

Our Community Matters

June 2023
Issue Fourteen



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



#catschools/#schoolscat

Editor: Michelle Borders
communications@catschools.uk
www.thecat institute.org

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



Firstly, huge apology to Windmill Primary School.

It seems that because I
enjoyed the article in which
Headteacher Mark Gibbons
spent time languishing in a
wheelie bin full of gravy for
Children in Need so much, I
thought we'd already
featured his school. To save
you hunting back through
the archives for OCM 5, you
can **check it out here** and
enjoy it all over again. As
you will see from his article

in our very final "Headspace" Mark was desperate to "have a go" and has applied that to all of his decisions throughout life. Presumably why he ended up in that wheelie bin full of gravy!

Also, in this issue we meet Jen Harvey, who is our recently appointed Trust Accountant. Jen isn't new to the trust, in fact she's been around for some time, but as one of our unsung heroes in the Finance Team. Jen has raised her head above the parapet and decided to "have a go" too, so it's great to introduce her to everyone.

There's been some changes in our school leadership teams around the trust. I'm hoping to make some introductions there as well over the next couple of issues. We kick off this edition by saying our farewells to Steve Carter, Headteacher at The Telford Langley School and saying hello to Emma Blount, who will be taking over the role in September.

And finally, to all our Y6, Y11 and Y13 students across our trust, I'd like to echo Chadsmead Primary Academy Headteacher's message to her Year 6 children:

"These tests do not assess all of what makes each of you special and unique. They will tell you something, but they will not tell you everything. There are many ways of being smart. You are smart! There is no way to 'test' all of the amazing and awesome things that make you, YOU!" Gemma Grainger

Michelle, Editor
Our Community Matters



Message from Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



Welcome back.

Many of you will know that Alison Bardsley (our Executive Director for Finance and Operations) is retiring this year and will be leaving us at the end of July. Alison has worked as our Executive lead for all things non education for the last 8 years and helped navigate our trust through significant change and growth. Our trust was in its infancy and Alison provided us with a strong professional steer establishing policy and practice that lay the foundations for where we are today. Alison's wonderful leadership combined with an extraordinary and relentless attention to detail and expertise has left us all indebted to her and our trust a financially secure and extremely well-run organisation. I wish her well in her retirement.

We have been recruiting to the central team. As part of our reorganisation of aspects of our central education team, we have appointed Allyson Brown to be our new Director of Schools (Primary). Allyson has a long track record improving numerous schools and has been a successful Headteacher and Executive Headteacher. We are very excited by the fresh perspectives Allyson will bring to our trust. Allyson joins our central education team comprising Jo Howell, (Director of Safeguarding and Behaviour) and Alexis Rickus (Director of our Institute of Education). The team is led by Edward May (Executive Director Education) who has a broader brief taking responsibility for all aspects of the Education we provide.

We have also appointed Lois Gordon as our new Executive Director (Finance and Operations). Lois has a broad and successful experience working in other academy trusts, and for central government. Lois will be starting in post in July and Alison will be able to hand over to Lois before she leaves.

These changes are early actions from our trust strategy to evolve our trust over the next 5 years. I have talked often about the journey all organisations are on represented by the sigmoid curve. Our trust strategy is about setting new directions, embarking on a new journey and harnessing the expertise across our trust for the benefit of our staff and families in new ways. I look forward to working with the new team and with colleagues in our schools to make our vision of excellence even more of a reality.

My best wishes for the half term ahead and a particular thought for all the young people in our trust sitting important examinations at this time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip".

Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



Head Space

Schools in the Spotlight:

Windmill Primary School, Telford

by Headteacher Mark Gibbons

'Please can I have a go?'

That question kind of sums up why I'm writing this.

When I saw on page one of the last OCM that all CAT headteachers had written a Headspace article, I thought, 'I don't think I have written one... shall I say something?'

And I did say something. And that may be because I'm a bit of an attention seeker, but it may also be because I wanted to write to you. Yes, you read that correctly, I wanted to write to you!

You see, 'Please can I have a go?' is also the main reason I am a headteacher.

You might also be someone who says, 'Please can I have a go?' Or maybe you're not. Or maybe you used to be, but you stopped.

I often say, 'Please can I have a go?' because I like to be involved.

I like making a difference... I like to be useful.

And I believe in my own ability - not just because I have a history of brashness and arrogance, but because people have told me that they see leadership qualities in me.



What do people tell you that they see in you? If people appreciate it when you take the lead in a situation, and if people value what you do on their behalf, or perhaps if people look to you for guidance or inspiration, then you're probably some kind of leader already (or you'll be one soon)!

I said, 'Please can I have a go?' when there seemed to be an opportunity to take some whole-school responsibility in my third year of teaching. And again, when there was an opportunity to be the deputy headteacher of a small village primary school. And again, when the headteacher of Windmill left to become a school adviser.

I was not a very good headteacher to start with, but I've been getting better over time (I think!)

OCM Issue Fourteen June 2023

For the first six years of Windmill Primary School's existence (from 2006 to 2012, with me as deputy head), Ofsted said we were a 'Good' school. In my first two inspections as headteacher, in 2014 and 2016, Ofsted graded us as 'Requires Improvement'.

So, for the last eight years I have felt like I have been wearing a badge that says 'Rubbish Headteacher'.

For a lot of that time, I was thinking I should probably give up.

But that went against what I/we continued to tell Windmill children.

Our values are:

- Aim High
- Do Your Best
- Don't Give Up
- Believe In Yourself
- Be There For Each Other
- Every Day Is A New Day

Joining CAT in 2018 gave us 'A New Day' - a fresh start. It reset our Ofsted cycle and gave us a chance to reinforce the strengths we already had and to fix the few problems that remained, with strong support from Ed May and a CAT-formed Education Advisory Board.



We started to believe in ourselves again. I started to believe in myself again.

People who don't know Windmill say it must be a challenging school to work in, and they are probably making that assumption because there are high levels of Pupil Premium, pupil mobility and safeguarding incidents.

The truth is, when you're working with great people, challenges don't seem as hard and as daunting as they do when you're on your own.

And we do not work on our own at Windmill; we are a fantastic team of great people.

And we continue to grow great people at Windmill.

Mostly children...

...but adults too.

We are able to do that because being part of Community Academies Trust has given us support, challenge and freedom in appropriate measure, which has then given us confidence and expertise in abundance.

Even Ofsted agreed, when they came to see us again in September 2022!

My journey as a headteacher hasn't been a cruise, or a quick flight, or even a gentle walk. It's been a long-distance expedition; exhausting and demoralising at times, but with an irresistible purpose and beautiful scenery along the way.

And I'm glad I asked, 'Please can I have a go?'

Ensuring Excellence

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



Farewell from Steve Carter, Retiring Headteacher at The Telford Langley School

It has been an extremely difficult decision to leave such an amazing school community, but I believe that the time is right for me to step down. It has been a huge privilege to be the Headteacher at The Telford Langley School and I can say with all sincerity that I consider myself extremely lucky to have been the Headteacher in a school with such an exceptional team of staff, fantastic parents, and carers and of course, amazing students. Young people are great fun to be around, and every day the students at Telford Langley manage to make me smile, and it is the students that I will miss most of all.

It has been a pleasure to work with all the colleagues from Community Academies Trust. Whilst in post, I have remained fully committed to the ethos of 'Ensuring Excellence' and am grateful for having a team around me who lived by those same values. I would like to take this opportunity to share my best wishes for the future with the trust in general, but specifically The Telford Langley School as they continue on their improvement journey in pursuit of excellence.

Welcome to Emma Blount, Headteacher from September at The Telford Langley School

It is an absolute honour to have been appointed Headteacher of The Telford Langley School. Having been part of the school community since 2014, I have seen how committed pupils, staff and governors are to the ethos and values of 'Ensuring Excellence' at every level.



However, my appointment is bittersweet: I am sad to say a fond farewell to Steve Carter who has been a continued source of inspiration and support, whilst on the other hand I feel a great sense of pride and anticipation about the amazing opportunity presented to me. Steve will be a hard act to follow in many ways, especially his balance of humour and empathy. I cannot thank him enough for his advice and expertise over the years.

The entire school will have fond memories of Steve. We are all grateful for the passion and commitment that Steve has given to the school over the years. Steve's calm and considered approach has enabled the school to develop and grow into what it is today.

I look forward to continuing building on these foundations by working collaboratively with colleagues as part of Community Academies Trust. We are very fortunate to work as a partnership of schools to share effective, sustainable strategies to benefit all our pupils. I welcome the exciting challenge ahead. It is a real privilege and also a reassurance to have such a knowledgeable and experienced team around me.

The Wilnecote School looking to inspire the workforce of tomorrow!



Over the last four years, the careers team at The Wilnecote School have worked hard to improve the quality and variety of careers-based education and experience that are on offer for all students.

On Wednesday 22nd March Wilnecote hosted their first Careers Fair with over 50 visitors taking up a stand and talking to students across five year groups.

We had people from Sixth Forms, universities, and local businesses as well as apprenticeship providers, the armed forces, public services, and nationwide companies such as Santander, FedEx, and Network Rail. Volkswagen brought along a brand-new VW Campervan Cornwall which the students were able to sit in and explore. Drayton Manor, Tamworth Coop Funeral Services, Lichfield FC, and The Belfry all offered year 10 students work experience places. Staffordshire Fire & Rescue offered the opportunity to try a specific equipment on, and many of the stands brought little take away items such as pens, badges, and sweets.

Each year group was given one hour to explore all of the stands. They were also given an activity sheet to complete which was tailored both to each year group and specific to the visitors that we had in school. This sheet was a starting point for our students to have conversations with the different adults as well as a place to record some of the huge amount of information they received that day. Students got to learn about skills and qualifications needed for different jobs, the range of options available once they leave high school and some of the experiences that university offers.

In addition, they were given information on how and where to apply for apprenticeships as well as the different kinds available. The Polesworth School did a great job of explaining T-levels to students in years 10 and 11, giving many of them food for thought. There was also opportunity to discuss salary expectations, working patterns, uniform requirements and what happens on a daily basis in different jobs. There really was something for everyone.



Coronation Celebrations

I'm sure everyone has a story to tell about how they celebrated the coronation of King Charles III last month. Chadsmead Primary Academy recorded the event using a drone.

The whole school gathered in the school playground and formed themselves into a crown.

I think you'll agree the resulting photo was a royal triumph.



Budbrooke's Religious Diversity Awareness Day

Written by Shelley Hallam, RE Subject Leader at Budbrooke Primary School.

On Friday 21st April the whole school enjoyed a day celebrating and exploring different religions. We launched the day with an assembly where we discussed the meaning of religious diversity and shared a brief overview of the six main religions: Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam.

Each class was given a religion to focus on and they explored that religion in lots of exciting and immersive ways, this included origami, painting, drawing, making puppets, designing patterns, and writing fact files. The children used artefacts, stories, images, songs, and music to inspire their activities. We had a showcase at the end of the day to celebrate the amazing work completed by each class. We were really impressed by how well the children worked together and how well they combined their knowledge and creativity.





Milestones celebrated at The Telford Langley School

On Thursday May 4th, The Telford Langley School were proud to celebrate the long service of several staff.

Headteacher Steve Carter presented each of them with their award as a token of thanks for all their hard work over the years.

Mark Chetwood received an award for a phenomenal 40 years of service.

Pictured: Sarah Drew, Angela Donovan, Steve Carter, Mark Chetwood, Germaine Davies.

Germaine Davies has committed 30 years to the schools. Sarah Drew and Angela Donovan were both acknowledged for their 25 years. Sarah reached this milestone two years ago, but celebrations were postponed due to Covid. We can't show our appreciation enough towards these colleagues, so we were grateful to be able to publicly mark the occasion.



Food Glorious Food!

Over the last few weeks, food students have been busy... Year 11s at The Telford Langley School made 3 American themed dishes for their final practical, year 10s have made their own cheese and cooking club joined forces with reading club and made David Walliams inspired rat burgers.





Introducing....

Jen Harvey. Jen joined the trust as a Cluster Assistant at The Polesworth School and later joined the central Finance Team. Now she's the Trust Accountant and enjoys the odd bungee jump – these last two facts are not linked!

Hello, I'm Jen Harvey, the Trust Accountant. I am based in the Central Team at Dimbleby House in Tamworth, on the Stoneydelph Primary School site.

I have worked for the trust for over 8 years now, starting as a 'Cluster Assistant' at The Polesworth School back in 2015. I soon moved across to the CAT Finance Team and have loved getting more involved in the accounts each year. I also took part in a secondment to the School Support team for just over 12 months, which was a fantastic opportunity to get out and about meeting the schools and understand their different circumstances and personalities.

My role as Trust Accountant involves managing the finance team to pay all the supplier invoices to keep the goods and services running in the schools, preparing our annual financial statements and preparing for the internal and external audits. I also work closer with the other members of the CAT team to make sure the trust prepares and submits timely reports as required by the government. Being passionate about working with numbers and spreadsheets, I love my role and the great team I get to work with each day. Even though our reporting requirements can stay quite similar each year, no two days are the same, especially as we have recently implemented new finance systems across the trust.

Part of my role also involves administering the Apprentice Levy funds for the trust. Within the central team we have recruited two apprentices over the past 6 years. Both of whom still work for the finance team, and we are currently recruiting for a third. I have found the apprenticeships a fantastic way to employ new staff. Not only is the apprentice learning the theory about their profession, they also gain relevant hands on experience. The practical portfolio requirements really help build their workplace skills, such as communication and self-organisation. Part of our trust ethos is that we are all life-long learners, so offering Apprenticeships is a great extension of this.

Life-long learning is something I am keen to participate in myself. When I joined the Trust, I was part way through studying the AAT Level 3 in accounting. Last year, albeit slightly delayed due to the pandemic, I finally graduated with a first-class honours degree in Applied Accounting from Oxford Brookes University. This has only been possible with support from my colleagues centrally and staff in schools that responded to my questionnaire requests for my research project. So thank you all!

I have always been interested in education since having my first child now almost 20 years ago. Before working for the trust I was a governor and parent helper at a local primary school for many years, listening to the pupils read and helping with multiple school trips. It was a privilege to help and watch them grow over the years; from starting nursery and helping them select picture books to take home from the school library, to listening to them read fluently and discuss their favourite books as they move up through the junior years.

Away from work I am married and have three children. They certainly keep me on my toes as they are all very different. My eldest daughter Elizabeth is currently studying Classics at university. Louise is studying for her A Levels and is hoping to do a Higher-Level Apprenticeship in Engineering. James Jr is in year 7 and hopes to be either a rugby player, an engineer, or a farmer. I love to go skiing in France when I can, having been in a race team when I was younger. Something else people might not know about me is that I have done a bungee jump over Lake Taupo in New Zealand. It was a good experience, but I don't think I would do another one!



**COMMUNITY
ACADEMIES TRUST**

NETWORKING EVENT

MEET. TUNE IN. GROW
Admin and Data Manager
Wednesday 5 July at 10am
LETS CONNECT!

- EFFICIENT ABSENCE REPORTING
- MARKETING HUB
- ADMIN FIT FOR SEPTEMBER

Register your interest now via email to:
michelle.whittaker@taw.org.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


Below are some articles extracted from blogs written by some well known thinkers in education. Plenty of food for thought here....



 Ross Morrison McGill 
1 hour ago · 1 min

**Reading for Pleasure:
A whole School
Approach**



 Pep McCre
26 minutes ago · 2 min

**Psychological Safety or
How to boost
performance in school**



 Andy Tharby
6 minutes ago · 4 min

**We are what we do:
The case for explicit
and school wide...**

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

This half term I'm looking in particular at the new direction that teacher training is taking. You may be aware that the teacher recruitment and retention strategy, published by the DfE in 2019, announced a number of changes. Some, such as the Early Career Framework and revised NQOs, have happened, and some, such as the simplification of teacher training, are due to be implemented in 2024.

Whilst 2024 seems a while away to worry about now, the recruitment cycle for 2024 starts in October this year. With fewer HEIs involved in teacher training and the advent of national providers, who are not SCITTs or universities, being given new powers to confer QTS onto trainees, the marketplace has widened, and the process has in fact become even more complicated. DfE funding for training now stipulates that delivery partners providing a lead mentor now have to recruit 25 trainees as a minimum. It is not a secret that there is a national recruitment crisis. In order to recruit 25 trainees, the IoE, as an organization is looking to recruit a pipeline of good quality beginning teachers within our trust schools. We are working against stiff competition from SCITTs in our local regions and also having to address a lack of capacity within our own trust schools due to accommodating students on PGCE Core and BEd Programmes. Can we therefore ask that anyone who looks after ITT in our trust schools thinks about the potential of taking on a beginning teacher through the IoE in addition to your usual placements. **If you are looking to recruit for 2024, please talk to us about how we can support you.**

The sign up window for the autumn NQO cohort is now open, so a reminder to sign up with Best Practice Network <https://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk/>, and to use "CATTs" when requested to signpost your delivery partner.

Best Practice Network are also the provider for the Early Career Framework if you have any ECTs starting with you in September. Don't forget that we are using Golden Thread as an Appropriate Body and have negotiated a group fee. However, this fee is only available if your ECTs are signed up in this academic year. This "How To" guide can be found on the IoE website under "Resources".

Alexis Rickus
Director, CAT Institute of Education

HOW TO GUIDE ECT REGISTRATION

- 1

Register with an Appropriate Body

Register with the Golden Thread Teaching School Hub here: <https://www.early-career-teacher.co.uk/registration>
- 2

Register with DfE

Register your ECT and your Mentor here: <https://manage-training-for-early-career-teachers.education.gov.uk> Also tell DfE that Best Practice Network is your ECF training provider.
- 3

Register with Best Practice Network

Click here: <https://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk/early-career-framework> to register with Best Practice. Select "CATTs" as delivery partner when prompted.

Any queries regarding the registration process, please contact loe@catschools.uk and a member of the team will be happy to assist you.

If your ECT has completed Year 1 of their induction and is staying in the same setting for Year 2 for 2023/24 their induction will continue and you will not need to re-register any details.



Network and Expert Group News

A snapshot of what some of the groups will be up to in 2023/24. 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.

JOIN US ON ZOOM!

Wednesdays 3.30-4.30

- 20 Sept 23
- 22 Nov 23
- 17 Jan 24
- 6 Mar 24
- 15 May 24
- 3 July 24

The times they are a changing!

2023/24 will see the Network and Expert Groups join up and take place on the same night! This way we reduce the number of meetings out there!

There really is a huge amount of work going on behind the scenes as a result of these groups. Below are details of what just a few of these groups have planned for the year ahead.

If you want to be in the conversations, you have to come along to the sessions. Dates for your diary have been set.

Why not make it a date?



welcome to:
ASSESSMENT

Group Leader: Paul Hewitt
School: The Telford Langley School
 paul.hewitt@taw.org.uk
www.thecatoinstitute.org

The focus of the **Expert Group on Assessment** will be on supporting the delivery of Standardised Assessments across all schools in the trust.

The sessions will look at the different assessments being delivered across primary and secondary schools including the administration of the assessments alongside getting the most out of the reporting elements of the assessments.




welcome to:
RS NETWORK

Group Leader: Sarah Dennis
School: Chadsmead Primary Academy
 sarahdennis@chadsmead.staffs.sch.uk
www.thecatoinstitute.org

Network Group on RS will be examining:

- Subject knowledge CPD on Judaism, Christianity, Hindu Dharma, and festivals.
- Visits to local places of worship for teachers and trips.
- Assessment in Religion and Worldviews.
- Outdoor Religion and Worldviews.
- Curriculum design.
- Subject knowledge CPD on Humanism and personal worldviews.

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!



Network Group on Science will be examining:

- Discussion of activities for use in Stem/Science clubs.
- Discussion of the best resources to teach Science in the primary and secondary curriculum.
- Opportunities to have a science leader deliver subject knowledge to non-specialists.
- Access to directories of expertise.
- Opportunities to co-teach a Science lesson with shared use of equipment.
- Opportunities for a Science roadshow visit.
- Latest professional development opportunities shared.



Network Group on Cover Supervisors will be examining:

The group focus will be on dealing with setbacks e.g.,

- How can you avoid having a bad cover lesson again? How can you avoid that dreaded feeling?
- How can you get a good relationship and earn trust and respect from students even if you don't teach them/ see them every day?
- What to do to get agency staff wanting to come back? How to get "good and reliable" supply staff?

This group is particularly useful for Cover Supervisors, especially those who don't go into classrooms due to other commitments/ roles within the school.



Expert Group on Culture for Learning will be working on the CAT Teaching and Learning Toolkit to provide resources for day-to-day practice.

Domains of the focus will be:

- Creating an effective learning environment
- Managing routines and behaviours
- Fostering positive relationships

We would also like to think about how families can engage with this.

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.

Kingsway Community Primary School
@SchoolKingsway

The children really enjoyed the Small Breeds Farm.



Stoneydelph Primary School @StoneydelphPS · Apr 1
Thanks @TamworthLions for your donation of £200 towards our @KeepBritainTidy campaign. We will be working with Tamworth COOL Pickers (who donated high vis and litter pickers) to keep the Stoneydelph community litter free. @SchoolsCat



CPA Gardening Club @CpaGardening · May 5
@Chadsmeadschool - the gardening club has created a floral display to mark the Kings coronation. Well done children it looks great



Stratford-Upon-Avon Primary School @StratfordPrim · May 19
The start of our countdown to Year 6 leaving us 😊 Today they received their leavers hoodies. So proud of them all and the journey they have been on. Can't wait to see the next path they take #catschools #Year6



Birchwood Primary @BirchwoodPrim · May 16
Obrigado amigos! What a wonderful class assembly Hazel!! There was singing, samba dancing, poetry (The Rhythm of Life) & acting from the story 'The Sock Thief'. You should be proud of your performance. You are all stars 🌟🎭🎵🎨📖 @MichaelRosenYes @AnaCrespoBooks @SchoolsCat



Telford Park School Retweeted
TelfordParkSEND @telfordparkSEN · May 10
First therapy session in school for Honey and Miss Campion in our SEN teaching room 🐾🐾



The Telford Priory School @telfordpriory · May 19
★ YEAR 10 GOLDEN TICKET WINNERS! ★
Well done to Camron B, Frankie M, Elizabeth S, Reece P who are this weeks Golden Ticket Winners!
Each received 25 merits and a prize!
Keep up the amazing work 🙌
#tpsnews #GoldenTickets #winners



The Telford Priory School @telfordpriory · May 19
Year 11 students busy revising for their first big maths exam! Good luck to you all!
#tpsnews #Year11 #exam #revision #Exams2023



Polesworth School @PolesworthSchl · May 9
Well done to all of our students who were nominated for a variety of different reasons (such as their efforts in class, showing exemplary behaviour and taking part in events) to meet with our Deputy Headteacher- Mr Quinney on Thursday 4th May! 🙌👏🎉



Our Community Matters

