

Our Community Matters

September 2023
Issue Fifteen



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



#catschools/#schoolscat

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Centre for professional
development and school
improvement

Expert/Network Group News

This issue meets new
Director of Network
Groups, Neil Coleman
who shares his vision for
the future of the networks
and highlights the work of
the Science Network
Group.

Hello, and welcome back to this 15th edition of the OCM, which comes to you following a hopefully restful summer break.

This term sees some new faces in our Network and Expert Group teams, and we welcome them and look forward to working with them over the coming year.

First off, congratulations to Neil Coleman, Headteacher at Birchwood Primary School who successfully became the new Director of Network Groups. We look forward to the innovations that Neil brings with him as he takes on the development of the network groups. There's also been some changes in the expert leadership groups, Caroline O'Regan, Deputy Director of the IoE takes on leadership and coaching, and Rebecca Wright, at The Telford Park School takes on Secondary Literacy Expert Group. We wish them all well and are confident these groups are in safe hands.

This September also welcomes new Headteachers to our Trust. Emma Blount at The Telford Langley School we met in issue 14 of OCM and we meet David Foskett, the new Headteacher at The Wilnecote School in this issue. We also welcome Steph Rowett, who starts her Headship at Heathcote Primary School and who we look forward to hearing from in the next issue.

Looking forward to another great year ahead and can't wait to see what it brings.

Michelle, Editor
Our Community Matters



Stratford upon Avon Primary School children demonstrate their baking skills



Message from Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



A happy new academic year to you and a very warm welcome back. I especially welcome new staff and pupils - you are joining a wonderful professional staff team in your school and the wider family of over 1200 staff and 8500 pupils who work and learn across our schools.

Amongst all the new staff joining our trust, we centrally appointed some key members of staff:

Stephanie Rowett - Headteacher at Heathcote Primary School
Emma Blount - Headteacher at The Telford Langley School
Dave Foskett - Headteacher at The Wilnecote School
Lois Gordon - Executive Director (Finance and Operations)
Allyson Brown - Director of Schools - Primary - Allyson's role is new to our trust.

My personal thanks to the staff who have managed and led the work that has continued in our schools throughout the summer - there has been a lot going on, including summer schools, significant capital projects alongside the routine and crucially important day to day management of our sites.

In late July and August schools and pupils received examination results with so many individual success stories and achievements. These achievements have enabled successful progression into secondary schools, Post 16 education, higher education and the world of employment and apprenticeships. This is the result of a significant and wonderful collective effort from you all - congratulations.

This week provides our most significant opportunity in the year to make the most of that new start feel, and to deliver on the planning and policy developments in your school and across our trust, many of which have been lined up to launch today.

My best wishes for a fantastic term.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO

Ensuring Excellence

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

Chadsmead's got Talent!



Everyone who attended Chadsmead's Got Talent this year had a wonderful evening, and those who didn't attend certainly missed a treat!

We are incredibly proud of all the performers ranging from Year 1- Year 6. There were singers, dancers, magicians, musicians and actors who were all so confident to stand on stage and perform.

Some performed solo and some had organised their own group acts. Staff also entertained the audience: Mr Stevens and Mr Drew danced with the Y5/6 classes; Mrs Cadman played flute, Mr Budge got the audience participating as he sang and played guitar and many members of staff dressed up and danced to 'The Greatest Show' - the perfect piece of music to end an absolutely amazing evening. The date is already in the diary for next year, so if you missed out this year, do come along next time.

This event helped raise money for our school, so we are very grateful and proud of all the participants.

First Art Exhibition for The Polesworth School a huge success.

We held our first Polesworth Art Exhibition for GCSE Year 11, A-Level Year 12 and A-Level Year 13 art students' coursework and examination work for which part of our Rossetti building was transformed into our very own art gallery!

The official opening night of the exhibition was reserved for parents/carers of our young artists to view all of the work for the first time.

The exhibition showcased how talented our students are and the hard work they have put into their art over the length of their GCSE or A-Level qualification.

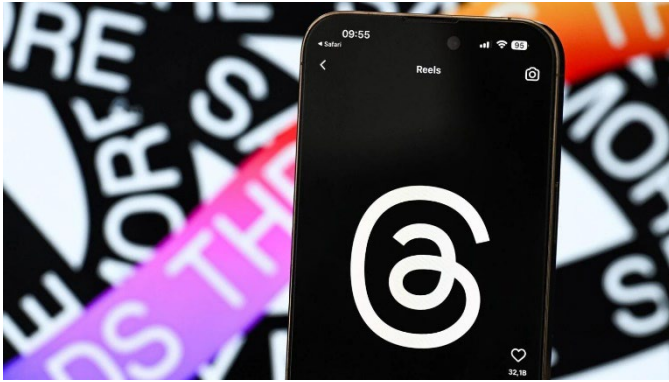
It was a fantastic, well-attended event in which attendees got to experience the diverse range of work on show and joined us in celebrating our students' success.



Threads! The new Twitter?

by Carl Savage, Communications Manager,
The Wilnecote School

It's important to remember that social media is a relatively recent phenomenon. Even Facebook, which is one of the pioneers, hasn't reached the 20-year mark yet.



On the 6th July, we saw the launch of Threads by Meta (Facebook's parent company) which shattered any assumptions that the sector had reached a plateau. Within just five days, Threads amassed over 100 million users (approximately 20% of Twitter's peak!).

Here are five key facts you should know (accurate at the time of this message but subject to change!).

- The official website for the service is threads.net, not threads.com, which is a distinct app focused on chat functionality.
- Threads is available in more than 100 countries, excluding the EU due to data protection concerns, although there are workarounds as always!
- Threads is exclusively accessible as a mobile app on iOS and Android devices. The threads.net website solely provides a QR code.
- Threads bears a striking resemblance to Twitter in terms of interface (unlike Instagram), albeit with a less robust search feature and slower posting due to the necessity of having content on your device to share.
- Presently, there is no integration with scheduling apps like Buffer or Hootsuite or even the Meta Business suite, which has made social media managers' lives busier than ever!

It's worth noting that unlike TikTok, which had a slow start and still faces instability due to governments considering bans in various countries, Threads appears to be a social media platform that will have longevity. Despite the threat posed by Mr. Musk challenging the app, it looks like both Twitter and Threads will learn to live together as the consumer votes with their fingers.

With the rise of fake social accounts associated with schools nationwide, has your school taken the necessary steps to secure not only the new Threads handle but also the handles on other major social media platforms?

If you require any assistance regarding the topics discussed in this article, please feel free to reach out to me. I'll be more than happy to help.

carlsavage@wilnecotehighschool.org

Introducing....

September 2023 sees our trust welcome David Foskett as the new Headteacher for The Wilnecote School. David tells us how much he is looking forward to returning to the town where he himself went to secondary school. We wish David the very best in his new role.

Hello, I am David Foskett and I am delighted to be the new headteacher of the Wilnecote School in Tamworth.

It is a real privilege to lead Wilnecote on the next steps of its journey following the improvements shown over the last few years. It is clear from my visits to the school, this progress to date is very much due to a talented and dedicated body of staff.

This position sees me return to the town where I went to secondary school. I have very fond memories of growing up in the community where I developed my love of sport. Sport played a key part in my career choice and has instilled in me the values of hard work, resilience and determination. From an early age I had a part time job at one of Tamworth's leisure centres working with younger children and later led the annual holiday sports camp each Summer when returning from university. These experiences had me hooked on the impact I could have as a sports coach and later as a teacher.

I have worked predominantly in schools in the West Midlands, starting my teaching career in 1995 as a PE teacher. My first teaching job was at a school in Walsall where I was to spend the next 18 years taking on new challenges and securing increased responsibility, mostly focusing on developing teaching and learning and student leadership. Whilst there, the school was granted Sports College status, the first in Walsall. We were blessed with funding only dreamed of today, but closely linked to success criteria and DFE oversight. A proportion of the funding had to be spent on the local community and I was able to lead projects in local primary schools and with community sports groups.

During my time in Walsall, I was fortunate to participate in a teacher exchange programme which saw me travel to Gondar in Ethiopia. I was left in awe of the aspirations and commitment to learning shown by the students I met and have tried to instill these in those I teach ever since.

From Walsall, I moved schools to a school in West Bromwich in 2013 and some would say, "out of the frying pan and into the fire". Here I was to experience both curriculum and pastoral Vice Principal roles.

The school went through a rollercoaster ride of OFSTED judgements, and I was one of the senior team that led the school from inadequate to good in just over a year. However, I am probably most proud of how my school responded to the pandemic, supporting a local community where deprivation and unemployment were high. Working in such a community really showed me that education truly can change lives.



I have been fortunate to work closely with several excellent headteachers who provided fine role models for the headteacher I want to become. I am really looking forward to applying my experience to secure the very best education for all of the students at The Wilnecote School and working within this supportive trust.

WE'RE HIRING!

We're Looking For You

Professional Network Chairs
Art & Design Technology
Geography
Performing Arts (Temporary)

Requirements:

- ▶ Strong organisational skills
- ▶ Experience of collaboration
- ▶ Inspirational leader

Closing date for applications: Monday 11th September 2023

Interviews: Wednesday 13th September 2023
9.00am at Birchwood Primary School

Letters of application to:
✉ ioe@catschools.uk



Exciting opportunity to shape the future of our Trust

Professional Development Opportunities

This is an exciting opportunity to shape the future of our Trust schools through the leadership of collaborative, cross-phase activities which support school improvement, professional enrichment, and professional growth.

We are looking for applicants who:

- Hold a leadership role in one of our schools which has the relevant national curriculum area within its remit
- Has strong organisational and interpersonal skills
- Has experience of chairing meetings and other collaborative events in an efficient and inclusive manner which gets the most out of everyone involved
- Believes in the power of collaboration for improvement and professional enrichment.
- Is a passionate professional who places value on people and relationships and knows how to promote effective collaboration which supports school improvement, professional enrichment, and professional growth.

Applicants are invited to express an interest in one of the roles as follows:

On one side of A4 (min 11-point font), please outline your experience in the relevant NC/focus area and provide evidence that describes how you meet each of the bullet points described in the person specification.

Please return to ioe@catschools.uk by 12pm on Monday 11th September 2023.

Interviews will take place at The Birchwood School on Wednesday 13th September 2023.

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 you'll find a report on the outcomes following the CAT TA Conference held at the end of June and a summary of a presentation on literacy made at ResearchEd Warrington in May.


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

 Michelle Borders 
a few seconds ago · 2 min 

Effective Communication in the Classroom



 Sarah Bagshaw-McCormick 
1 minute ago · 8 min 

The power of teaching literacy

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

Firstly, welcome back to the new academic year. I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you of some upcoming opportunities for which there are very short deadlines.

National Professional Qualifications - there is still time to apply. Currently these qualifications are fully funded by the DfE. This funding has only been guaranteed until the end of this academic year. If you are considering investing in your own professional development, this may be the last opportunity for you to participate on a **fully funded** basis. The CAT IoE will be delivering the **NPQ LBC, LT** and **LTD** as well as the **NPQSL** in partnership with Best Practice Network. The deadline to apply will be 25 September 2023. If you apply and you wish to be in a cohort with your CAT colleagues, then please ensure you select "CATTs" as your delivery partner and "Scholarship" When it asks about payment methods. Further information and the link to apply is here:

<https://www.bestpracticenetwork.co.uk/npq>

Network Chair Vacancies - you will have seen an advert earlier in this newsletter about vacancies for network chairs to fill the posts in Geography, Art & Design technology and a temporary cover for Performing Arts. If you have a passion for your subject and you would like to develop collaborative working across our trust, then do please apply. There are 6 meetings per year (one per half term) over zoom. We have had some great work emerging from these groups, from conferences, to shared resources. The closing date for applications is very soon, so do please think about applying.

For this academic year, we have listened to feedback and, in order to cut back on the number of meetings, we are holding network and expert group meetings at the same time. Dates for your diary for 2023/24 are below. Meetings will continue to be on Zoom and the link will continue to be displayed on the IoE website www.thecat.institute.org. Meetings are 3.30 - 4.30pm.

20 Sept 23

22 Nov 23

17 Jan 24

6 Mar 24

15 May 24

3 July 24

And finally, The DfE has published a new version of 'The reading framework', which now provides non-statutory evidence-based guidance for teachers and school leaders on teaching reading up to year 9.

Developed with contributions from reading and language experts from across the literacy sector and school leaders, the guidance supports teachers and school leaders in evaluating their teaching of early reading and shares best practice for improving. You can view the new version of 'The reading framework':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-reading-framework-teaching-the-foundations-of-literacy>

I hope you can take advantage of the opportunities that are available and look forward to working with you this year.

Alexis Rickus
Director, CAT Institute of Education



Network and Expert Group News

We meet new Director of Network Groups, Neil Coleman, Headteacher at Birchwood Primary School.

Welcome to new Director of Network Groups, Neil Coleman

It is an honour and a privilege to have been appointed as Director of Network Groups.

Having been part of the Community Academies Trust since its inception in 2012 I have always been a supporter of collaborative working between schools and now I am really looking forward to playing a more prominent role in driving standards and sharing excellent practice across our Trust.

Our Trust is filled with brilliant people, and I believe that together we can continue to enhance the learning experiences for all our children. I am excited to have the opportunity to work alongside and learn from colleagues from across our schools and I am keen to tap into their expertise and share this for the benefit of all.

The aim of our professional network groups is to support the development of high quality, innovative practice. The network groups will eventually support all curriculum areas and together will play a key role in developing our Trust 'Play Book' (part of our Teacher Toolkit).

We are keen to get as many staff involved as possible. Network Groups come together every half term with the first meeting for this academic year planned for Wednesday 20th September. If you have not yet signed up to join one of the Professional Network or Expert groups, please register so that you are able to join in with the sessions.



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

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

Science Road Show



The Science Network Group offers lots of support in science to both primary and secondary schools within the trust.

In recent meetings we have produced directories of expertise as well as setting up a Science Road Show where Becks Wilkinson from The Polesworth School went over to Stonydelph Primary School and was able to deliver a fun filled transition session to their Y5 pupils.

Children were able to see the equipment in action which isn't normally used until secondary school and were also able to design and launch their own water rockets.

The Science Network Group is hoping to partner up more primary and secondary schools and facilitate the delivery of transition activities moving forwards and with sessions

planned already, this will decrease workload on teachers.

In addition, future plans involve opportunities to have a science leader deliver subject knowledge to non-specialists where appropriate. If this is something you are interested in, please join the group at future meetings.



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.

Stoneydelph Primary School @StoneydelphPS · Jul 24
Thank you to Miss Fox and staff team for organising our circus spectacular. Team Stoneydelph go above and beyond everyday to make sure our children have amazing learning opportunities, memorable experiences and fantastic fun. What an incredible end to our year! 🎉🎊🎈
@SchoolsCat



Heathcote Primary @Heathcote_PS · Jul 7
🥕🥔🍆🥒🥬🥕 Holly class have enjoyed harvesting the potatoes, peas, carrots, lettuce and radish which they have grown in their outdoor area. Today they chopped up the potatoes and made their own chips and salad!
@SchoolsCat @CATTSAlliance #Holly #HomeGrownVeg #OutdoorLearning



@Grange_Park_Gardening @GardeningPark · Jul 22
Yesterday, we had one last harvest before the summer break!
@RHSSchools
@potatoes4school
@GWandShows
#allotment #potatoes #beetroot #rhubarb #courgettes #gyo



1 4 14 672

Careers @ TPS @Careers_TPS · Jul 20
Well done to the Y9 who have taken part in the steps to success project this term, and especially to Kenneth who won the shining star award! Thank you to Future Focus for organising this great project. #aspire #pathways #routesintowork #aspiretoHE @TelfordWrekin



TelfordParkSEND @telfordparkSEN · Jun 23
Thank you to @CATTSAlliance for todays TA conference. Our TA representatives have a great day and loved their goody bags!
#refresher #everydayisalearningday



The Telford Priory School @telfordpriory · Jul 19
TPS Sports Awards Evening 🏆
Team of the year 🏆
#tpsnews



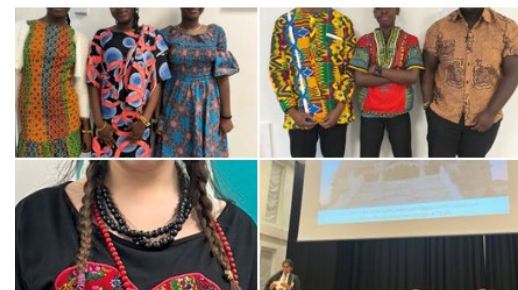
Birchwood Primary @BirchwoodPrim · Jun 27
Well done to all our year one children on sports day! You all did your very best and worked as a team! You should all be very proud of yourselves.
@SchoolsCat



Polesworth School @PolesworthSchl · Jul 18
One of our students (JP in Year 9) has been put forward for the People's Choice Award by the Royal Academy of Arts. Please see the portrait below which JP has drawn and follow the link for more details on how to vote for JP's amazing work: youngartists.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibitions/20...



Holly Rigby @HollyRigby1 · Jul 18
celebration of cultures @telfordprksch today, thank you to everyone who contributed towards a very special day #teampark 🧡



Our Community Matters

