

Our Community Matters

January 2022
Issue Five



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



#catschools

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CAT Institute of Education Matters

Centre for professional
development and school
improvement

**Hope you took
advantage of
some great
down time with
family and
friends over the
festive season -
it always seems
to be over
before it even
begins.**



When writing this
editorial, I always

seem to be looking back and this issue is no exception, though we do get to jump 140 years into the future as The Polesworth School celebrated its 140th year with the burial of a time capsule! The Polesworth School opened on 21 November 1881, so in recognition of this, our Trust CEO, Philip Hamilton OBE, together with former staff and friends of the school, helped celebrate this 140th anniversary by bedding down the last pieces of earth around a time capsule, located outside the school's recently opened Bramcote building. You can read more about this later, but can you imagine digging this up 140 years from now with future Polesworth students and staff discovering what we were up to today..... Ladies and Gentlemen, we have indeed touched the future...(whatever that may look like and however vicariously).

We're focusing attention this time round on our networking groups which have been meeting over the last few months. Please take the time to join any that interest you or to contact Headteacher of the Wilnecote School, and Director of Networking Siân Hartle, should you wish to start your own group.

This issue also features poppies, poetry and children in need. If you haven't seen Mr Gibbons at Windmill Primary School bathing in gravy to the chorus of "Do it!" then I strongly recommend you click on the link and view it for its sheer entertainment value if nothing else!. Thank you Mr Gibbons for that and for the fantastic amount it raised for Children in Need. It takes a special person to voluntarily dunk themselves in a wheelie bin full of gravy.

As ever, hope you enjoy the read.

Michelle, Editor
Our Community Matters



Message from Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO



Welcome back - Happy New Year.

I do hope you had a restful period over Christmas and were able to recharge ahead of the start of 2022 - a first day of term that certainly feels a little more optimistic when compared with January 4th, 2021. Different in many ways- but still with many of the same things on our minds.

Lockdowns seem unlikely, but the impact of COVID on our schools remains and there will be significant challenge for us all as we continue to work in the context of the national Plan B and the new temporary controls in place in our classrooms. My personal thanks to each and every member of our staff as we take on that challenge whilst also trying our best to make our pupils' experience as normal as possible.

The need for professional agility and a can-do approach continues to be significant - something I mentioned in my school staff meetings throughout the autumn term. Working with you in those meetings to take stock and seek your views on where your school is on our journey to 'Ensure Excellence' was a privilege. You provided some very well considered, evidence-based insights that are already feeding into our wider trust plans. I now have a wide-ranging digest of examples of excellent practice and constructive ideas for improvement - real professional gold dust - thank you.

Our peer reviews are now up and running for this year, and we completed 8 during the autumn term with the rest planned before the end of this academic year. These visits have enabled us to fully evaluate curriculum provision and spend time in classrooms with leaders, gaining a shared understanding of how and what our pupils are taught - and why you do it the way you do. Crucially, we also discuss how well the pupils are getting on and how staff are professionally supported in their work. These reviews have been very positively received, providing benefit for both those conducting the review and those being reviewed.

Our new trust initiatives are starting to gain traction with multiple meetings of our expert groups and professional networks, and more staff engaged in cross school development work. This is proving to be a great professional opportunity for colleagues and with more to come I would encourage all our staff to keep an eye out for further opportunities that could be of benefit. One such opportunity (and a date for your diary) is a celebration of the work of our expert groups in their first year where we will be hosting a 'virtual unconference' on Monday 4th July 3.45pm-6.00pm. This will be a free informal event where staff of varying experience can share ideas, passions and insights on our theme of 'Collaborate and thrive'.

Speakers confirmed so far are Sir John Timpson, Mary Myatt and Dr Gill Berry.

It will be an invaluable CPD and networking opportunity for all staff within our Trust and neighbouring schools to come together with the aim of building relationships across schools and strengthening our own individual practices.

My thanks to everyone who has contributed to this wonderful new edition of Our Community Matters - I do hope you enjoy the read.

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

Philip Hamilton OBE, CEO

Head Space

Schools in the Spotlight:



Introducing Stratford upon Avon Primary School and Heathcote Primary School

by Executive Headteacher, Gill Humphriss



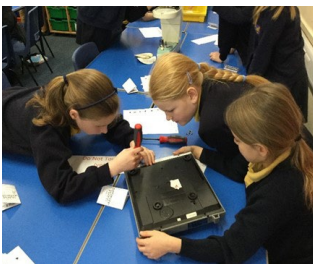
It is an absolute pleasure to introduce to you all in this edition of our trust newsletter two more of the primary schools which form part of Community Academies Trust. They are both very much community schools but have very different stories. Stratford Primary is almost 200 years old and part of the ancient town of Stratford upon Avon whilst Heathcote Primary has just entered its 5th year of educating children and is watching a brand-new community emerge around it just outside Warwick and Leamington.

Stratford upon Avon Primary has been known by a variety of names but started out as The British School in 1823 in Rother Street educating nearly 300 pupils at its peak. In 1881 the original buildings were condemned and a new school built on what was originally vegetable plots and today, 215 children enjoy a very varied curriculum with Shakespeare and the town's history at the heart of it. Indeed, we often tell people that William Shakespeare probably walked across the very land our school is built upon *'Well it certainly works on impressing people even if it might not be 100% true!'*



doorstep, we began to build links with them; developing children's speech & language and providing lots of opportunities for them to go out and about in the town to build their historical knowledge and skills.

During this time, we also took the opportunity to find out more about the people who once went to our school and Year 6, as part of their WW1 topic, researched the surrounding streets and found out that 28 of the men named on the town's war memorial once went to our school. This opened up further community links and soon people from different groups connected with us and Stratford Primary once again became the school everyone wanted to know and be a part of.



I became Head Teacher of Stratford in September 2017 and it would be my 3rd school as head. The school had become a sponsored academy and was in Special Measures and had sadly lost its

place in the community. We worked hard as a team to really focus on a curriculum which would meet the needs of all the children regardless of their ability. Shakespeare seemed to be missing from the day to day teaching and, since The Royal Shakespeare company was practically on our

In December 2018 we welcomed a visit from Ofsted and we were all over the moon to be graded 'Outstanding.' It certainly made our Christmas that year.



It was great that they recognised that the quality of teaching was exemplary and that teachers' subject knowledge was excellent and used to engage and inspire pupils with a stimulating curriculum because that is what we were aiming for. We continue to ensure that we are always looking for different

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ways to teach the children and to open doors to them which will hopefully support them in their chosen careers one day. Recently, we have connected with local estate agents who have taught the children how to sell houses! We have a resident author and a whole corridor is dedicated to the work the children are producing as part of their understanding on how stories are written. Just last week year 5 spent an evening stargazing in the local woods and spotted Jupiter and are now asking 'How do you become an astronomer?' It is a small part of the day to day aspects of Stratford but hopefully you have got a flavour for what we try to do.



So where does Heathcote fit into all this? Well in September 2019 I became Executive Head of Heathcote Primary on a temporary basis to

support the school during a period of rapid growth. Heathcote opened in September 2017 as a one form entry school with a Reception class and a mixed Y1/2 class and less than 50 children. It was a brand-new free school in a brand-new housing estate. It was meant to develop slowly in line with the building of the houses but it became very clear that the demand for school places was increasing and Warwickshire Local Authority asked the school to move to two form entry in 2019 and when I started we opened a second Reception class and had over 180 pupils. Unfortunately, it was very obvious that the existing building would be too small to eventually educate over 420 pupils and so a second set of 8 classrooms was built. This was an exciting time for the children to watch a new building grow from scratch and we planned our curriculum around being able to look at the designs and work with the builders. However, it was not meant to be as Covid stopped all plans but the children did get to watch it grow from a socially acceptable distance and the day we got to take a group of them up on the newly installed roof was very exciting. In November 2020 the second building opened and KS2 moved in. We are now 2 form entry in Reception and KS1 and single form in KS2 and the school are pleased to say that this year we have a Year 6 class and 304 children in the school with extensive waiting lists. By 2025 we will be full.



Heathcote Primary has been built on farmland and the buildings are surrounded by extensive land so our curriculum is focussed on outdoor learning

and healthy minds and hearts. Over the 5 years our forest school has gone from a scrubby patch of grass to established trees, willow dome, bug centres and areas where the children can use their imagination to build roman forts to defend. We have a beautiful wildflower meadow and the sports field is beginning to establish itself. This year we have connected with Warwick Heritage Museum and we will be working with archaeologists to understand how farming developed through history which will result in the children planting different grains and hopefully one day building an Iron age house.



We are really keen that the children form part of our leadership team and this year we established a school parliament. They have already started monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and with Mrs Shirley our Assistant Head they visit classes, interview pupils and decide where we can improve. They are also connecting with the local retirement village and beginning to build intergenerational links so that young and old can learn from each other. Heathcote Primary might be a young school in comparison to Stratford but it is certainly going places and making its mark on the community it serves.

The one thing I am often asked as an Executive Head is 'How busy are you, running two schools?' It is definitely busy but I have two excellent teams and each school is ably led operationally by a Head of School, Mrs Withers at Stratford and Mrs Abernethy at Heathcote, leaving me to think strategically. We all want the same things for the children in our care; to have fun, to engage in a rich and diverse curriculum and be at the centre of a community of which they are proud to be a part of. We would love you to come and visit us and experience two very different community schools, the old and the young but certainly happy exciting places.

Ensuring Excellence

The Polesworth School celebrates 140 years of community education

by Nicky Holland, The Polesworth School



On 21st November 1881, The Polesworth School welcomed 269 children into its care: 124 boys, 61 girls and 84 infants.

Today we stand at 1553 students and we still occupy Tomlinson Hall, the original building from 1881. To commemorate this occasion, our tutors have lead tutor sessions looking at the history of the school, culminating in the selection of an item that best reflects the current time to them. This item has then been placed in a time capsule which we have buried on the school site.

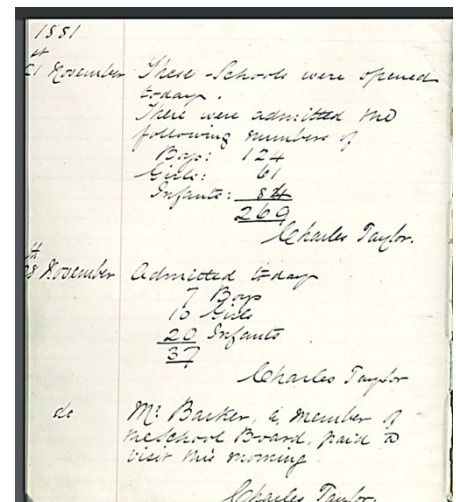
We were joined on Monday 22nd November by the wife and son of Mr Moss, who was Headteacher at Polesworth when we celebrated our 100th Anniversary. We

were also joined by ex-members of staff and current and past Governors of the School. Maura Favell, Headteacher and Philip Hamilton, CEO of the Community Academies Trust, spoke about the school and its history before asking Mr Moss to join them in putting the last spade of earth around the capsule.

Until recently, each Headteacher had maintained logbooks and punishment books which paint a picture of what life in a school was really like. For example, in 1969, two boys were punished for stealing a guinea pig from Twycross Zoo during a school trip. Furthermore, until whipping with a cane was made illegal in 1986, the main reason for caning a student was for insolence and disobedience.

The logbooks that we have in our archive have been a revelation. In some ways they serve to show that things in a school have not changed so much in 140 years. They record absence, appointments, inspection visits, visits by other schools and key historical dates and events. For example, they outline the role of Polesworth in welcoming evacuee children from Coventry during the Second World War. Indeed, Polesworth students helped out in the community during wartime and until the 1960's pigs were kept on school grounds in pig sheds built by the students.

The 3 Rs have now come to represent something completely different at Polesworth. Rather than the original Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic as documented in the logbooks, they now represent the school ethos of Ready, Respectful and Responsible.

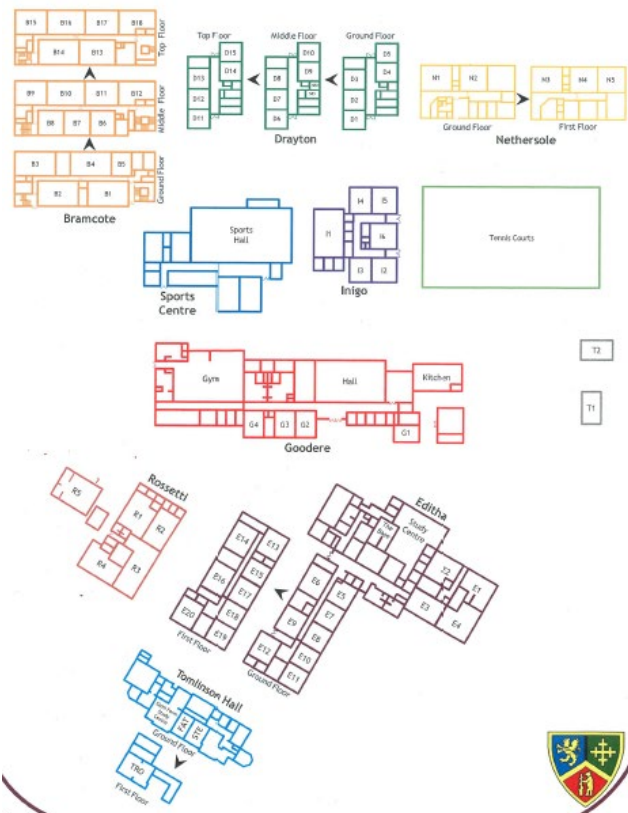
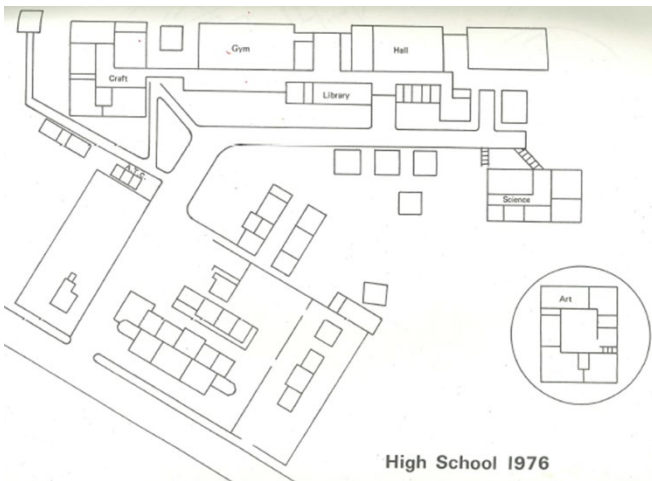
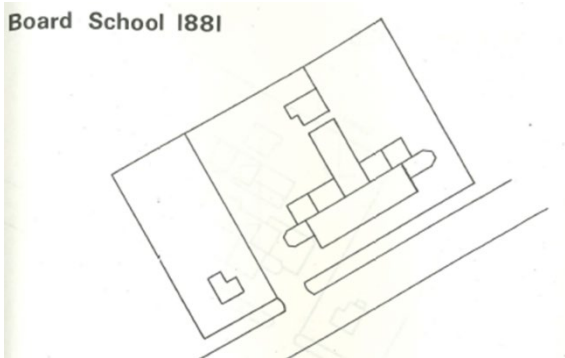




At the time of opening, Queen Victoria was on the throne, women did not have the vote, cars did not exist, the school was lit by oil lamps and there would have been very few houses. Arrival to and departure from the school would certainly have been very different.

Despite the societal changes over the last 140 years, the role and purpose of education remains the same. Every day we ensure that the students in our care are well-educated and well-rounded individuals who are well-prepared for life after school so that they can contribute effectively to society and lead successful lives.

Polesworth students have truly been bitten by our time capsule bug. Their ideas have been inventive, innovative, witty, poignant, funny, thought provoking and a true representation of life at Polesworth in 2021. In another 140 years it would be interesting to be a fly on the wall when it is someone's responsibility to reflect on 280 years of The Polesworth School. When they open the time capsule, how will they comment on the political, societal and economical agendas of our time and how well we handled them? History is being written every minute of every hour of every day and we are the main characters. Polesworth students have done their absolute best to ensure that this snapshot of Polesworth in 2021 is both memorable and successful!



The Polesworth School Today



Telford Arts Hub goes from strength to strength

By Victoria Blakeman, The Telford Priory School



Telford Priory School is a real hub for the Arts, we were recently awarded Arts Mark Gold by the Arts council and we are constantly striving for new ways to include the Arts across our curriculum and in the community.

On 4th November we hosted a performance of the play text DNA by Denis Kelly performed by Quirky Bird theatre company. The play is a set text for both English and Drama specifications and is widely used by Drama departments up and down the country for its interesting themes and teenage characters. The play starts with a group of friends explaining what had happened to Adam - they had bullied him resulting in his death. The play follows the group as they try to cover up their crime by framing another person and the impact that this has on them as people. We were able to offer this live theatre performance to an entire year group, with 190 year 8 students in the audience. This is the first time we have had this many students engaging in professional

theatre and the discussions that inevitably follow.

Lots of the students commented on the realism of the story and could feel the panic coming from the characters. They felt the acting was incredible with Phil coming out as a clear favourite character across the year. For the majority of our students, this is the first time they had watched a piece of theatre and behaved beautifully as an audience. They laughed at the jokes (much to the relief of the actors) and held the moments of tension and silence. Most students said that they would love to see more theatre and are interested in studying this play in more depth. Oscar Wilde said, *"I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being"*. We believe that now more than ever, we need to connect with each other and understand each other and theatre really allows us to do this. We hope to be able to share more experiences of being a human being with other year groups in the future.

On Tuesday 9th We began the Telford Arts Hubs latest project. This year, Telford Priory, Park, Langley, Grange and Windmill schools are working alongside fashion designer Roz from the company Complex Simplicity.

Each school will have 5 full day workshops in which the students will design, develop and create pieces based in the theme of upcycling. The designs will have a circus flare with a hint of Alice in Wonderland. TPS had 20 year 8 students involved in our first school workshop, with the primary schools using 60 students in their work. Their first task was to use some mood boards and inspiration sheets to create a T-shirt design. They will then go through the same process as the designer would to get it from thought to finished product. In March, all of the schools will bring their collections together at Coalbrookdale Youth Hostel where we will hold an immersive fashion show, sharing and celebrating the work of all of the students involved.



This is the second project that we have done as a Hub. In 2019 we worked with a Dancer from Infuse Dance company to encourage boys to take part in Dance. We held that celebration event at Enginuity Museum Ironbridge. We have future plans to do more regular, but smaller, work together and have recently started work on a debate league. Our first fixture will be in December. We look forward to continuing to build on our shared experiences and improve the Arts across all schools and surrounding communities.

Highly Sprung Workshop comes to The Wilnecote School

By Carl Savage, The Wilnecote School



On Wednesday 24th November Year 10 GCSE Drama students took part in a workshop led by Mark Worth from the performance company Highly Sprung.

Highly Sprung specialise in physical theatre, a form of theatre which uses movement to create characters and tell stories.

During the workshop students explored a variety of techniques for creating

performances, including ensemble movement, lifts and contact work. They also examined ways of creating characters and communicating emotion. These techniques can now be used in students GCSE performances as they move through the course.

The students really enjoyed the day and in addition to the new performance techniques that they learnt the workshop also boosted students' self-confidence, with Year 10 student Mia commenting that she "did things she never thought she would be able to do" and another saying, "I'm not going to be shy about doing things in Drama again".

It was a fantastic experience for everyone involved and Year 10 are looking forward to putting their newfound knowledge into practice.



Bikeability at The Wilnecote School

Year 7s had the opportunity to participate in bikeability - the cycling proficiency scheme.

23 students took part in completing the level 3 is designed to equip the students with the skills to stay safe when cycling in more challenging urban situations.

After the instructors checked their bikes and riding ability, the year 7s left school to cycle around the local area. Whilst out and about in Wilnecote, our students demonstrated their best riding

position for any situation and rode on some busier roads.

All the students who took part were amazing, the instructors were very impressed. It was noted that some cyclists were so good they could talk to the instructors the whole time they were out!!!

The Year 7s all received their certificates and badges and came away feeling much more confident on their bikes.

The stars are coming out tonight for the Wilnecote School Virtual Awards Evening



The Wilnecote School's annual Awards Evening once again went virtual this year. We were determined to celebrate the success of our students despite not being able to invite everyone into school given guidance from our local Public Health team. Our Awards Evening is one of the many highlights of the school year and we are committed to celebrating success whether that is in person or virtually.



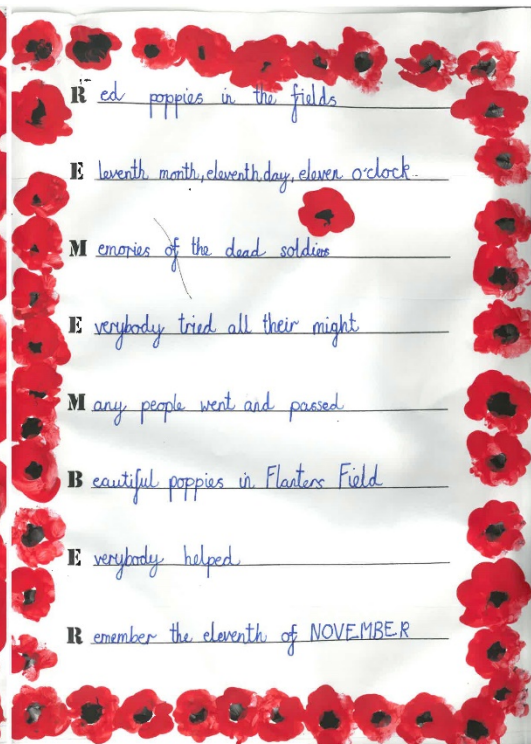
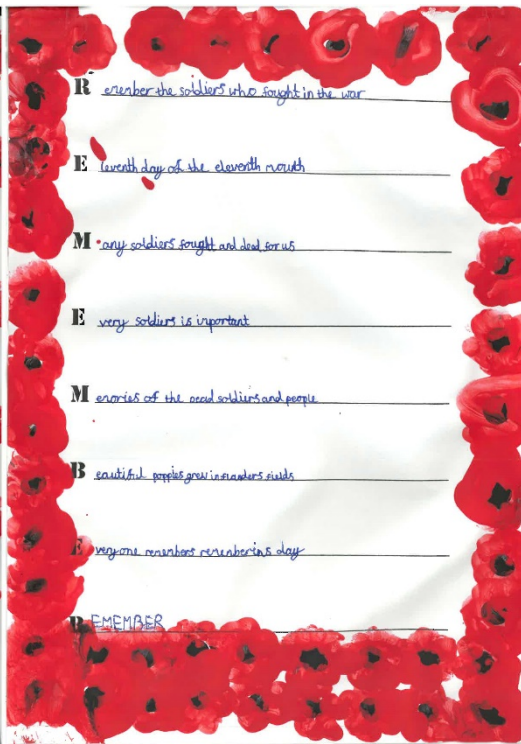
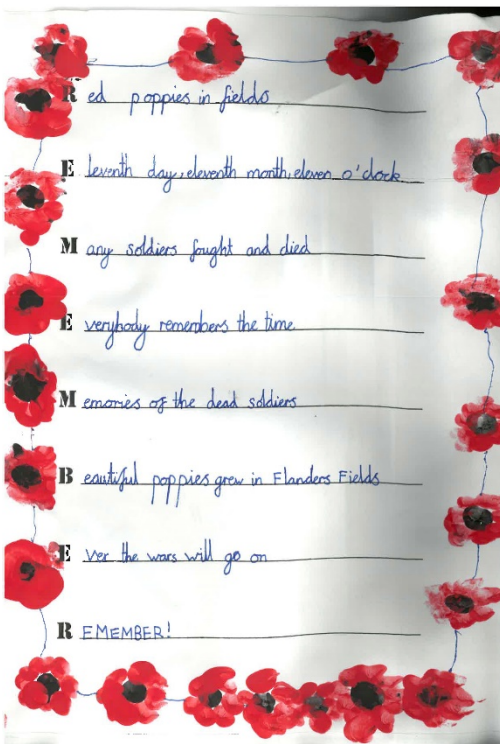
We at Wilnecote pride ourselves on our students' wonderful academic achievements and the subject awards are given to the highest individual achievers in each year group in each subject area. However, we also value progress, believing that if students are to succeed, they must show commitment. In acknowledgement of this, we also wanted to recognise students' commitment to learning with our academic progress awards. In addition, a number of names awards are given to those students who have excelled in a particular area or are our Pride of Wilnecote.



"We all look forward to our Awards Evening every year," stated the school's Headteacher, "It is a special occasion to celebrate the achievements of the whole school and to reward the successes of our award recipients. It is such a shame that, once again, we could not do this in our traditional way, but as we have learned over the past 18 months, anything can be achieved."



The children from Stratford on Avon and Heathcote primary schools turned their thoughts to Remembrance by writing poetry.



Introducing.....

Our now regular "Introducing" article shifts its attention back to the CAT Central Support Team as we chat with Zoe Parton, the Trust's Head of HR



I am the head of HR for the Communities Academies Trust and have been in post since May 2018. This is my first role within an academy, but I bring significant experience from working within local

government also within an educational setting. My last role before taking up this post was with Entrust HR supporting over 100 schools within Staffordshire.

After attending University in Sheffield, I completed an HR Postgraduate Diploma with Kingston University before securing my first role in HR with Serco. After holding several other positions within the private sector, I entered the education side of HR with Birmingham City Council and subsequently Staffordshire County Council - Education HR being a whole different world!

Education is important to all children not least our own. Having three teenagers who have now completed secondary school education has given me an understanding of what educational support parents want for their children and I ensure that I have that at the forefront of my mind when I do business.

Whatever the issue I am dealing with I ask myself what would I want for my kids in that situation?

My day-to-day job and that of the HR team involve supporting CAT ethos that are particularly focused on ensuring excellence for all children. This can include supporting the Directors with HR strategy or providing one-to-one support to headteachers and other senior leaders. I also have the responsibility for payroll making sure you all get paid correctly and on time. No two days are the same and the ongoing pandemic has resulted in significant change for our workforce; those who make the trust what it is. HR has rightly spent significant time supporting individuals that have been particularly affected and this work is ongoing.

Outside of work, I have all the normal things going on that supporting teenagers through A levels and University, and elderly parents who need increasing support, can bring. When I do have time for myself, I like to walk and exercise. My husband has a motorcycle and when the weather is better you may find me riding pillion touring the UK and elsewhere. We have made previous long-distance trips through Spain and France camping overnight and sampling the local food and drink.

CLOSING DATE FOR SPRING INTAKE OF NPQs 10 January 2022

It's not too late to apply to join our upcoming NPQ sessions, they are all available free of charge at the moment so register whilst you can here: <https://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk/npq>

Education Matters



Network Groups

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

"People who want to change the world should hang out with people who want to change the world"

To the 1,500 teaching staff now, and to the 1,000 support staff in our CAT schools in the future...

Have you heard? There will be a new professional network just for you. Literally for you..and you...and you. For Telford, Warwick, Tamworth, Leamington, Stratford and beyond. For early years, primary, secondary and Post-16. Our web of professional networks has now entered a new phase and there are massive opportunities for everyone to work together professionally and make the most of the fantastic people and expertise within our Trust.

In the July edition of OCM, I launched the vision for CAT Professional Networks. The groups would be for people doing similar roles or jobs across the Trust to come together to discuss relevant issues, share good practice, organise specialist CPD opportunities and do anything and everything that would promote continuous improvement in practice and provision.

I wanted these networks 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.

Integral in achieving that vision is the role of Network Chair of each of the networks. In both Phase 1 (when we started small and established groups in Maths, SEND and MFL and Phase 2 (when those initial groups were joined by Art & Design, Computing, Geography, Performing Arts, Science, PE and RE), I got to spend a wonderful few hours talking with passionate subject specialists about why they wanted to take on the role of Chair. They were some of the most engaging and exciting professional conversations I have had recently and I came out of the meetings buoyed with a real sense of optimism for the individual schools who have the joy of these people in their employment, for the Trust as it has such great resources to pull on, and for the future of teaching as these people are testimony to the power of moral imperative combined with passion for their subjects.

Those wonderful people are as follows:

Subject Network	Phase	Name of Chair (or Co-chairs)	Email address
Art and Design	2	Jade Stevens	Jade.Stevens@taw.org.uk
Computing	2	Iain Garland	IGarland@wilnecotehighschool.org
Geography	2	Ruth Cox	ruth.cox@taw.org.uk
Maths	1	Katie Holloway and Mike Brown	katie.holloway@taw.org.uk Mike.Brown@taw.org.uk
MFL	1	Deborah Woodward	d.woodward@stoneyclapham.staffs.sch.uk
Performing Arts (Music & Drama)	2	Laura Slater	slater.l@welearn365.com
PE	2	Hayley Hathaway	hayleyhathaway@chadsmead.staffs.sch.uk
RE	2	Sarah Dennis	sarahdennis@chadsmead.staffs.sch.uk
SEND	1	Helen Cadman	helen.cadman@chadsmead.staffs.sch.uk
Science	2	Leanne Taylor-Lloyd	leanne.lloyd1@taw.org.uk

After the Network Chairs were in place, they began by contacting people directly who we knew to be doing a subject lead role in the relevant areas and the first meetings which took place in the last term were well attended. Thank you to all those who gave their time and commitment to those inaugural meetings. Each network will have one meeting every half term moving forward. Most will be virtual, although there may be the chance of face-to-face meetings as part of the wider activities the groups will be involved in, e.g. subject-specific CPD or training.

If you feel that your subject role is represented here but you were not contacted, I'm afraid we were dealing with incomplete data, so please accept our apologies and contact the relevant Network Chair. Similarly, if you are reading this and think that you have an interest in one of the groups, regardless of your job role, you are cordially invited to attend. Please do get in touch with the Network Chair. You can see that we have yet to appoint Network Chairs in a couple of NC subjects despite open advertising. If you are interested in talking about these roles, please get in touch directly with me.

The Network Chairs, in consultation with their networks, are now planning the meetings and activities moving forward. Each network may be different in terms of its activities and events as it responds to the bespoke nature of each subject, group and direction. That is a good thing. It means that we are

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responding to the professional needs of our staff and moving things forward for the benefit of our students in each focus area. We are looking to fund trips, key-note speaker visits and conferences as part of the network offer. Our networks, be they subject-based or role-based, will move from professional collaboration to collaborative professionalism.

Looking forward to January and beyond, the number of networks will continue to grow as we move beyond subjects to wider focus areas and the roles of support staff in our trust. The key areas for Phase 3 development may include pastoral and inclusion support, school business management, teaching assistants etc. If you feel passionate about a particular aspect of school life which would be replicated in school structures and activities across CAT and would like to propose a network, please get in touch. My email is headteacher@wilnecotehighschool.org

We are looking forward to an ever expanding web of networks which will support the development of high quality, innovative practice and we would very much like **you** to be part of it. Reach out, join in and make the most of these amazing opportunities to learn, grow and make a difference.

Community Academies Trust Development Projects - Vulnerable Pupils

Richard Grant, from The Wilnecote School, who is leading the Vulnerable Pupils Development Project talks below about how he hopes this project will make a real difference to not only the pupils in our Trust, but to the staff who are working with them.

Hi! My name is Richard, I am the SENDCo at the Wilnecote School.

As a part of the Trust wide Vulnerable Pupils Project, I am delighted to be able to offer a wide range of CPD opportunities. Focusing upon raising awareness of and improving the educational experiences and outcomes of our most vulnerable pupils.

The hour-long Teams meetings will be led by specialist support services such as Autism Outreach and the Hearing-Impaired Team. Advocacy and support groups such as the Carers Association and an Experts by Experience group.

When compiling the programme, we considered the needs of early years, primary, secondary and post 16. It has been designed; to ensure that the sessions are broad enough to widen understanding of needs and vulnerabilities across all our settings, to be valuable from a teaching and learning, pastoral, inclusion and SEND perspective.

The sessions will explore personal journeys of how SEND can affect an educational experience, provide examples of best practice for example in behaviour management and teaching and learning, and signpost the support available for children, young people and their families experiencing difficulties.

For further information please contact me rgrant@wilnecotehighschool

I look forward to hearing from you.

Rich

Development project – Vulnerable Pupils

Aim of the project

To develop a trust wide universal offer that ensures a consistent approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable students; to strengthen the sense of collaborative working across the trust, enabling best practice and expertise to be shared effectively and to have a measurable positive impact upon the educational outcomes of vulnerable students.

Executive summary

This project aims to:

- Strengthen the sense of collaborative working across the trust, enabling best practice and expertise to be shared effectively, through the creation of a working group focused upon meeting the needs of vulnerable students and an online resource sharing platform to enable staff to share examples of excellent practice
- Devise a trust wide set of inclusive principles; the trust's 'Pillars of Inclusivity' and a Universal Offer. These policies will be underpinned by the CAT ensuring excellence principles, ensuring a trust wide approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable students
- Involve vulnerable pupils in a meaningful way, ensuring that their views are listened to and the project is led by them. A termly student voice questionnaire to evaluate the impact of the project on students' experiences.
- Provide staff with an opportunity to broaden their knowledge and improve their practice through CPD sessions led by specialist support services and experts by experience.

Next steps

Please identify a member of staff who could act as a link between your school and Richard as the project leader. It would be really appreciated if the name and email address of your nominated link could be sent to rgrant@wilnecotehighschool.org by 30th September.

If you have any questions about the project, please don't hesitate to get in touch.





For the latest blog articles, subscribe to [Our Community Matters Journal](#). The OCMJ Blog presents an opportunity for colleagues across our trust to share knowledge, expertise and experiences. A sample of the latest ones are below. Ctrl + Click to read more. You can also access our expert groups and take part in our discussion forums [here](#).

Thank you to all who have contributed so far.

Please Ctrl + Select on the article to read more.

Sarah Foley ⚡
6 days ago · 2 min

The Literary Canon

23 0 2

Caroline O'Regan ⚡
21 minutes ago · 2 min

Adaptive Teaching - Differentiation by a Different Name?

1 0

Teacher Talk ⚡
2 minutes ago · 2 min

Where have all the NQTs gone? What the ECF is and why it is...

0 0

CAT Institute of Education Matters



A spotlight on the trust's new and growing centre for Teacher Training, Professional Development and school improvement

The new year is an ideal time to look forward to new beginnings. Whilst preparations are underway for the official launch of the trust's Institute of Education, our work into teacher recruitment, ECT training, NPQ delivery and Developing People has been well underway throughout this year. Upcoming sessions can be found overleaf, and don't forget that the deadline to apply for the Spring intake of NPQs is fast approaching, as the closing date to apply through Best Practice Network is 10 January 2022. If you want to train with your trust colleagues, then now is the time to submit your application, please contact us if you need support with the application process.

It has been really great to get back to attending face to face recruitment events, not just for the opportunity to talk to potential trainees but in terms of networking as well. A recent visit to the DfE Train to Teach event in Birmingham not only gave us the opportunity to show off our new look but also resulted in a great new contact with Wolverhampton University, who's agreement to allow us access to their STEM undergraduates has enabled us to extend our bid to the DfE to run their paid internship programme to more than 30 STEM interns and to include our Telford colleagues for the first time. We have been participating in this recruitment pipeline initiative since it started in 2018 and, over the years, it has become an integral part of our recruitment strategy. Typically, we host around 15 interns across our partner schools in Warwickshire, so being able to double this offer and extend the opportunity to include our colleagues in Telford is particularly exciting.



The value of networking is indeed indisputable, and our professional networking groups have already gone through two phases of development. Having created groups directed specifically at teaching colleagues in the first two phases, Sian Hartle, Director of Professional Networking is now looking to form support staff networking groups. If you want to get involved with professional networking then Sian's piece in this issue tells you how you can do that and who you can contact.

Our expert groups have been working hard behind the scenes. You will see below details of an exciting opportunity to join in a great research-informed FREE professional development training session on disciplinary literacy delivered by colleagues from the Education Endowment Fund. Secondary Literacy expert group lead, Sam Whitaker wrote an article about this subject which appeared in the [OCMJ blog](#). Literary Discipline applies to all subjects so this will be of interest to everyone. Anyone wanting to sign up, details are below in our Save the Date feature.

In terms of the Development Projects that have been introduced this year, we have been working with Richard Grant, SENCo from The Wilnecote School, on how we can develop his Vulnerable Pupils project further. Richard has planned a suite of CPD sessions that will appeal to anyone who works with young people, but particularly to anyone with an interest in working with our most vulnerable students to help improve their educational outcomes. The sessions have been designed to be broad enough to widen understanding of needs and vulnerabilities across all our settings and to be valuable from a teaching and learning, pastoral, inclusion and SEND perspective. Further details will be out as soon as they are available or you can contact Richard directly on the email detailed in his update. If you are interested in taking part in any of our development projects further details of all of them can be found [here](#).



SAVE THE DATE

Developing People - Upcoming courses....Book Here!

Please click on the links for a full description of each course.

What is disciplinary literacy?

An excellent and bespoke FREE CPD opportunity!

This 90-minute CPD session will be delivered remotely on Wednesday 26th January (15.30 – 17.00).

- This exciting CPD opportunity will be delivered remotely by literacy experts from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the National Literacy Trust (NLT). This one-off session is available for all staff in the trust.
- The session will give secondary school staff an overview of what disciplinary literacy is, and the experts will share research and evidence with practitioners along with strategies that can be utilised in all subjects to support the explicit teaching of literacy.
- For more information about what disciplinary literacy is, please read Sam's blog post here: ['An Introduction to Disciplinary Literacy'](#).

If you would like to attend this session, please email Sam Whitaker (Expert group lead for Secondary Literacy, Reading and Numeracy) on sam.whitaker1@taw.org.uk

On demand	Growing Great People Coaching Workshop , available to schools across our trust by arrangement either by Teams or Face to Face.
13 January 2022	WalkThru Series: Questioning and Feedback - provides a range of questioning strategies and feedback techniques.
17 January 2022	Supporting Social, Emotional and Mental Health in the Primary School , provides practical, realistic idea to support SEMH needs in a primary context
25 January 2022	Restorative Behaviour for the primary context - practical activities and strategies to implement restorative behaviour practices, Stoneydelph Primary School
27 January 2022	The Power of Coaching , OLEVI programme to develop coaching skills. Comprises three twilight sessions - all sessions to be attended to pass.
8 February 2022	Understanding Mental Health and Young Minds - examines what works when "behavioural strategies" fail
3 March 2022	Safer Recruitment in Education Training - led by Jo Howell, this is a two half day session on Teams open to all staff and governors who play a role in recruitment and volunteers
10 March 2022	WalkThru Series: Practice & Retrieval - develops knowledge and techniques to ensure pupils are fluent in their retrieval practice
25 March 2022	Boost Your Science - aimed at primary colleagues, provides practical examples on how to use science and adapt it across the curriculum (delivered on Teams)
Ongoing	A selection of apprenticeship qualifications designed specifically with school support staff in mind.



And finally.....

What a fantastic half term for our #catschools in the Twittersphere, what with Children in Need, Remembrance Day and of course end of term Christmas preparations, there are so many moments from which to choose and below, are just a few. However, I have to include the fantastic video footage of [Mark Gibbons, Head of Windmill Primary School, immersing himself in gravy for the benefit of Children in Need](#) ... a definite tip of the old chapeau for that one...above and beyond Sir! Click on the link above to watch it.

Our Half Term in Pictures

Chadsmead Primary Academy @Chadsmeadschool · 22h
All the children had such a fantastic time at the pantomime yesterday - such a special trip for them all with memories made.... 🎄 🎭 @The_Garrick



Stoneydelph Primary School @StoneydelphPS · Nov 29
We are so lucky to have such beautiful grounds at Stoneydelph. It was a winter wonderland at school today. It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas... #schoolscat



Polesworth Arts @ArtsPolesworth · Nov 24
Emma checking out our new @Line6 amps. Santa's come early this year 🎅 #CATSchool #polesworthmusic



Birchwood Primary @BirchwoodPrim · Nov 26
Year 6 used a WW2 ration recipe to create a delicious Spam Hash. Whilst many of us had never tried Spam Hash, it was a tasty revelation for the majority.



Kingsway Community Primary School @SchoolKingsway · Dec 1
It's beginning to look a lot like... Yes, Christmas has arrived in our library 🎅



Telford Park Reading @readingatPARK · Nov 23
Realised #teamEnglish have missed out on celebrating 2 engagements, 1 wedding, 3 new houses, 3 babies, 2 new staff & 3 children leaving home! Tonight we rectified what C19 deprived us of! #teampositive #colleagues #WorkLifeBalance @park_english1 @telfordprksch @HollyRigby1



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

