

CLASSICS MATTERS

The Classics for All Magazine Autumn 2025



CHAMPIONING CLASSICS IN SCHOOLS

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CLASSICS MATTERS The Classics for All Magazine

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A word from our Chief Executive

Jo Hobbs MBE reflects on Classics for All's activity over the past year



Jo Hobbs MBE at this year's Classics for All Impact Awards

As the leaves begin to turn, I've been reflecting on what an energising and hopeful year it's been for Classics for All. Whether I've been visiting schools, chatting with teachers, or catching up with our brilliant Network Coordinators, one thing has stood out: the passion and determination to make Classics accessible to every child, no matter their background.

This year, we're focusing our efforts on regions where the need is greatest – the North East, East of England and West Midlands – and it's inspiring to see the difference your support is making. From schools just starting out with Latin to those building thriving Classics departments, we're helping more pupils discover the joy and challenge of the ancient world.

We've also been working hard to retain schools already teaching Classics, especially in areas facing disadvantage. Our approach is becoming more data-informed, helping us target support where

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it will have the most impact – and ensuring that every donation, every hour of training, and every conversation counts.

When the government unexpectedly withdrew funding for the Latin Excellence Programme earlier this year, we knew we had to act. We couldn't stand by and watch pupils, many of whom were just months away from their exams, lose the

chance to succeed in a subject they had worked so hard to master. So, we stepped in. We took on the funding to ensure continuity for the schools and pupils involved. It was a decision rooted in our values: that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive, and that Classics should never be a casualty of circumstance.

Looking ahead, I'm excited about this year's Big Give campaign. With your help, we hope to raise £100,000 to support our work next year recruiting and sustaining Classics in state schools, especially in areas of deprivation.

Thanks to our pledgers, every donation will be doubled, helping open the door to Classics for thousands more young people. Thank you for being part of this community. We couldn't do it without you.

Jo Hobbs MBE
Chief Executive Officer,
Classics for All

Finding Verres' defence in Newcastle

Laura Hope, North East Coordinator, discusses her proudest project in her region

The North East Network works with 47 schools stretching across the breadth of Hadrian's Wall, from Berwick-upon-Tweed down to the North Yorkshire border. More children in this region face persistent deprivation than in any other in England and yet we are full of – as one headteacher stated – 'little schools that can do big things'.

Few state schools in the North East teach classical subjects, so innovative methods are often needed to bring them into focus. This year, that included a new venture: Corruption in the Spotlight.

The project was organised in partnership with the Why Cicero Matters festival and the international project Twisted Transfers, produced by Cinzia Hardy at the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne (the Lit and Phil), and led by Dr Marta Garcia Marcillo of the University of Newcastle. Teachers and 40 sixth form students from across the region were invited to explore corruption through Cicero's famous speeches against Verres, the notorious Roman governor of Sicily accused of several acts of corruption in 70 BCE. The aim, according to Dr Garcia Marcillo, was 'to understand the impact of ethical values and moral dilemmas in Ancient Greece and Rome and why they matter today'.

Throughout January and May, students participated in three workshops which detailed: who Cicero and Verres were; the contents of Cicero's speeches against Verres; and explored the ancient roots of corruption through the charges against Verres. Led in discussion by experts including Dr Kathryn Tempest, Dr Garcia Marcillo, Dr Nick Freer, Cinzia Hardy

and me, students engaged with ideas of how corruption is socially constructed, processes of checks and balances, and citizenship. They were asked questions about how to define corruption, how to solve corruption, what makes a good or bad citizen, and how relevant the ancient world is to our understanding of today's issues.

At their final workshop students used all this new knowledge to create a defence for Verres, since the ancient one has not been preserved. Their narratives were presented to local poet and playwright Kristen Luckins, who used their voice to create a play re-enacting the trial of Verres. Finally, after 2,000 years, the Sicilian governor's defence would be recorded for posterity – in the North East.

The new trial was featured at the annual Lit and Phil ClassicsFest, with professional actors Wambui Hardcastle as Cicero and Eliis Konstantina as Hortensius, Verres' defendant; Professor Deveral Capps, the Dean of Leeds Law School, as the judge; and actor

Jake Jarratt as the clerk. At the end of the trial play, the audience were asked to give a 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' vote of guilt for each of the charges against Verres. The play was followed by a panel of the participant students, the writer Kristen Luckins and academic advisors for the play (Dr Garcia Marcillo and Dr Tempest).

It was a proud moment for everyone to appreciate the eloquence of our students, who were able to show off their knowledge to an invested crowd. Public speaking about something which you are passionate and being listened to by an equally engaged crowd is an invaluable experience which is sadly not always able to be fostered in the cramped day-to-day school schedule.

It is events like these that can stick with a young person, where the ancient history of another culture can come to life in their own backyard. We are always endeavouring to explore such opportunities at Classics for All alongside our consistent work training schools.

The Verres trial in action





Hartside Primary Academy pupils using the 'handling box'

In the North East, we haven't just given this chance to our oldest students but also to our youngest; recently launching our 'handling box'! This travelling kit gives primary pupils the opportunity to engage with archaeological replicas, including pieces of pottery and corresponding tasks to uncover more about each item.

One stop for the roaming handling box this year was none other than our North East winner at this summer's Classics for All Impact Awards: Hartside Primary Academy.

Hartside Primary Academy is a small primary school in Crook, a former industrial town and one of the most deprived areas in County Durham. In 2023, the school introduced Latin for all their Year 3–6 pupils (ages 7–11) with our training and support, after one of their teachers, Tim Pratt, attended a taster session in the North East.

Initially Tim was interested in Latin as a foundational language for his pupils. Many of his pupils would study one modern foreign language at primary, only to go on and learn another at secondary school. Since then, Latin has become more than just a practical solution; it is inspiring pupils at the school. The school was particularly impressed by their pupils' newfound passion and the links they could form between history, literature, language and etymology because

“It's our history, and you can kind of hear some English words translated in the Latin and I think that's really good ... like "consume" and "medicus" for medical.
Pupil, Hartside Primary Academy, County Durham

of their Latin knowledge. Tim noticed that pupils, especially boys, who had previously been more difficult to engage were affected by the storytelling of Latin and Ancient Greece. He 'even had some of the "hard to reach" boys saving up their pocket money and spending it on abridged versions of the *Odyssey*'.

Despite only being in their second year of Latin on the curriculum, the school has become a strong advocate of Classics in their local education scene.

Headteacher Dawn Simpson and Tim Pratt work tirelessly to persuade the Chief Executives of their Academy Trust, with research and personal testament of their students, of the value of Latin. Their hope is it will be taught at more schools across the trust.

It was this passionate advocacy that helped make Hartside worthy winners of the North East award at the Impact Awards.

An interview with Professor Michael Scott

Kelsi Russell interviews author, historian and Classics for All trustee Professor Michael Scott

Professor Michael Scott is a renowned ancient historian, author, broadcaster and lecturer. Classics for All has been privileged to count him as a trustee and partner over the past six years. Before his term came to an end, we caught up with him to discuss his Classics career and why, six years later, he sees the work of Classics for All as vital.

What initially drew you to Classics?

I have to make a horrible admission. I hated Latin in school and had no intention of studying Classics. I thought I was going to be a lawyer. But, one day, a teacher started explaining the first couple of letters of the ancient Greek alphabet. And I thought, that's interesting ...

Then I went on a school trip to Greece when I was 17, and it was a formative moment. It didn't start well. The airline lost my luggage permanently, so I went around Greece wearing the same pair of jeans and t-shirt for a week, but I had the most extraordinary time

visiting the sites. I pretty much decided then and there that I would take a year out of school and re-learn Latin to study Classics at university.

Was there anything specific about the trip that captured your imagination?

It was my first-ever experience of walking in the actual remains of these extraordinary ancient civilisations. There was something particularly captivating about being in amongst the stones and ruins and feeling like I was walking in the footsteps of the history that I had been studying.

That has stayed with me ever since. There was just something about being where these things happened that really spoke to me.

Why do you think it is important for young people to study Classics today?

There are ideas and values that we still live by today that started in antiquity. Democracy is an obvious one. You can't fully



Professor Michael Scott

Not everyone will love Classics and that is absolutely fine, but there is a real value to having the chance to be exposed to it.

Blackpool Sixth Form College Students exploring Rome





Pupil from Hartside Primary School in Crook showing off their 'Greek' pottery

understand these concepts in the modern day without appreciating where the ideas began.

But at the same time, I think the ancient world provides a counterpoint that challenges our understanding of how we live today. While some of what we love and value began back then, there were ways their society thought and acted that we would find extremely challenging and confronting.

Studying them allows us to understand where we are today but it also gives us a brilliant foil, a sense check and ways of realigning and reconfirming what we truly value, what we want to hang onto and drive ourselves towards as a society.

Why do you think Classics for All serves an important role?

Classics for All does what it says on the tin, it says Classics should be for "all" – a belief I share. Everyone should have the opportunity to study and engage with these cultures to explore what they mean for them.

Everyone should have that door-opening moment where they see how the ancient world helped influence and curate the world today and with that knowledge,

they can consider what the world should be like tomorrow. Not everyone will love Classics and that is absolutely fine, but there is a real value to having the chance to be exposed to it.

Ancient languages are also beneficial in improving students' English abilities and providing a common language for multicultural cohorts. So, I think there are a whole set of advantages to having had the chance to be exposed to these worlds, these cultures, these languages, these ideas; and fundamentally Classics for All believes and I believe that we should all have that chance.

If a young person is interested in Classics and sees you as someone they admire, what advice would you give them?

Fundamentally, find what it is that you are passionate about doing, hold onto it, run with it and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. You have a long time to work. You have a long time to do lots of stuff in your life, so you have to find the thing that you're passionate about. Whatever that might be just go for it!

Is there anything coming up for you in the near future?

In February 2026, I will be launching my next book with Yale University

“Everyone should have that door-opening moment where they see how the ancient world helped influence and curate the world today and with that knowledge, they can consider what the world should be like tomorrow.

Press. This is obviously an exciting moment because it is something you [Kelsi] and I have had a chance to collaborate on. It's a slight rarity for me at the moment as I've taken on a role within the executive board of Warwick University.

I now oversee all the international-facing activities of the university. Unfortunately, this means taking a step back from teaching, which I miss. At the same time, hopefully I can bring some of those ideas and thoughts we have mentioned to our partners around the world.

I have greatly enjoyed my time as a trustee for Classics for All; I wish the charity well and can't wait to see all the amazing things it does.

Greek Academy students at the Supreme Court

East of England Coordinator, **Angela Nash**, and her students discuss last year's mock trial



Greek Academy students Sophie (left), Leo (centre) and Sebastian (right) at the Mock Trial of Medea

The Cambridge Online Ancient Greek Academy is an initiative supported by Classics for All, the Cambridge School Classics Project and the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Classics.

It provides state school pupils from Year 8 to 13 (age 13–18) in the East of England the opportunity to learn Ancient Greek, introducing them to the ancient world through free, expert-taught online lessons.

They progress towards ICCG (Intermediate Certificate in Classical Greek – a tailored pre-GCSE course), GCSE, and even AS Level qualifications. These dedicated students, who commit to weekly evening lessons and optional half-termly face-to-face meetings, demonstrate an impressive passion for a subject that most state schools simply cannot offer.

Their enthusiasm was on full display in October 2024 when three of our GCSE students, currently studying Euripides' Medea, had the opportunity to attend the



Speaking in such a prestigious venue undoubtedly boosted their confidence and solidified their belief in the value of their classical pursuits.

mock trial of Medea, hosted by Classics for All's Lawyers Group at the UK Supreme Court. For these young classicists, coming together in such an iconic setting was an unparalleled experience. Listening to the legal arguments and then voting on the outcome brought their studies to life in a way no classroom could.

Following the trial, our students bravely stepped up to present to the audience about their enjoyment of learning Greek, and the importance to them of the Greek Academy. Speaking in such a prestigious venue undoubtedly

boosted their confidence and solidified their belief in the value of their classical pursuits.

The Greek Academy empowers students not just to read ancient texts, but to engage with them and to articulate their insights with conviction. The journey for many of these students continues beyond the Academy; we are immensely proud that many of our pupils are going on to study Classics at university, including offers this year for Cambridge, proving that a passion for the ancient world can open doors to exceptional futures.

To watch the Greek Academy students' speeches at the Supreme Court, scan the QR code or go to youtube.com/watch?v=nwbGJu9CzUk



Voces oratorum

We asked Sophie, Leo and Sebastian – the Greek Academy students who spoke at the Supreme Court – what their highlights of the event were, what it meant for them to speak to the Classics for All Lawyers Group and why they love the Greek Academy.



Leo Year 11

I loved the mock trial and visiting the Supreme Court. My highlight of the day was seeing such serious lawyers and a judge bringing so much enthusiasm and unseriousness.

I genuinely enjoyed speaking to everyone there about something that matters so much to me and the setting made that even more of a surreal but brilliant experience.

The Greek Academy means a lot to me as a place to meet others with similar interests and surprise my teachers with my out-of-school activities.



Sebastian Year 10

I absolutely loved seeing some of the best lawyers in the country bring all their usual seriousness to put Medea on trial – and then add some humour alongside! Being able to speak to so many people was an absolute privilege, especially when so many of them were such senior figures in their areas.

The Greek Academy has given me so many amazing opportunities, from visiting King's College Cambridge to seeing the Supreme Court as a member of the jury!



Sophie Year 12

It was amazing to see this ancient literary figure who I've been studying in my Greek classes brought to life by these lawyers, who treated Medea's case with both humour and seriousness. You could really tell just how much time they had invested in preparing their cases, and watching them in the Supreme Court, I became just as invested in Medea as if she were a real person!

It was a real privilege for me (nervous as I was!) to speak in front of all these impressive lawyers – in the Supreme Court no less – and share what the Greek Academy has given me.

The Greek Academy has done so much more than provide lessons in Greek – every half term or so we have a 'Greek Academy Day' at the Cambridge Classics faculty, where we have a mini lecture on the ancient world, putting our Greek learning into context.

I signed up for the Greek Academy a year after I had stopped learning Greek at school because it wasn't offered any more; thanks to the Greek Academy, I have now decided that I want to study Classics at university!



Support students like Sophie, Sebastian and Leo

Attend the annual mock trial at the Supreme Court by joining our Lawyers Group. This year's trial will be on **Thursday 23 October**, with livestream tickets available to purchase on our website. For details, scan the code to visit classicsforall.org.uk/lawyersgroup

The Big Give is back

Want to double your impact? Join us in December for our annual fundraising campaign

For the past eight years, every December, we have called on our generous supporters' festive spirit to help us in our biggest annual fundraising campaign. This year, we are counting on your support to help us reach our goal of raising £100,000.

For each and every pound you give during the Big Give week, we will unlock up to £50,000 in match funding from our generous pledgers and our Big Give Champion.

One donation, double the impact

This year, our aim is recruiting new schools and sustaining Classics in state schools, especially in areas of deprivation.

Since our founding in 2010, Classics for All has supported more than 1,300 state schools across the UK to provide Classics teaching to their pupils.

We want to reconnect with as many of those schools which have sadly ended their Classics provision in the last 15 years and ensure that all the schools we supported in the last few years are offered top-up teacher training, so that they keep offering Classics to their classes into the future.

“ I am supporting the Big Give campaign to enable Classics for All to recruit new schools and especially to assist existing schools to continue their Classics education.

Noel de Keyzer, Big Give Pledger, 2025

2nd–9th December



St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

“ I have been supporting Classics for All's Big Give Christmas Challenge every year since 2018. As a donor, I am always excited to know that any money I donate through The Big Give will have twice the impact of a normal donation thanks to matched funding.

Julian Hardwick, Big Give Pledger, 2025

“ Classics for All has been incredible – we could not have put in place Latin without them.

Teacher at Five Acres High School, Gloucestershire

To contribute during The Big Give week, scan the QR code to register your interest at classicsforall.org.uk/big-give-2025 or email us at contact@classicsforall.org.uk and we will be in touch once the campaign launches.



Translating Magna Carta 1225 and the Charter of the Forest

Classics for All's pupils have helped create an exhibition on Magna Carta

Earlier this year, Classics for All was approached by the Society of Antiquaries with an exciting collaboration proposal for their latest exhibition: Magna Carta 1225.

Celebrating 800 years since Magna Carta 1225, their exhibition explored the less famous reestablishments of the first Magna Carta (which was annulled shortly after its creation in 1215): the Charter of the Forest in 1217 and Magna Carta 1225.

After hearing about our work promoting Latin in UK state schools, the Society of Antiquaries inquired whether any of our schools would translate parts of the Charter of Forest which was written in medieval vernacular Latin.

Six schools from across England with students from Years 9, 10 and 12 were involved in producing the translations: Chesterton Community College, Durham Johnston Comprehensive School, Harris Girls Academy Bromley, Liverpool College, Sir John Talbot School and the Liverpool Blue Coat School. The

“ This was a really fun project to work on, where everyone could have a go at trying some different skills and make some new friends. We all worked together on the translation with the help of our Latin teacher and had a great time learning a new version of the language and about the past.

Pupil at Sir John Talbot School



Above: A copy of Magna Carta 1225, believed to be from the 14th century

students also recorded readings of their translations which the public will be able to listen to alongside reading the text in the exhibition.

The project gave students an opportunity to have their translations and audio recordings at an exhibition which they could visit with friends and family, and a chance to explore where Classics can take them in the real world. Engaging with Magna Carta 1225 and the Charter of the Forest provided them with a practical translation exercise with a purpose beyond exams or school learning.

The feedback from pupils and teachers involved has been extremely positive. They loved the opportunity to be part of such a fantastic project, and we will look forward to working with the Society of Antiquaries again in the future.

The Magna Carta 1225 exhibition has now closed, but the Society of Antiquaries has created freely accessible digital versions of the Charters so that the exhibition can be enjoyed in posterity.



The Charter of the Forest

Find out more about the exhibition by scanning the QR code, or visit sal.org.uk/event/magnacarta



Teachers take up arms at our annual Impact Awards

Hosted at the Royal Armouries, we celebrated our best and brightest Classics teachers

Our annual Impact Awards returned for a fifth year gathering Classics teachers and our most innovative schools and partners across the country. We invited teachers, network coordinators and special guests to celebrate their transformative work.

This year's Impact Awards took place at a very special ceremony kindly hosted by the Royal Armouries in Leeds. All guests were invited to the launch event of their new *Gladiators: Heroes of the Colosseum* exhibition which will run until 2 November. We would like to thank this year's event sponsors Hellene School Travel and Hat Trick Productions for making this wonderful event possible.



Winners of this year's Impact Awards



Acland Burghley School headteacher and teacher receiving their Secondary School of the Year award

“ Latin and Classics are more than just subjects – they are powerful tools that foster intellectual curiosity, cultural awareness, and critical thinking. Support from Classics for All has been indispensable in ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of our work.

Eleni, Teacher at Acland Burghley School, London, our Secondary School of the Year.



“ I really love how supportive and encouraging the department is beyond the curriculum, they’re always ready to talk about any part of the classical world – I don’t think I would have got my Oxford offer without them!
Student at Reigate College, Surrey, our Sixth Form College of the Year

“ We find it particularly difficult to engage boys in literacy; however, you provided them with a brilliant role model and as a result they are hooked – we even have some of the "hard to reach" boys saving up their pocket money and spending it on abridged versions of the *Odyssey*.

Tim, teacher at Hartside Primary School in Crook, County Durham and winner of our North East award



“ It’s a great language to learn. I love that it’s different and it makes me proud.

Elodie, Year 5

“ Our pupils love Latin, they feel special learning a subject rarely offered in state primary schools, and their enthusiasm is evident.

Ruth, St. Catherine's Church of England Primary School, Bolton, our Primary School of the Year.



Clockwise from top:
Reigate College teachers with their Sixth Form College of the Year award; Hartside Primary pupils in full Roman regalia; Pupils of St Catherine's CofE School, our Primary School of the Year, on a trip to Vindolanda

You can read about all who won an award at this year's Impact Awards on our website by scanning the QR code below or visiting classicsforall.org.uk/impactawards25



Latin's future after the Latin Excellence Programme

Our Programme Director, **Alice Case**, explores how we're keeping Latin going, beyond the closure of the Latin Excellence Programme

The Latin Excellence Programme (LEP) was launched in September 2022 with government funding of £4 million.

Its aim was to expand Latin teaching at Key Stages 3 and 4 (ages 11-16) by working with 40 non-selective state schools across England. The programme was delivered by the Centre for Latin Excellence, established by the Future Academies Trust that same year, and designed to run for three years, until September 2025, with the possibility of a fourth year.

In December 2024, however, the Department for Education (DfE) announced it would enact a contractual break clause, bringing the LEP to an early close in February 2025.

As a member of the DfE's Latin Expert Panel, which advised throughout the programme, we at Classics for All had been working on an exit strategy in collaboration with the Centre for Latin Excellence and the DfE prior to the announcement.

After the termination of the LEP, our priority had been to deliver targeted and feasible support – both to teachers and pupils – to ensure that schools associated with the programme did not cease to teach Latin. We committed to ensuring continuity for the 23 schools with pupils preparing for Latin GCSEs in 2025 and 2026, so that no child would lose out on their ability to get a Classics qualification.

When I first started learning Latin, I was thinking "I don't understand how this language that people don't really speak any more can be useful in other subjects". I didn't understand how it would help me. But I've started realising how much Latin can relate to all your other subjects and just how interesting it can be.
Pupil at Greenbank High School, Southport



Greenbank students receiving Latin certificates



Greenbank students in a Latin lesson

Since the LEP's closure, we've continued to provide Future Academies' tailored training and guidance to 78% of LEP affiliated schools which teach Latin GCSE (18 of 23). Many of these schools are new to Classics for All, having only recently introduced Latin courses through the LEP; others are re-engaging with us after previous years of successful collaboration, having joined the LEP for the additional funding available for

“ Leah is so excited and came home last week on a massive high. She really enjoyed the Latin session and was so animated telling us about it. It is amazing how engaged she is already and we are lucky she has had this opportunity.

Parent of pupil at Greenbank High School.

salaries and trips. One notable re-engagement example is a group of schools within the Southport Learning Trust, in the North West.

In 2012, we supported teacher Julia Clayton, then teaching Classics at King George V Sixth Form College, to peripatetically introduce entry-level Latin and GCSE Ancient History at feeder schools: Greenbank High School and Stanley High School. After that initial work, Greenbank began teaching Latin GCSE as an extracurricular subject in 2016. In 2022, Greenbank joined the LEP as one of its core schools. Attracted by the appeal of LEP's funding, which enabled the school to integrate Latin into the curriculum, they also promoted the programme amongst their Multi-Academy Trust. Five additional schools in the trust – Meols Cop High School, Maghull High School, Stanley High School, Range High School and Birkdale High School – all began teaching Latin with the LEP. By 2025, every single school had students preparing for their Latin GCSE.

Over recent months, our North West Network Coordinator, Dr Joanne McNamara, has visited Classics for All-funded LEP training sessions in Southport, to build relationships and ensure long-term sustainability. It has been a pleasure to reconnect with Greenbank's Jo Aughton and MAT CEO Ian Raikes, both of whom played key roles in Southport's early work with us and remain passionate champions of Classics.

We look forward to continuing our support for these schools and many others as we work to secure a lasting future for Latin in state schools across the country. Thanks to the generosity of supporters at the Gala Dinner in May, we raised more than £13,400 to this end. Yet to support all the LEP schools teaching a Latin GCSE, we needed to raise £27,820. If you would like to help ensure that no student at a LEP school misses out on their chance to achieve a Latin GCSE, please donate on our website using 'LEP' as the description.

