OCM Issue Eleven January 2023

Our Community Matters

January 2023 Issue Eleven



The latest news, views, and announcements for the Community Academies Trust



#catschools/#schoolscat

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As I write this introduction, it is the end of the Autumn term, and schools are about to break up for the holidays. This time of year lends itself to a little introspection, so I'm unashamedly using this platform to say thank you! Thank you to each and every one of you for everything that you do. You might not realise it, but whatever your role in school you touch someone's life. Whatever is going on outside, you are someone's constant; someone's link to normality, and you may be that one person that simply gets someone through the day. From myself and the young people and colleagues across our trust that have needed that anchor in a sea of uncertainty, sincerely Thank You!

The Facebook algorithm fairies have decided I need poetry in my life, so I'm leaving you today with the fab picture above from Stoneydelph Primary School demonstrating that the sun is now forever over the yardarm, and a poem from Sunday Times Best Selling Author Donna Ashworth that particularly resonated about looking after our mental health. It's called "A Lot!"

I could tell you to make amazing things happen today, this week, this year, and maybe you would! But what I really want to tell you is how amazing what you already do every day is. It's a lot my friend.

Your life is a lot The world is a lot Your mind is a lot So today, this week, this year, why don't you take some time to look at what you already do and what an impressive machine you actually are? You're a whole lot (and that's more than enough). Michelle, Editor Our Community Matters



A Happy New Year - and welcome back to 2023.

I have had the pleasure of meeting staff across our trust last term completing my 18th staff meeting on 12th December. Throughout I have been struck by the positivity, creativity, honesty, and high levels of professional reflection by our colleagues. Your contributions to the questions I asked about your school, and about our trust priorities going forwards are extremely helpful as we plot our way through the coming months and years. During those meetings I asked colleagues to think in terms of evolution and paradigm shifts, defining those approaches as:

- Paradigm Shift "a fundamental change in approach and/or underlying assumptions"
- Evolution "the gradual development of something"

I am keen that as we move forwards as a trust, we ensure we embrace these two approaches. We must understand what we have that is strong and powerful and build on it (evolution). We have some excellent work in its infancy as a trust - The Institute of Education, Professional Networks, Expert Groups, Growing Great People, new finance systems and approaches to HR, Estates management and compliance (to name a few) - and we must ensure we continue to develop these areas, build on them and make them the best they can be.

Just as important is to challenge the underlying principles and the assumptions we have always made as a sector about how we do things and to truly innovate in the interests of our pupils, staff and wider stakeholders. Disciplined innovation is crucial as it ensures progress collectively and individually, it changes things for the better and allows us to achieve things we never thought possible. Many of the ideas you have contributed during my staff meetings have been inspiring and truly innovative. I look forward to working through them and feeding them into our next steps.

We are building capacity in the central education team this year to support the delivery of the trust's strategy and will be recruiting two new members of staff as Directors of Schools (Primary and Secondary). The recruitment processes will start in the next few weeks. These new postholders will join Alexis Rickus (Director of Institute of Education) and Jo Howell (now full time Director of safeguarding and behaviour) to form a team led by Ed May (Executive Director of Education). I expect the new roles will be filled for September 2023 at the latest – possibly earlier. The intention is that these new post holders will form strong and close developmental, professional relationships with our schools and that you will all get to know these colleagues over time.

My best wishes for the half term ahead.

Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



Head Space

Schools in the Spotlight:

Stoneydelph Primary School

by Headteacher Esther Parsons

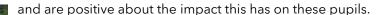
Who knew when I accepted the role of Headteacher at Stoneydelph Primary School in March 2020 that education and the role of schools would change so dramatically from everything we knew. I remember that the interview panel didn't shake hands with the candidates (which felt a bit strange at the time) but I had no idea how different school life would become during my first 2 years of headship. I was prepared for a rollercoaster but I didn't anticipate the rollercoaster would be travelling at 100 miles an hour, change direction every minute with a new risk assessment at every turn!

Despite the challenges of a global pandemic, I was determined that Stoneydelph would continue on it's school improvement journey under new leadership. I knew there was much to do and a huge amount of potential in the school site, staff and pupils.

I prioritised making relationships with the school community and discovering what the strengths of the school were. The biggest strength of our school was the care and lengths that staff went to provide for the neediest of pupils and their families. It was evident that the nature of our locality, high level of deprivation and 48% of the school in receipt of Pupil Premium funding would all contribute to increased pastoral and emotional health needs, which were further exacerbated by the covid lockdowns.



Our range of emotional and mental health support, including drawing and talking therapy, Lego therapy, sand play therapy, nurture, ELSA and emotion coaching, ensured we were able to address many barriers to learning that our pupils were experiencing. All through the lockdown, our pupils were keen to attend school and spoke positively about the care and support the school had offered. Families in need also benefitted from our work alongside food bank charities, such as Food Fairies, Heart of Tamworth, Tamworth Pantry and Packington Farm Fresh Revolution. We continue to provide these services to our school community as we understand how important it is for our pupils. Feedback from agencies working alongside our most vulnerable pupils have always been impressed by what we offer





Stoneydelph hasn't always had the best reputation when compared with other local schools so we were keen to change this. Firstly, there has been a physical transformation over the past 2 years too, including new windows, doors, roof, internal signage, playground equipment, 2 new libraries and a new 'Computing Hub'. The school environment is still on our priority list for improvement and early next year we will be installing additional security fencing and outdoor signage. The pupils and staff are proud of the school and it is important that our learning and working environment reflects our high standards. It is an ongoing challenge with such a large school site but already these changes are having an impact on how the community feels about our school. Our pupil numbers are higher this year than in the previous 2 years and our parent voice has positively reflected the changes that have taken place.

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Developing our school site has also seen the introduction of a Forest School area. The old allotment space has been redesigned to include a bog garden, compost area, planting beds, conservation area, fire pit and log seating. Every class has access to the forest school during the year and we are going to install an outdoor gazebo to encourage more outdoor learning opportunities across the curriculum. Seeing our pupils thrive in the outdoors, develop new skills, enjoy the fresh air and nature which is not possible in the classroom has been a privilege and we are very lucky that our school site has the potential to increase this further. Watch this space!

Our curriculum offer is constantly evolving to reflect the needs of our school community and our core ethos of working hard, respecting others and being kind are embedded through everything we do. Raising the aspirations of our pupils, giving them exciting opportunities outside the classroom and making memories remain central to the wider curriculum on offer at Stoneydelph. Many of our pupils have limited life experiences and we aim to provide enrichment in the arts, sport and technology. Some of the events taking place have included virtual reality workshops, watching a theatre production, visiting a range of places of worship, performing in ensemble choirs with live musicians, seeing animals at the zoo and meeting Father Christmas. Many of these events may not seem innovative or ambitious to some, but to our Stoneydelph children, they are once in a lifetime opportunities.



The installation of our on-site swimming pool certainly made a splash earlier this year. Every child in the school had an intensive block of swimming lessons with additional booster lessons for Year 6 who hadn't reached the expected standard, plus after school clubs. The impact this had on pupil progress was fantastic and pupils loved their lessons. It wasn't without some teething issues, but the positives far outweighed the negatives and we hope to have the pool back next year to continue this fantastic curriculum offer.

Finally, we were delighted to welcome OFSTED to Stoneydelph in October 2022. My first inspection as a headteacher was a nerve-wracking one, but the opportunity to show them how much had been achieved over the past 2 years was exciting and the inspector was pleased with our strategic plan and ambition to continue to move the school forward. Retaining the 'Good' grading was a relief but has spurred me on to further embed the excellent work that is taking place at Stoneydelph.



To say the past 2 years have been a steep learning curve is an understatement but the reason I wanted to become a teacher many years ago is because I love learning! Being headteacher at Stoneydelph has taught me so much about the role of a leader but also about myself. I love my school and know that parents, pupils and staff understand how passionate I am about Stoneydelph. I am immensely proud of what has been achieved so far in a relatively short time span, especially considering the pressures of the pandemic, but there is still a huge task ahead.

I am determined to make Stoneydelph a first-choice school for future parents and I am confident that with the amazing pupils, leadership team, staff and wider school community, we will achieve this.

Ensuring Excellence

Schools across the country marked anti bullying week back in November, and our trust schools took part in a variety of activities to raise awareness of tackling the issue and to encourage young people to reach out and tell someone when things are not okay. Helen Cadman, SENDCo at Chadsmead Primary Academy tells us what happened in their school.

National Anti-Bullying Week arrived early at Chadsmead Primary

Children were involved in a range of activities each day to remind us that Chadsmead Primary Academy is an Anti-Bullying school.



- Children have been reminded that:
 - we are all different (Odd Socks Monday),
 - the need to be kind (Kindness Tuesday),
 - to work well (Work Well Wednesday),
 - to be thoughtful (Thoughtful Thursday)
 - to be friendly (Friendship Friday).



This year's anti- bullying message is to "Reach Out" and tell others when things are not ok.

Children were reminded through our whole school assembly to "Reach Out" to a trusted adult if they ever feel unsafe or worried about how they are being treated. They were reminded about what bullying is, the types of bullying that should not take place including Physical bullying, verbal bullying, social bullying, sexual bullying and cyber bulling and about what to do if they feel they are being bullied.

Here at Chadsmead, children are being encouraged talk it out, report it, stay with friends, be confident, be an ally and "Reach Out!" Most of all, children are being encouraged to not accept bullying anywhere and to make sure they do not get involved with any bullying.





During the week, children added odd socks to

our Being Different Washing Line; they were given a sticker each day and a 'Reach Out' wrist bracelet. They undertook a range of different activities within their classes linked to each day of the week and took part in a theatre workshop from West End in Schools, who visited Chadsmead on Tuesday and Wednesday to deliver tailored workshops to each class in school.

5

In Early Years, children drew pictures of their friends and showed ways they could be kind to each other. In Year 1 and 2, children undertook a seven-day kindness challenge; built their own washing lines of odd socks which they have made in their classrooms and learnt about what makes a friend and what isn't a friend through role play and discussions.



Year 3 and 4 were visited by Engage Youth Mentoring, who provided a fun friendship workshop making friendship bracelets to consolidate children's learning about friendships

Year 5 and 6 took part in drama scenarios relating to bullying and held in depth discussions about how children can communicate effectively to address bullying, should it ever happen and the strategies they can choose from.



During the week, we chose our first Chadsmead Anti-bullying Ambassadors and in Friday's celebration assembly, children who had been noticed for their kindness, thoughtfulness, friendship towards others and working well were given the first Chadsmead "Anti-Bullying Ambassador Stickers". We hope to see a lot more of these being awarded over the coming months when children are spotted for their kindness, thoughtfulness and friendship towards others.

Later in the term, all classes took part in the World Kindness Assembly with Year 1 and 2 experiencing a kindness workshop in addition to Engage Youth Mentoring returning to Chadsmead to tackle the world of worry and anxiety in workshops for Years 5 and 6.

With all these amazing experiences, Chadsmead Primary Academy is certainly the place where children should not experience any bullying!



Mayor and Sheriff's Christmas Poem Competition

Years 5&6 at Chadsmead Primary Academy submitted entries to this year's Christmas Poem Competition in Lichfield, the theme being "kindness at Christmas".

Huge congratulations go to Jackson in Year 5 for his winning entry. The amazing poem is below. I'm sure you'll agree, we've got a budding laureate on our hands. Well done Jackson, we could all do with a bit of kindness:

Kindness At Christmas
a. a ^a z i
Even is your souls are not stomally bound,
It heard take much to have someone of the avoiltd.
le thought sliping and sliding in the shorus,
The morst thing to do mould be let go. What you give is what you get,
Even ig it is not a tablet of a pet.
K malic hindrack all usar cound.
And turn that snowball of pindness into a mound.

School Bytes

Snapshots of what our schools have been doing this term.

The Telford Priory School helps the BBC celebrate 100 years



16th December saw the BBC's "Share your Story" event, part of it's 100 year celebration arrive at The Telford Priory School. Careers Officer, Laura Burke reported how Gemma Howell hosted a wonderful discussion with Alex from Kiss FM and Olympian Judoka. Students learned about resilience and determination required to succeed even when challenge seems too great.

Students were welcome to ask questions and Gemma talked about how her mum is her biggest supporter and her love of dogs and how her Labrador, Kiara, sees her through the tough times.

It's all about giving

Our trust community is full of generous people who understand that this season is about more than just receiving presents and that the joy of giving is a gift in itself. The Polesworth School and the CAT Central Team have been doing a bit of giving themselves... Well done all! You have nailed the spirit of this time of year.



Sunflower Sisters, were supported by Y7 students from **The Polesworth School** who collected items as gifts to help spread a little cheer for children in two refugee camps based in Germany and Poland.

The Sunflower Sisters will also be hosting a festive party for the children based at the German camp, which has been created specifically for families with one or more children with autism. You can check out the incredible work of the group here: www.sunflowersisters.co.uk.



The CAT Central team, rather than do their traditional "Secret Santa" this year, decided to create their very own "Donation Santa" instead. The money they would have spent went on food bank donations, and you can see for yourself the result of their efforts.

Great work teams!

WOODLOES PRIMARY SCHOOL CLEAN UP!

Inspired by the CAT #tenthings Pupil Experience Project, Andy Mitchell, Headteacher at Woodloes Primary School told us that he had been working with his School Council to develop a community problem solver project.

After some debate, and many suggestions, the children decided that they would do some litter picking. Not only would this project help the community and improve the environment, but would also generate pride in the area in which they lived.

The Garbage Gang and Rubbish Detectives were born.





The Polesworth School Art Department goes abstract

Noughts & Crosses Exhibition

The Noughts & Crosses Exhibition took place on Monday 12th December and was a huge success, representing a series of works by our GCSE Year 10 Fine Art class on the theme of 'Noughts and Crosses'. Our students have been working on abstract pieces demonstrating their understanding of the formal language of Art.







The Wilnecote School welcomes back Annual Awards Evening

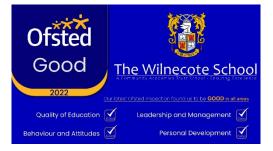
The Wilnecote Schools Annual Awards Evening returned to the school for the first time in three years after being a virtual event during the pandemic.

Our Awards Evening is one of the many highlights of the school year and we look forward to celebrating success and this year it was with joy that we could do this in person.

We at Wilnecote pride ourselves on our students' wonderful academic achievements and the subject awards are given to the highest individual achievers in each year group in each subject area. However, we also value progress, believing that if students are to succeed, they must show commitment. In acknowledgement of this, we also wanted to recognise students' commitment to learning with our academic progress awards. In addition, a number of name awards are given to those students who have excelled in a particular area or are our Pride of Wilnecote.

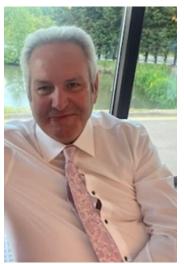
Governors, staff, students, parents and carers all look forward to our Awards Evening each year. It is a much anticipated event in the school calendar when the school comes together to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our students. Congratulations to all our recipients for their efforts in the academic year 2021-2022. We are very proud of you.





Introducing....

Allan Ravenscroft, our trust's estate manager. You might have seen Allan out and about in your school peering up at windows, examining brickwork and generally looking after our schools. If you haven't seen him, you've certainly experienced Smartlog (yes, he's the one..) Here we find a little more about Allan and how he came to be doing what he's doing now.



What does my job involve? Health and safety, condition improvement projects and legal serving compliance. I am also the trust administrator of Smartlog and provide daily advice and guidance on all sorts of health and safety and estate issues, so no day is the same and life is certainly not boring.

I have had 3 careers since I left school at 16 and signed on for a five-year engineering apprenticeship with a Birmingham engineering company called Dartmouth Engineering. They immediately packed me off to the triplex glass factory in Kings Norton to join their apprentice school along with 12 other apprentices. There we had a workshop and together, with a tutor, we learned how to use various machine tools and gained the engineering skills to make a metal toolbox with the hand tools to go in it.. Looking back, the training I received was excellent. I completed two City and Guild's (part one and two) in engineering craftmanship at Garett's Green College and was also awarded the certificate of engineering craftmanship. I loved working as an engineer but sadly 4 years after qualifying I became a victim of the recession in the late 1980s and the company closed.

So began my second career. I took a job at The Belfry Hotel Golf and Leisure Resort as a concierge whilst I was applying for engineering jobs. During this time, I was I was given the opportunity to join the De Vere management program which involved working in all departments. I was then appointed Head of the Concierge and Porters department and at this point I decided to stop looking for engineering jobs and build a career in hotels Over the next 20 years I was promoted into many roles including Guest Services Manager 'Front of House Manager and Head of Events' which was a senior management role where several department managers reported to me as well as having the responsibility for Health and safety.

I enjoyed my time at the Belfry about which I have many stories about celebrities and royalty that I could bore you with, please ask me the next time you see me about the time I had a very strange experience involving Tina Turner and David Bowie or about some of my encounters with the Royals. However, nothing lasts forever, I left the Belfry when it was sold just after the Ryder cup in 2003, along with most of the management team.

Which brings me to my current life in education. First at Birchwood, as Site Manager where I also became the nonteaching governor, which I will now confess to being on the interview panel that appointed Ed May - and what a good decision that was, as Ed went on to lead the school to its first outstanding OFSTED rating; something I am proud to have been part of. Ed, as you know, is the co-founder of CAT, and it was his encouragement that prompted me to go back into a management role and apply to be the Hub Facilities Manager. This was a new role due to the formation of the trust and involved managing site teams across the 4 schools. I was based at The Polesworth School for two years, another school I was lucky to be part of when they retained their Ofsted outstanding rating. Then in 2018, I was appointed as the CAT Estate Manager.

As for my personal life, I have been married for 42 years to my wife Liz who is a teaching assistant at a school in Tamworth. We have four daughters who have been our life since they were born. I suppose my hobby is spending as much time with them as I can. We are always with at least one of them at weekends, having meals out, visiting the cinema or theatre and enjoying family holidays or helping them with DIY at their homes. My weekends are always busy. Danielle, my eldest daughter is the revenue manager for Jarvis Hotels, she got the hotel bug while working for me when at university. Amy is a customer services manager for Hobbycraft, Sophie is a store manager for Next and Chloe is a commercial property solicitor. As for the future, there is so much still to be achieved before retirement calls. I intend on being around for quite a few more years yet.

Education Matters



If you haven't downloaded our App onto your phone yet, you can do so directly by accessing the OCMJ on the web here: <u>https://www.theocmjournal.com/</u> As usual control and click on the pictures below to access the full story. I've been looking at the analytics and the traffic on the app is definitely buoyant with the pedagogical and forum entries attracting plenty of views. If you would like to submit an article, we would love to hear from you. Email: communications@catschools.uk





Dr Tom Millichamp 🖡 Nov 23 • 3 min

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Let's go for a walk.....





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Inspiring the next generation into STEM

CAT Institute of Education Matters



A spotlight on the trust's centre for Teacher Training, Professional Development and school improvement by Alexis Rickus, Director of Institute of Education

I hope you had a restful break. Hopefully, by now you will have found your way around the new Institute website which went live in November. Each school has their own username and password. Headteachers have been given the access details to the secure areas. If you haven't been able to access it, do please ask your Headteacher. www.thecatinstitute.org

Expert and Network Groups have met twice using the new Zoom Events platform. Most people have been able to access, but I believe there are still access issues in some of our Telford schools. The Links to the zoom professional network and expert group meetings will be posted on the relevant group page, accessible only to colleagues from our trust. Please remember you need to register your attendance before you can access your group meeting.

All meetings are on Wednesdays, 3.30 - 4.30. Dates of the meetings for the remainder of the year are as follows:

Expert Groups	Networking Groups
18 Jan 23	25 Jan 23
8 March 23	15 March 23
26 May 23	3 May 23
28 June 23	5 July 23

There's some great work coming out of these sessions, do please keep an eye on the website for updates.

The first session of the emerging leadership course, designed by the CAT Expert Group for Leadership took place early December and leader of the group, and Headteacher at The Telford Priory School, talks about the day a little later in this newsletter. You can access the model itself on the IoE site at <u>www.thecatinstitute.org</u>. The site is constantly being updated so do keep visiting it.

Finally, a reminder that free NPQs are due to finish in 2024. If you are thinking of signing up for an NPQ, this isn't really a very long time with only two cohorts accepted per year. Closing date for signing up for Spring 2023 is 6 January 2023. Remember to sign up through Best Practice Network <u>https://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk/npq</u>. Applications for each qualification will be on the right of the relevant screen and please remember to select "catts" as your delivery partner and to select "scholarship" when prompted for funding information or you'll end up with an invoice.

Alexis Rickus Director, CAT Institute of Education

DAY ONE: EMERGING LEADERSHIP COURSE

By Stacey Jordan, Lead of Expert Group (Leadership) and Headteacher, The Telford Priory School

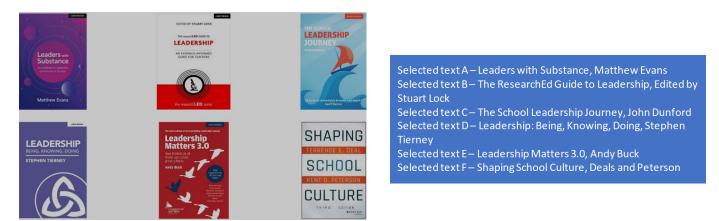
The Expert Leadership group includes a team of leaders from across the trust working in a range of schools and variety of roles. The

Expert Leadership group identified core reading to influence the thinking of the group last year and from this, as well as following input from some external experts, the team rationalised that truly great leadership needs both substantive and disciplinary knowledge to be actively developed. They created a package of support for leaders and other professionals in our trust.

By substantive knowledge, the team mean the knowledge which belongs to a particular area or domain e.g. SEND, PP, coaching, Maths etc. Alongside this substantive knowledge, and certainly as important, is the <u>disciplinary knowledge</u> which has to be practised in order to develop great leaders. As a group, the team devised a model, and created and curated a range of reading and resources, to enable leaders and



professionals at all stages of their leadership journey to succeed. All of these resources are to be found on our website which is almost ready for release! The key texts which were used as part of the design of the model are:



In terms of the disciplinary knowledge needed to be a great leader, the expert leadership group devised the CAT Leadership Support Model which looks at:

The Heart: Integrity, what we stand for. The Head: Strategy/mental models The Hands: The tools/structures we have at our disposal The Mouth: The language we use to communicate The Feet: The way we walk the walk/our persona, i.e. leadership behaviours

As part of the work of the Expert Leadership group, the team used the model around disciplinary knowledge to create a new Leadership course which is running over three days.



Day one of the course was held in December 2022 at The Barns Hotel in Cannock. Session one was led by the leader of the Expert leadership group, Stacey Jordan, alongside Tom Ward, a member of the group. The second and third days are scheduled for March and July of 2023 and the attendees have already reported a lot of positive feedback and called the day 'informative', 'collaborative' and 'extremely useful'. The programme really is open for staff at all points in their career ranging from Assistant Headteachers to academic coaches. We look forward to days two and three.



And finally.....

Hopefully you found us on Instagram <u>https://www.instagram.com/schoolscat/</u> (#schoolscat) as well as on Twitter @SchoolsCat (#catschools). Follow us and we'll follow you back. You can also find us on our App via the Wix Spaces, Our Community Matters.

Our Half Term in Pictures

Dordon Primary @DordonPrimary · 2h

Lovely that we can revive the tradition of our whole school visit to church at Christmas & The children were amazing and it made all the adults smile! Merry Christmas everyone 🔆 * •



Telford Langley School @TelfordLangley · Dec 7 Congratulations to Mr Chetwood on his 40 years of service. Mr Chetwood is well known in the community, as he has worked at Phoenix School, Phoenix Academy and now The Telford Langley School. We are all very grateful for all your hard work! @SchoolsCat



Grange Park PE @Grange_Park_PE · Nov 23 District Champions

Well done to our U9 girls football team who tonight won their Telford area final in the @SSCFA2 County Cup.

The girls will now play their Shropshire semi-final in 2023.

Massive credit to the @Apleywood girls who were fantastic tonight in this end to end game



Stratford-Upon-Avon Primary School @StratfordPrim · Dec 5 · · · Year 5 would like to thank parents and carers for helping out at our topicsharing event. Look at our amazing Shang vessels! They will be bronzed up this week!#Catschools #Shangdynasties





Larch 2 learnt about fire safety in our forest school session. We spoke about respecting the fire and the position we sit in when around the fire. We also had a go at lighting the fire using flint and steel, as well a feeding the fire with sticks. Well done Larch!





Heathcote Primary @Heathcote_P_S · Dec 5 Thank you to Austin Heath for inviting our KS2 choir to sing with them on Sunday. We were were made to feel very welcome and felt privileged to

meet and sing with Aled Jones.







The Telford Priory School @telfordpriory \cdot Nov 18 Today some of our students were planting trees to make a nice, shaded area for students to sit within and read in the future. The students were all

fabulous and thoroughly enjoyed themselves 😃 #tpsnews #support #read



Polesworth School @PolesworthSchl · Nov 11 Thank you to all that were involved and to those that joined us for the Remembrance Day event at The Polesworth School today including The Mayor of North Warvickshire- Councillor Tony Clews to commemorate the end of the First World War.

remembranceday #lestweforg



Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue and made this edition possible. This publication will drop into your inbox at the start of each half term. Don't forget to subscribe to the OCM Journal Please email any articles, news to <u>communications@catschools.uk</u>.

