



TOGETHER

WE FLY

**EXPRESS
YOURSELF**

North East
Festival of Languages

World Friendship Project 2026 - Photobook

TOGETHER WE FLY



This year's Festival World Friendship Art Project is called Together we Fly.

12,527 children and young people from
84 North East schools, 17 schools
worldwide and communities at North
East Museums' events participated.

They have created colourful origami butterflies, many with messages of friendship, kindness and togetherness in different languages.

Their butterflies celebrate bonds of friendship, support and unity across the world.

**Divided we stand alone, but
Together we Fly!**

This project is part of Express Yourself: North East Festival of Languages 2026.

The project was conceived and the installation curated by Declan Baharini, Festival Coordinator and Sarah Edgar, Newcastle City Council's Festival lead.

The Festival is part funded by the North East Combined Authority



SCAN FOR MORE
INFORMATION



Together We Fly is one of five creative multilingual projects offered to schools and groups to participate in as part of Express Yourself: North East Festival of Languages 2026.

Children and young people were encouraged to express themselves in any language - their home languages, languages they are learning or any they are interested in. They were able to represent their own culture and feelings about friendship and share these with other children and young people around the North East region and the world.

Schools and groups received a resource pack with instructions and videos on how to create the origami butterflies. These were sent in and the butterflies strung on lines to create a spectacular public art installation at Newcastle Civic Centre from April 2026.

Their creations are individually beautiful, but together are a kaleidoscope of colours, languages and cultures - with a unifying message for all and spreading joy.

Do visit the installation if you can. This photobook can be shared with all participants, as well as more widely, to spread some joy and share the creativity and hopes of children and young people for friendship and unity.

[illegible]



Friendships hold immense importance in our lives, impacting our mental and emotional well-being. Cultivating and nurturing positive friendships can bring immense joy, support, and a sense of belonging to our lives.

Extending the hand of friendship across the region and the world, the World Friendship project and 'Together we fly' installation will demonstrate and celebrates the bonds of friendship, support and unity across continents.

Origami is the art of folding paper into beautiful shapes without cutting or gluing. The word “origami” comes from “ori,” meaning “to fold,” and “kami,” meaning “paper.” For hundreds of years, people have created animals, flowers, and other designs by folding a single sheet of paper.

By making butterflies together, we connect with this tradition of creativity and imagination, while also sharing friendship across languages and cultures.

Butterflies are found in many cultures as symbols of change, growth, and new beginnings. Because they transform from caterpillars into creatures with wings, they remind us of the beauty that comes from change and imagination. In some traditions, butterflies are also seen as messengers of hope, joy, and friendship.

By folding butterflies in many colors and languages, we celebrate the idea that even though we are all different, we can come together to create something bright and full of life.

12,527 children and young people in 101 schools and groups created their own unique butterflies to be part of the Festival's Together we Fly world friendship project 2026



Hawthorn Primary School, Newcastle





Seaham High School, Durham

Primary School Regina Pacis - Vercelli, Italy



Boldon School display, Boldon Colliery South Tyneside

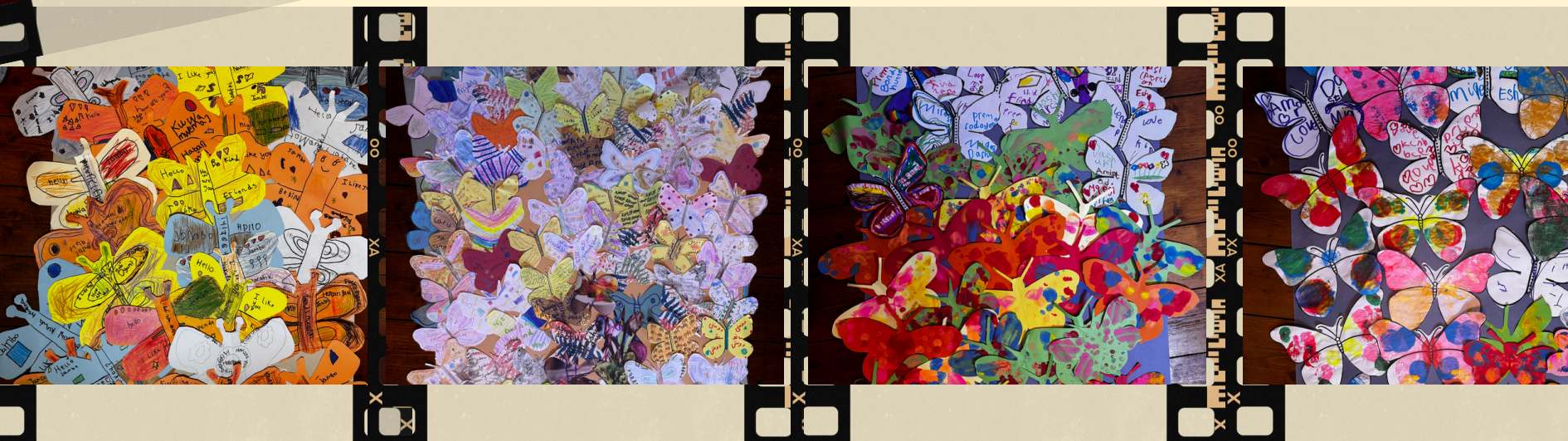


Woodhorn Museum in Northumberland held butterfly making sessions with refugee families - organised by Becki Copper (pictured)



Sir Charles Parsons School in Newcastle sent in a box of beautiful butterflies - Teacher Amy Meekin (pictured)

PREPARING
the **INSTALLATION**



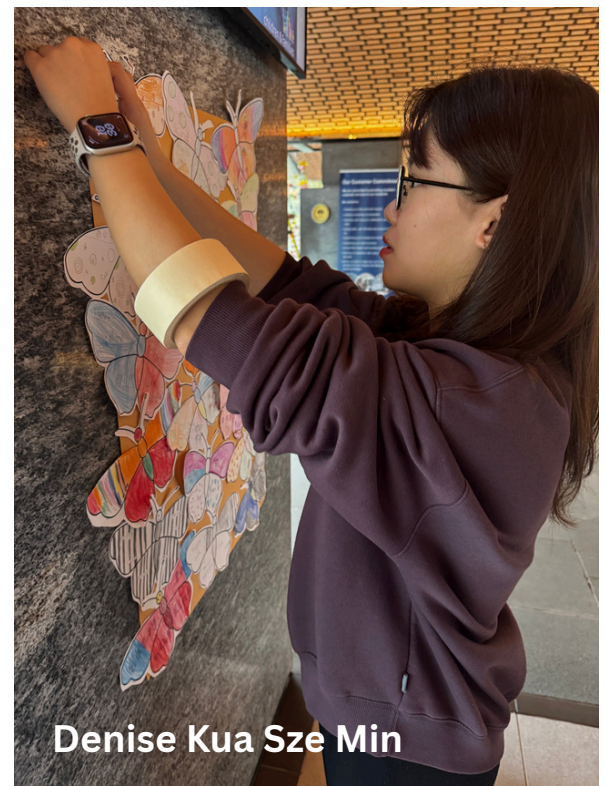
Butterflies were put on strings and labelled then hung from hoops and hooks, with butterfly drawings presented on large sheets and frames hung in the Civic Centre alongside the strings of butterflies.



Sarah Edgar



Declan Baharini



Denise Kua Sze Min



Karl Mercer



Sarah and Declan with
volunteer Karl Mercer
and Festival intern
Denise Kua Sze Min put
up the butterflies at
Newcastle Civic Centre.



TOGETHER WE FLY

World Friendship
Project on display
at Newcastle
Civic Centre

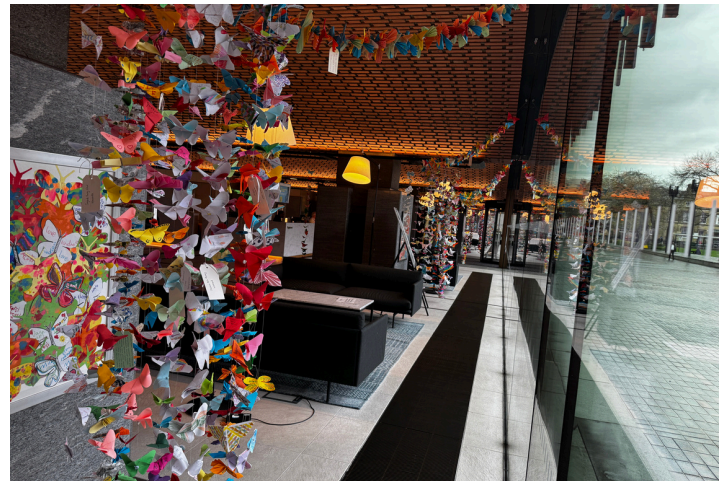
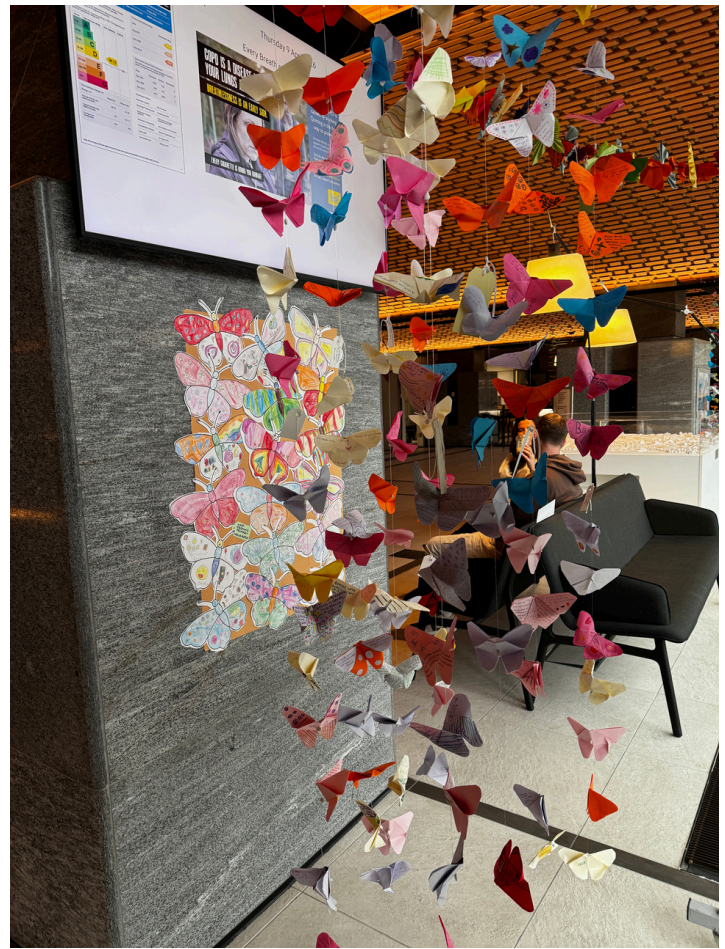
April 2026+





















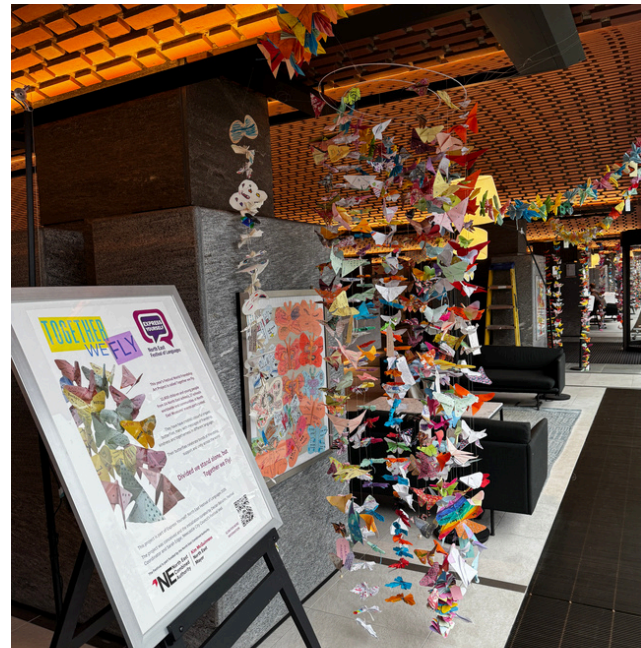








Denise Kua Sze Min - Festival Intern and photographer







All schools who took part in the project received a Certificate of Participation and the photobook of the project

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION



**North East
Festival of Languages**



This project was part-funded by:



THANK YOU TO THE PUPILS AND TEACHERS OF:

Name of school or group

For taking part in the 'Together we Fly' World Friendship Art Project,
as part of Express Yourself: North East Festival of Languages 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'D. Baharini'.

Declan Baharini
Festival Co-ordinator

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'S. Edgar'.

Sarah Edgar
Project Lead, Newcastle City Council

Thanks to the North East schools and groups who took part:

Newcastle

- Archibald First School
- Atkinson Road Primary Academy
- Benfield School
- Bridgewater Primary School
- Broadwood Primary School
- Brunton First School
- Byker Primary School
- Central Walker CoE Primary School
- Cragside Primary School
- Excelsior Academy
- Grange First School
- Hadrian School
- Havannah First School
- Hawthorn Primary School
- Hotspur Primary School
- Kenton Bar Primary School
- Kingston Park Primary School
- Knop Law Primary School
- La Petite Ecole de Newcastle
- Moorside Primary School
- Mountfield Primary School
- Newburn Manor Primary School
- North Fawdon Primary School
- Ravenswood Primary School
- Sir Charles Parsons School
- St Bede's Catholic Primary School
- St Catherine's Catholic Primary School
- St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School
- St Joseph's RC Primary School
- St. Lawrence's RC Primary School

- St Teresa's Catholic Primary School
- Stocksfield Avenue Primary School
- Walkergate Community Primary School
- Welbeck Academy
- Westfield School
- West Denton Primary School
- West Jesmond Primary School
- West Walker Primary School
- Wingrove Primary School

Durham

- 15th Durham Elvet Scouts
- Catchgate Primary School
- Chilton Academy Primary School
- King James I Academy
- Newton Hall Infants' School
- North Durham Academy
- Seaham High School
- Springmoor Grange School
- St Benet's RC Primary School
- St Charles Catholic Primary School
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
- The Ribbon Academy
- Thornhill Primary School
- Wingate Primary School

Northumberland

- Belsay Primary School
- Darras Hall Primary School
- Heddon on the Wall St Andrew's Primary
- Newminster Middle School
- Ponteland Primary School
- Richard Coates Primary School
- Swarland Primary School
- Woodhorn Museum

North Tyneside

- ILAS Inclusive Learning & Achievement Service
- Amberley Primary School
- Appletree Gardens First School
- Balliol Primary School
- Burnside High School
- Christ Church Primary School
- Collingwood Primary School
- Hadrian park Primary School
- Hazlewood Community Primary School
- Marine Park First School
- New York Primary School
- North Gosforth Academy
- Percy Main Primary School
- Preston Grange Primary School
- Redesdale Primary School
- Shiremoor Primary School
- St Peter's CofE Primary School
- Waterville Primary School

South Tyneside

- Boldon School

Gateshead

- Blaydon West Primary School
- Shipley Art Gallery
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
- Washingwell Community Primary School

Tees Valley

- High Tunstall College of Science
- Reid Street Primary School
- St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Thanks to the teachers and children from international schools who took part:

- 12th Primary School, Xanthi, GREECE
- 13th Primary School, Xanthi, GREECE
- The English School - Primer colegio inglés de San Sebastián, SPAIN
- CEIP Suárez Somonte, Mérida, SPAIN
- CRA Los Alijares, Ibahernando, SPAIN
- Xiamen Yanwu Primary School, Xiamen, CHINA
- Istituto Comprensivo Ferrari di Vercelli, ITALY
- Primaria Regina Pacis, ITALY
- Báthory István Sportiskolai Általános Iskola, HUNGARY
- Soproni Petőfi Sándor Általános Iskola és Alapfokú Művészeti Iskola Balfi Tagiskolája , HUNGARY
- Szkoła Podstawowa nr 1, POLAND
- DAREIC Nancy Metz, Nancy, FRANCE
- L'école Notre Dame de Kerbertrand, Quimperlé, FRANCE
- École Jean Zay Villeneuve-Saint-Germain, FRANCE
- Collège Guynemer, Nancy, FRANCE
- Ecole de Caillouël-Crépigny, FRANCE
- Kaunas Jurgis Dobkevičiaus progymnasium, LITHUANIA

Acknowledgements

- Special thanks to all the children and young people and their teachers in schools across the North East and worldwide, as well as in community groups and museums for creating and sending in their wonderful creations to be part of Together we Fly world friendship project
- Thank you to Festival Coordinator and International Newcastle Chief Executive Officer, Declan Baharini, for devising the project, producing the teachers' resource pack and sending this to registered school and for helping prepare the public installation, as well as producing the project photobook
- Thanks to Sarah Edgar at Newcastle City Council (School Effectiveness) for co-leading on the project with Declan, as well as for helping to prepare the installation and liaising with City Council facilities staff and reception staff on the public exhibition
- Thank you to volunteer, Karl Mercer, for helping to string and frame butterflies and helping with the installation at the Civic Centre
- Thanks to Festival Intern, Denise Kua Sze Min (Northumbria University student), who helped with the installation, as well as producing photos for social media and articles, as well as for the photobook



The Festival is part-funded by the North East Combined Authority



Kim McGuinness
North East
Mayor

