

# Our Community Matters

November 2023  
Issue Sixteen



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



#catschools/#schoolscat

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This issue introduces new  
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collaborations.

We've been busy this term, engaging in various activities to promote teacher training in our trust schools. From eye-catching banners to snazzy posters, we've adorned our school reception areas with some killer "merch". The best bit though was visiting our schools to put faces to the names of people we only ever chat with over the phone or via email. It's great to meet new people and we're thrilled to welcome Steph Rowett as the new Headteacher at Heathcote Primary this September. Steph features in our "Introducing" section and we can't wait to hear her exciting plans for the school.

But wait, there's more! The first half of the term saw some impressive appointments for our network and expert groups. Let's give a huge round of applause to the new network leaders and a big shoutout to Paul Hewitt from The Telford Langley School, who snagged the Director of Standardised Assessments title. Paul's got a big responsibility ahead in supporting our trust schools with getting to grips with it all.

In other important news, we've changed the start time for the network/expert group meetings to 3.40 pm. This change makes it easier for our primary colleagues to attend, as they have a later closing time than our secondary schools. Let's get the networking started a little later, shall we? And finally, I'd like to extend my warmest wishes to all of you for a wonderful Christmas and New Year. Have a good rest!

Michelle, Editor  
Our Community Matters

**BECOME A TEACHER**

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in partnership with  
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Institute of Education

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Our school trains teachers in this community.  
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## Message from Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



A big thank you to colleagues who have contributed, so far, to my annual collection of your views about the improvement journey your school is on. I know there are more meetings scheduled this half term to complete the survey, thank you in advance to colleagues yet to share.

This annual “discussion” is based around our trust led approach to defining what an excellent school looks like using these 6 broad areas:

- We all work so that pupils understand and believe in **The Power of Education** – *instilling a ‘crucial sense of possibility’, making sure they value education and are motivated to achieve.*
- We all work so that we **live** and breathe **Inclusivity** – ensuring all pupils are valued as individuals.
- We all give **Our Professional Best** to ensure a consistent approach to leading and managing behaviour so that there are excellent relationships for learning.
- **Education** – *Ensuring an excellent curriculum and progress lesson after lesson.*
- **Leadership** – Ensuring leadership so that our trust is a place where we all grow professionally and that this impacts on pupils’ educational progress and experience **“a well led school is well led by many”**.
- **Community Schooling** – Schools as Anchor Institutions who play a significant role in their localities contributing to the greater social good.

We have defined the outcomes for pupils if we are excellent in these areas and your responses to where your school is in each area has influenced what we do dramatically. Over the last 12 months your views expressed in the autumn term 2022 and in particular the points you made about how the trust and how your school can get better have contributed to the following trust wide developments:

- The launch of our trust wide approach to harnessing pupil voice – “You matter, we care”.
- Review and standardisation of approaches to improving attendance.
- Significant progress towards aligning all our schools’ approaches to assessment.
- The development of a soon to be launched trust wide teaching tool kit to support classroom practice.
- A standardised expectation around our offer to support the mental health of young people across our schools.
- Reviewing and enhancing our approach to CPD, Professional networks and expert groups.

Every year your comments influence our sense of direction and policy.

So, thank you, once again to those who have already completed the survey and to those who will later this term. What you say matters and will continue to support our collective way forwards.

Best wishes for the rest of this term.

Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO

# Ensuring Excellence

Snapshots of what our schools have been up to this half term.

## Chadsmead Primary Academy kick starts their year with an Adventure!



**The Year 6 students of Chadsmead Primary Academy took on an exciting challenge to start their academic journey.** They went on a week-long trip to Whitemoor Lakes in Staffordshire, where they could explore their hidden talents and push their limits with a range of thrilling activities. From building rafts to circus arts, this group of students was unstoppable.

By starting off the year with an epic adventure, the pupils had the opportunity to bond and create a close-knit community before the real

work began. And the fun is far from over! The pupils at Chadsmead will have Bikeability training, a performance of Benjamin Britten's Noyes Fludde opera at Lichfield Cathedral, and much more to look forward to.

Keep exploring, Chadsmead!

## Calling all Governors!

**The Board of Trustees would like to invite governors to join their delegated committees:**

- The Audit and Risk Committee - meets on Wednesday mornings, once per term, via Teams
- The Finance and Resources Committee - meets on Wednesday mornings, twice per term in person at Dimbleby House, Tamworth, or governors can join via Teams



The trustees are looking for governors with particular skills and knowledge in these areas and an interest in supporting the trust at board level by joining a committee as a co-opted governor.

If you would be interested in joining a board committee or would like further details, please email Nicola Parker, Assistant to the Directors on [nparker@catschools.uk](mailto:nparker@catschools.uk). **Thank you for your continued support.**



## Silver Duke of Edinburgh - Qualifying Expedition September 2023



**As heavy rucksack after heavy rucksack arrived at school on Friday morning, it could mean one thing only, D of E. This time it was the real thing, the Silver qualifying expedition.**

Although this experienced group were well tuned in terms of D of E expeditions, the unfamiliar terrain of the Wye Valley awaited, the students were both excited and nervous about the three days ahead.

A motorway service stop, enroute ensured students were full of energy (or should that say McDonalds) when they arrived at the start point in Ross on Wye.

Navigating their way out of the town and into some very challenging terrain, map reading skills were tested immediately, as well as teamwork and leadership.

Kearne Bridge was the ideal place to recharge the batteries as groups stopped for lunch next to the beautiful River Wye. Navigation became easier at this point but there was still a distance to cover before reaching camp.

As the sun started to lower in the sky, the groups entered camp and they ended up eating in the dark. The mood wasn't dampened by the later than planned arrival, which is more than can be said for the firewood!!

Saturday morning arrived before we knew it and the groups were packing up, making breakfast, and enjoying the glorious location of the Biblins Youth Campsite. Groups departed, crossing the famous Biblins Bridge and made their way to the Kymin. An extremely physically demanding walk but once again students were rewarded with beautiful views. After lunch, students entered the Forest of Dean and navigated their way to camp. This time arriving in daylight, students enjoyed a slightly more relaxing, and warmer evening. Marshmallows were shared and games were played, all whilst enjoying the campfire.

Sunday morning saw mother nature throwing a spanner in the works... rain!! Packing away soggy tents is never much fun but the resilience of this group of students meant that morale remained high and they were soon ready to set off on their final day of walking. Precise navigation and yet another challenging route was once again rewarded with one of the nicest views of the Forest of Dean, from Symonds Yat Rock. Rucksacks were downed momentarily, and snacks were enjoyed. The end was within touching distance now.



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Staff made their way to the final check point (I cannot confirm or deny that there was Coffee Cake, Millionaire Shortbread or Bakewell Slices involved at this point...). Two very tired groups of students arrived in good time. The Silver Qualifying Expedition was completed, successfully. From my point of view, we could not ask for a better group of students to see progress from Bronze to Silver. Each and everyone of them are a credit to themselves. The Duke of Edinburgh Award develops skills required for life. What is often missed off is the fact the memories made whilst completing the award also last a lifetime.



Well done, Silver Team, we are extremely proud of you all.



## Kingsway Community Primary School makes history with its first "Good" Ofsted report.

Kingsway Community Primary School in Leamington is celebrating a glowing report from Ofsted inspectors.

For the first time in the school's history, the school was graded as 'Good' in all areas and overall after the inspectors' visit on September 13 and 14.

The inspectors said: "This is a very warm and caring school. Staff and pupils are kind and thoughtful. The single school rule of 'respect' is easily understood by all and shines out." "Pupils say that at this school everyone is equal and

everyone is welcome".

"This is a school which has been on an exciting, challenging and improving journey in recent years. Leaders across the school and trust have brought about many positive changes. "Imminent building works have staff and pupils alike excited about the future."

Kingsway's headteacher Sharon Byrne said the school was proud of the "immensely positive" report. She added: "This is a fantastic achievement for everyone in our school community; to be able to say we have changed the course of the school's history is something to be immensely proud of."





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# Introducing....

September 2023 saw us welcome Steph Rowett as the new Headteacher for Heathcote Primary School. Steph tells us about her journey to her first substantive headship.

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**Hi, my name is Stephanie Rowett, and I took over the headship at Heathcote Primary in September.**

I have been very excited to join CAT for my first substantive headship post, feeling ready to develop a school in my own vision - ensuring that an excellent education is provided for the children that we serve. I have been lucky enough to work alongside many exceptional leaders, teachers, support staff and families who have taught me so much about what makes a great school, a great teacher, and a great leader. I am absolutely determined to ensure that I apply all that I have learned to continue to develop Heathcote into an amazing school.

I started my career in a two-form entry Primary within a MAT, predominantly as an Upper Key Stage 2 teacher. During this time, I realised that strong relationships are absolutely essential for success and took part in action-research projects with Warwick University, developing an understanding of relationship-based practice to provide improved outcomes for children. This inspired me to carry out my Masters in Educational Leadership and Management. I was made Assistant Headteacher responsible for developing curriculum within my school, ensuring it matched the needs of our community and provided an enhanced National Curriculum offer. As part of my role, I was asked to work with colleagues within the wider trust to begin their journey to develop a trust-wide program to support newly adopted schools that required rapid improvement.

Following this, I was Deputy and then Head of School at a large (500 pupils) primary school in Banbury, having been seconded there as part of a 'Trainee Headship Programme'. During my time at this school, my passion for research-based teaching and learning enabled me to develop the school, ensuring that **all** adults in the setting were leaders of learning with very high levels of pedagogical knowledge. I really enjoy providing opportunities for those that I work with to develop their own practice and passions and have done this formally by training to become a Professional Coach and by facilitating NPQ sessions. This has enabled me to hold space for people around me, supporting them to reflect, develop and grow in their role - leading to improved outcomes for all.

Educating the 'whole' child is central to the provision that I intend to create within a school, thinking carefully about the knowledge, skills and experiences that the children within the setting need to be well-rounded, capable and happy individuals. This has meant providing opportunities beyond the National Curriculum and thinking carefully about the context in which the school and our families sit. I have previously been Chair of a multi-agency group called *Safeguarding Children in Banbury* (SCIB). This provided a preventative curriculum based on key issues that were prevalent agendas for partner agencies such as the police and social care - exploitation through County Lines, for example. This also provided me with the opportunity to sit on a Serious Case Review Education Panel, with the view to affect system change and improve outcomes for children.

I am looking forward to taking Heathcote into its next chapter, ensuring that the children and families that we serve get the very best start to their educational journey.

# 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: <https://www.theocmjjournal.com/> As usual control and click on the pictures below to access the full story. If you would like to submit an article, we would love to hear from you. Email: [communications@catschools.uk](mailto:communications@catschools.uk)



**Thank you for the huge support for our very first webinar using the Zoom Event platform.** More than 80 of you attended this webinar, led by Trust CEO, Philip Hamilton OBE.

For anyone who missed the webinar and would like to watch it, then click on the poster to the left.

The **resource booklet** and the **Monitoring Impact Template** referred to in the video can be downloaded from the IoE Website the link to which is [here](#). These pages are password protected, so if you need your school password, please email [ioe@catschools.uk](mailto:ioe@catschools.uk)

## Safer Recruitment Training - Last chance to book!

This training will be delivered virtually but will include whole group and smaller group activities which will be facilitated by the trainers.

This training is for all staff and governors who play a role in the recruitment of employees and volunteers into school. This includes anyone involved in interview planning, advertising, interviewing, and decision making.

There will be a face-to-face Refresher session Thursday 18th April 2024 9-1.00pm for anyone who has completed in last 3 years and needs to refresh their knowledge.



# 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**

We're well ensconced into the new academic year, and much has been happening.

You should hopefully now be using the CAT Teaching & Learning Toolkit which helps sharpen teaching skills through providing descriptions of the different elements of impactful teaching from good, to high to highest. With thanks to the contribution from our network groups, we are hoping to have a "Playbook" ready to support the toolkit with exemplars and videos. Everything will be found under **IoE Resources on the Home Page** of the IoE website [www.thecat institute.org](http://www.thecat institute.org). The Toolkit will be on there now, and the Playbook will be on once it's been sufficiently populated. If you need access to the members only pages, please email [ioe@catschools.uk](mailto:ioe@catschools.uk) identifying your school and Michelle Borders will make sure you can access the site. As a reminder all schools have their own log on details.

In the last issue we touched on how successful the pilot running summer standardized assessments for all of our Y5 Maths had been. The value of the results of these assessments has since been recognized and the IoE is now supporting further discussions on how we can make best use of this platform for supporting pupil assessment and reducing staff workload. To this end, we are delighted to announce the appointment of a new Director for Standardised Assessments, Paul Hewitt from the Telford Langley School. Many of you will know Paul as the Lead for the Expert Group on Assessments and will be familiar with his expertise in this area. Paul will be supporting schools in the effective implementation of the assessments. Analysis of the results should highlight any strengths and gaps in learning, identify and support children with additional needs and deliver evidence of progress and whole school improvement through helping to inform appropriate teaching strategies. We wish Paul well.

And finally, the second network and expert group meetings of this Autumn Term are scheduled for 3.40pm on Wednesday 22 November. We look forward to seeing you there.

Alexis Rickus  
Director, CAT Institute of Education







## Network and Expert Group News

Link to next Expert Groups Meeting on Wednesday 22 November 2023 at 3.40pm is [here](#).

### Network Groups Update by Neil Coleman

**It has been a busy first half term for our Network Groups. We have held our first Network meetings of the school year and shared our key priorities for the next 12 months.** A big thank you to all staff who attended one of the network meetings and to Headteachers for prioritising these meetings and supporting this work. In total we had 109 colleagues attend one of the 12 meetings.

This year our curriculum Network Groups will be looking to support the work of the IOE by focusing on producing playbook resources for retrieval practice in their subject area. They will also be looking to create a 1. Page guide to support subject knowledge and linked resources to support teaching and learning.

One of our aims this year is to ensure that we have a Network Group to support each curriculum subject area. In September we successfully appointed two new Network Chairs. Helen Parashar will Chair the Performing Arts Network and Hannah Clarke the Design and Technology Network. Just this week we have also appointed Laura Aston as Art Network Chair and Katherine Davis as Geography Chair. The new Chairs are all looking forward to leading their groups in the next round of Network meetings held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

After receiving some feedback at the last Headteachers Strategic forum meeting, we are proposing to make some changes to support staff to be able to attend the meetings. As some of our schools do not finish till 3:30pm, it has been agreed by the IOE to move the start time of the Network and Expert groups meetings back to 3:40 pm.

The exceptions to this are: Office Manager Network which runs from 10:00 – 11:00am. School Business Manager Network which runs from 2:00 – 3:00 pm. Cover Supervisor Network which runs from 3:15 – 4:15 pm.

Headteachers also shared concerns that core subject leaders were not able to attend their Expert and Network meetings as they are held on the same day. From next half term, will be piloting a joint Network and Expert Group for Maths. Laura Scotchmer and Katie Holloway will lead a single Maths group where the Chairs will provide both Primary and Secondary expertise. These meetings will be reviewed over the course of the year, and if successful, this model could be rolled out across other subject areas in the future.

*'Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success' – Henry Ford.*

# Our Half Term in Pictures



## And finally.....

Hopefully you found us on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/schoolscat/> (#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.

Safesmart @SafesmartUK · 23h

And winner number 6 is... Woodloes of @SchoolsCat! 🎉

Sam and Jade were delivering this one, and after a trip up to Warwick, they returned to HQ delighted after another successful delivery. It was great to see you all in high hopes for the season ahead and good luck to you all! 🍀



Holly Rigby @HollyRigby1 · 19h

More amazing @teifordprksch art work. Well done year 10 🍀❤️  
#teampark 🍀



Wood End Primary @WoodEndPrim

Fantastic story mapping from one of our Red Squirrels. They were able to retell the story of the Everywhere Bear from the bear's point of view 🍀



Birchwood Primary @BirchwoodPrim · Oct 13  
Year 5 are having a great time at Drayton Manor!



Dordon Primary @DordonPrimary · Jul 14

The certificate has arrived celebrating our recent win in the @trilbytv Trailblazers competition. Well done to Miss McGroarty and the House Captains who won this accolade for their innovative use of our digital signage to promote pupil voice 🍀🍀



Stoneydelph Primary School @StoneydelphPS · Oct 17

We are so excited to be involved in this special performance at Lichfield Cathedral. The t-shirts are looking fantastic too! @schoolscat @musicshare



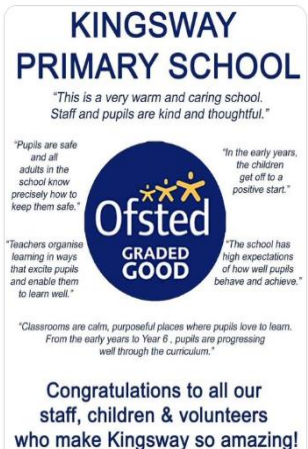
Stratford-Upon-Avon Primary School @StratfordPrim · Oct 4

Learning comes in many forms. Raced round the school in one minute look at some of the things we were up to. #learning #catschools



Walsingham Primary School @WalsinghamPrim · Oct 6

We are extremely proud to have been rated as a GOOD school by Ofsted. #communityacademiustrust #teamwork #achievement



# Our Community Matters

