

Our Community Matters

September 2021
Issue Three



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



#catschools

Editor: Michelle Borders
communications@catschools.uk

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I hope you managed to have a restful summer break and that you managed to find some time to recharge those batteries. Just in case you need any more re-energising for the coming year, click the video above and watch the children from Woodloes Primary School, our Headspace feature this month, talk about how great their school is.

There are plenty of new initiatives starting this term. In this issue, we're meeting the new Directors of Professional Networks and Expert Groups to find out what they have planned for us as we enter this new phase in our development; a particularly poignant time as we approach our first decade as a Multi Academy Trust.

Another new initiative is the birth of the Blog! Evidenced by the last issue, there are a lot of colleagues out there keen to write about pedagogy, their experiences, and what they have learned from putting theory into practice. There were so many requests to be included, and the material we received was so good, we wanted to include everything. So, we created the OCM Journal. The Education Matters articles for this, and future issues, can be found on this platform. You can follow your favourite subject, contributor, or contribute your own. Simply sign up here: <https://www.theocmjournal.com/>.

And finally, this publication is about the people who make up our community, and I'm thrilled to introduce Simon Atkins who is the Chair of our Board of Trustees. Our Trustees govern our organization and are the ultimate decision-making body, shouldering responsibility for our collective effectiveness. The group of governors who work to govern your school is a subcommittee of Simon's Board. The trustees safeguard the ethos of our trust and are responsible for ensuring we all deliver on our Trust's charitable objective - "the advancement of education for public benefit". Keep an eye out for Simon, he'll be out and about, visiting schools again soon."

As usual, if you're tweeting, remember the hashtag! #catschools!

Michelle, Editor Our Community Matters



Message from Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



Welcome to the new academic year.

September is mainly a time to look forwards. With the easing of restrictions, this term looks as though it will be as close to normal as we have seen since September 2019. The start of a new academic year always has a freshness to it, a sense of anticipation and optimism for the year ahead. New staff and pupils join our schools and many of the initiatives we have been working on in the summer term come to fruition. This is true this year once again - only even more so. Exciting new initiatives combined with a return to many of the things we have held dear in the past but had to change or abandon during COVID.

Representing our trust, as your employer, I am determined that the collective power of our network of 18 schools plays into this new term feel and sense of positive change and innovation. That is why we have put a range of things in place designed to support you to professionally benefit, not only because of your work in your school, but also because you are an employee of our trust. So, you now have a range of professional opportunities in addition to those that will be provided at your school.

You can now....

- Join a Professional Network and work with colleagues from other schools in our trust who do a similar job to you (more info later in this newsletter from Sian Hartle, Head of The Wilnecote School and Director of Professional Networks)
- Join an Expert Group if you are passionate about one of the expert group areas and want to contribute to new innovative development work in those areas (more info later in this newsletter from Holly Rigby, Head of The Telford Park School and Director of Expert groups)
- Work with your professional coach as part of the new trust wide Growing Great People approach to your professional growth setting targets that will help you become even more effective in your role
- Contribute to the trust wide development projects led by colleagues from our schools, who are looking to put new consistent trust wide provision in place across our schools in the areas of staff welfare (led by Matt Clark - a teacher from Woodloes), Pupil Experiences (led by Chris Quinney DHT from Polesworth) and Vulnerable Pupils (led by Richard Grant SENDCO from Wilnecote). This is in addition to the work led by Jo Howell (our trust lead for safeguarding and relationships) on pupil mental health.
- Sign up to the OCM Journal: <https://www.theocmjournal.com/> for some wonderful examples of how our colleagues lead and achieve excellence every day in their classrooms and schools.

These will provide professionally enriching experiences for you, only possible because your school is part of our family of schools that is the Community Academies Trust.

I personally appreciate your enormous professional achievements last year, and that of the pupils who left our schools either secondary ready or with qualifications that have enabled them to keep progressing despite everything the virus has thrown their way. The wonderful work over the summer - whether it be managing the mountain of maintenance and capital works going on throughout trust, providing summer schools or preparing for the start of term including for our secondaries the establishment of COVID testing sites. Thankyou for your contribution to this collective success.

I am looking forward to meeting with you once again this term to reflect on some important aspects of working in our trust and to learn from you in the interests of our wider plans. I do hope you enjoy reading the rest of this edition of Our Community Matters.

Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO

Introducing....

Simon Atkins, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Community Academies Trust



Meet Simon Atkins, our Trust's Chair of Trustees. Trustees are members of the public who share the expertise they have reaped in their professional lives and share it for the benefit of our Trust.

I am a trustee and current Chair of the Board of Community Academies Trust along with being a member of the charitable company that is home to CAT's 18 schools.

My involvement with CAT goes back to October 2012 when I was appointed to the Board of Trustees. However, my association with Polesworth goes back much further than that. Rewind the clock to the 1980s and you'd find me as a pupil at Polesworth County First and Middle Schools (which later became Birchwood Primary School) and, for a time, at Dordon Primary School when the Middle School was largely destroyed by fire.

I then attended The Polesworth School and left the Sixth Form in 1994 before heading to the University of Warwick to study mathematics. My journey to the CAT Board began in 2011 when I joined the local governing body of Birchwood

after being approached by Ed May to assist with the conversion of Birchwood from a local authority school to an academy and then joining forces with The Polesworth School to become Community Academies Trust. It was an exciting time as the academy "movement" was in its early stages and we were leading the way with the establishment of a multi-academy trust.

I have always had a keen interest in education and ensuring the best possible opportunities for the children and young people in our care. Indeed, my own children were attending Birchwood at the time and my eldest has just finished his school education after finishing at Polesworth Sixth Form in June of this year.

CAT began to grow rapidly, and we soon welcomed both Dordon Primary School and Wood End Primary School to our family. Following quickly from that, I joined the Board of Telford Co-Operative Multi-Academy Trust as we worked hard to reshape our Telford schools and we soon welcomed our three Telford secondaries to the Trust.

Fast forward to June 2021 and we have 18 schools in our trust, an inspirational staff team of almost 1,350 and approaching 8,400 pupils and students in our care.

My role as Chair of the Board is to work with my fellow trustees (Gary Brown, Stuart Mason, Shaun Sibley, Sally Stewart, Ron Vernon and Steve Wallis) to set the vision and future direction of CAT. We meet six times a year with Philip, Ed and Alison (our executive team) to review both the educational and financial performance of the trust.

We are responsible for setting budgets, allocating capital funding across the trust and work with our local committees to ensure all the schools in our trust are delivering the best educational experience possible for our pupils and young people.

As part of my role, I meet regularly with the Regional Schools Commissioner, Department for Education and the Education and Skills Funding Agency to discuss the achievements of CAT and our strategic plan and overall direction.

My day job sees me working with around 60 academies and multi-academy trusts as an audit Partner at Cooper Parry - a regional accountancy and audit firm. I spend my time advising my clients and ensuring their compliance with the rules and regulations issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. I can share with CAT the best practice that I see from my client base and through my role advising my clients, am able to contribute to the wider academy sector.

Outside of work, and CAT, I can often be found cycling or walking around the Polesworth area and enjoy, when we can, holidaying in Europe (especially Italy) and hiking in the Lake District and Scotland.

As COVID restrictions ease, I hope to be able to "get on the road" and visit all our CAT schools again and so hope to see some of you soon.

Head Space

Schools in the Spotlight:

Introducing Woodloes Primary School

by Headteacher, Andy Mitchell



I am delighted to have the opportunity to provide our friends across the Trust with a bit more information about the amazing Woodloes Primary School community. The headlines are that we are a two-form entry primary school with a nursery that can be found just on the outskirts of Warwick, and our children and staff are simply fantastic!

It started for me in 2009, when I was appointed to lead the amalgamation of two schools: Woodloes Infant and Woodloes Junior. It was a grand plan: amalgamate two schools, whilst managing the construction of new school buildings on a new campus, co-located with a special school. Simple!

We moved into new buildings in the June after working on a construction site since the previous September. Being committed educationalists, we had tried to maximise the learning opportunities that being a building site presented but it is fair to say we were ready to embrace our new accommodation when the time came, and we haven't looked back since.

The ethos of Woodloes was forged in those early days of community collaboration and our school motto; 'Loving, learning together' has captured this philosophy since day one. We started with lots of questions rather than providing quick answers, some examples being:

What kind of school do you want your children to attend?

What do you want your children to have learned and be good at before they go to secondary school?

What personal qualities would you like your children to develop?

This discussion with members of our school community, the children and staff led to the formation of our school charter and the fundamental principle of co-construction and professional collaboration took hold.

Fast forward 12 years, and 5 Ofsted inspections, and you will see how far we have progressed. We have embraced an 'inspiring and challenging curriculum which creates an environment where questioning, academic risk-taking and the freedom to learn from mistakes are encouraged,' one which is current, reflective, engaging and personalised to the pupils and the local community it serves. To deliver this, our wonderful team of staff skillfully plan a variety of topic hooks and sequences of learning, generated using high quality and engaging texts. This equips our children with a life-long love of learning in all areas of the curriculum and provides them with the knowledge and skills needed for future success.

Outdoor learning is also a hallmark of the Woodloes experience, and we have developed excellent provision for Forest Schools through investment and the development of our outdoor areas. If we can't deliver it on site, then we also like to go and explore and we have a great range of off-site visits and destinations that are typical of our curriculum experience. We also take our children on two residential trips, one to Marle Hall and the other to the Eden Project in Cornwall which provide great enrichment for our curriculum as well as giving our children great preparation for transition to secondary school. We can't wait until restrictions are lifted and we can return to these amazing spaces!

Our ethos of collaboration and professional support led to us converting to become an academy in 2015 which is when we joined the Community Academies Trust. The vision for the Trust was very much aligned to our own and this was a positive next step for the continued evolution of our school community and since then, we have helped with the construction and launch of Heathcote Primary School as well as establishing and leading the Woodloes Teaching Partnership.



Our biggest asset by far are our children and staff and we are immensely proud of their achievements together. The pandemic has presented many challenges, but it has also been the catalyst for innovation and community cohesion. As restrictions start to lift, I wonder how many of the solutions we have developed together will remain part of our provision in a post-pandemic era?

I hope I have given you a flavour of who we are, where we've come from and where we are going. The new school year offers us a wonderful opportunity to reflect



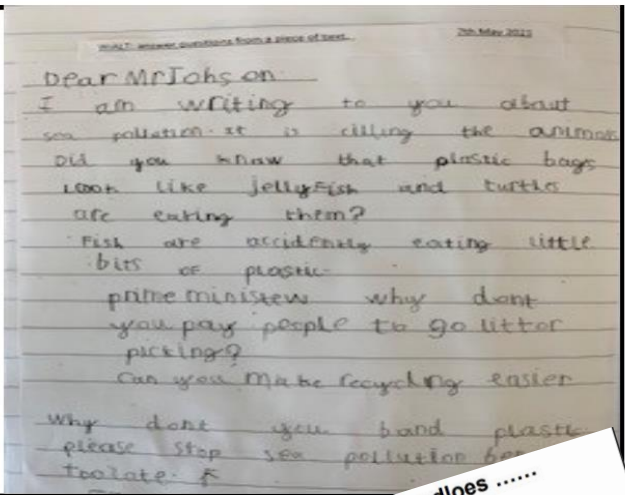
and move forward with renewed enthusiasm and determination. We are very proud to be part of a much wider family of schools in the Trust and if there is any part of our story that has piqued your interest then please get in touch and we can write some new chapters together.

Photo & Caption

'You are never too small to make a difference.'

Year 1 have been so moved whilst learning about sea pollution and how it's caused, that they wrote to the prime minister! The children told Mr Johnson how they felt and what they learned and then suggested solutions to the plastic waste problem.

We're so proud of them for finding their voices.



What I love about Woodloes

I like doing phonics because I'm good at it!
Bethany
Year 1

What I love about Woodloes

In Year 5 we are enjoying all of our learning. We are having fun in our bubbles and working hard too.
Freya

What I love about Woodloes

In Year 6, if we don't understand something in maths, we start off with it the next day and then it usually makes sense!
Logan, 6BU

What I love about Woodloes

I love how all the teachers, especially mine (Mrs Khaira) is fair, kind and fun! I know that your first time here is scary, but it gets more joyful

What I love about Woodloes

I like playing 'Fairies' with my friends.
Rose
Year 1

What I love about Woodloes

I love Woodloes because my teacher is amazing because he teaches me things I never knew.
Pupil from Class 3C

Ensuring Excellence



Introducing the Telford CAT Arts Hub

I was delighted to discover the existence of the Telford CAT Arts Hub. This is a collaboration between our trust schools based in Telford, primary and secondary alike. It's an amazing opportunity for schools to celebrate the Arts together. Each school is part of an Arts Ambassador Network and has an Arts Ambassador teacher dedicated to sharing the value of the Arts in working collectively and creatively. I'm thrilled to give you a taster from the Art Ambassadors themselves of some of the activities that students and staff across the Telford schools have been enjoying as part of this new initiative.

Here at Windmill Primary School, during this strange academic year, we have introduced the use of sketchbooks to enhance our art and design lessons. Staff and children have embraced linking their art skills to their cornerstones units and making connections to a wide range of artists. These skills have then been brought together to introduce some fantastic final works!



Here are some examples of our sketch books works linked to the themes 'The scented Garden' with a focus on collage and mixed media, 'Moon Zoom' with a focus on black and white and printing, 'Tribal Tales' with a focus on texture and thinking about what it would be like to create a 'cave painting' like the first artists, and 'Alchemy Island' with a study on Hundertwasser.



We are busy thinking ahead to the Summer Term when we will host our annual Creative Arts Week where our theme is 'Decades'. We look forward to sharing this with you in the future.

Here at The Telford Park School, we invest a lot of time to the Arts and really value what they add to our school. At KS3, students have Performing Arts and Art lessons and at KS4 we offer courses in Acting, Music, Interactive Media, Art and design and DT.

We took part in the CAT arts project last year which allowed our students to take part in Dance workshops. Next year students are looking forward to working with Roz a fashion designer from Complex Simplicity on designing some sustainable fashion wear to be modelled in a fashion show.



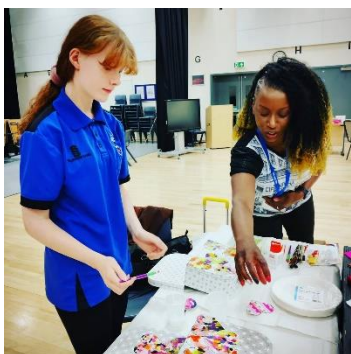
Here at Grange Park Primary School, all year groups have been busy creating theme-based art works which combine skills-based lessons with inspirations found in nature and the work of famous artists. Year 6 have been using a mixture of paint, coloured paper, patterned paper, tissue, cardboard, felt tips and crayons to create mini collages of the heart and blood. Year 3 have been learning about the power of our Earth, including volcanoes and tsunamis: we had loads of fun using splatter paint techniques to create images of erupting volcanoes and we loved working together to make a huge collage inspired by Hokusai's 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa'. Nursery and Reception have been letting their imaginations run wild with their creative topic, 'Puddles and Rainbows'.



The Telford Priory School, have also been busy and despite the constraints of lockdown, continued to provide opportunities for students to excel in all their Arts subjects. As you may have seen in lockdown one, the music department at The Telford Priory had amazing success with their version of I'm Still Standing being seen by Elton John. Not wishing to rest on their laurels, they've created another music video covering Backstreet Boys "Backstreets Back". They've also been keeping the choir and orchestra busy on Teams.



Our Arts Ambassadors have also been hard at work over lockdown. They are working towards their Bronze Arts Award and were tasked with watching a performance and writing a review (some of which will be shared in later editions) and researching a favourite Arts practitioner. Some of those chosen include Christopher Bruce, Lin Manuel Miranda and Banksy. Our Year 7 Ambassadors are also very keen to plan a trip to the West End as soon as we can do an educational visit - top choices include Wicked and the Lion King. The students are planning an assembly to promote the visit and a ballot to select the show we see.



The Telford Langley School expressed how much their students really enjoy the Arts at their school and how they loved being involved in the first CAT project last year. Dance was something that Langley students hadn't had the opportunity to experience in lessons, so they really threw themselves into the work.

Arts Ambassador at Telford Langley said how much they were looking forward to joining forces again and showing off their work in the forthcoming fashion show next year. The collaborative work between schools is great for students and staff alike.



If you've been inspired by what you've read to set up your own Arts Ambassadors Schools Network, you can find out more about the process here: <https://www.artconnect.co.uk/what-were-doing/arts-ambassadors/>

The 2-year programme seeks to develop quality arts and cultural provision across a network of schools, developing teacher leadership skills and practice, empowering young people, and placing pupil voice at the heart of arts activity. A network has a minimum of 5 schools, and a maximum of 8. Check out the website for details on how the programme works and what sort of commitments are expected.

A story to inspire!

Readers of the previous issue of OCM may recall Y7 Veronika K from The Telford Park School. Her Headteacher, Mrs Rigby, requested that we include her piece on the Tempest, in our last edition of the OCM. Well, this issue we get to learn a little bit more about Veronika. She certainly seems to have inspired her English Teacher with this written piece. Veronika only moved to England in the past few years and English is her second language. When phoning home to congratulate her, Mrs Nolan, Veronika's teacher, was very pleased to hear that Veronika had researched all the schools in Telford and had chosen The Telford Park School, because it was the school, she loved the most. This story brightened everyone's day at Telford Park School and Headteacher Mrs Rigby asked that we include her assessment piece in this newsletter to share with you. Hopefully, it brightens your day as well.

<p>7 a Breaking the rules Friday 30th April 2021</p> <p>Four walls. Minutes passed yet nothing happened. The sun hid away in sorrow and the clouds faded into different shades of gray. My mind wandered about but stayed blank. The colour drained from my room, or so it seemed. Being trapped in one room, felt like it was torture to my creativity. Motivation left me empty-minded and every little sound infuriated me. Was I going insane? The walls felt like they were moving and that I was falling deeper into the rabbit hole of boredom.</p> <p>hearing against my wall, something caught my colourless eyes. Greenery. The small bit of colour made my eyes open and my mouth create the shape of an 'o'. My mind cleared and started feeling like the bars to my metaphorical prison cell started to open. Starting to close in, the walls felt like they were suffocating me. Panic. Fear set in me and the hopeful emotion from before evaporated. I snatched my belongings, trying not to make much noise and frantically dashed for the door. Enough was enough, I desperately had to leave, for a short amount of time anyway.</p> <p>Creeping down the stairs, I made sure nobody was around. Perfect timing. Grabbing my keys, I plunged them into the keyhole and locked the pearly white door behind me. The clouds ran with me, fading back to their origina original snow-</p>	<p>white colour. Green grass was swayed by the wind's melody and the pathway looked incredibly neat. I swiftly took out my phone and looked at my battery percentage, which frightened me since it was that low. I put it back and found myself stumbling upon a magnificent forest.</p> <p>Choked by its own overgrown branches, the forest resembled a sprawling fortress, barricading the Earth from the warmth of the sun and the blue of the sky. A carpet of fine evergreen needles covered the forest floor, perfuming the clearing with a pungent, yet sweet scent. The loneliness felt so comforting, it was deceptive. The weeping willow tree invited me to rest against it, until I heard a ring coming from my phone...</p> <p>loneliness - loneliness - loneliness - loneliness</p>
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Launch of careers hub to transform careers education at The Telford Priory School

Imran Iqbal, Deputy Headteacher at The Telford Priory School, talks here about the launch of the LEP Careers Hub.

Careers Hubs are groups of schools working together with local employers, universities and training providers. They focus on improving skills and opportunity for young people tailored to local need and have been proven to accelerate improvement in young people's career development.

Wilnecote's Y7 have been giving witness testimonies in French to Stop the Thief!

Year 7 students have been learning to talk and write about their school uniform in French. But to further test their French superpowers they encountered a thief in their midst.

"Stop Thief" is an activity designed to make students think on the spot and to put their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar to the test.

The class had been warned at the start of the lesson, that someone had been entering school premises to steal items.

They were told to keep their eyes peeled for anyone acting suspiciously and to be prepared to provide witness statements if needed. Little did they know that their powers of observation and French would be put to the test so soon. At approximately 15 minutes into the lesson, a very suspicious-looking character entered room 53 and stole Mrs. Whiffin's mobile 'phone. In pairs, students had to quickly provide witness statements in French in which they had to give an accurate description of what the criminal was wearing.



The students were very accurate in their observations and their written French provided vital information. Of course, the criminal wasn't real, but a member of staff, who gamely agreed to dress the part for Mrs. Whiffin. But who was he.....?

Wilnecote Students demonstrate how they made their own light shine

The Wilnecote School's Year 7 Design and Technology students have spent this term exploring paper and card so they can develop their 3D design skills.

Students have created a 'card lamp' over the last few weeks leading up to the half-term holiday. Students have used various layers to create a beautiful, silhouetted landscape of their choice.

Before they can show off their silhouette landscape, they were going to need a light to project through the rear of the design. In Year 7 we don't just hand them a light off the shelf, we like to encourage them to learn about basic electronics at an early age, so students this week have been learning how to make a paper circuit to create a switchable LED light. Students can now insert their light into their card structure to see their silhouette in all its glory.

Mrs Smith, head of Art & D&T said "The students have embraced this project with great enthusiasm, it has been great to see them understand how electronics work. I cannot wait to see their finished projects in all its glory".



Education Matters

We talk to the newly appointed Director of Professional Networks and Director of Expert Groups to find out a little more about their plans for the future and how colleagues can get involved.

Directing Networks

By Sian Hartle Headteacher, The Wilnecote School,
Director of Professional Networks

The interview for the Director roles required applicants to articulate their vision for this new aspect of CAT's development.

Having completed my interview for Director of Professional Networks at CAT, I sat back and reflected on whether I had that vision right. That may seem strange having been successful in obtaining the role but, in the ever-expanding nature of possibilities in our network of eighteen schools, that vision can grow and develop and sometimes alter. It is a good job therefore, that the request for this article came about after a few weeks in the job when I had thought more, tried out my ideas on others (thank you Philip, Ed and Holly) and gleaned important collaborative perspectives from education, business and industry.

The educational landscape is, in one sense, a giant professional network all its own - schools, the DfE, MATs, professional associations, education charities, LAs, Ofqual, awarding bodies, education pundits on Twitter...the list goes on and on. We learn from it and we contribute to it. But sometimes, this huge network can be greedy - it makes constant demands without consultation and appears not to listen.



I want our CAT professional networks to be different to the behemoth. I want them to be intimate and agile, like-minded and inclusive and to offer every person who becomes involved, both teacher and support staff member, a chance to develop professionally and personally through their interaction with diverse colleagues.

Our networks, be they subject-based or role-based, will move from professional collaboration to collaborative professionalism. Unlike the giant network of the education sector, our CAT networks will ensure that *'the currency of real networking is not greed but generosity'* (Keith Ferrazi). We will share our developments, make our improvements and, in doing so, contribute to better provision and outcomes for the c8400 children within our trust in whom we are all so invested. I am so looking forward to as many people as possible contributing to that vision through our networks.

You will hear more about the available networks over the coming weeks. Please do feel that one (or more!) is the right home for you and, if at some point you feel that a viable network opportunity is missing, do make me aware.

If you wish to contact Sian about getting involved with professional networks across our trust, then you can do so at SHartle@wilnecotehighschool.org



You don't need to be an expert to be part of an expert group!

By Holly Rigby, Headteacher The Telford Park School
Director of Expert Groups

As the trust continues its journey of growth and development, it is a privilege to have been appointed as Director of Expert Groups.

During the pandemic I am sure that you, like me, have felt alone at times. However, as the summer holidays approach and we take the time to reflect, we should be so proud of the professional agility we have demonstrated and the speed with which we, as part of our school teams, have implemented change. There is so much we have learnt, and can continue to learn, that will help us move forward together successfully in a more thoughtful and sustained way. The expert groups will help develop a school's robustness to cope during a challenging time and /or adapt to rapid change by having easier access to and understanding of great ideas and resources. Those ideas and resources will be based on an innovative approach to research and evidence informed practice.

I am a passionate believer in the power of collaboration. When groups of people, who represent their schools, come together, special things begin to happen. Collectively, we all share and believe in the vision of 'ensuring excellence' in all we do. The expert groups will provide a level of support and collective learning that no single school could achieve on its own. I am aware that across our schools there is already so much amazing practice that takes place. However, ad hoc professional development does not lead to sustained change. The expert groups will share this practice in a more structured way so that all schools are able to benefit.

The Teacher Development Trust recently published a paper entitled 'School improvement through professional development'. Within this paper they state, ***'it is through the development of people in our schools that we unlock improvement'***. They argue to achieve this we must adopt a more holistic view to the leadership of professional development as in the table overleaf "A shift in priority":

For me, in line with the findings of the teacher development trust, the success of each group will relate to the people who engage and participate. I hope that if you are a teacher or leader who is passionate about school improvement in one of the five expert group areas you will be confident enough to join the group and commit to making a difference to the education and lives of the young people across our trust.

As an individual taking part in an expert group, you will benefit from the rich and professional ongoing dialogue that will be taking place as well as the opportunity to share and implement best practice.

We are going to be running expert groups in the following areas:

- **Assessment**
- **School culture**
- **Reading, Literacy and Numeracy**
- **Quality of Education**
- **Leadership**

A shift in priority	
From	To
<i>Improvement as a series of initiatives to be implemented</i>	<i>Building culture, systems and habits that foster improvement</i>
<i>Culture as ingredients of effective implementation</i>	<i>Implementation being an ingredient of effective culture</i>
<i>CPD as a vehicle for getting ideas into a school</i>	<i>CPD as a habit of effective teams</i>

Extracted from School Improvement through Professional Development, Teacher Development Trust

Dates for your Diary

Meetings will take place once every half term. We have pencilled in the following weeks for the meetings so please do add them to your diaries and to school calendars.

- Autumn 1:** w/b 20th September 2021
- Autumn 2:** w/b 15th November 2021
- Spring 1:** w/b w/b 24th January 2022
- Spring 2:** w/b w/b 14th March 2022
- Summer 1:** w/b 9th May 2022
- Summer 2:** w/b 20th June 2022

If you wish to contact Holly about getting involved with any of the expert groups across our trust, then you can do so at holly.rigby@taw.org.uk



School Improvement Through Professional Development

On Wednesday 18th November 2020 the Wellcome Trust and Teacher Development Trust (TDT) hosted a virtual summit that convened policy makers, school leaders and system-thinkers to discuss *School Improvement through Professional Development*. The event marked the official launch of the NAHT's [Improving Schools](#) report, which itself is grounded in the thinking that "if the teacher makes the weather, the school creates the climate" (Tim Brighouse). Using this report, as well as the TDT's working paper [A culture of improvement: reviewing the research on teacher working conditions](#) as stimulus, delegates were invited to consider the following questions:

- What are the most effective policies to enable teachers in all subjects, contexts and phases to participate in high-quality CPD?
- What can system leaders and policy makers do to support all schools to create the conditions for professional learning?

If you want to read the paper to which Holly refers in this article, the whole report is available to download from the Teacher Development Trust here: <https://tdtrust.org/schoolimprovement/>


The OCM Journal



Following the tremendous response to a call for contributors to this newsletter's Education Matters, we have created the **Our Community Matters Journal**. The OCMJ Blog presents an opportunity for colleagues across our trust to share knowledge, expertise and experiences.

To see all the articles that have appeared in the previous editions of the OMJ, simply click on the link above. You can subscribe to the blog and receive updates when new articles appear or you can submit your own articles, or simply reference previous articles should you wish to do so. Thank you to all who have contributed so far.


Ctrl + Click on the articles to read more.....




Lola Oriade
2 hours ago · 3 min

Balancing the Act of Feedback to avoid overload

1 0


This is a car 

This is also a car 

Dr Tom Millichamp
2 days ago · 3 min

Teaching through Examples

1 0



Sharon Lettwich Lloyd
May 12 · 2 min

Dual Coding in the Classroom

0 0

Central Matters

News from CAT Central Support Team

HR Matters – Probation Periods



More new staff join our trust in September than at any other time. Employees who are new to our trust will be starting a 6-month probation period; this, together with an effective induction, is the best opportunity to ensure new colleagues are clear about their role and our expectations.

This is a critical time for establishing an understanding about, and commitment to the trust and school's objectives. This also ensures that new staff have the best chance of success in their role.

Line Managers have responsibility for monitoring a new employee's performance, conduct, attendance and progress during the probationary period. The key activities throughout this period are:

- To have an initial meeting in the first two weeks of them starting to set out the probationary standards, expectations and any training.
- To agree future meeting dates and a mid-term review (at 3 months) and final review (before six months)
- Throughout the probationary period, to ensure that regular meetings take place to agree work requirements and monitor performance
- At the end of the probationary period, hold a formal review meeting and if required a probation hearing.

This period is designed to support staff to overcome any challenges they may face and celebrate their achievements ahead of a formal judgement at the end of probationary period."

Employee Self Service (ESS)

Later in the year the way ESS currently looks will be changing. The change is being driven by the organisation who provides Our People. The changes will make it more pleasing to the eye and easier to navigate through. Get a sneak peek of the upcoming changes in this you tube clip:

[itrent you tube clip on new ESS features](#)

Whilst you're exploring the ESS system, perhaps you could take the opportunity to complete the information detailed in the ESS tabs; particularly sensitive data and qualifications information.

Within ESS there are a number of fields which, with improved completion, will help the trust to respond to several activities including the School Workforce Census. It would also improve and enable accurate monitoring of the recruitment and retention of staff with protected characteristics, indicate the impact of policies and practices on different groups throughout the trust and enable the qualifications of our staff to be captured in one place.

Developing People

A spotlight on the trust's Growing Great People development opportunities

The trust values its people. We have created a system through which colleagues can grow professionally by "improving not proving", supporting colleagues to be the best that they can possibly be, and to make a difference where it is needed the most.

Our priority is to develop all aspects of teaching, learning and leadership through a comprehensive offer of professional learning which includes the opportunity to:

- access a professional curriculum which will support staff and schools to identify and, where possible, lead their own development.
- Promote collaborative working and sharing of best practice through professional learning communities, networks and expert groups
- Strengthen leadership capacity in our schools

In a major development this year, we partnered with Schools Training Network to provide a range of new apprenticeship opportunities to support colleagues to grow and meet their professional goals and to provide support at every step of their career from level 2 to level 7. The impact of these opportunities is to develop expertise and to build leadership capacity for all colleagues within our trust.

Apprenticeships are much more than a training course; they provide a professional development plan with a built-in qualification to help you to reach your full potential. As well as offering industry training, they also equip you with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours you need to thrive in your area of expertise and advance to senior positions. The courses on offer in Developing People are tailored to specific job roles, and lead to a recognized qualification.

The DfE has recently undertaken a review of the teacher training market. One of their proposals is that if you are a school who is involved with teacher training, the lead mentor should hold the newly launched NPQLTD (Leading Teacher Development). Currently, this is the *only* NPQ qualification that is free for any state-maintained or academy school via a scholarship regardless of eligibility criteria. The good news is that those schools who are on the DfE list of 30% pupil premium enrolment get free access to the whole suite of NPQs. As far as our trust is concerned that includes Stonydelph, Chadsmead and all our Telford based schools.

The higher level NPQs can be undertaken alongside either a Level 5 or a Level 7 Apprenticeship and Best Practice Network, with whom we enjoy a good working relationship, and who recently awarded us the Gold Partnership Award, are hoping to link the NPQLD and NPQLBC to apprenticeships later in the year. Applications for NPQs are now open and are due to close on 12 September 2021. You can find out more about them and submit an application <https://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk/about-best-practice-network> - however, if you are applying for an apprenticeship, do let us know as these have to be processed centrally through the levy portal.

Please, take the time to look through the new edition of [Developing People](#), and consider your potential career pathways and do discuss them with your coach or line manager to make sure you can take advantage of the opportunities there are for you to succeed.



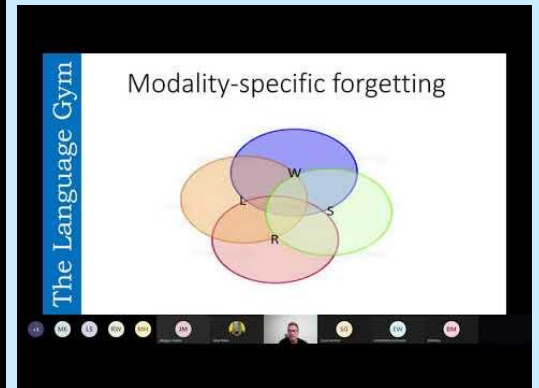
MFL Networking News

On Monday the 14th June 2021, the MFL Hub hosted the incredible Gianfranco Conti. Gianfranco Conti is a renowned MFL researcher and trainer. His work on sentence builders and teaching techniques has taken the #mfltwitterati by storm. This much anticipated session did not fail to deliver the messages that we were longing to hear.

Gianfranco spent the session delivering information and advice on how to form a clear, straightforward Scheme of learning to ensure that all language learners make progress.

Within the short time limit Gianfranco set to work on delivering an exciting and information packed training session, where we learned how to employ his key strategies into our Schemes of Learning to maximise learning time. In addition, we learned about his world-famous EPI concept - Extensive Processing Induction - which instructs teachers on how to move from sentence builders with students to enabling students to have automaticity in a language, whereby they can produce structures that are well learned via his teaching methods and activities set out in the training session. According to Conti and his extensive research students struggle to recall more than 3 - 5 words or chunks of information, therefore it is more time efficient to produce sentence builders, which enable students to learn and recall 3 - 5 chunks of information. This is a technique that we really enjoyed learning about - whereby students learn more in less time and we are enabling them to grow in confidence and ability.

Our Department are so excited to set to work and put Gianfranco's incredible ideas into practice and embed them within our own Schemes of Learning.



Catch up on Gian's session here.

Any MFL teachers out there who want to join the MFL Hub, regardless of phase, please contact:
catts@thepolesworthschool.com



Train to Teach with the CAT Institute of Education (formerly known as CAT Teaching School)

We are looking to recruit School Direct trainees for our Partner Schools located across the Midlands. There are three hubs through which you can train to teach, CAT Institute of Education, the Woodloes Teaching Partnership and the Telford Partnership.

In all cases, applications should be made via the DfE Apply system <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-teacher-training>. Eligibility criteria comprises a C/4 grade in GCSE English, Maths (and Science for Primary) and a good degree classification.

Similarly, should you wish to recruit a School Direct Trainee to start training with you from September 2022, please let us know as the recruitment window opens 12 October 2021.



And finally.....

Because the news is so fleeting, here is a taste of what our trust schools have been up to as we approached summer break. #catschools



@Grange_Park_Gardening harvested their strawberries ready for Wimbledon



@BirchwoodPrim enjoyed their action packed day at Beaudesert Outdoor Activity Centre, Cannock



@StratfordPrim impressed with their determination and perseverance on PGL residential



@readatLangley lovely canteen staff prepared a special lunch for Harry Potter Book Night



@StonevdelpHS enjoyed their residential at Shueborough Outdoor Education Centre



@Telfordpriory Y10 had a great day on their STEM visit to RAF Cosford.



@SchoolKingsway Y2 learning the art of Karate



@Grange_Park_PE Y5/6 girls football team made it to the TWSSP Cup Final

Hot off the press....

Lee James, who looks after Grange Park PE asked us to let primary colleagues know about free online tennis courses. He says it's the easiest course to complete and you get lesson plans and resources plus £250 per school to spend on tennis equipment just for completing the course. The link to this bountious offer is: <https://lta-tennis.force.com/schools/s/>



A huge congratulations to The Telford Priory School Music Department on winning the Music Award Category in the Education Business Awards that recognises excellence in the education sector. <https://awards.educationbusinessuk.net/category/school-music-award>

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

Our Community Matters

