delivery and they won the senior competition.

The three Rotary clubs thanked the excellent judges Ros Rokison and Ken Rokison. Ros gave each of the twenty-one students useful constructive feedback.

Public speaking is a hard skill to master, but such a useful skill to acquire and Rotary is proud to have given these young people this opportunity.

John Chamberlain.

Epsom and Ewell schools get new CEO

30 January 2024



The new chief executive of one of the country's biggest multi academy trusts has a busy schedule in place as he prepares to visit all 42 schools under his watch during his first term.

Julian Drinkall, the new CEO of GLF Schools, has started 2024 with a pledge to visit all schools within the Trust, located in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Surrey, West Sussex and the London Boroughs of Wandsworth and Croydon, during the spring term.

GLF's schools in Surrey are Banstead Infants, **Cuddington Croft Primary** (Cheam), **Danetree Primary** (West Ewell), **Glyn** (Ewell), **Rosebery** (Epsom), The Beacon (Banstead), **The Vale Primary** (Epsom), Warren Mead Infants (Banstead), Warren Mead Juniors (Banstead), Cordwalles Juniors (Camberley), Frogmore Juniors (Camberley), Hammond (Lightwater), Lightwater Village, Pine Ridge & Lorraine Federation (Camberley). Lime Tree (Merstham), Merstham Park, Merstham Primary, Salfords Primary,

Mr Drinkall replaced the outgoing and founding CEO **Jon Chaloner**, who stepped down from his role last month after 11 years of leading the organisation through a period of continued growth. The pair worked together in the weeks leading up to the Christmas break to help the transition before the New Year. [Many will remember Jon Chaloner during his headship of Glyn School in Ewell.]

Mr Drinkall said "GLF Schools is in an enviable position, with many great schools and poised to go from strength-to-strength. I intend to visit all our schools in my first full term. Context is everything in schools and, as with our children, each and every one of them has different needs at different moments in time.

"It is that context and that ambition that I want to learn about, and I am looking forward to getting to know as many of our staff as possible, as well as our students, parents and carers, schools and communities, and hearing about the incredible work that everyone is engaged in and committed to."

Mr Drinkall has held a variety of education CEO roles and was CEO of the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), leading its turnaround over a five-year period. He said he was both 'delighted and proud' to be starting work for GLF Schools, which provides education to over 17,000 young people aged from two to 19, in a diverse array of settings and employs around 2,500 members of staff.

He added: "I'm looking forward to establishing new dreams and possibilities for our Trust, and I'm committed to finding innovative and supportive ways to make that happen for all our children and young people."

Caught the Christmas Epsom Stagecoach to Paris

30 January 2024

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

5th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771



20 DECEMBER 2023: Gifted students from local **Stagecoach Performing Arts Epsom** were chosen to take part in Disney's festive show, Let's Sing, in Disneyland Paris at the weekend.

The troupe of 21 students, aged between nine and 19, performed alongside Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Donald and Daisy Duck, and Goofy, as well as professional Disney singers, in a magical and spectacular choral story that was performed four times over the two days.

Taking to the specially decorated stage with scenes from Disney's Main Street USA and the Disney Christmas tree, the students gave a heart-warming performance of festive songs.

The students also took part in a choral workshop with Disney choirmasters and professional stage rehearsals and sound checks, learning how large-scale productions such as this are put together. Skills they can take forward for future performances and productions, and into their professional lives.

Stagecoach Epsom Principal Rachel Crouch said: *"We've taken part in Stagecoach's event, Disney Dance the Dream, before, but this was the first time we had performed at Christmas time. The students thoroughly enjoyed it and learnt a lot from the experience. It was fantastic to watch them on the stage singing alongside such iconic Disney characters, and lovely to be there for the festive season."*

Stagecoach Performing Arts opened its first school 35 years ago and, since then, it has seen more than one million students unlock their creative potential. Provided with the support and dedication of the experienced Principals, the students learn so much more than how to sing, dance and act. Stagecoach helps them blossom into well-rounded individuals, ready to embrace life and all its exciting opportunities.

With a network of over 55,000 students and more than 3,000 extra-curricular performing arts schools worldwide, Stagecoach aims to make a difference in its students' lives by teaching Creative Courage for Life and many children have gone on to study and work in performing arts from blockbuster films to countless roles in local theatre productions. Early stages classes are available for children aged four to six and main stages classes take place for six to 18-year-olds every weekend during term time.

For more information about Stagecoach Performing Arts Epsom, please visit www.stagecoach.co.uk/epsom or phone 01737 669504.

About Stagecoach

Stagecoach Performing Arts was founded in 1988 and continues to grow as the UK's largest network of extra-curricular performing arts schools for children, with over 50,000 students enrolled in our weekly classes worldwide.

One of the first extra-curricular children's performing arts schools in the country, we aim to inspire our students, making a difference in their lives by teaching *Creative Courage For Life®*.

With 350 franchisees and 3,000 teachers worldwide, Stagecoach operates over 2,000 schools and classes and has a presence in eight countries including Canada, Germany, Malta, Spain, Gibraltar, Lithuania and Australia.

Notable alumni are Emma Watson, Jamie Bell, Eleanor Tomlinson, Tuppence Middleton, Tom Fletcher, Dani Harmer, Josh Cuthbert, Danny Mac, and Charlotte Jaconelli.

Find Stagecoach on Facebook at www.facebook.com/stagecoachtheatrearts and on Twitter at www.twitter.com/stagecoach_gbr.

For more information visit the website www.stagecoach.co.uk.

RAAC's latest victim

30 January 2024



© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

Redhill Library has had to close with immediate effect following further investigations of the known reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in the building.

The closure of the library will allow more detailed assessments and immediate safety measures to take place to ensure the building is safe to reopen to residents.

We understand the short notice closure of the library will cause disruption for library users and staff. However, as residents would expect, safety is our top priority.

At present, as the discovery of RAAC in the library building is very recent, further urgent work will need to be undertaken before we can provide any details on mitigation measures or timelines for re-opening.

Further announcements and updates regarding Redhill library will be shared via the **Redhill Library web page**.

Merstham Library and **Reigate Library** remain open for residents.

Redhill Library is a Surrey County Council designated warm space, alternative warm spaces in Redhill can be found **here**.

Sunak in Surrey

30 January 2024



The **University of Surrey** welcomed Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and **Guildford MP Angela Richardson** to campus on Thursday (30 November).

Epsom and Ewell Times notes the Guildford Parliamentary Constituency is rather marginal. The 2019 General Election result was:

Conservative Angela Richardson 26,317
Liberal Democrats Zöe Franklin 22,980
Labour Anne Rouse 4,515
Independent Anne Milton 4,356
Peace John Morris 483

During their visit, the Prime Minister and Ms Richardson met nursing students and staff from the School of Health Sciences, where they observed practical lessons taking place. They also toured Surrey's world-class facilities, including a unique immersive simulation suite which digitally replicates different healthcare settings. The Prime Minister also took the time to personally speak to Surrey's students to learn more about their journey in becoming nurses and why they chose to pursue the profession.

Professor **G Q Max Lu**, President and Vice-Chancellor, of the University of Surrey, said:

"I am honoured to welcome the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak and Angela Richardson MP to the University of Surrey campus. Our reputation for training highly skilled and inspiring health care professionals precedes us. The strength of our excellence in teaching and student support makes Surrey an exceptional place to study. We are delighted to have this opportunity to showcase some of our state-of-the art facilities to our distinguished visitor.

"As part of our commitment to producing the sought-after health professionals for the future, we are pleased to be welcoming our first cohort of medical students in 2024. Combined with the innovative biomedical and healthy living research undertaken at Surrey, we are steadfast in our contribution and support to the NHS and our communities."

The School of Health Sciences, which sits within the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, at the University of Surrey continues to go from strength to strength. The calibre of nursing programmes at the school are both nationally and internationally recognised, being ranked seventh in the QS World University Subject Rankings and eight in the UK (The Times / Sunday Times Good University Guide 2024). This builds on an established history of the school, which recently celebrated 40 years of educating nurses at Surrey.

Professor **Paul Townsend**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Surrey, said:

"It is an enormous privilege to have the Prime Minister and our local MP visit us.

"Surrey is not only the home to cutting edge research but is a world leader in educating health professionals of the future. Our team of dedicated teaching staff work hard to ensure that our students have the knowledge and skills needed

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

to care for patients and that they embody the culture and values of the NHS. It is a great honour to be a part of the Surrey family and to witness our students succeed in their studies."

Jackie McBride, Associate Professor, Head of Department: Professional Preparatory Programmes at the School of Health Sciences at the University of Surrey, said:

"I am delighted that the Prime Minister has met some of our future healthcare professionals here at the University of Surrey. I am beyond proud of our students and of everything they have and continue to achieve. Nursing is more than a job, it requires dedication, empathy, knowledge, and skills, and I know the Prime Minister will have seen today all these attributes in our students."

Surrey University Press Office

Kids takeover Ewell's Bourne Hall

30 January 2024



On Friday 17 November **Bourne Hall** in Ewell collaborated with local college **NESCOT** as part of a national Kids in Museums Takeover Day event. This project sits within **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council**'s Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy which aims to increase access to art, culture and heritage within the borough, as well as nurturing local, creative talent.

Mirroring these values and supported by Arts Council England, the **Kids in Museums** charity, aims to empower young people and help them learn digital marketing skills, as well as support museums to engage younger audiences.

Since Takeover Day began in 2010, over 40,000 children and young people have taken part. Takeover Day was established to help historic institutions empower young people and give them meaningful roles in their organisations. Over 5,000 people, from toddlers to 25-year-olds, now take part each year.

In support of the Takeover Day, Bourne Hall welcomed a group of creative arts students from NESCOT to its Museum this month to view their collection of 'paper tapestry' wallpapers. The wallpapers originated from homes within the borough from 1690 onwards and were created by hand using block-printing techniques. As objects within Bourne Hall Museum's collection, they are excellent examples of our borough's creative and heritage-rich past.

Focused around the Kids in Museums theme of 'Let's Play', students then used the wallpapers as a springboard to let their creativity run free – employing techniques learned in the artistic studios at NESCOT, the end result is a fantastic collection of colourful and characterful textile artworks. An exhibition of the students' work is now on display at Bourne Hall Museum, free to access and enjoy at your own pace.

"As part of our new Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy, we are committed to nurturing creative talent and increasing access to resources and opportunities within our Borough," says Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Community and Wellbeing Committee. "Working collaboratively with NESCOT shows how our cultural and historical past can be reimagined through the eyes of the creative talents of the future. Blending the past and the present through such artistic outputs is fantastic to see and I warmly congratulate the students from NESCOT on their exhibition, which I would encourage residents to visit."

Sarah Jane Morgan, Curriculum Coordinator Art and Design and Digital Design and Lecturer and **Chloe Chivers**, Art & Design Tutor at NESCOT added "Our UAL Level One Diploma in Art and Design students put their skills into action creating contemporary fabric prints inspired by historic wallpaper samples found here in the Bourne Hall archive. It was a great opportunity for our students to modernise historic prints dating back to the 17th Century, designing for a new audience. An experience enjoyed all round!"

Epsom's University of the Creative Arts new boss

30 January 2024

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

5th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771



The University for the Creative Arts (UCA) has begun a new chapter in its illustrious history, with the appointment of Professor Jane Roscoe as its incoming President & Vice-Chancellor.

With a campus in **Epsom**, UCA is defined by creativity, world-leading research, and innovation. Professor Roscoe joins a specialist university where students build real solutions to human problems, staff are acclaimed for their top teaching quality, and the courses are highly respected among the creative industries.

Professor Roscoe, who has an extensive career in both higher education and the broadcasting industry, will take up the role in February 2024.

"I am delighted to be joining an institution with such a long history of arts education and am looking forward to helping it build a new legacy within the creative industries both here in the UK and around the world," ***said Professor Roscoe.*** *"I'm excited to get started and to be working with UCA's tremendous staff and talented students."*

Professor Roscoe comes to UCA from the University of Greenwich, where she has been Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chair in Creative Industries since 2021. Before this she held leadership roles at the University of the West of England, Bristol, and the London Film School. Outside of academia, she has also shaped the schedules for television across Australia, as Head of Channels and Head of International Content at SBS (Special Broadcasting Service).

Together with her career history, Professor Roscoe is a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts, a member of BAFTA, the Royal Television Society, the Academy of Arts and Sciences and the International Design Organisation. She also has almost 60 published works, and multiple commissioned research projects, to her name.

This wealth of experience and expertise made her the perfect fit for UCA's next chapter, according to **Jeremy Sandelson, Chair of the Board of Governors:**

"We were hugely impressed by Professor Roscoe's experience within higher education and the creative industries, and her track record will not only complement UCA's values and ambitions but enhance them further. We are excited to usher in a new era with Professor Roscoe. Her vision for the University will be fresh, inclusive, and ambitious."

UCA's interim President & Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nick Foskett, said: *"The University is looking forward to working with Professor Roscoe to deliver its ambitious plans for the future."*

AI training hub coming to Surrey

30 January 2024



Surrey is set to become home to a high-quality training hub in Artificial Intelligence (AI), a move which could have transformative impacts in the way vulnerable residents engage and access public services.

Government announced last week that the **University of Surrey and the StoryFutures unit at Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL) will be the home of a new Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) in AI for Digital Media Inclusion**.

The funding will help establish a unique creative industry hub for high-quality training in responsible AI, inclusive design, and creative skills within the county.

In addition to creating 80 PhD posts, the centre will look at using AI to transform digital media into intelligent content that adapts to individual preferences, such as age, language, and sensory and physical abilities.

The ambition is to place Surrey – and the UK as a whole – as a world leader in media inclusion.

Surrey County Council is proud to back the bid and keen to work with the new centre to establish how public services could be made more accessible to its 1.2 million residents.

In a letter of support, Cllr Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council, said: *"We are excited by the Centre for Doctoral Training's (CDT) proposed approach to responding to the national need for a new community of experts who individually and collectively will deliver resilience for our digitalised Critical National Infrastructure.*

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

"We recognise and support the CDT's aim to develop the underpinning research, training, community-building, and knowledge exchange, contributing 80 highly skilled and connected resilience experts to the workforce.

"The funding bid and subsequent CDT and associated research and expertise will have a significant positive impact on our organisation's ability to deliver high-quality and sustainable services for all."

Cllr Oliver added the local authority was interested in exploring how new technology could improve the way its most vulnerable residents accessed its services.

There was also potential to look at increasing engagement with businesses, fire prevention, community safety services, and greener futures and net zero.

The Surrey hub will be one of 12 Centres for Doctoral Training in AI across the country that will benefit from £117 million of funding through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

It was **announced at the global AI Safety Summit held at Bletchley Park last week**.

Cllr Oliver added that Surrey County Council has an established track record of working successfully with the county's universities to drive innovation and economic growth.

Last week the local authority's cabinet agreed to investment £3 million to support the establishment of a new **CoSTAR (Convergent Screen Technologies and performance in Realtime) satellite studio and incubator space** on the RHUL campus.

The new centre for the creative industries – which will have direct links to the national lab based a short distance away at Pinewood Studios – will create 300 jobs, support 200 businesses and contribute £30 million to the Surrey economy.

The Council was also partner in a **successful bid by Surrey's Guildford Games Cluster and Warwickshire's Silicon Spa for £1.5 million from Research England**.

The funding will support two of the UK's biggest gaming clusters to work with higher education to drive innovation, invest in infrastructure and support growth in the wider regional economy through the Games and Innovation Nexus (GAIN) project.

Cllr Matt Furniss, Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, said: *"The games industry is one of Surrey's real success stories, showcasing our county and its talented workforce on a global stage.*

"This funding has the potential to take this growing, innovative sector to new heights, creating high-quality jobs and generating inward investment into our communities – both of which would be good news for our residents."

Surrey College fraud probe leads to housing plan

30 January 2024



Warnings a failed subcontracted apprenticeship scheme was a "major risk" were ignored leaving a Surrey college with a £25million financial time bomb that it now hopes to solve by selling land for 320 homes.
Brooklands College in Heath Road, Weybridge, borrowed a large sum from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) with the money given to SLC Security to run apprenticeship programs at the school between 2011 and 2019.

When SLC Security collapsed, a formal review was launched by the Department for Education's further education commissioner – and soon after Scotland Yard began its own three-year fraud investigation which closed in May with no arrests – leaving the college holding the can.

The school's solution has been to look to sell land to developers Cala Homes for a £45 million project to cover the money it owes to the ESFA and a modernisation of its campus. The planning application is due to be decided by Elmbridge Borough Council in November, potentially drawing the saga to a close.

In the months leading up to SLC's collapse concerns of the school's financial health had already caught the attention of the Department for Education and the college's "capacity and capability" to get out of the mess, questioned.

The commissioners said the subcontract was a "major risk" and recommended the college "undertake further work to understand the risk associated with this contractor and to immediately review subcontracted provision".

The school's governors, on the other hand, told commissioners they had been given "numerous assurances" by the principal and chief executive over the college's financial stress testing and auditing of its subcontractors which "showed no issues regarding eligibility, existence of learners or their employment status".

At no point had any thought had been given by governors to develop a Plan B should the investigation find the college

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

financially liable for any failings, the report read.

The college's senior leadership team and governors at the time believed "they had undertaken all necessary and appropriate checks and due diligence on all sub-contracted SCL Security provision and from the work they have done, believed that the risk of clawback was low" according to the commissioners' report.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said it does not comment on individual cases but that colleges are required to ensure any education subcontractors adhere to regulations.

They added: "In all cases where apprenticeship provision does not meet the funding regulations it is standard procedure to recover those funds."

A liquidators' statement for SCL Security published on January 4, 2023, revealed that colleges and the ESFA have claims worth £22.5 million against the company. However, it shows there is only about £6.5m available, far short of how much the college must return to the ESFA.

Brooklands College also plans to seek damages for breach of contract, although this will require "further work" to adjudicate.

A spokesperson for the Metropolitan Police said: "In June 2020, the Metropolitan Police received an allegation of fraud relating to a college based in Heath Road, Weybridge, Surrey. The allegation related to financial transactions between 2011 and 2019. An investigation was undertaken which included assessing all available evidence and speaking to staff at the college. No arrests were made in connection with the investigation. In May 2023 a decision was taken to close the investigation and the college has been informed of this outcome."

A three-year repayment plan is now in place between the college and the ESFA. The college has also put in place a new leadership team and is working with Cala Homes on a joint planning application. The £45million scheme, the college says, will enable its Grade II listed mansion to be refurbished and restored, open 12 hectares of woodland to the public, provide a community-accessible sports centre, as well as the 320 homes – 128 of which will be classed as affordable housing.

The public consultation into the plans closed on October 23 with 235 people voicing their support for the project against 22 letters of objection.

A spokesperson for the college said: "A new leadership team and a revitalised Board of Trustees have been focussed on putting the college on a solid, long-term, financial footing and have developed a plan to repay the debt and safeguard the college's future. Our plan will upgrade our teaching facilities to create a modern learning environment that will meet future educational needs, inspire the next generation of students, and secure a sustainable future for Brooklands College in our community."

Image: Visualisation of completed Brooklands College campus site (Cala Homes/Elmbridge BC)

Guildford centre of the cosmos for a day

30 January 2024



Budding astronauts and space engineers are set to be wowed and inspired on Saturday 7 October, when space researchers at the University of Surrey take over Guildford town centre.

The University and its event partners, the Institute of Physics, will offer activities for children and adults to try in the Tunsgate Centre and on the High Street.

Thanks to the UK Space Agency, there will be space suits to try on, Winchester Science Centre will host a pop-up planetarium, and there'll be a working model of a mini Mars rover.

Experts from Surrey Space Centre will be in the Tunsgate Centre.

Laura Cox from the University of Surrey's Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences explained what people can see. She said:

"Come along to see inside a small satellite and have a go at steering it. You can also help spot illegal fishing boats on satellite images, a crime which costs over $15bn annually.

"At the mobile ground station, visitors can see signals from satellites in real-time and the decoded data they are sending from space. And you can learn about different types of space rocks and handle 3D-printed models of real asteroids, comets, and planetary moons."

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

5th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Astrophysicists from the School of Mathematics and Physics will be answering astronomy questions, running a constellation activity, offering an escape room-style activity and more.

Local employers in the space sector will also participate, including Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL), who will show off models of spacecraft and components of the satellites they make, including a propulsion tank, circuit boards and samples of the exterior panels we see in photos.

Dr Nicola Baresi, an astrodynamicist who plans efficient routes for spacecraft to travel in space, including to the Moon and to other planets in our solar system, says:

“It’s going to be a fun day for people of all ages with lots of space-related activities and experiments to try. Space is a hugely exciting sector and is a thriving industry across Surrey and Hampshire. There are plenty of opportunities for rewarding careers in this area, yet significant skills shortages, something we help tackle at the University of Surrey with our research activities and educational programmes. We’re keen to inspire people and help them realise that they could get a job in the space industry.”

Epsom and Ewell’s Technology College 70 years young

30 January 2024



The **North East Surrey College Of Technology** (NESCOT), situated in **Epsom and Ewel**l, Surrey, England, traces its roots back to the 1950s when it was known as Ewell Technical College. As NESCOT marks its 70th anniversary in 2023, it’s worth delving into its intriguing history.

Originally christened as Ewell County Technical College, the institution welcomed its first cohort of students in September 1953, with an official inauguration following in March of the subsequent year. The college’s establishment was notable not only for its academic pursuits but also for its geographical footprint, occupying what was purportedly the largest arable field in all of England. The construction of this educational institution came at a price tag of £250,000.



Ewell Technical College

Ewell County Technical College earned distinction as an early advocate of “liberal education.” During the mid-1960s, students at the college devoted their Wednesday afternoons to an eclectic array of supplementary courses, ranging from sailing to folk dancing. Additionally, it made strides in student welfare, being among the pioneering technical colleges to appoint a dedicated staff member for this purpose. Today, this commitment to student well-being is upheld through various support services, encompassing Advice and Guidance, Student Finance, counseling, healthcare, childcare, security personnel, and specialized assistance for students with a history of being in care.

In its inaugural academic year, Ewell County Technical College enrolled 789 students, organized into three departments: Building, Science, and General Education. By the mid-1970s, this institution had burgeoned to accommodate a student body of 4,000. Tuition fees for students above the age of 19 ranged from £72 to £120 per academic year, while those under 18 were entitled to claim travel expenses amounting to 15p per return journey.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

In 1973, a devastating fire swept through the newly-constructed extension, causing extensive damage estimated at £100,000. The fire, which originated in a science laboratory, left the exact cause shrouded in mystery.

The transformation into NESCOT occurred in 1975 when Ewell County Technical College underwent a name change. Subsequently, in 1988, the college acquired the former Epsom High School. Notably, NESCOT's theatre bears the name of Adrian Mann, who served as the college's inaugural chairman of governors. Mann's dedication to NESCOT extended even after his retirement as chairman in 1963, as he continued to serve as a governor for another decade before being conferred the title of Governor Emeritus.

Throughout its history, NESCOT has been a host to a diverse range of artists and events. Notable musical acts such as Queen, Genesis, Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, and Ralph McTell graced the college's premises. In 1977, Shepperton Studios chose NESCOT as a filming location for scenes in "The Revenge of the Pink Panther."

Among the illustrious alumni of NESCOT is the renowned naturalist David Bellamy, who both studied at and later worked as a laboratory technician at the college. Bellamy credited his teachers at NESCOT with kindling his passion for biology. Additionally, Frank Hampson, the celebrated cartoonist behind the Dan Dare comic strips and a recipient of the "best postwar comic illustrator in the world" title in 1975, served as a technician at the college. Dr. Guy Vine, father to the famous Vine brothers, Jeremy and Tim, imparted knowledge in civil and structural engineering at NESCOT.

Over the years, NESCOT has offered a diverse array of courses, reflecting its commitment to comprehensive education. These courses have spanned a wide spectrum, from Advanced Domestic Cookery and Air Conditioning Design to Bacteriology, Biblical and Religious Studies, Certificate in Home Economics, Flower Arrangement, Drug Toxicity, Law, Nursing, and Guest House Management. Additionally, NESCOT has provided classes and refresher courses in Shorthand and Typing.

Notable alumni from NESCOT include Anthoni Salim, a prominent businessman, investor, and money manager; Professor Peter Saville, distinguished psychologist; Joe Wicks, the renowned fitness coach; and Jane Wilson-Howarth, an accomplished author.

As NESCOT enters its seventh decade, its storied history stands as a testament to its commitment to education, innovation, and the cultivation of talent across a diverse range of fields.

Image: Courtesy NESCOT

Ewell Primary school "raaced" with concrete problem

30 January 2024



A primary school situated in **Ewell** has been confirmed to harbour hazardous concrete that presents a potential risk of structural failure. **Danetree Primary School** is among the 147 educational facilities across England that have been identified as having reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC), a lightweight construction material that was widely used between the 1950s and 1990s but is now regarded as being susceptible to collapse.

A **GLF Schools** spokesperson for **Danetree Primary School** told the **Epsom and Ewell Times**:

"Over the summer the Year 3 block was identified containing RAAC. On Thursday 31 August the Department for Education instructed the Trust to close this building immediately.

"The school then put a plan in place to relocate the Year 3 classes elsewhere within the school, so that the school opened as planned. Parents were advised of this.

"Further surveys have been arranged to clarify longer term plans for the school and we will provide updates to parents as more information is known."

The **Department for Education** has recently released a list that reveals all the educational establishments in England where necessary measures were required to address concerns related to concrete structural integrity. The government document affirms that Danetree Primary School has successfully maintained in-person education for all its students, whether on the school premises or in nearby locations. In response to the concrete structural issues, 19 schools in England had to postpone the commencement of the term, while an additional 24 schools implemented remote learning measures, with four schools making a complete shift to remote learning.

Gillian Keegan, the Education Secretary, expressed her regret over this situation and acknowledged that it was far from the ideal way for parents, teachers, and affected students to begin the new academic term. She reassured the public that the safety of students and staff remains the top priority. She also commended the collective efforts of schools, colleges, local councils, dioceses, and academy trusts in ensuring that the majority of the affected educational settings were able to open their doors to all students at the start of the term. The Education Secretary stated, "I know this is the last way parents, teachers and children affected by this wanted to begin the new term, but it will always be my priority to ensure

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

the safety of pupils and staff.”

Image: Danetree Primary School: Google

Independent Surrey SEND school slammed

30 January 2024



A “culture of discrimination and inequality” goes unaddressed at a school for children with additional needs, where pupils “fear reprisals” from some senior staff if they report concerns, according to Ofsted inspectors.

An inspection into the independent school was requested “as promptly as possible” by the Department for Education, following complaints from parents.

Inspectors described a “negative culture” across staff, pupils and parents at the school, pupils subject to “racial and homophobic slurs and sexualised language and behaviours” and leaders not showing the “capacity to lead and improve the school”.

Their findings rated **Wemms Education Centre**, in Long Ditton, inadequate overall and in the areas of behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership and management, in a report published on Tuesday (September 12).

The quality of education at the school and its sixth form provision were both rated “good”, and inspectors said teachers were clear about what they wanted pupils to learn and how, with curriculum leaders having “expert subject knowledge”.

But inspectors said leaders’ understanding of safeguarding was “weak”, without a shared understanding of what constituted a “serious concern”. Their report said: “Consequently, referrals to other agencies have been too slow, meaning that pupils are placed at risk of harm. Furthermore, senior leaders are not clear about who the most vulnerable pupils in school are.”

Speaking after the report was published Wemms chief executive, **Duncan Murphy**, told the LDRS the report did “not mirror other external reviews of life at Wemms” but accepted that growth has not come without its challenges. He said: “It is no secret that the school challenged some areas of the report; now that it has been published, it is important that we focus on what matters the most – being a school that reflects, learns and ensures that every child has the best possible experience under our tutelage.

“In order to achieve this, we have put together a comprehensive action plan outlining active steps we are taking to amplify our strengths and target areas of improvement. Trustees have added additional capacity to the leadership team, and it is also our aim to diversify and professionalise governance so that there is greater rigour and accountability throughout.“

According to inspectors, “strong work” done at the school was “sullied by a culture of discrimination and inequality that goes unaddressed”.

Pupils at the school are those who have been “unable to cope in mainstream education” and typically have social, emotional and mental health needs with almost all having an education, health and care plan in place.

Inspectors said: “Too many pupils do not feel happy or safe at school. They are fearful of the bullying behaviour of other pupils, which goes unaddressed. During inspection, pupils, staff and parents spoke of the negative impact on pupils of racial and homophobic slurs, inappropriate sexualised language and behaviours. Pupils trust only some adults in school to help them. Many pupils fear a lack of empathy, even reprisals, from certain leaders should they report a concern.”

The Ofsted report said pupils believed they were treated “inconsistently and unfairly” and as such “a culture of intimidation, mistrust and fear abounds”.

Six action points were set out by inspectors for the school, with fees of £50,000 per year, to improve.
Inspectors described relationships within and between all groups of staff as “severely flawed” and said the school was a “deeply fractured community”. They said there was a “a widespread lack of trust and confidence” in the school’s leadership and that parents too were “deeply divided” in their views of the school, particularly its leadership.

According to the Wemms website, the school was “proud to declare itself a ‘marmite’ school… you will love us or hate us”. It said: “Our school is for individuals and mavericks who yearn for a bespoke education, which allows them to learn in their own way and at their own pace.”

With parents able to write to the inspectors as part of the process, the Ofsted report said positive and negative opinions were equally received, and a smaller number wrote with neutral views.

Three quarters of parents who completed Ofsted’s online survey said they would recommend the school, but common themes were raised regarding “unsupportive behaviour towards pupils and parents, particularly regarding the

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

management of concerns”.

Less than a quarter of staff who completed a survey said that the school was well led and managed, and only one third believed they were treated fairly and with respect.

But inspectors said around two thirds remained happy to work at the school and believed leaders were considerate of their workload.

Inspectors said: “A negative culture pervades the school and permeates across staff, pupil and parent groups. Some staff, parents and pupils are wary of leaders and feel unable to air their views or concerns. “Leaders should take urgent action to ensure that members of the school community are able to express their views without fear of reprisals. Leaders should work to establish a positive, shared school ethos.” As well as this, there were concerns that leaders’ responses to pupils’ breaking the rules were “inconsistent and unfair” and that sanctions were not applied consistently.

The report said: “Inspectors heard repeatedly from staff, pupils and parents that pupils are not kept safe from bullying and abuse, including the use of racial and homophobic slurs and sexualised language and behaviours.”

They added that there were no established strategies to address these behaviours and that behaviour and anti-bullying policies were not effectively implemented.

The school’s nurse left the organisation during the course of the inspection in May as a result of her concerns, put in writing to the school in March 2023, relating to safeguarding, medication, staff training and a lack of autonomy to practise as a school nurse.

Staff, pupils and parents also raised concerns about the school’s response to pupils’ medical needs.
What does the school do well?

Inspectors said the pupils’ experiences at the school varied widely, and that the move from a site in Leatherhead to Long Ditton in 2022 had “proved popular”.

They said the pupils generally behaved well in lessons, whether working individually or in twos with a teacher and that there was “high academic ambition” across the school.

The report added: “Pupils achieve strongly across a range of subjects, frequently beyond their own and their family’s expectations. Older pupils learn to drive, helping them to be prepared for their futures. However, these successes are not mirrored in other aspects of school life.”

The LDRS understands some parents do not support the inspector’s findings and are looking into lodging a formal complaint about the Ofsted report. One parent said the school had been a “life changer” for their family.

How the school responded

Duncan Murphy, chief executive of Wemms Education Centre, said the school had a “proud history of supporting children with complex and challenging needs” and two positive previous inspections were the reason for moving to the bigger site.

He said the report did not mirror other external reviews of the school, but added that the school “wholly accept and understand that growth has not come without its challenges”.

With the school having challenged aspects of the report, he also pointed to pupils who “achieve strongly” and that many parents would be happy to recommend the school to others.

Mr Murphy said: “However, there have rightly been questions of consistency which we will seek to address with pace and purpose as we build for the future.”

The school would focus on being one that would reflect, learn and ensure that every child at Wemms had “the best possible experience”, he added.

With an action plan outlining steps being taken, as well as changes to governance for “greater rigour and accountability throughout”, Mr Murphy also said concerns regarding discrimination and inequality were being tackled.

He added: “We firmly believe that our community can once more be united behind a shared vision of excellence for those pupils who need a school like ours the most. It is a source of great regret to us that the essence of this aim has been misplaced since the move to a new site last year, but now is an opportunity to drive improvement and ensure a long and successful future for our school and its community.”

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY