

SPECIAL

# connect

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL

## A message from the CEO



I would like to warmly welcome you to a special edition of Connect. This February half term issue, takes a brief look at

all the inspirational ways our schools are making a difference in the lives of the children and families in our care.

In what has been an incredibly challenging time for so many, it is not an understatement to say that we have undergone immense change during this period. To demonstrate how the Mulberry family has come together to support each other, we hope this issue will provide you with moments of inspiration and encouragement.

You will find updates on the progress of the Mulberry STEM Academy, as well as a summary from each of our schools on their remote learning offer, Emergency Field Schools and details on devices that have been received to date. Our friends and supporters have shown such kindness and generosity during these tough times.

I hope you enjoy reading this special issue. Please do explore some of the signposted online content to learn more about what we are doing remotely.

On behalf of the Mulberry Schools Trust, I am sending my best wishes to all our hardworking students, staff, our families and our friends.

Stay safe and enjoy the half-term break.

Dr Vanessa Ogden  
CEO

## Mulberry STEM Academy formally opens to new Scholars

The Mulberry STEM Academy, in partnership with Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix Ltd, launched in November 2020. Since then, we have been working hard to select amazing STEM Scholars for the elite programmes.

We received over 100 applications from across all three Mulberry schools for the 20 highly sought after places on offer in Year 10 and Year 12. The entire recruitment process took place remotely, commencing with a tough shortlisting stage.

Next, we invited the remaining 69 students to attend remote interviews using Microsoft Teams. Students were placed in groups of 3-4, where they had to answer individual questions, as well as participate in group discussions. Candidate assessments were based on Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix's 'PRIDE framework' (Passion, Respect, Innovation, Determination and Excellence) and the interview questions were deliberately very broad. They were designed that way to promote confidence and discussion, including prompting.

Despite the challenges posed by holding interviews remotely, they all went smoothly and it was a privilege to listen to our young people talking about their experiences and interests in STEM fields. We are proud of all the young people who initially applied and secured interviews - as well as our successful STEM Scholars, who will now join the elite programmes.

We are pleased to be able to launch the first event at the end of February.



The online event, hosted by Mercedes, the reigning Formula One World Champions, will see four of their graduate employees join the team's Technical Director and Chief People Officer to talk about their experiences in education and at the team. Our students will be able to learn about their careers, how their choices in education influenced their career path and what a typical day looks like working at a world-leading Formula One team. The Mercedes team members will then take questions from our STEM scholars. We are so excited for all involved and can't wait for the roll out of other impressive events.

Visit our dedicated [web page here](#)



REMOTE LEARNING

# Students enjoy exceptional teaching and creative lessons

We are extremely proud of our remote provision and student participation at Mulberry Academy Shoreditch.

Students have been logging in every morning for registration, Year and House assemblies, followed by a day of exceptional teaching. Our Heads of Year and attendance team follow up any absences with the same diligent thoroughness, which has ensured excellent attendance rates of 94%. They are also able to resolve any issues where students might not be able to access their learning.



Teachers have been working tirelessly to engage students to ensure that remote learning is of the highest quality and closely aligned with in-school teaching. Teachers use visualisers, videos, break-out rooms, engaging games such as Kahoot and Microsoft Forms – all resulting in really innovative and creative ways of working.

During English lessons, students have been involved in a creative writing project: 'letters to a future generation', in Art students have been making 3D models from paper and in PE students have been participating in lockdown games. Creativity continues to flow in the Hospitality and MFL departments, who have come together for a fusion cooking and language project. We have been overwhelmed by our students' hard work, but most impressive has been the level of collaboration of students to address their studies.

**To find out more about our online learning activities, please visit our dedicated [webpage](#) .**

EMERGENCY FIELD SCHOOL

## Students love lessons and seeing their friends

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch opened its doors on the first day of lockdown this year to support the children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

Our Head of Inclusion oversees the Emergency Field School and members of the Senior Leadership Team work to a daily rota to support students' focus, engagement and academic work.



The day runs from 9am to 3pm and students are able to interact with their peers and members of staff in school, as well as continuing to access online learning.

Students have also been involved in sports activities at break and lunchtime. Students are really enjoying being onsite, seeing their teachers and some of their friends, as shown in some of the feedback below:

**"I've enjoyed coming to school because I can speak to people and get help from teachers when I struggled in lessons. It's been lots of fun."**

**"The lessons are really good and I have loved doing PE and Art."**

**"The teachers have made the lessons really interesting. I thought I would find it difficult, but they have made it easy to understand."**

**"English has been amazing and really fun."**

**"The teachers have made it safe, as we are all socially distanced from each other and it's easy to learn."**

LAPTOP DONATIONS AND SUPPORT

## Devices making incredible difference

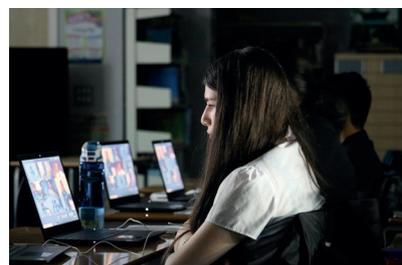
Mulberry Academy Shoreditch is happy to have supplied 386 laptops to date for students.



The devices have made an incredible difference to our families, allowing students to access our fabulous remote provision.

The Department for Education has supplied 346 laptops since the start of the pandemic: 53 arrived early spring 2020, 174 devices arrived in September 2020 and another 119 were delivered at the beginning of this year. We are lucky to have a further 40 devices on their way, which were purchased by the Mulberry Schools Trust.

We are in the process of setting up a JustGiving donation page in collaboration with our Governors to allow us to secure more devices. Our aim is to ensure all students have their own device, as many are currently sharing with other family members.



**"I am so grateful for the laptop and as a result it helps me to get on with my work consistently without any distractions."**  
*Year 12 student*

REMOTE LEARNING

## Impressive 96% attendance figure leads the way

As the whole school moved online, Mulberry School for Girls was so impressed with the way students met the challenge of learning from home.

Our remote school attendance hit an impressive 96%, with children logging in every morning to talk to their tutors and take part in PSHE activities to start their day.

Students follow their normal timetable, attend their live lessons and hand in assignments to share their work with their teachers. You

can see some amazing examples on our [Twitter account here](#) 📄.

Our Sixth Form students have been leading the way with the highest attendance to lessons. From Maths, English and Science to Film, Economics, Textiles and Art, students have been sending us positive feedback about their lessons. To support students, our online intervention programme called 'Prep' has been running and is incredibly well attended. Year 11 and 13 students have also taken part in online mock exams. Their dedication and commitment is outstanding.

It has been really hard not being together as a learning community, but our trailblazing Mulberry girls continue to amaze us with their curiosity, creativity and love of learning.

**Details about our remote learning offer can be found [here](#)** 📄.



EMERGENCY FIELD SCHOOL

## Learning, playing and fun with Rosie the dog

On Tuesday 5th January, we welcomed Mulberry School for Girls students to our Emergency Field School.

Each day, staff warmly greet students as they make their way to registration and lessons.

All students in attendance, have access to Mulberry Learn (the school's virtual learning environment powered by Microsoft Teams) and they follow the same vigorous timetable and curriculum, as other students who are engaged in remote learning from home.

Students are provided with a device and are assisted in accessing their online lessons by a team of helpful and dedicated support staff and members of the Senior Leadership Team. On a daily basis, there is an average of 45 students in attendance, who are organised by year group in their learning hubs.

Students benefit from the social interaction with their peers and members of staff. They participate in regular outdoor exercise and a range of engaging enrichment activities. The highlight of the day is often playtime with Rosie our therapy dog, which always generates lots of fun and laughter.

Feedback from surveys indicate that our students really do enjoy the provision and the attendance and punctuality figure is consistently high at an average of 96.5%.

The exceptionally well facilitated provision, allows for live mentoring sessions and access to essential services. Our Learning Mentors also work closely with individual students to ensure they are always fully supported.



LAPTOP DONATIONS AND SUPPORT

## Generous donations help students thrive

Since spring last year, Mulberry School for Girls has received a number of laptops and other devices from the Department for Education and generous friends.

The DfE has provided a total of 409 laptops from March 2020 to date and in January 2021, we purchased a further 100 laptops for students, as a direct result of the kind generosity of so many of our friends and supporters. In total, the school has been able to purchase 531 devices - with more hopefully on the way.

This important supply of devices, will help those students with the greatest need to continue to thrive and learn at home.

We are incredibly grateful to the [Chartered Accountants' Livery Charity](#) 📄. Their £5,000 donation means that the school was able to purchase 10 laptops. We also received a £2,000 donation towards the purchase of more devices and dongles from the BBC's Digital Divide Campaign.

We know that for many families, owning a device for every child is a significant expense, and that many students are sharing laptops. We extend our warmest thanks to individuals and organisations who reached out to support our students. Your kindness and generosity means that we can continue to support students with their remote learning during this time.





REMOTE LEARNING

## Mulberry UTC students adapt with ease to remote education

Mulberry UTC students have made the transition to online learning seamlessly showing high levels of attendance to online lessons and completing excellent work from home. This shows how ready they are for the tech-based world of work.

Staff have been delivering high quality, engaging and active learning, which ensures students are able to reach their potential. We also aim to make sure our students feel heard and that they experience normal school routines throughout the week.

Virtual tutor time takes place on MS Teams every morning between 8.40am-9.00am and has been a place to catch up, compete and have fun with many activities running and great assemblies hosted by the Heads of House.



Students also continue to make applications to top universities and attend interviews online. They are as well prepared as usual and on track to great destinations.

**To find out more about our online learning activities, please visit our dedicated [webpage](#) .**

EMERGENCY FIELD SCHOOL

## Emergency Field School – there for those who need it

The Emergency Field School has provided a useful base for a number of students who need a quiet place to study.

It is staffed by the learning support team all day from 8.40am to 3.50pm and staff are on hand to ensure that students have access to all of the learning resources they need. Students are able to dial in to their online lessons hosted by their teachers, whilst also benefiting from the additional staff support onsite. All students in the Emergency Field School receive a free lunch. Year 11 students in the school have also volunteered to participate in pre-recorded PE sessions which have been broadcast to the whole of Key Stage 4.

We have recently been able to open up the provision to Key Stage 5 students who have expressed they would prefer to work in school. The calm and supportive workspace has allowed these students the conditions they need to focus.



LAPTOP DONATIONS AND SUPPORT

## Keeping the school connected

Students at Mulberry UTC have benefited from laptops and routers provided by the Department for Education and the school, as well as free data provided by phone companies.

Our fantastic IT technician, Ifti Jalal, has been hard at work managing this extra provision, which ensures that every Mulberry UTC student has access to a device and to the internet. This technology gives Mulberry UTC students access to a high quality education despite the

challenges of lockdown, which helps improve the life chances of our students and their families. Students tell us:

**“The best thing about online school so far has been the support I’ve been receiving from teachers, as well as the continuous effort to make sure I’m okay with the work and being able to manage everything.”**

**“All of the teachers have been so helpful and my form tutor has been so great at communicating things with me and making sure I’m good with everything.”**

