

NMCF support for OYTS 2025

Another voyage report for you as we have spent the donation you generously gave us earlier this year! As in previous years, the money went towards providing a voyage for The Vyne Community School in Basingstoke. Funded places went to students who were eligible for Pupil Premium / free school meals, had special educational needs, or are not currently fulfilling their potential in school and have limited opportunities due to family circumstances:

A, girl aged 13: Parents are separated and A stays with each of them 50% of the time. A creative girl who enjoys art and is a very talented writer. She struggles with voicing her thoughts. She has very strong empathy. Can struggle with her mental health and feelings of sadness, and is uncomfortable with people shouting around her.

B, girl aged 12: Mum has struggled for some time with her own mental health and this can be difficult for the family. The family has received professional help to implement routines etc. to support them. B has an Education, Health and Care Plan for autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs, and is Pupil Premium / free school meals. She will mask at school and can sometimes be quite heightened at home. She has worked really well and positively on self-regulation methods. She has made great friends in Year 7 which mum is really pleased about. This will be a good opportunity for her to meet more friends and build upon her social skills.

C, girl aged 13: A nice polite young student who is always up for trying new activities and is a stand-out member for the Vyne community. She has zero behaviour points for the last two years of school and always volunteers to help others. She is Pupil Premium / free school meals and it will be massively beneficial for her to get these opportunities to be able to build her social strength.

D, boy aged 12: Until recently, D was a looked after child and has spent some time in foster care. He has just moved back home with his mum but is still under a care order. He has a blended family with quite a few siblings. He only joined us at The Vyne in the spring term after returning back to his mum's care. He has displayed fantastic qualities of being a polite, hard working young man.

E, girl aged 14: Has witnessed domestic violence within the home between her brother and mum. Her brother has recently been released from prison and is back living in the home. E would benefit from any experiences that build her resilience and create chances for her to discover new talents and interests. Pupil Premium student and has a moderate learning difficulty.

F, boy aged 13: A polite young man who lives with his Dad. Dad is a double amputee and home life can be hard for F. He is very funny and likes to have a chat. He enjoys outdoor activities and is very active. Pupil premium, free school meals and mild learning difficulties.

H, girl aged 14: A very quiet young lady who will often struggle to articulate how she is feeling. She has self-harmed in the past. A hard-worker who should achieve strong grades at school despite being at risk of dyslexia. Pupil premium student.

J, boy aged 13: A great team player who has a lot to offer, though he lacks confidence. He has been around domestic abuse in the home and other legal trouble from other close family members so he struggles to open up. He likes to try new things and is happy to learn. Pupil Premium student, free school meals and has a moderate learning difficulty.

K, boy aged 13: A quiet young man who struggles with anxieties. These centre around him not being able to do things and letting people down. This is due to witnessing a lot of domestic

abuse at home. When he is given praise he responds well. He is an active child and enjoys doing things outside with his friends. Premium student, free school meals.

L, girl aged 12: A quiet student who secured a few positive friendships in year 7. A well-behaved student who follows school's expectations. She is on the autistic spectrum and due to this, has never been on a residential trip but since being in secondary school, her confidence has grown and she feels confident enough to try her first ever residential. Pupil Premium student, free school meals, emotional / behaviour difficulties.

M, girl aged 14: a young carer and attends our Young Carers after school club each week. A quiet girl who struggles to maintain secure relationships. Premium student, free school meals. Born with a heart condition but has had all the operations to correct this though she is still on medication.

G and I were staff members from the school.

Voyage report

To finish a very busy September we had the Vyne School in Basingstoke, one of our very longstanding clients, joining for a three-night voyage with a mixed group of 12–14-year-olds and two members of staff.

It was all go-go-go from the moment that the group joined as welcomes and safety briefs were quickly dispatched to get out on the water and make the most of the wind. After leaving Southampton, *Prolific* motored down Southampton Water while winch drills were completed. Mizzen and staysail were hoisted and young people steered or went out on the bowsprit.





They picked up the buoy outside Yarmouth and enjoyed a beautiful sunset. Everyone then gathered around the big saloon table to enjoy pasta and meatballs. By now the excitement of the day was catching up with everybody so it was an early night for everyone.

Everyone was up before daybreak the following morning to get the boat ready as the plan was to sail around the Isle of Wight. The early start was rewarded with a chance to watch the sunrise.



The buoy was slipped at 0700 and they headed towards The Needles on the western tip of the Isle of Wight. Breakfast of croissants and pain au chocolate made the early start even more worthwhile. Some of the sea staff did a navigation exercise out of the Needles channel.



Despite some swell out of the Solent, the crew hoisted the staysail and made for St. Catherine's Point, the most southernmost point on the island which is marked with a lighthouse. The wind filled in to make for a good sail. Unfortunately, the weather turned into a grey drizzly day but some of the young people remained on deck to enjoy the sail while others felt the effects of the sea and had to retire to their bunks. One young person claimed it was the best nap of their life!

Once reaching St Catherine's Point the engine was put on to make good speed back towards the Solent, and the swell calmed as they skirted along the eastern coast of the island. Everyone was back on deck by the time the Nab Tower, which is used to guide ships of all sizes into the deep water channel for Portsmouth and Southampton, was in sight. A calmer sea had bought the crew's appetites back with many of the crew enjoying lunch on deck. After lunch the crew got involved with lots of boat duties including steering and helping to drop the sails. One of the sea staff safely

navigated *Prolific* towards Portsmouth and into Gunwharf Quays, the home of the Spinnaker Tower, just inside the harbour.

Once alongside the crew had Happy Hour (boat cleaning) duties before some shore leave and showers. Dinner had a Moroccan theme with tagine on the menu. Despite a long day the young people still had some energy for games including 'slaps', After Eights and moo-offs:



The following morning it was a slower start to the day with the aim after breakfast to head for Stokes Bay, west of Portsmouth harbour. Two man overboard recovery drills were completed on the way before anchoring in the sunshine off the bay. Some RYA Start Yachting theory was taught before fish fingers for lunch! After lunch the anchor was raised and they headed back towards Southampton Water. On the way back each watch took turns to navigate back to Ocean Village, our home port, while the other watches were kept busy learning knots, parts of the boat and venturing out onto the bowsprit.





Once back in port the deck was tidied, dinner was cooked and banana bread was baked. After disco washing up the group played more games and laughed a lot too before heading for bed. The following morning it was time for a sum up of the trip, packing and final clear up before the crew departed.



They had sailed 98 miles and [you can see their complete voyage track here](#).

Individual reports

A (13): One of the quieter members of the crew and did get very seasick around the island. Said later on they have a sickness phobia – they were proud of how well they bounced back. They got involved in all the games and were the navigator for their watch in the navigation exercise. Very good concentration during nav planning. Learned knots quickly. Once engaged in a smaller group was reliable and competent. In a big group was self-conscious and lacking confidence. Enjoyed the games, particularly “slaps”, which was in a big group. Welcome back.

B (12): They really came out of their shell this week. Initially seeming quite unsure, they became chatty and more sure of themselves. Benefited from explicit clear instructions. Helmed during some of the navigation exercise. Joined the dancing on deck and seemed to have a lot of fun. Managed to get out on the bowsprit three times and LOVED it! Was really scared and took a lot of persuasion the first time but then was super keen later on. Was seasick round the island but then helmed when we were dropping sails. A pleasure to have on board, gentle and polite. Volunteered to do tasks like washing up. Welcome back.

C (13): Helmed into and out of Portsmouth and did a great job. They were dependable and polite, always happy to help. Baked banana bread and was reliable when it came to washing up and other “less fun” domestic jobs. Smily and positive. Did get quite cold round the island and on staff “orders” was marching in the nav room holding a hot water bottle but once warmed up did get back involved and helmed the boat quite a way into Portsmouth including passing ferries. Calm and collected. Superstar – very reliable, supported her anxious sister and got involved. Impressed the staff very much and we would love to get her back for another voyage to see what doors might open for her in sailing as she gets older.

D (12): Fun and boisterous - they had good friends on the trip and really enjoyed being on a boat. Though easily distracted, they were generally engaged and involved in all activities, including sailing and dancing on deck. Felt really rubbish and seasick at one point but didn't let this stop him later in the trip. Picked up knots very quickly, loved the bowsprit & loved spending time with friends. Smart and learned quickly, correcting other people's winch technique. Capable and natural leader, confident. Welcome back.

E (14): Polite and helpful, they were involved with many aspects of the trip, including dancing on deck. Didn't seem to like helming much but did try it enough to get their RYA qualification. Had good friends on the trip and got very boisterous doing extreme washing up. Attentive listener and followed instructions. Quietly capable. Stowed the anchor chain and did a good job of this. Communicated well when passing lines ashore. Welcome back.

F (13): Fun and had good friends on board. They were one of the loudest on board and occasionally disruptive. School staff said in their tutor group there are louder personalities and they are often lost so has probably enjoyed being in a smaller group environment. They spoke about some of the difficulties they've faced and is facing in life, which are significant. They do Cadets and it sounds like this is a good thing for them. Was helming around the island after many others had gone down to their bunks. They did then throw up but said they felt better after it (and was very apologetic), and kept going with a positive outlook which is commendable. Said their nap off-watch was the best nap of their life. Struggles with co-ordination when using winches etc. Not naturally gifted at knots but persevered and achieved them all. We think he got a lot out of this trip and said it was "probably the best thing that's happened" to him. Would probably appreciate and get a lot out of another trip. Very sociable. Welcome back.

H (14): Very quiet and generally didn't speak in group settings around the table. They did however get involved fully in all the games and activities. Had friends on board but found it hard to make new friends. Didn't enjoy helming but did do it and achieved their qualification. Went on the bowsprit despite not wanting to initially. Welcome back.

J (13): Seemed to really enjoy the trip and had good friends on board. Struggled with balance on the first day. Did really well in the navigation exercise – they were a lookout and were very attentive monitoring the ship's heading and communicating well. Friendly and involved, they were a pleasure to have on board (though maybe with less sweets next time...). Very keen to come back and has now got a logbook. They would get a lot out of another trip.

K (13): Had good friends on board who would sometimes mess around but he often didn't get involved in this, which showed good maturity. Really good attentive lookout on the navigation exercise, spotting and monitoring boats and determining if we were on a collision course. Didn't get seasick and looked after themselves well. Really keen on sailing and was asking watch leader / school staff about how he might be able to get involved in some dinghy sailing. Fast learner, keen and reliable. Was scared of heights but did go on the bowsprit, with a teacher who was also scared. Didn't necessarily enjoy it but was proud to have tried it. Impressed the staff very much and we would love to get him back for another voyage to see what doors might open for her in sailing as she gets older. We feel he'd get lots out of another trip and be a great asset – he'd really try and make the most of it.

L (12): Initially really anxious – getting teary a few times on the first day – speaking minimally and quietly. She was absolutely transformed and by the end of the trip was smiling, chatty and baking fabulous banana bread. Superstar crew member. Really good on the helm & helmed a significant section of the nav exercise, showing great concentration. Really enjoyed it. Welcome back.

M (14): The only one of the young people to have been before, they showed some knowledge from last time which was good. Supportive of quieter friends and got on well with the group. Could get quite excitable and would lack concentration and push boundaries. When calmer she was capable and would get involved. Didn't look after herself very well when feeling seasick / cold – wanting to go outside with her jacket unzipped etc. But was engaged and not actually seasick. Social leader, partly due to having been on board before, and enjoyed this. Welcome back.

Excellent staff support from G and I! Lovely to have I back – a calming influence who is great at supporting the young people (including making a deal with one of the students about going on the bowsprit together when they were both nervous about it). G was new to sailing but seemed to take to it and also had brilliant youthwork skills – mentioned that he would like to do more sailing and we'd be delighted to see him on one of our adult training weekends next year and see if we can help him develop his sailing experience to the point where he could consider qualifying as a watchleader where his skills with young people would make him a real asset.

Certificates

Everyone in the group earned RYA Start Yachting certificates.

We always like to stress that an RYA certificate is a proper recognised qualification which can be kept in someone's Record of Achievement. It shows that they mastered some basic sailing skills; but perhaps even more importantly, earning the certificate also provides evidence of transferrable skills. To complete it, people have to be able to listen, concentrate, work in a team, practise things until they were able to get them right – even if they initially struggled, take part in routine tasks such as cooking and cleaning as well as the more exciting jobs, cope with living in an entirely unfamiliar situation, cope with being away from home, undertake tasks which some will have found really challenging, take responsibility when asked, follow safety instructions, and much more. They should be proud of themselves for doing so well.

Outcomes Wheel self-evaluation

We use an exercise called Outcomes Wheels, developed with Children in Need and the Prince's Trust, to measure how crew members feel about themselves at the start of a voyage and again at the end, giving themselves marks out of 6 in different areas.