

TRUST STAFF NEWS

EASTER 2024



DEAR COLLEAGUES

As we approach the end of the Spring term, this newsletter allows us to reflect on some of the wonderful opportunities that our children and staff have had across the Trust. As always, it has been a busy term and a few weeks ago it was Chestnut Grove Academy's time to welcome the Ofsted inspectors into school for an ungraded inspection. We look forward to updating you on the outcome of the inspection after the Easter break but it is fair to say that everyone involved in the inspection is pleased with the outcome.

Looking ahead to after the Easter break we will return as a Multi-Academy Trust of five schools as we welcome Thomson House School into the Trust on 1st April. We look forward to hearing about Thomson House School in future editions of this newsletter and working with new colleagues in the weeks, months and years ahead.



**Christian Kingsley (Co-CEO),
Mark Siswick (Co-CEO) and
Sian Mathias (Chair of Trustees)**

For now, have a wonderful Easter break and we look forward to seeing you all at the start of the summer term. Happy Easter

NEWS FROM RAVENSTONE

Battle of the Books:

Our three Wandle Learning Trust primary schools came together in the first ever Battle of the Books competition this term. Children had the challenge of reading a selection of books, chosen by the three schools and answering a series of questions in a quiz battle. The children were super excited and eager in their groups and after whittling it down to the finalists, Ravenstone came out on top claiming first place! As well as a bit of healthy competition, it promoted a love of reading and now the children are wanting to read books by the same authors, extending their reading repertoire! It was also lovely to see lots of networking between staff across our primary schools.

Our Early Years had the lucky addition of some baby ducklings this Spring term!

The eggs arrived from the farm and the children waited with anticipation as they hatched. They learned how to look after them and the life cycle of a duck. They even learned about life and death as not all of them survived.

Year 3 children went on a residential trip

to Sayers Croft Outdoor Learning Centre in Surrey for three days. The children had an amazing time even if it did prove to be a little wet! Activities included a night walk learning about nocturnal animals, visit to an aid raid shelter, pond dipping, blind trail and maze and orienteering. A great experience particularly as many were away from parents for the first time on their own!



Chestnut Grove Academy



NEWS FROM CHESTERTON

The highlight of the term has definitely got to be the US visit that we hosted on behalf of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in February. As well as Foundation staff, the visitors were leaders in maths education and product development, with a particular focus on AI addressing inequality in learning outcomes. They were keen to understand how maths teaching and learning happens in practice in English schools, as well as learning about the approach that the maths hubs take. We presented how the London South West Maths Hub links in to the provision at Chesterton and across the wider reach area. It was also an opportunity for two-way learning and the visitors were keen to share some of their perspectives on maths teaching and learning in the US.

It was an honour to show them around the school. The children and staff were amazing- the use of mathematical language, consistency of teaching and engagement in maths lessons really

shone out and was commented on by all the delegates. We also learnt about the education system in the US which was fascinating and very different to the UK. Hopefully what we shared will be used in the US to improve maths education for children worldwide.

As a thank you Priya, Nicki and I were invited to the US ambassadors house in Regents Park as part of the maths symposium Transforming Mathematics: An Evening Reception, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and XTX Markets, and hosted by The Honourable Ambassador Jane D. Hartley of the Embassy of the United States of America. It was amazing! We met some inspirational people, some of whom we are hoping will visit Chesterton to inspire the children to pursue a future in STEM. It was a window into a world that we don't often enter and really was a huge honour to have been invited.



NEWS FROM PAXTON

Opening the Window to the World of Books

Founded in 2021, the Libraries for Primaries campaign is a group of organisations who work to address the lack of investment in primary school libraries. Part of the campaign will support 25 primary schools in Islington and Croydon

In January, Paxton was one of 25 schools to be selected to take part in the Literacy Trust and Bloomberg Coronation Libraries programme. Paxton will receive training, resources and books needed to continue to develop our reading for pleasure culture and ensure that our children become lifelong readers.

At school, children have been busy designing new book areas and writing letters of application. They have taken part in interviews and now, after a lot of discussion, 10 children have been awarded the role of Librarian.

Community Café Event

The Reflecting Realities project has provided us with a platform to celebrate diversity and strive to ensure that the children and the community are represented in all that we do.

This term Miss Linke and members of the School Council held our first 'Community Café' to launch 'Paxton's

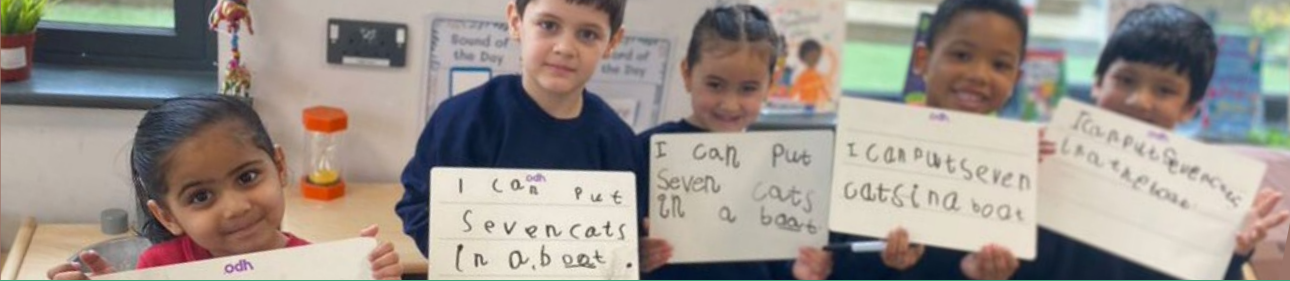
Celebration Calendar' to parents and family members

The Celebration Calendar maps out key and national events across the school year, which we feel will help the children to further their knowledge and gain a deeper understanding about our ever-changing world and the people who live on it, either through assemblies or in whole-school celebration days.

Changing the Narrative

In February, thanks to an invite from Anthony King, our Head and Deputy, boys and girls attended a My Ends meeting, where they took part in a discussion about facial recognition with officers from Croydon Met, including Superintendent Andy Britton, Inspector James Weston and members of the community. They also met Labour MP Sarah Jones and Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley.





NEWS FROM CHESTNUT GROVE ACADEMY

It is well-documented in current research that students who read do better academically: regular reading improves students' vocabulary, academic focus and cultural capital. To access GCSE content, students need to have a reading age of at least 15.

However, there has been a negative impact on students' reading habits caused by the Covid pandemic: increasingly, teenagers tend to spend time on their phones rather than reading books and the hyperstimulation of brain through social media and gaming has resulted in students struggling to maintain the level of sustained focus required when reading.

Chestnut Grove has been working closely with Little Wandle's programme developers to deliver, review and evaluate Key Stage 3 phonics provision.

All the phonics sessions delivered to Year 7 and Year 8 students form part of this pioneering provision. The reading screening was delivered by Little Wandle, along with all of the data analysis and resources. Communication and evaluation has been consistent in ensuring the quality and efficacy of the programme.

We conducted reading screening in the Summer term with our current Year 8 students, along with screening all our Year 7 students during the first week of the academic year. We have also been able to use the progress tests of the current Year 9 students to decipher which Year 9 students need extra support with reading.

This range of testing has now enabled us to identify students' reading needs and create a bespoke programme for each one of them. This year we have introduced a range of reading programmes. Each student will have access to at least one, with



the choice of programme to depend on their individual reading needs.

- Tutor time reading: one tutor time a week is dedicated to reading. This may be silent reading with students' own reading books or reading an article or book as a whole class (all students).
- Code: a phonics reading programme which develops decoding skills (select students in Years 7 and 8).
- Reading +: for students who need to focus on developing their reading fluency, comprehension and word recognition (select students in Years 7 to 9).
- Reading with Sixth Form Mentors: supporting students in developing reading confidence and comprehension (select students in Years 7 and 8).
- The reading dog: sessions with readers who lack confidence or who benefit from coregulation (select students in Years 7 and 8).

In addition to this, all teaching staff have been trained on tools they can use to teach tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary explicitly. Tutors of Years 7 to 10 spend one tutor time a week explicitly teaching academic vocabulary to support students' verbal and written expression, as well as their comprehension. Departments have then embedded a range of strategies to explicitly teach tier 3 (subject specific) vocabulary.

Additionally, all teaching staff and LSAs have received training on explicit reading strategies to incorporate into their lessons to ensure that all students are able to access texts, at the same time as being stretched and challenged.

The hope is that all the initiatives will have a positive impact on the reading ages and reading experience of our young people.



CGA SIXTH FORM SUCCESS

We're really pleased to have had well over 500 applications for the 300 places in our Sixth Form this year, attracting strong interest from both internal and external candidates. All interviews have now been concluded and we'll be sending out offers to prospective students soon.

As the only Sixth Form within WLT, we're proving that the Trust's ambition for every child to reach their potential stays true throughout the whole of their compulsory education journey.

Some particular recent highlights for the Sixth Form include:

- Opening a brand-new building – not only does this give us dedicated facilities, but it also provides a sense

of progression and separation from the main school for those students who decide to stay on at CGA after Year 11.

- Introducing an ambitious Sixth Form curriculum – which caters for all levels of interest, ability and ambition including the highest performing students. This has included changing the culture to one where independent study periods are used more effectively and raising the level of student aspiration to match our Ofsted 'Outstanding' Sixth Form judgement. More students of all abilities are now choosing to study with us.
- Excellent destinations data – in 2023 an amazing 26% of our

students went on to a Russell Group university, compared with just 6% in 2014.

- Embedding formative assessment – this is happening lower down the school but the effect of deepening student thinking through perceptive teacher in-class questioning, and staff coaching is raising student aspiration. Our 2023 Progress 8 score of 0.56 means we have students equipped with strong GCSE results, which makes applying to the most competitive universities far more compelling.

Please take a look at the Sixth Form area of our website if you'd like to know more.

NEWS FROM WANDLE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

ENGLISH HUB

So far this year the English Hub has awarded schools over £380k worth of funding towards DfE-validated SSP programmes, resources and books, worked with 50 schools on our Early Reading Audits and welcomed almost 200 schools to our fully-funded CPD sessions.

Next term, we are looking forward to launching our new Research into Practice webinar series. For the first of these sessions we will

be joined by Chloe Butlin, Literacy Content Specialist at the EEF, who will be exploring the research on oral language development. We hope to see you there! **Book your ticket**

WANDLE TEACHING SCHOOL HUB

We are delighted to let you know that Wandle Teaching School Hub has been successful in being re-designated from 1st September 2024 for another four years. We will receive full details about the remit and what we will be delivering late April, and will need to submit a delivery plan in late May. Congratulations! And a big thank you to the Teaching School Hub team.

MATHS HUB

The Maths Hub was very pleased to be part of the US delegation visit to Chesterton School (see News from Chesterton for more details).



Re-Designation

We are delighted to inform you that Wandle Teaching School Hub has been successful in being re-designated from 1st September 2024 for four years.

Thank you to everyone involved! We look forward to continuing on our journey and working with our fantastic schools.

wandlethshub.org.uk

CPD PARTNERSHIPS

25 April 2024 and 7 June -

Team Teach: Positive Behaviour Management Level 1

A six-hour open course providing individuals with practical, interactive training, designed to transform participants' practice in the workplace, allowing those working in low-risk primary and secondary schools to understand and implement holistic behaviour management strategies.

Participants will receive a course workbook and, upon successful completion, a certificate.

28 June 2024 - Team Teach: Positive Behaviour Management Level 2 (delegates need to have completed level 1) **Please book here**