

Our Community Matters

April 2023
Issue Thirteen



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



#catschools/#schoolscat

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Centre for professional
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Expert/Network Group News

This issue looks at a
selection of just some of
the work that
network/expert groups are
undertaking.

I hope you've all had a great Easter break. Here at Institute Towers, we're channeling our inner Tiggers!

It's all about positivity, building resilience and bouncing back from whatever life throws at you. There's no doubt that happy people are more productive people and we're very excited to be hosting "**Bouncebackability**" a resilience building workshop, delivered by the very buoyant team at Art of Brilliance who we've engaged just for our trust's support staff colleagues. Look out for the flyer in this issue for more details; and prepare yourself to shove that Eeyore back in his box! (Only metaphorically speaking, personally, I'm quite fond of Eeyore....)



In this issue of the OCM we meet the final jewel in the crown of the 18 schools across our trust. I am thrilled to present to you the Telford Park School as the final incumbent of our Headspace feature. Headteacher, Holly Rigby, tells us all about the fantastic students and colleagues in her school and why she loves the place so much. I've enjoyed reading about the journeys each of the schools have made to join our trust family and will miss this feature. Perhaps it will return in the future?

One section I'm pleased that we're not going to lose any time soon is our regular Introducing feature. I love discovering all the people in our trust who make it tick. It's great to put faces to names and this issue puts Institute of Education's newest member, Vicky Garrett in the hotseat. Some of you will know Vicky from her day job at Wood End Primary School, but she joined the IoE on a secondment earlier this year. Vicky will soon become an even more familiar face, particularly to our primary colleagues as she's out and about visiting our schools.

And finally, I'll leave you with the wise words from Tigger's friend, Pooh Bear "When life throws you a rainy day, play in the puddles!" So cheer up all you Eeyores - life is full of Pooh! Hope you have a Tiggerific half term everyone.

Michelle, Editor
Our Community Matters



Message from Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



Welcome back.

I have talked in the past about the emotionally intelligent school, and how I am as keen as ever that our trust operates where the highest levels of emotional intelligence pervade the relationships that exist in our schools.

This week we have successfully appointed two new Headteachers into our trust, and that experience has highlighted once again how emotional intelligence and strong, positive professional relationships are essential to achieving excellence for the children in our schools. One of the assessment activities during a Headship interview is to speak to the school's staff in support of their application. Candidates are both nervous and excited about the opportunity to set out their stalls before the staff they hope to lead. One of the many things that struck me during the process, was the collective highest levels of emotional intelligence from colleagues. As one candidate put it "it felt as though the staff before me were willing me to succeed.... Their smiles and their body language were welcoming and supportive, and it helped me to say what I wanted to".

In past staff meetings I have talked about the feelings that negative criticism and praise create in us professionally, I asked staff to describe how they felt in one word. Some examples are below:

When I am criticised:

- Anger
- Resentment
- In need of a gin
- The need to shop.
- Demotivated
- Upset

And when praised:

- Excited
- Proud
- Accomplished
- Fuzzy
- Valued

I know that if we orientate our professional relationships around appreciation and look to tune in positively with our colleagues' emotions when doing our work then we are all more likely to perform and succeed in our work.

The collective demonstrations of significant, positive emotional intelligence on show this week during those headteacher appointments makes me as proud as any other of our collective achievements.

My personal thanks for all you do to make our work schools such positive places to work.

Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



Head Space

Schools in the Spotlight:

The Telford Park School

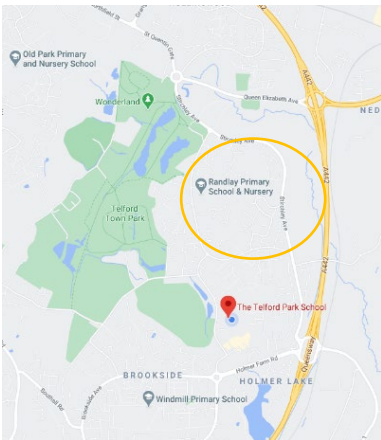
by Headteacher Holly Rigby

It is my pleasure to introduce you all to The Telford Park School. The Telford Park School is so much more than a building; it is a feeling. We pride ourselves on being ‘big enough to make a difference, small enough care’.

The school is situated in South Telford and is the smallest secondary school in the borough.

Personally, I have always been invested in education in South Telford, having been a former pupil of the Telford Langley School. My journey to Headship began in Wolverhampton as a PE Teacher. Nineteen years later, I considered myself extremely privileged to be offered the role of Headteacher. Despite the well documented challenges, I still get up every day determined to make a difference to the life chances of our young people.

The Telford Park School was rebuilt and reopened in September 2015 with state-of-the-art facilities for Sport, the Arts, Science, Technology, and ICT. However, more important than our facilities is our belief that every child really does matter and that all of our pupils should feel safe, happy and secure in an environment where they can strive for success and enjoy their learning. We are highly aspirational for all our pupils and believe they will be successful by ‘letting their light shine’ academically, personally and socially.



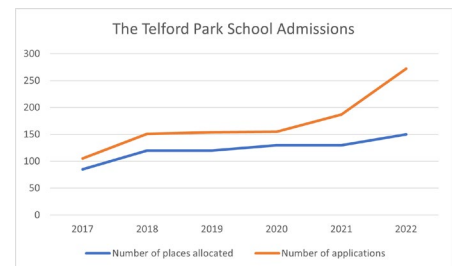
Our School is situated at the heart of its community and is very proud that its largest feeder schools, Grange Park, and Windmill Primary Schools are Community Academies Trust schools.

The school badge represents the historic past of the region and includes the Ironbridge and the ‘Stirchley Chimney’. The ‘Stirchley Chimney’ is in the Telford Town Park, approximately half a mile from the school and is the only remnant of what was once a busy ironworks.



**The Telford
Park School**

When the school opened in 2015, it had 342 pupils on roll. Over the last eight years we have worked hard to develop a strong reputation in our local community to become the community’s first-choice secondary school. The school now has 661 pupils on roll (61 over PAN); a 49% increase, and something of which we are all exceptionally proud. We have been full and oversubscribed for the last four years.

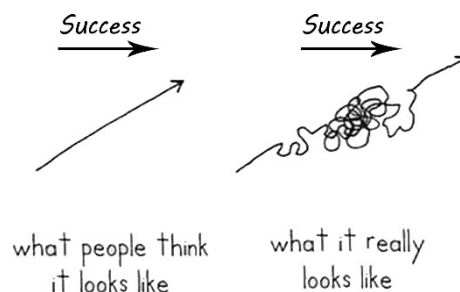


We believe in the core values of ‘be ready and resilient, be respectful, be responsible and safe’. Being ‘ready and resilient’ means being the best we can be. Being ‘respectful’ means to uphold the

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collective school rights by showing respect to all members of our community. Being 'responsible and safe' means being part of a safe school community.

Every term I talk to pupils about success and remind them what the journey to success might look like, I am sure they are fed up hearing it (!) however, the path to success is never ever linear. Our pupils are very familiar with this diagram and recognise that on any given day our path can be a very 'curvy' one with lots of twists and turns.



Schedule of the week:

- **Monday 23rd August: 11am-3pm:** Orienteering/ Treasure Hunts, Teamwork Games, Cooking, Multi-sports, Maths Problem Solving.
- **Tuesday 24th August: 9am-3pm:** Talk the Talk Public Speaking, Bright Star Boxing, Multi-sports, Taiko Drumming, English Challenges, Computer Workshops
- **Wednesday 25th August: 9am-3pm:** Bushcraft Activities, Crossbar Sports Coaching, Cooking, Computer Workshops.
- **Thursday 26th August: 9am-3pm:** Visit and presentation from a leading author, Bushcraft Activities, Crossbar Sports Coaching, Science Experiments, English Challenges
- **Friday 27th August: 9am-1pm:** Multi-sports, Science Experiments, Awards Ceremony, BBQ

A pupil's journey at Telford Park School begins on the day we receive our updated list for the following September. We aim to foster a sense of belonging and it is at this point that our transition work begins.

For the last two years we have offered a summer school programme. The difference it has made has been significant. One parent commented '*I think summer school was excellent for my child as it helped overcome his*

fears of getting lost in a school he hadn't been able to access earlier and also, the chance to meet other year 7 starters from different schools was great for him. My son is very excited and relaxed about starting tomorrow now due to attending summer school and I thank the school and teachers for arranging this'.



As part of our offer to our Year 7 September 2023 intake, and in response to the cost-of-living crisis, we will be providing this year group with a free blazer, tie, pencil case and stationery, PE bag and water bottle.

As their journey continues from transition our pupils are immersed in a curriculum focused on developing lifelong academic, personal, and social development. Our curriculum is broad and balanced and is designed to meet the needs of all pupils, providing them with the cultural capital to succeed in life.



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I thought it would be useful to share some examples of how we enrich our curriculum.

For example, in November we were delighted to achieve the 'Artsmark Gold Award' in recognition of high-quality arts and enrichment activities. You can see our pupils 'letting their light shine' [here](#). Other enrichment activities we offer include a wide variety of after school clubs, educational visits, and trips. I am very grateful to our hard-working staff for providing the wealth of opportunities they do. In January 2023 our bi-annual ski trip took place with a visit to Alpendorf, Austria. The pupils and staff had a fantastic experience, with some great conditions on the slopes and life skills learnt.



At The Telford Park School we love to read! We are all aware that reading is at the heart of educational success and is one of our non-negotiables of a pupil's academic entitlement. Our well stocked library, run by a team of pupil librarians, is something we have developed over the last eight years. Unbelievably, when the school opened the library did not possess one book. The development of reading skills is a high priority for all of us with the long-term goal of no pupil leaving us without a standardised score of less than 100. We intervene consistently with those who are struggling as well as exposing pupils to a wide variety of challenging texts as part of our tutor reading programme. As part of this programme pupils experience a broad range of vocabulary, genres, cultures, and eras. We also operate a daily READ45 programme and are regularly visited by authors to inspire and motivate. As our book vending machine states 'readers make leaders'.



As part of our careers programme, we are committed to providing all pupils with a varied programme of advice and guidance to equip them to make informed choices. Our careers programme helps pupils develop, identify, and add to their employability skills and contributes to the schools' vision and values in raising aspirations. Careers is now embedded into all curriculum areas so that pupils gain a working understanding alongside their learning of how new knowledge/skills could be applied in a workplace. Here are a couple of snippets from our careers in English curriculum:

Topic	Year Group	Term delivered	Content of lesson – what students will be able to know or do by the end of the session	Skills developed
Poetry from other cultures	7	Autumn 2	Pupils take part in an online author visit in which he discusses the inspirations behind the novels he has written.	Pupils understand that writing is a career and that everyday events/ creating interview questions to gain the most accurate information from a candidate.
Wonderscape	7	Spring Term	<p>Lesson 8.9 Pupils write a speech from the point of view of a character in the novel. Lesson promotes an opportunity to talk about speech writing as a career option for pupils.</p> <p>Lesson 13: Pupils have the opportunity to create questions to ask characters in the novel. Lesson promotes an opportunity to inform pupils of some statistics/ top tips around interviews.</p> <p>Lesson 18: Pupils write leaflets in favour of or against the characters' visit to Africa on safari. Lesson promotes the opportunity to inform pupils of a career in marketing.</p>	<p>Speech writing for a purpose and specific audience (similar to skills needed for speech writing as a career)</p> <p>Top tips for a successful interview/ creating interview questions to gain the most accurate information from a candidate.</p> <p>Leaflet writing as a format of writing with purpose (similar to skills needed in career in marketing)</p>
The Tempest	7	Summer Term	<p>Lesson 2: Pupils learn information about the life of William Shakespeare and his time as a playwright. Lesson promotes an opportunity for pupils to learn about having a career as a playwright.</p> <p>Lesson 14: Pupils have the opportunity to create their own piece of travel writing. Pupils are shown/ read examples of travel writing in order to recreate their own based on the island featured in The Tempest. The lesson promotes an opportunity to explore travel writing as a career with pupils.</p>	<p>Comprehension skills</p> <p>Travel writing skills- researching and gathering evidence, techniques and features of travel writing (similar to those needed for a career in this field)</p>

Did you know you can have a career as a speech writer?

Y7- Wonderscape- Spring Term

Speech Writer Requirements:

- A bachelor's degree in journalism, English, literature, communications, creative writing, or a similar discipline.
- Excellent research and analytical skills.
- A good understanding of public speaking.
- Superb written and verbal communication skills.

What can I earn as a Speech Writer?

- Experienced speechwriters may charge per word that they write.
- As of October 2022, the average speech write makes approximately £44,000 per year.



Did you know you can have a career as a speech writer?

Y7- Wonderscape- Spring Term

- Speech writers create and edit speeches for different occasions and purposes.
- They can be employed in the corporate, political, or PR sectors, or do freelance work for other organizations.

Speech Writer Responsibilities:

- Understanding written briefs and meeting with clients to discuss the specifics of the speech, which may include structure, points of emphasis, appropriate humour, content, and overall style.
- Conducting research to obtain interesting facts and statistics that can be used in the speech.
- Rehearsing or practicing the speech out loud to get a sense of how well it works and whether it is suited to the speaker or not.



One of the areas we have strengthened over the last year is our response to pupil voice activities. Using the 'you said, we did' we have developed a response to safeguarding to reassure pupils that their views matter. Here are a few examples:

Can we move the pastoral bases so that they are closer to the canteen, near where the pupils are?
(Year 10 girl, June 2022)

Year 9, 10 and 11 bases were moved to the ground floor. We are looking at the year 7 and 8 bases too
(Sep 2022)

When a member of staff deals with a problem I don't know what to do if things carry on
(Year 9 girl, Oct 2022)

Mrs Rigby now has a post-box outside her office. You can post any concern you have to Mrs Rigby. She is the headteacher and will take action for you.
(Nov 2022)

I don't know who to go to when I have a problem
(Year 7 girl, May 2022)

We now have Trusted Adult Cards in place. All pupils have two pre-set trusted adults and a third that they can nominate for themselves
(Sep 2022)

Sometimes I feel unsafe at break and lunchtime because I don't know which members of staff are on duty
(Year 8 girl, June 2022)

All duty staff now wear orange high vis jackets. You can see who is on duty and will notice how many staff are there to support you and keep you safe
(Sep 2022)

Safeguarding is everyone's collective responsibility
(Staff survey June 2022)

We have a new pupil led 'Safe Squad' in school. They meet with Mr Ward once a fortnight to help embed a culture of safeguarding within the school.
(Dec 2022)

We all need to say no to Misogyny and Body shaming
(Year 8 boy, Sep 2022)

This topic has been explored in assemblies and PSHE/SRE lessons. Loudmouth have completed theatre group sessions. Teachers will call this out for what it is. Its never OK!

Finally, around two years ago as one parent left an open evening she asked if we could talk; she then said to me 'I have sussed your school out', suspiciously I asked 'How?', she went on to say, 'You are about names not numbers and that is why we are choosing Telford Park'. Something that is not measurable, but nevertheless a Headteacher moment that I will never forget.

For even more information - our school video can be found [here](#).

It's been a pleasure to read about the schools in our trust, their journeys, and their communities. It would be great to hear more from our schools, so I will be revisiting them in future issues to see what's been happening since we last heard from them.

 Celebrating staff and student achievement across our trust



Woodloes Primary School has embarked on an ambitious, inclusive project with Evergreen School to create an Eco Project to benefit their combined school communities.

Woodloes is a campus site adjacent to Evergreen, which is a generic special school. As such, discussions of collaborative working have been a regular feature for many years. However, the partnership between the mainstream and special school has sometimes been difficult to achieve. As a recently appointed SENDCo,

I was keen to give this another try.

Initially, the leadership teams from Woodloes and Evergreen worked together to establish a shared vision and identify desired outcomes from a joint project. The aim of the Eco Project is for children from both schools to play and learn alongside each other whilst looking after their environment. The site will provide a range of eco-friendly learning spaces and activities that engage and educate our students on the principles of sustainability and being environmentally friendly.

Specific outcomes included:

- Staff and pupils from both schools working together to achieve the best possible outcomes in all areas of SEND.
- Improved knowledge of creating inclusive environments from special school expertise
- Development of an outdoor learning space and curriculum to engage and motivate learners.

It was then time to get creative!



To capture the ideas of the broader school teams, a joint working party was formed to design a shared environment within the Woodloes School grounds. Once funding was secured, construction of the site began. The Eco Project site has progressed brilliantly! We now have a polytunnel, a fire pit with a gazebo and seating, raised beds, giant bug hotels and a pond.

In October, we had a tree planting party, when parents and staff from both schools braved the cold to plant 100 trees, move 8 tonnes of top-soil and 4 tonnes of stones!

Children from both Woodloes and Evergreen started using the new learning space together in November 2022 and it is a joy to see the children thriving in the outdoors.

Activities have included planting bulbs, building leaf compost bins, making sun catchers, creating hedgehog houses and planting trees. Woodloes children who attend The Hive nurture base visit the Eco Project alongside a class from Evergreen every week. They have particularly enjoyed the heavy work area where they can engage in regulating activities like digging, lifting, and moving earth.

Similarly, Year 4 children, a target year group for personal development, attend the project every week with skill development focusing upon collaboration and resilience.

Activities within the project act as motivators for reluctant learners and have enabled them to learn to concentrate and focus while doing fun learning tasks outside. This new provision enables us to punctuate the week with activities that can act as a circuit break and a reset for children to re-engage with classroom learning and provide valuable learning in itself.

Curriculum plans are developing through the year with staff from both settings contributing to the process. The aim is to create an annual plan for outdoor learning with a focus on personal development and the science curriculum which will then be used and adapted year after year.

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Following a review, continuous provision has been incorporated into planning to enable child-initiated learning alongside adult-directed activities. Future plans include Woodloes children designing a sensory garden to apply their scientific knowledge and show an understanding of individual needs.

In line with one of Woodloes' core values of understanding and celebrating diversity, the Eco Project is offering an ongoing opportunity to know and build friendships with children who have a range of special educational needs and disabilities. In addition, it is an example of how the Woodloes curriculum has been developed and adapted to reflect its local context. Through the Eco Project, inclusive practice has been enhanced to benefit children and staff from both settings.

The project is well on its way to achieving its original aims with children's needs at the heart of the plans. We look forward to championing SEND and inclusion as this project continues to develop for the benefit of all children within our joint school community.



School Bytes

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



The Wilnecote School say Goodbye to Headteacher Sian Hartle.

It is with sadness that I wish to let you know that I will be leaving The Wilnecote School at Easter this academic year to move to a role in the executive team of a multi-academy trust. Whilst I am professionally excited to be making the move to this new and challenging role, I am aware of what I will be leaving behind - a great community school with the most wonderful staff and students and a place where governors, parents/carers and the wider community have made me feel so at home.

The great news is that Simon Adams, Senior Deputy Headteacher at The Wilnecote School, will be acting as interim Headteacher when the school returns for the summer term. The Community Academies Trust will lead on the recruitment of a permanent headteacher to Wilnecote and anticipate the recruitment to be complete by the end of April.

We wish Sian good luck in her new role – she will be missed.

The Polesworth School bakes cakes for Turkey and Syria Earthquake Appeal



Thank you to the students, parents/guardians, and staff from The Polesworth School. They supported the school's Turkey and Syria Earthquake appeal by purchasing a cake to help raise funds for the victims in Turkey and Syria from either the Sixth Form Bake Sale, which took place in Polesworth's new Bistro at the Yr9 Curriculum Evening on Thursday 16th February, or in Tomlinson Hall during lunch and break times on Friday 17th February.

The school is proud to announce that students raised £344.01 in total from both bake sales, which has been paid to the Disasters and Emergency Committee.

The Wilnecote School hit the slopes in Aprica

40 students from The Wilnecote School recently embarked on a thrilling ski trip to the picturesque mountains of Aprica. The trip, organised by Mr Croydon, Head of PE and Outdoor Education, provided an opportunity for the students to test their skiing skills while enjoying the breath-taking views of the Italian mountains.

On Saturday 21st January the trip left The Wilnecote School at 4am to make the trip up to Manchester Airport for the two-hour flight to Milan Airport. During the flight, students took in the breath-taking view of the Alps as we travelled over France into Italy.

Sunday morning was the first day on the slopes and for most of the students their first day on skis! The students were accompanied by local experienced ski instructors from Full Sky Aprica Ski School who helped them refine their techniques and conquer the slopes with confidence. Despite the challenges posed by the mountain terrain, the students displayed a remarkable level of determination and camaraderie, cheering each other on and pushing themselves to new heights. By day five all students had made it to the top of the mountain and the week was rounded off with a session of night skiing, which brought everything they had learnt over the week and all students completed the 5KM trail from the top of the mountain back into the village of Aprica.

The trip proved to be an unforgettable experience for the students, offering a unique blend of adventure, learning, and personal growth.

"This trip was a great opportunity for our students to challenge themselves and step out of their comfort zones," said Mr Croydon, Mrs Ager Assistant headteacher added. "We are proud of their hard work and look forward to organising more such trips in the future."

Sophie in year 8 commented "It was great to ski for four hours a day, it taught me to persevere, and I gained lots of confidence. "Lewis, one of our year 10 students on the trip added "This was a fantastic opportunity to explore the skiing life and the instructors were amazing and very patient with us all.

"The students have returned home with new friendships, unforgettable memories, and a newfound appreciation for the wonders of the mountain and ski world.



Introducing....

Vicky Garrett. Vicky has recently joined the IoE on a secondment as a Primary Lead. Many of you will know Vicky from her time at Birchwood and more recently at Wood End. Now Vicky is out and about bringing her expertise to primary schools across our trust.



My name is Vicky and I am currently on a one day a week secondment with the Institute of Education. I work alongside the Directors at the Institute and am really enjoying my new primary role. So far, this has entailed working with the primary ITT students in our CAT schools, working on a transition and reading project from primary to secondary, working alongside other colleagues in preparation for a TA training event, and working with the Directors on Institute projects. Next term, I shall be working more closely with the ECTs in our trust. I have loved meeting new people and visiting other schools in the Academy and feel very privileged to have been given this opportunity to work with and alongside colleagues.

My journey to this point feels like a long one! But I feel lucky in the fact that I knew I wanted to be a teacher from a young age and was allowed and encouraged to follow that dream. I was the first in my family to embark on a university education.

Having gained a Bachelor of Education Degree at Worcester, my first teaching job was working for Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council in the days when you were interviewed to join a pool of teachers and the local head teachers could pick and choose. Thankfully for me, I was chosen quickly and joined Ashwood Park, staying for 8 years. What a joyful place it was. My mentor nurtured me well and my first colleagues became lifelong friends.

Opportunities came my way and whilst there I began leading reading. I also went to night school to learn British Sign Language to support the attached hearing-impaired unit. When a fantastic opportunity came up to study for a master's degree in education, I took that too. I am a great believer in 'having a go.' You never know if you don't try!

With thoughts of climbing the leadership ladder, I started to look for a promotion when my husband got a new job in Leicestershire. In a scented candle interview, I got my next job. A new school. I didn't have the best of starts though. Having moved from one authority to another and in between, booking a trip to Australia, I didn't factor in going back to school in August! So, starting a week later than everyone else, I began a new role to lead KS1 and literacy. And with supportive colleagues, who embraced some change, I grew in this role. I loved leading whole school initiatives and working with others to have an impact. I also became a Mentor for students from university and this was by far, one of my favourite jobs.

It was whilst at this school that I started my own family. A premature baby did change my perspective on working full time though. How to balance work and home? So, I decided part time was the best option. Following my second born, I gave up the long commute and changed my working pathway to one-to-one tutoring in more local schools as well as a two-year stint at supply work. This broadened my outlook on how different school communities worked.

When I saw an advert for a part time teaching job at Birchwood Primary, I applied straight away and got it. After a few years teaching in KS1, I eventually ended up in Early years, a year group I was never really interested in. However, after a year there and with encouraging and fabulous staff, I got the early years bug. This is probably the best way to describe it! How children could be engaged and oversee their own learning with facilitation from teachers fascinated me, and still does today.

It was whilst at this school that the Community Academies Trust began with Birchwood and Polesworth High School being the foundations.

Fast forward a few years and here I am at Wood End Primary school, back to working full time and leading Early Years. I also lead literacy across both Wood End and Dordon Primary, a challenging but rewarding role. I feel very lucky in my career to have worked with wonderful and talented staff. This is truly echoed now by the people I work with. They make coming to work every day a pleasure, along with the lovely children at our schools. Of course, some days can be more challenging, but we certainly cannot say that our job is boring!



SAFER RECRUITMENT TRAINING

Accredited by the Safer Recruitment Consortium, this course supports the requirements in KCSiE. Suitable for anyone involved in interview planning, advertising, interviewing and decision making.

Led by CAT Director of Behaviour and Safeguarding, Jo Howell and CAT Human Resources Officer, Sam Sweet

THURSDAY 6 AND 13 JULY 2023
THE WILNECOTE SCHOOL
9.00 AM - 1.00 PM




TO BOOK:
IOE@CATSCHOOLS.UK


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.theocmjournal.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

 Alexis Rickus ✓
Mar 17 · 4 min

Growing Great People

 Michelle Borders ✓
Mar 15 · 4 min


What is Modelling and Why should teacher educators care about...

 Sharon Leftwich Lloyd ✓
Mar 8 · 6 min

Developing Literacy in the Drama Curriculum at KS4-5

on Children


PLUS
Drama Really Matters
ND Mission Statement
Young Males
Sette the Day!
Report on 9th World Congress of IDEA
Making, Performing and Responding

 Sharon Leftwich Lloyd ✓
Mar 8 · 8 min

Dual Coding & Word Diagrams in the Drama Classroom

CRACKS IN OUR FOUNDATIONS
Addressing the longstanding attainment gap in England's primary schools

February 2023



*For those of you with an interest in oracy and the importance of reading particularly in respect of addressing the attainment gap in our primary schools, the recommendations made in this report **"Cracks in our Foundations"** from the Centre for Social Justice makes for interesting reading. Thanks to Executive Director Ed May for sharing this.*

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

You could be forgiven for thinking you've walked into a scene from Stepford Wives this half term - we're all humming Pharrell Williams "Feeling Happy" and attempting to exude inner peace and happiness.

In response to a request from the CAT Central Services team to source some resilience training, we discovered these inspirational, motivational people from Art of Brilliance! Resilience has been described as a superpower that we can learn and the Bouncebackability workshop will provide the skills and resources that we mere mortals without the natural resilience gene, can cultivate to combat our innate negativity and transform us from potential mood hoovers into much happier, and consequently, more productive teams of people. If this workshop sounds like it could be for you then do, please contact us via your school business manager/office manager who has been sent this flyer.

Staying with our Support Staff, the SEND Networking group have written and developed a training programme specifically for Teaching Assistants across our Trust. The theme is all about improving communication in the classroom. This workshop will be full of strategies and resources that you can use as soon as you leave. It's also a great opportunity to network with colleagues from across our other trust schools. Appropriate for colleagues across both phases, this training has been arranged to happen on the same day as the Primary Heads conference and will take place in two venues. For Warwickshire and Staffordshire colleagues, it will be held at the National Conference Centre near the National Motorcycle Museum and for colleagues in Telford it will take place at Grange Park Primary School. To find out more, you can check out SEND Network Chair, Helen Cadman's article in the Network/Expert Group News section below.

Alexis Rickus
Director, CAT Institute of Education

**Zap that Mood Hoover in your life!
Be less Eeyore and more Tigger!**



**Calling all Support Staff
Sign up for this!**

Rainy days and Mondays getting you down? The thought of dealing with more stress is too much? Is dealing with rapid change bringing your negativity to the surface?

The team at Art of Brilliance invite you to this morning workshop where they examine the things that make positive people be the irritating people they are of a Monday morning. Why are they so happy? Why do they never seem stressed? It doesn't come automatically to most of us but we can all cultivate personal skills and resources to help us not just cope better with stress but learn how to use challenges as opportunities to grow.

bouncebackability
Rolling with life's punches

**Tuesday 2 May 2023
9.00am to 2.00pm
Dordon Primary School
Roman Way, Dordon
Tamworth B78 1PJ**



Life is not about
how fast you run
or how high
you climb but
how well
you bounce.



Network and Expert Group News

A snapshot of what some of the network groups have been up to this half term. Don't feel you are missing out, join the conversation! Meetings are virtual, on Zoom Events and you need to register via the links on the IoE website to join.

SEND Network Group Teaching Assistant Conference

COMMUNITY ACADEMIES TRUST
Institute of Education

Teaching Assistant Training

Effective Communication in the Classroom

Designed and delivered by the CAT SENCO Network Group

Friday 23rd June 2023
9.30am to 3.00pm

What is effective Interaction?
How does effective communication relate to children's learning, your classroom or your school setting?

Develop the skills you need to develop effective communication in order to move learning on in the classroom and meet other Teaching Assistants from across our Trust.

We look forward to seeing you!

Calling All Teaching Assistants and HLTAs!

TA Training: Effective Communication in the Classroom

Designed and delivered by the CAT SEND Network Group

The CAT SEND Network group were tasked at the end of last summer with developing TA training across the trust for June 2023 and with the support of amazing colleagues, who have volunteered their time and energy, we've made it!

A huge thank you to all those involved!

As a result, on Friday 23rd June 2023, the CAT SENCO Network group will be delivering the Trust's first TA training individually tailored to the Trust's needs and we are hoping you will be there! Teaching Assistants from across the trust will be able to come together and meet face to face and learn about a range of strategies that can support effective communication within the classroom. We hope there will be something for everyone and hopefully become an annual event – at least, this is the plan!

Venues are as follows:

Warwickshire/Staffordshire Schools: National Conference Centre, Motorcycle Museum

Telford Schools: Grange Park Primary School

To book your spot, contact: ioe@catschools.uk

Your networks need you! Being part of the conversation means you have an input in the strategic direction of our trust in your area of interest. Sign in, join in, and have your say!

OCM Issue Thirteen April 2023

Art Network Group

The Art Network Group this year held a cross trust Art competition. Entries were based on the theme of "Ocean" and competition was fierce. Below are the winning entries for each of the key stages!

There were some amazing entries and clearly a lot of hard work went into producing them. Overall winners in each category won a gift voucher to visit the National Sea Life Centre in Birmingham and an art pack. Other winners received art packs. Congratulations to everyone who entered – may their talent grow in leaps and bounds.

**Key stage 1 Winner:
Birchwood Primary School**



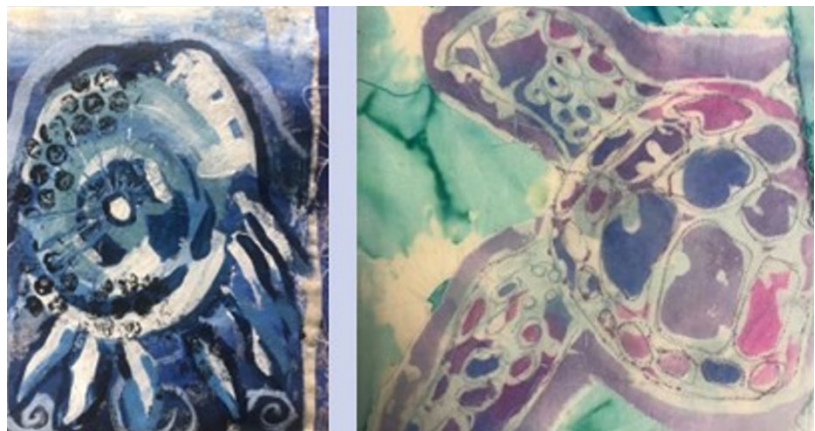
**Key stage 2 Winner: The
Woodlands Primary School**



**Key stage 3 Winner: The
Telford Priory School**



**Key stage 4 Winner: The
Telford Priory School**



Sadly, Jade Stevens, Chair of the Art Network Group is leaving the trust to go to pastures new. We wish her well and thank her for inspiring this great competition.

EXPERT GROUPS

Update: Expert Group: Literacy, Reading and Numeracy (Secondary)

This group restarted this year after a change in leadership; we began by discussing the EEF secondary literacy guidance and some Australian research around numeracy. Due to our restricted time, we decided to focus our time this academic year on reading which was a key priority for most of the group. We split this into four actionable areas:

- Data transition for reading from key stage 2 to 3;
- Reading screening, diagnostics, and interventions for our weakest readers;
- Reading complex texts - approaches within the curriculum;
- Reading for Pleasure.

Our key actions to date are:

- Sharing research and literature linked to reading to broaden our knowledge as a group. (Specific details are available in minutes on IOE website).
- 'Phonics for Secondary Teachers' training delivered by Emma Spiers last half term. The resources from this short course are available on our area of the IOE website.
- Exploring current approaches and collating resources and case studies onto the IOE website to find the best ways forwards.
- Trialling new approaches to teaching reading, collating resources, and feeding back.
- Exploring potential ways in which we can work together to develop RfP and sharing approaches and ideas.
- Collaborating with key stage 2 colleagues to develop transition in terms of data and timing to enable earlier interventions.

There are a huge number of resources on our area of the OCM website searchable by literacy area and by subject available for all; we invite you to explore them and feedback gaps, useability and any resources you may like to contribute.

We welcome and encourage new members: please join us!

Sharon Leftwich-Lloyd

Leader: Expert Group: Literacy, Reading and Numeracy (Secondary)

Reminder of the dates for upcoming Expert and Network Group Meetings

Expert Groups	Network Groups
24 May 23	3 May 23
28 June 23	5 July 23

**Zoom joining links can be found on the appropriate landing page of the IOE website:
www.thecatoinstitute.org**

Expert Group School Culture, Lead Mark Gibbons, Windmill Primary School

Coordinating an expert group focused on 'School Culture' has been problematic...

Firstly, following on from the inimitable and hugely popular Mr Richard Thorpe, who led the group last year, is a daunting prospect. And then there's the tricky issue of not stepping on the toes of other expert groups!

Can we focus on something in the School Culture group if it involves 'Leadership'...? Or 'Quality of Education'...? We have been tiptoeing through and nobody has shouted 'Ow!' yet...

Last year, one of the key things agreed by the School Culture group was a definition of what 'school culture' is:

'The shared beliefs, attitudes and values of school stakeholders, and the relationships between them. It is the way a school feels, because of the way the school behaves.'

This year, we decided to use a book called 'This Much I Know About Love Over Fear', written by John Tomsett in 2015. We know that our trust strives for the perfect balance of Power and Love, and I am confident that no one in our trust wants there to be 'Fear', so we are exploring how a school can pursue a culture of truly great teaching without any risk of scaring or intimidating anyone. Sounds good, right?

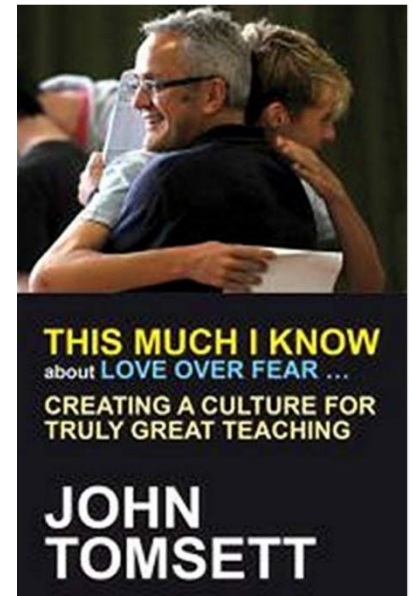
There are some important chapters in the book, which all knit together through John's autobiographical style, which makes it very moreish, and humorous and emotional at times too. At the time of writing the book, he was a serving secondary school headteacher who insisted on maintaining a teaching commitment throughout his leadership of learning. He walked the walk, as well as talking the talk. As a headteacher myself, this really challenged me: is it too late for me now though? Mind you, he was teaching hour long lessons in his specialist subject... can that be my excuse?

Chapter headings in the book that grabbed me were: 'Creating the conditions for growth', 'You can't just wish to be better', 'Making the time', 'Tending your colleagues', and 'Becoming an evidence-based profession'. The book is already informing my own school leadership and strategic planning, and as a group we have identified key principles that match CAT's Excellence Outcomes and are aligned with CAT's 5-year Strategic Plan.

By the end of the year, we will share a summary of the key messages from the book that we as a group have agreed on and can testify to through our own experiences. We have teachers, headteachers and assistant headteachers in our group and we are not afraid to disagree with each other - or to disagree with John Tomsett for that matter! There's still a chance to join us if you like. We'll send you a book to read and we all agree that it's very readable.

I imagine our group has a different feel and approach to the 'Culture Club' that Richard established last year, but we believe in the same things:

School Culture is about people, people, and people.



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.

Stacey Jordan @staceysylvia21 · Mar 20
So much quality discussion at the CAT Emerging Leaders course - day 2!



Wix and Pathway

Windmill Sports @windmillsports · 3h
The sportsability event is well under way, our children are having so much fun already! @TWSSP @AFCTelfordutdCC



Wood End Primary @WoodEndPrim · 1h
Some of the fabulous egg designs we had in school this morning. Thank you to everyone who took part!



Kingsway Community Primary Sc... @SchoolKings... · Mar 3, 2022
World Book Day, best costume winners!
#WorldBookDay #JuliaDonaldson #MichaelMorpurgo



Birchwood Primary @BirchwoodPrim · 21h
Year 5 enjoyed their Reading booster session today when they were set a challenge to read and decipher clues to find hidden letters around school. They were awarded a total of 15 letters which they needed to reorder to win. Victory went to the girls!



Chadsmead Primary Academy @Chadsmeadschool · Feb 17
What an exciting day the children had yesterday with @MrSpottle as part of our Storytelling Week in school...



Stratford-Upon-Avon Primary School @StratfordPrim · Feb 15
Year 2 have been feeling the love with Valentines day this week and have made their own Valentines day cards. They applied the practise they had earlier in the term of making mechanisms to use either a slider, linkage or lever mechanism. #DT #DesignandTechnology #CATSchool #love



The Telford Priory School @telfordpriory · Mar 16
#RandomActOfKindness
Year 9 visited Margery at her care home to deliver a birthday cake and sing Happy Birthday! 🎂🎉
#tpsnews #KindnessMatters #KindnessMatters



Heathcote Primary @Heathcote_PS · Mar 27
Outdoor artists #forestscool #CATschools



Our Community Matters

