

Design*Ed*

10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE



Central Region
Schools Trust

Founded by the RSA



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Meet The Team

The Central Team

- Guy Shears**
Executive Principal (CEO)
- Penny Harrison**
Trust Finance Director (CFO)
- Harinder Sidhu**
Chief Operating Officer (Interim)
- Sarah Bates**
Trust Executive Principal – Primary
- Samantha McMonagle**
Executive School Improvement Leader
- Stephen Brownlow**
Business Improvement Partner
- Amandeep Singh**
Head of Estates
- Jennie Homer**
Head of Governance & Corporate Services
- Edward Cooper**
Head of IT
- Nicola White**
Head of HR
- Emma Morom**
Head of Finance
- Chelsea Cafolla**
PA to the Executive Principal (CEO) & Office Manager

Trust Board

- Eric Griffiths**
Chair of Trustees
- Trustees
- Elizabeth Keates**
- Orla MacSherry**
- John Howard**
- Nicholas Clifford**
- Jo Townshend**
- Emtiyaz Chowdhury**
- John Stephenson**
- Dominic Bradley**
- Nicole Riley**

Executive Leadership Team

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- Samantha McMonagle**
Executive School Improvement Leader
- Ian Mellor**
Executive Principal
- Angela Crawley**
Executive Principal
- Ross Trafford**
Executive Principal
- Stephen Brownlow**
Business Improvement Partner

Principals

- Rachel Whiting**
Principal of Abbeywood First School and Church Hill Middle School
- Ian Mellor**
Executive Principal of Arrow Vale School
- Sarah Allen**
Principal of Arrow Valley First School
- Ross Trafford**
Executive Principal of Holyhead School and Gospel Oak School
- Angela Saul**
Principal of Ipsley CE Middle School
- Lee Card**
Principal of Oldbury Park Primary School
- Sarah Callanan**
Principal of St Stephen’s CE First School
- Angela Crawley**
Executive Principal of Sutton Park Primary School
- Damian Belshaw**
Principal of Waseley Hills High School

Co-Design Leaders

- Tom Preston and John Barratt**
Trust Leads for Maths
- Helen Cowie and Clare Sidaway**
Trust Leads for English
- Hattie Hayhurst and Dan Wilson**
Trust Leads for Science
- Alison Bailey-Green & Hannah Tinsley**
Trust Leads for History
- Amy Terry**
Trust Lead for Geography
- Matthew Purslow**
Trust Lead for Modern Foreign Languages
- Ed Lee**
Trust Lead for Drama
- Tracey Darby and Lauren Clarke**
Trust Leads for Religious Education
- Luke Pascin**
Trust Lead for Physical Education
- Angela Saul & Francesca McCullough**
Trust Leads for PSHE/RSE
- Bernie Maguire**
Trust Lead for ICT/Computing
- Dale Holt**
Trust Lead for DT
- Stacey Geal**
Trust Lead for Art
- Francesca McCullough & Daniel Wright**
Trust Leads for Personal Development
- David Hunt**
Trust Lead for Music

Teach Central Leaders

- Matthew Purslow**
Trust Assistant Principal (School Improvement) CRST Lead Professional Learning, Research & Development
- Teresa Wilson**
Trust Lead for ITT & Early Careers

Chairs of LAGBs

- Richard Davies**
Abbeywood First School & Church Hill Middle School
- Stephen Jackson**
Arrow Vale School
- Kayleigh Mapstone**
Arrow Valley First School
- Simon Foley**
Gospel Oak School
- Jeanette Beckett**
Holyhead School
- Alexander French**
Ipsley CE Middle School
- Kirstin Bluck**
Oldbury Park Primary School
- Vicky Jackman**
St Stephens CE First School
- Katherine Maynereid**
Sutton Park Primary School
- Tom Forty**
Waseley Hills High School

Strategic Groups

- Samantha McMonagle**
Trust Lead for Disadvantaged and Vulnerable (including Pupil Premium) Strategy
- Claire Round**
Trust Director of SEND
- Samantha McMonagle and Sarah Bates**
Trust Leads for Reading
- Scott Crane**
Trust Lead for Safeguarding
- Niall Brennan**
Trust Lead for Remote/Digital
- Matt Rash**
Trust Lead for Behaviour and Attendance
- Samantha McMonagle**
Trust Lead for Curriculum and Pedagogy
- Samantha McMonagle and Matthew Purslow**
Trust Leads for Co-Design

A note from Guy Shears

Welcome to this very special edition of DesignEd, which captures our ten year anniversary conference and the launch of Our Distinctive Culture: People, Places and Processes. Central Region Schools Trust has been consistently supporting social justice through exceptional schools for 10 years. I know our communities and all who work for, or support through volunteering or partnership working, are truly proud to be part of building our Trust to be the strong one that it now is. Of course, as well as celebrating all that we have achieved, it is also a time to look forward to the future, in building an ever strong community of schools.

You will see many moments from our brilliant conference, hosted at the ICC. They all had one important aim – to inspire, motivate, and refuel us all for the next 10 years ahead. The day was filled with a plethora of talented guest speakers, from Jo Goodman, a governor at Gospel Oak School, to Bonita Norris, the youngest woman to reach the summit of Everest. The quality of the speeches were exceptional, and in their different ways that they have provided us with the motivation to nudge our individual positive impact on Our Distinctive Culture, in all of our myriad of roles.

The incredible talent displayed on stage by our young people was nothing short of phenomenal. To perform as they all did in front of such a huge audience is a huge credit to them, and of course to all who work with them day in, day out, to build such strong attributes of character as well as the

amazing performance skills. It was just what we all needed at this point in the school year to boost our motivation and resilience as we head into 2023.

Our Distinctive Culture is at the heart of everything we do. The focus on People, Places and Processes is the very foundation that we will continue to build upon to further secure our mission of supporting social justice through exceptional schools.

The commitment shown by each and every staff member, is commendable. It is the hard work and dedication to supporting our students in the best possible way, that is the key to our success and makes me very proud to work with and alongside such a brilliant team of people across our Trust. I have absolute faith in our collective ability to rise to future challenges in these, as Alistair Smith put it, 'uncertain times.' What is certain, is the young people in our schools need us to do so, I know we will.

Thank you for all who have helped us become the Trust that we are now. What we can now achieve in terms of social justice through exceptional schools is something we can be truly optimistic about.



Guy Shears
Executive Principal (CEO)

Introduction

‘Supporting social justice through exceptional schools’

Staying true to the principles of our founding organisation, the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (The RSA), of undertakings for the public good we take a practical view of social justice, moving from powerful thinking into practical action. We consider how our people, places and processes can best support social justice, putting this commitment into practice. Fundamental to this are inclusion and equity. Our vision seeks to articulate how we do this:

As a Trust founded by The Royal Society of Arts, our exceptional schools work together to create learning that is inspirational for all: igniting imagination and enabling creativity and curiosity which results in the highest achievement. People are valued and happy, developing their knowledge, attributes, skills and networks for success and fulfilment. In our empowered communities, everything is possible and aspirations are high.

Creating the culture in order to best deliver our vision in practical ways is what this document seeks to support. School culture can be defined as the guiding beliefs and values evident in the way a school operates. ‘School culture’ can be used to encompass

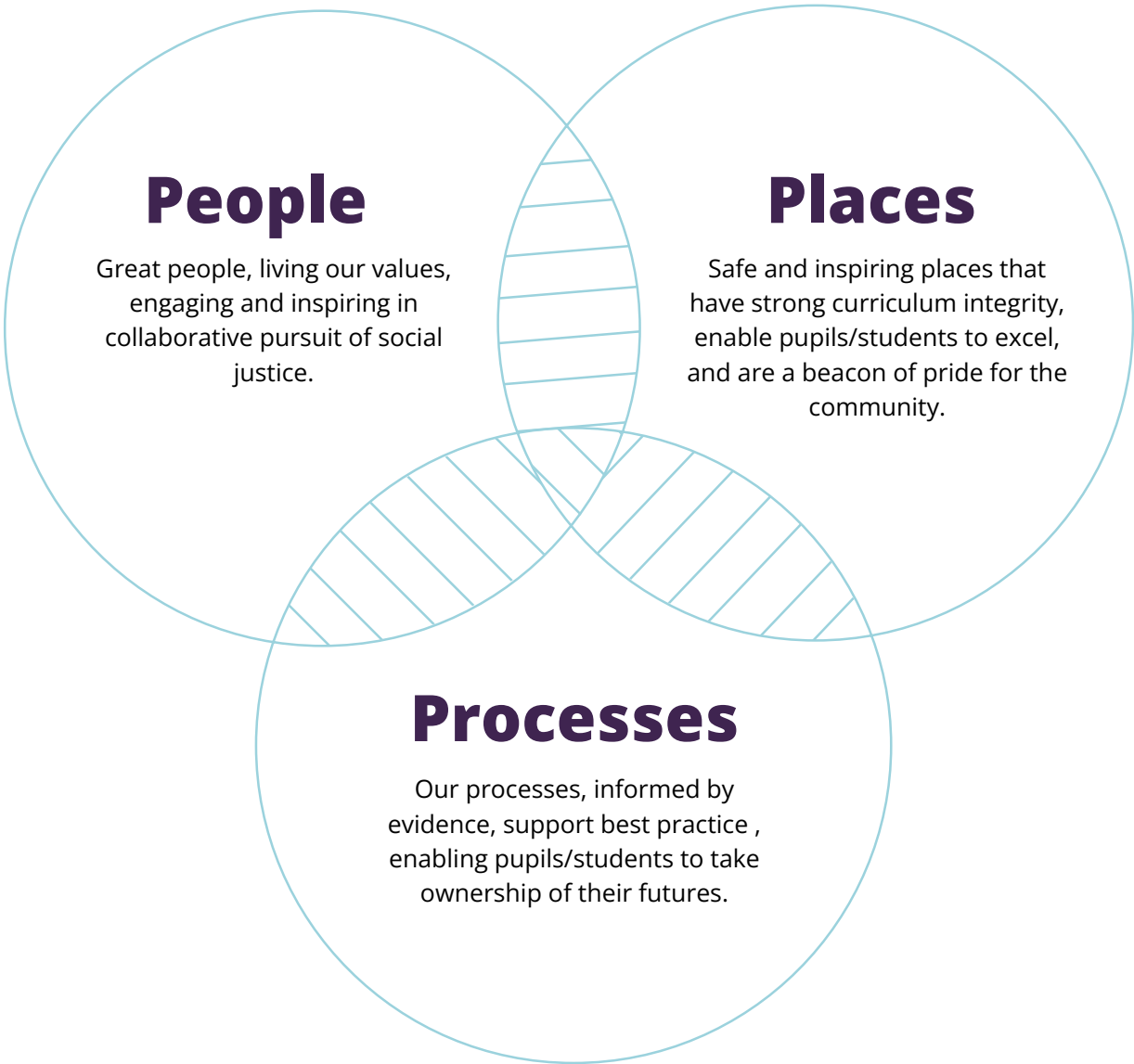
all the attitudes, expected behaviours and values that impact how the school operates.’ Fullan (2007). Our guiding principles are organised into three categories: people, places and processes.

It is vital we get our school culture right. It is bigger than compliance: we are clear that our culture is delivered through shared endeavour, professional high expectations, warmth, inclusivity, positivity and kindness. It is the intentional behaviours and mindsets that shape the thinking, the communication, the values and mission. The danger of not getting the culture right is that this will significantly limit our progress towards ensuring sustainable excellence in each of our schools.

Culture, in the communities our Trust serves, matters. Our leaders strive to establish our strong distinctive culture and we are consciously developing a shared language. In order to grow this further, and sustain our strong culture into the future, we need to define what it is we do that builds and secures a rich, safe culture. Without this clarity, through changing personnel and drifting norms, a strong culture can be easily eroded and eventually lost completely. This document seeks to set out this definition: what we expect, what we say and what we do.

People, places and processes. These three areas form our culture and underpin the delivery of our strategic plan as we strive to support social justice through exceptional schools.

In a Nutshell



The volumes written on defining social justice in education would fill an entire library. They range from the philosophical and often abstract concept, to the narrative, offering portraits of injustice related to schools and education. We know our vision for ‘supporting social justice through exceptional schools’ is a powerful rallying call to our people and provides motivation for many colleagues drawn from a myriad of sources, from the political to deeply felt personal experiences of injustice. As an organisation we take a practical view of what we need to do to support social justice.

People

Our people understand and know their powerful role in fostering our distinctive and intentional culture through their behaviours and mindsets which shape thinking, communication and action to support social justice. **We...**

Ensure a safe, secure school environment by nurturing strong relationships with each other and with pupils/students



Create a compelling vision of the future by acting as role models both for pupils/students and other adults

Engage with and support parents to positively support their child's achievement



Influence the communities around our Trust with authentic fostering of leadership and agency of pupils/students

Drive excellence by playing an individual role within high performing teams expect all our people to follow the Trust's agreed behaviours:

Leading by example

Effectively communicating

Keeping promises and sticking to the organisational commitments

Committing to line management and development of others

Having a solution focused approach

Putting the success of the team before your own

Demonstrating full commitment to the bigger picture

Inspire pupils/students through the delivery of our curriculum

Encourage and empower others by being respectful, positive and optimistic



Create a fair and equal learning environment by prioritising access to experiences and events for disadvantaged pupils/students



Have a strong commitment to positive well-being and positive mental health for all members of our communities and are committed to workload reduction

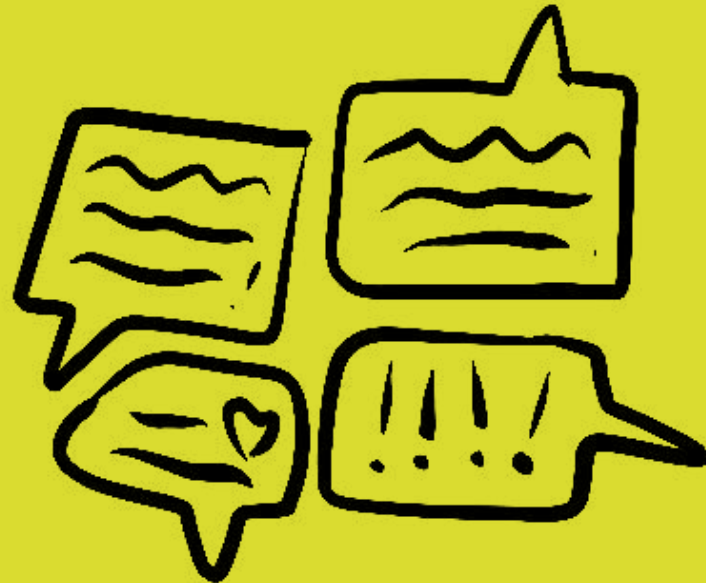
Have the highest expectations of pupils/students and understand the importance of showing them how to achieve the habits that will lead them to success



Places

Our people know how much the physical environment shapes and supports our distinctive culture. It is a key feature of our mission to support social justice through exceptional schools, with excellence required to ensure our pupils/students feel valued, be inspired by, and have the right resources and surroundings to excel. We...

Encourage communities to flourish by creating great spaces for dialogue to take place, both informal and formal, inside and outside.



Create an environment where everyone is safe to excel by proactively encouraging and celebrating diversity, inclusivity, spiritual development and by embracing all cultures.

Inspire passion and excellence in pupils/students with an environment which reflects how they learn, celebrating their achievement and reflecting their best qualities and aspirations.



Develop strong readers with facilities which tangibly support a love of reading.

Reinforce and signal the qualities of which we are most proud with an environment which reflects our CENTRAL values and pride in being a Trust founded by the RSA.

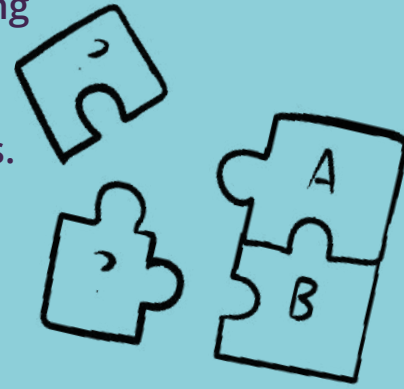


Inspire pupils/students to know more, be able to do more, and remember more in subject disciplines with clear expectations from leaders for design, layout, resourcing and messaging in each area of the school demonstrating that we care about our students, staff and visitors with clean, orderly, light spaces, that are well maintained.

Processes

Our leaders co-design processes and frameworks that enable our distinctive culture to flourish through clarity and consistency of delivery, based on the evidence of things that matter. We...

Constantly learn and improve by identifying and welcoming exceptions to our cultural expectations.



Build Trust and inclusion by communicating with clarity and consistency.

Ensure reliable growth by building delivery frameworks on evidence based best practice:

Curriculum delivery (K-ASE, including CENTRAL enrichment guarantee)

Teaching and learning policy

Consistent and moderated assessment

Disadvantaged and vulnerable strategy

Special Educational Needs strategy

Behaviour and Rewards strategy

Safeguarding policy and practice

Build inclusive communities of stakeholders, parents and community partners by actively seeking and listening to external voices.



Reinforce our cultural distinctiveness by making informed choices within our staff recruitment, selection and development activities.

Have strong operational systems, processes and frameworks to support school improvement that are efficient, affordable and sustainable:

Finance

Governance

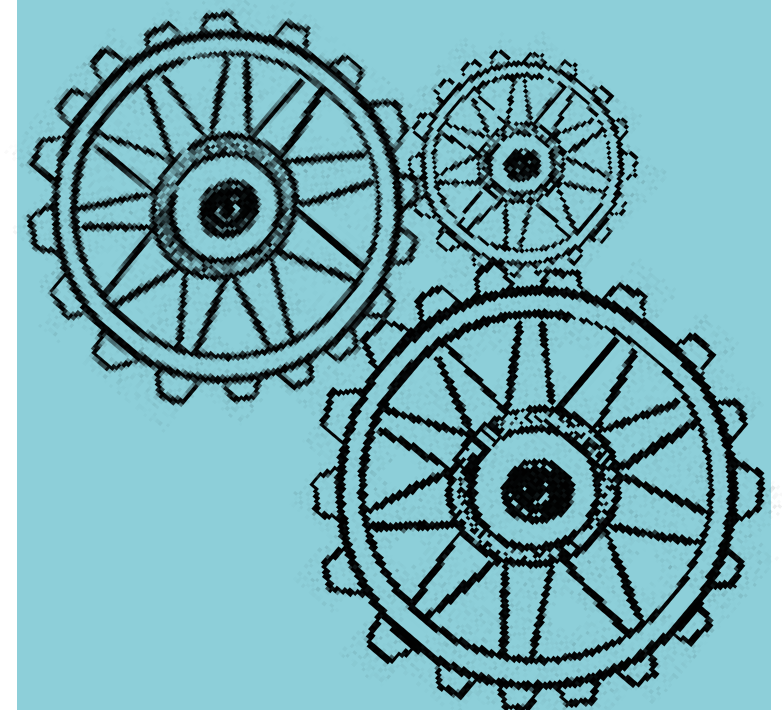
IT/data

HR

Estates

Health and Safety

Risk Management



Student Performances



HolyHead School Drummers



Holyhead School Performance



Gospel Oak School, Dancing Performance

10 year conference speech – our distinctive culture



Our Chair of Trust, Eric Griffiths, opened the conference and welcomed all to the event. He expressed his thanks to all who had contributed over the ten years of the Trust, since being founded by the Royal Society of Arts, in making the Trust the amazing and successful organisation that Central Region Schools Trust is now.

Our Executive Principal (CEO), Guy Shears, reiterated Eric's sentiments, and invited all to enjoy the day, and celebrate each and every one for the impact on our young people, some over the years, and some very new to the Trust. As well as looking back, reflecting on our mission and strategy that had built our successes, Guy outlined that we were also launching Our Distinctive Culture that would help shape our work over the next 10 years.

Guy outlined how the Trust was found 10 years ago by the Royal Society of Arts (The RSA), at the time as Redditch RSA Academies Trust. It had come into being as a solution to issues at Arrow Vale, where he had taken on headship, which was in a dire situation on standards, reputation and finance and was threatened with closure. Ipsley Middle, a five minute walk away, was also in great difficulty. Therefore, over 1000 young people were getting a poor education and families were leaving Redditch, either completely or for education, in order to avoid these schools.

A route to changing this was through structural change to turn Arrow Vale into an academy. Leaders sought sponsorship with the Royal Society of Arts, and following a massive academisation project, the Trust was founded. The DfE determined that the

school would become an 'empty MAT' and we were founded. Ipsley were then directed to the MAT a term later. Lorraine Allen OBE, Principal at Whitley Academy in Coventry provided the required school improvement force for our Trust in the early days, and we opened on 1st September 2012.

It was more than a history lesson as to why Guy went through this. He emphasised that given that Arrow Vale was regarded as 'impossible' to solve back then, when you look at it now, and indeed Ipsley, it just shows how the impossible can be achieved through harnessing the amazing talent evidenced in the conference.

More so, he was clear that our foundation as a Trust by The RSA is fundamental to the shape, mission, vision, values, and ethos of the Trust, and indeed to shaping the distinctive culture that the Trust have worked on leading to its launch. The RSA is a social justice organisation of over 250 years and has provided us, in a revised partnership, with a deeply held mission of **SUPPORTING SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOLS.**

Guy said he believed that no person in the room did not have a strongly held passion for social justice. This would mean different things to different people, but aligns us all in a common goal.

Guy talked through the founding principles of the Trust and how they are very important, providing our DNA, and give us our USP as a Trust. They are:

- Breadth of curriculum and the power of authentic engagement with the world beyond school

- The false dichotomy of skills and knowledge
- Truly inclusive
- Passionate about local communities who have the power to solve their problems through powerful thinking into practical action - each school as a Beacon of pride in its local community, but also our collective power is as a Trust community.

He then discussed the strategy that has made us strong and outlined the four planks: Expert Professionals; Excellence in Systems; Infrastructure and Places; and Partnerships and Communities. He explained how these all build to great provision to enable exceptional learners. He gave examples of the work of our teams over the years and some of the amazing successes.

Guy then launched Our Distinctive Culture, which has been developed over 3 years of consultation with colleagues and pupils. He explained that if the planks of our strategy are 'our curriculum' then the delivery or 'pedagogy' by all in the room was through People, Places and Processes.

Our Distinctive Culture video was received with great enthusiasm by the room. Guy then invited three Principals to outline their thoughts on culture and urged all to think deeply about their role in building the strongest possible culture in our schools and across the Trust, so that our young people can truly excel. He thanked all for their individual contribution to driving our missions of **SUPPORTING SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOLS.**

Eric Griffiths speaking at the ICC Event



Claire Trewartha

(Deputy Director in West Midlands Regions Group)

Claire is a qualified teacher and has worked in a variety of roles in education for over 20 years. She has delivered in the classroom, in learning outside the classroom settings and as part of a large charity leadership team. She has also been a Trustee of a multi academy Trust and is currently a school governor. She joined the Regional School Commissioners Office in the Department for Education at the beginning of 2018 wanting to provide support to the sector more widely. She is now Deputy Director in West Midlands Regions Group working with Andrew Warren as Regional Director.

It was fascinating listening to the role of the West Midlands Regions Group and the vision for the next 10 years. It is clear that CENTRAL has played an integral role in creating a system of strong multi academy Trusts across the West Midlands and it was great to hear that we are considered a strong Trust by the DfE. This is down to the work of all the staff who work for CENTRAL.

I was delighted to see several of our achievements celebrated-eg growth over three local authorities, approval as a academy sponsor and the results for our children. We should all be very proud of these achievements and I'm sure there will be many more to come.

You have had some amazing achievements over those years



*Stephen Brownlow,
Business Improvement Partner*



Jo Goodman

(West Midlands and Central Regional Delivery Lead at the Education Endowment Foundation)

Jo is currently the West Midlands and Central Regional Delivery Lead at the Education Endowment Foundation, working with schools and system leaders to support the mobilisation of evidence. Prior to this, she managed school partnerships across the West Midlands as part of a government funded widening participation programme which aimed to increase progression to higher education amongst under-represented groups. Over the last 4 years, Jo has served as a governor at Gospel Oak School, taking on a responsibility for Pupil Premium and SEND. Jo is extremely passionate about disrupting the deficit narratives surrounding pupils from a disadvantaged background and is currently undertaking a PhD in Education and Social Justice to explore this further.

Jo spoke, in a very truthful way, about the power education has to completely change the course of someone's life. Jo detailed the struggles she faced and the path she was destined to go down and how it seemed like it would be fate that she repeat the cycle she was born into.

It was so refreshingly honest to hear Jo speak about her past and her own experiences and how her childhood set up was pushing her into the lane of repeating the actions of her family and falling into the same fate as those before her. Her saving grace? Her education. Her teachers. Her hard work and realisation that education and support from the right people, would give her all the power she needed to break the cycle.

An estimated 3 million children in the UK are affected by a parental alcohol problem

- Six times** more likely to witness domestic violence
- Five times** more likely to develop an eating disorder
- Three times** more likely to consider suicide
- Twice** as likely to experience difficulties at school
- Twice** as likely to develop alcoholism or an addiction
- Twice** as likely to be in trouble with the police
- Poorer physical and psychological health
- Poorer educational outcomes
- Risk of premature death, teenage motherhood and family separation



Hearing Jo speak about the power of the sector that we are in was nothing short of amazing. Central Region Schools Trust strives to achieve social justice through exceptional schools. We strive to ensure that no matter a child's background, no matter the cycle they may feel destined to repeat. Jo, someone who has experienced this first hand, relit that spark in us all, reminding us of the importance of what we do. Whether you are a teacher, dealing with our students and pupils first hand, or support staff, making sure our learners have the right tools and

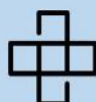
settings to best facilitate their learning, or whether you are site staff, making sure our locations are the best they can be and make sure our children are well fed and can concentrate on learning. Whatever your role within our Trust, Jo reminded us all that we do matters. What we do, can change the whole trajectory of a child's life.

I know we were all in awe hearing Jo speak and we all left knowing the power of our industry and the power of our roles in the lives of our children.


Sharan Kaur,
Central Office Administrator

Alistair Smith

Alistair Smith has worked with our Trust since April 2018. He has over 30 years’ experience of working in education and is unique in working in prominent roles across three sectors: education, professional football and projects related to business and technology. He has written 8 books and delivered over 1,800 CPD sessions and key notes. His experience in working with the education sector and high performing schools has been invaluable in supporting our curriculum work. He was instrumental in supporting our work on Teaching and Learning and the KASE underpinning curriculum principles. His keynote at our 10 year conference was bespoke and unique to our context and our work on organisational culture. He focused on Head, Heart, Health and Heroics as a frame for his speech on well-being.




Securing wellbeing




The power of purpose





“The sense of being part of something greater than yourself leads to higher levels of engagement, creativity, and the willingness to share ...many people are as motivated by the sense that they are contributing to something worthwhile as much as they are by financial returns or status.”


Rebecca Henderson, Harvard Business Review, The Business Case for Purpose, 2015





Winning the H Factors

-  Head – more productive thinking
-  Heart – forming and sustaining relationships
-  Health – securing wellbeing
-  Heroics – selflessness and delayed gratification



The power of purpose and clear shared purpose; how we make and sustain relationships and how we create space to properly process were key messages throughout his talk.

“Alistair was relevant, challenging, engaging and (as always) genuinely warm and funny. His understanding of how culture is developed in organisations is second to none; we appreciated his key note and look forward to continued work with Alistair in the future.”

***Samantha McMonagle,
Executive School Improvement Leader***



Bonita Norris

'The Girl who climbed Everest'

What an inspiration Bonita was. Not only was she the youngest woman to climb Everest, at the age of 22, but she did it through sheer grit and determination. Her story started with a spontaneous night at the University mountaineering club, looking for a date! After listening to a seasoned climber talk about his ascent to the peak of Everest, she was hooked.

The prospect of seeing the curvature of the earth from the top of the world's highest mountain was the inspiration Bonita needed. Having never climbed before she enrolled herself in a local club, starting with a climbing wall at the sports centre. From this unspectacular start, Bonita worked hard, developed her fitness levels, practised, and practised, until she was ready to begin her first ascent of a 'real' mountain.

During the next two years Bonita became single-minded in her determination to climb Everest and see that awe inspiring view - the curvature of the earth from above the clouds.

Her retelling of the many challenges she overcame, both physical and financial, were an inspiration, she set herself, what some people deemed an impossible goal, and against the odds, achieved her dream.

The messages to our Trust were so clear and helpful. From focusing on the next step, and concentrating hard on this, as she neared

the summit of Everest in the 'Dead Zone' she was reaching sheer exhaustion. A Sherpa whispered to her, realising she was in danger of stopping, which would lead to certain death, 'turn your torch off and look up'. The view of the stars was truly unbelievable, and with new-found energy she made it at speed to the summit.

To focus on the next step is of course vital, but for us all to step back and take a look at the big picture is something that is very important to build time into our lives to do.

At the Summit, Bonita said that the most emotional and important call she made was to the team down at base camp. Without them, there would be no summit views for her, and yet the team saw none of this. A clear nod to the myriad of jobs carried out in schools that are carried out behind the scenes quietly, to ensure the learning in each classroom is exceptional.

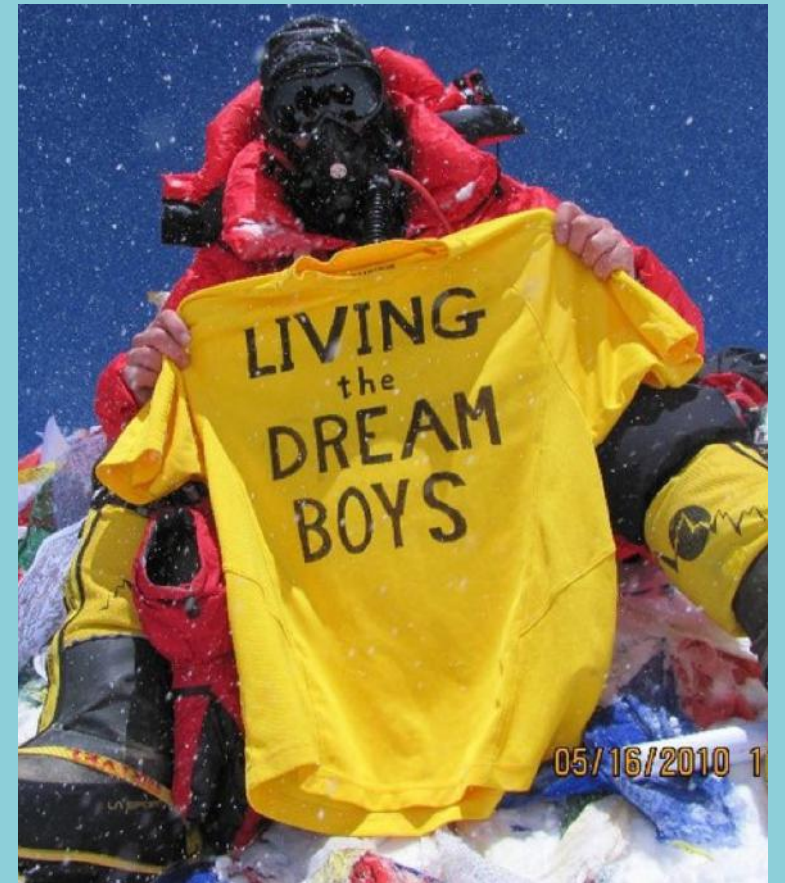
Bonita finished by thanking our Trust team for the work they do year on year to enhance the lives of our pupils. For the pupils, they climb Everest once, and of course it is crucial that they reach the summit. For school staff, like the Sherpas, we start each year, like the next ascent, to reach the top for the next year group of children. Her thanks felt so warm and genuine. What an inspiration to us all.

Sarah Bates,
Executive Principal – Primary





Bonita's trip to Mount Everest!



Student Performances



Sutton Park Primary School Performance



Gospel Oak School Dance Performance



HolyHead School Drummers



Oldbury Park Primary School Performance



Chloe from Gospel Oak, Singing Performance



Church Hill Middle School Dance Performance

Celebrating 10 years of CENTRAL at the ICC, Birmingham





Abbeywood First School



People

This shows that the teachers here always support the children - Kemi



People

This one reminds me of teamwork at Abbeywood - Evann



Places

This shows the children help make our school look good - Mollie



Places

Abbeywood is about learning whilst having fun - Ella



Places I love this picture! I'm proud of our new building - Holly



Processes

Lunch is my favourite time of the day! - Sam



Processes

There is always someone reading in our school - Ella



People

They all look like they're having so much fun at school - Louie

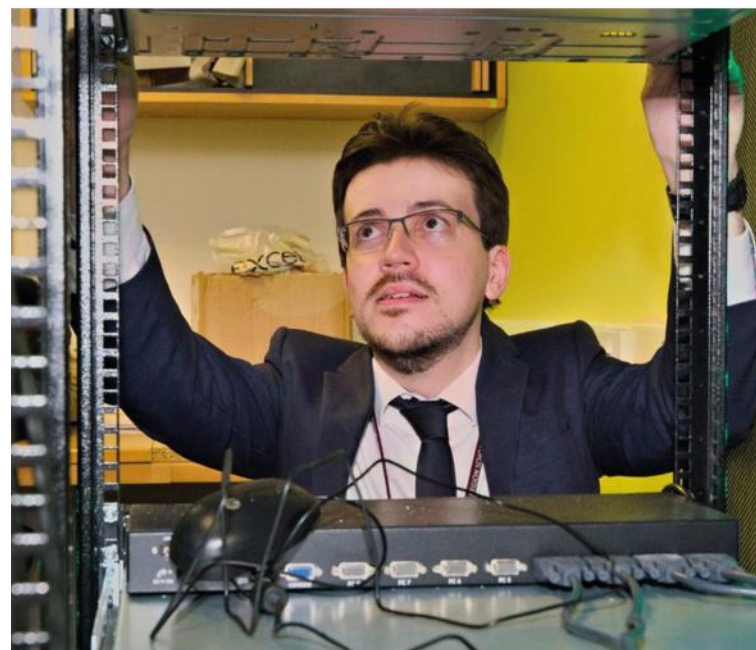


Processes

We always make each other laugh at Abbeywood - Sam



Arrow Vale Academy



People

I have worked in the Trust for almost 10 years and had great opportunities to develop my skills as an IT professional - Member of staff



People

Our students bring joy to our staff – even on a wet autumnal day! - Member of staff



People

At Arrow Vale, we have a wide range of places to learn. I never had the opportunity to learn trampolining before joining Arrow Vale. Now, I love my trampolining lessons. - Evie



People

There's always time to smile as teacher at Arrow Vale... especially when the photocopier is working! - Member of staff



Places

I feel well supported by all members of the Department and have been grateful for the opportunities provided - Member of staff



Places

When I feel uncomfortable or stressed, the library is somewhere I can go to feel safe and comfortable - Isabelle



Processes

In Biology we use visual representations to understand the process of Mitosis and it works really well - Tashantie



Processes

I enjoy cooking in my practical as I can get much more involved with Miss Lawless' help - Harry



Processes

I have so enjoyed the creative thought process during my time studying Art in 6th Form, that I have decided to study Fine Art at University - Julia



Arrow Valley First School



People

People from all over the world want to work in our school - Milo



People

The teachers help us to read- reading is so important as it helps us to achieve almost everything! - Lottie



Processes

We learn things then apply them so that they stick - Jacob



Processes

These ladies help our community. They welcome people and check that they are safe to come into our school - Miller



Places Outdoor spaces are great places to take a break and have fun (even with the principal) - Member of staff



Processes

I like this one as it shows how we can ask for help - Fletcher



Places

Our classrooms are places where we learn together - Member of Staff



Places

We have a computer suite where we can explore- Holly



People

We have experts teach us new skills- Member of Staff



Church Hill Middle School



Places

Working together to make the school a better place



People

Church Hill and Abbeywood working together for the love of reading!



People

Lots of people are around to support us and help us for all sort of reasons. We feel cared for!



Processes

Global goodness – The ‘Plus’ effect. We look wider than our own community



People Our pupils are a happy team who care for each other



Places

Our values are so important to us



People

Our wellbeing ambassadors are just one part of our support networks



Places

The quote says it all!



Processes

We get involved in projects – we loved contributing this piece for the Commonwealth Games Trust project.



People

Teacher engaging with students in their learning and shows student staff relationships are good - Tutor group 11b



Places

This is our school – Pride ,Respect and Aspiration. The doors to education - Tutor Group 9E



People

Smiling and engaging in learning - SLT



Places

The path to learning...bright corridors - SLT



People

Anyone for tennis... shows student participation in different sports and happy - PE Dept



Places

Our Library is a great place for learning and taking part in reading and other activities - Tutor Group 7h



Processes

Great artwork and reflects our values of respect - Support staff



Processes

Together we stand...Whole school meeting and togetherness - Tutor Group 12A



Processes

Teachers and student engagement - Tutor Group 9f



People

The heart of Holyhead stems from our staff- Zeeshan



Processes

More than just teaching - Member of Staff



Places

Happiness fuels creativity - Member of Staff



Processes

I feel warm knowing that teachers listen - Kamarlo



Places

Positive student and staff Interactions outside of the classroom - Member of Staff



People

The student mind is always curious to learn something new - Suniya



Processes

Student leadership is a core part of our culture - Member of Staff



People

Everything tastes better when we make it together - Rsophia



Places

Curious and Invested and surprised faces - makes me smile - Isatou



Ipsley CE Middle School



Processes

This is my favourite photo because Miss Saul is always so happy in assemblies. The teachers tell us about our values and teach us to be kind. We get to see all the other people in our year group in assemblies - Thomas



Places

This is my favourite place, I got to help choose the messages on the wall. We chose them to be inspirational! I like the hall because it's where we all get together for PE, assemblies and most importantly LUNCH! - Finlay



People

This is my favourite picture because it shows how friendly everyone is and that brunch is AMAZING! At breaktime, we get lots of new food to try and we can't wait to see what is there! We get to see all of our friends and play together - Ruby



Processes

This is my favourite picture because we get to make bands in our lessons and perform in front of the class. I love learning to play a musical instrument and be creative - Jayden



Places

his photo reminds me of our library because we have lots of books – the whole room is full of them and I get to take them home! It feels really grown up in the library and at break and lunch, because it is quiet, I can read with my friends - Olivia



Processes

I like this photo because reading is COOL! - Zac



Place

This is my favourite, it reminds me of doing science experiments and using the science labs in our lessons. I want to be a scientist when I grow up - Issy



People

I love spending time with my friends. They make me feel safe and happy. We can talk about what we have been doing in lessons and help each other - Josh



People

This is my favourite photo because Mr Johnson is really kind and helps me in my learning – all our teachers always help us when we need it because they want us to do our best. They are always smiley and say hello to us and help us if we are stuck or need to talk to someone - Lucy



Oldbury Park Primary School



Places

A safe environment for children to learn in – our magnificent school buildings - Kitty



Processes

Motivating our children to always 'Believe in Best' - hot chocolate with the Head! - Charlie



Places

Charlie – the school dog 'excitement maker' helps our hearts and minds - Hannah



Processes

The room where it happens: Fridays mean 'Believe in Best' assembly time! - Member of staff



People Friendship, kindness and fun at Oldbury - unpopppable! - Mabel



People

We Believe In Books! Reading is good news at Oldbury - Member of Staff



People

Community communication is key! - Harper



Processes

The newest generation of Oldbury Park eagerly start their journey towards reading success - Emma



Places

Learning is fun when you work together - Bert



St Stephen's CE First School



People

Teaching at its best! I love the intense concentration on EVERY child's face - Governor



Processes

Never stop practising, it pays off! I liked that it really shows that practice does make perfect. - Lily



Places

I never get 'tyred' of Forest Schools. I like the fact our children have these opportunities as not all children do - Member of Staff



People

This is the result - Max



Places

These are the best days of your life It's reminding me back when I was in Reception. It was really fun! - Christian



Processes

Together we are better! The children are outside, in the fresh air, playing together which is fabulous for their mental health and well-being! - Member of Staff



Places

Shh...Can't you see we are writing in here! I like this because it is showing that they are really concentrating! - Aahil



People

Connections never fade We have a really nice friendship and I wanted to put that into words - Max



Processes

Proud to be part of it! I like the fact that she is smiling on our lovely trim trail. It's great! - Reyah



Sutton Park Primary School



Places

We love being good role models to our younger friends – I was reading a book about birds! - Jo



Places

We think learning is so important - Gracie



Processes

It shows that our grownups keep us safe - Garron



Processes

We have a Sports Crew who care about us and help us to play sporting activities, they coach us and help us to get better - Adam



Places We have space to run and be our unique selves - Jess



People

This photo shows that we work hard in all different subjects - Alexx



Processes

We take pride in our work - Lyela



People

Teachers help us whenever we have any problems or need help - Molly



Processes

We love having Dougie as part of our school, he makes a huge difference and helps us to stay calm and happy, and helps us with our learning - Lucas

Waseley Hills High School



People
Confidence



Places
The courts



Places
The Quad



People
Anyone can talk to anyone, including teachers



Places Our school



Processes
Intelligence in ICT



Processes
Excellence in Art



People
Always smiling at Waseley



Processes
Making Music

Pictorial by Eleanor Beer



People Development: This Time It's Personal

I afforded myself a few hours of reflection time in penning this piece. I wanted to try and sink back into the warm and re-invigorating waters that enveloped us all that mild Friday in November 2022, as we shared the experience of our 10yr celebration.

I don't know about you but whenever I manage to 'sculpt' some reflection time into my diary, I find myself trying to pull everything together again – the entire sensory gambit of sights, sounds, smells. I revisited the slides, thumbed back through the newly-launched Distinctive Culture document and scrolled back through the Twitter posts of the day. I was searching, I think, for something tangible to write about. A particular moment or speaker that grabbed me. A performance, perhaps, that encapsulated one of the elements of culture with illuminating clarity. Pleasingly, it didn't happen.

What I discovered instead was the opposite. Something almost imperceptible, seemingly abstract and yet as lucid and memorable as those cajun-spiced wedges devoured over lunch. When I asked colleagues on the journey out of the ICC what their favourite part of the day was and why they were able to generally give a definite response – for some it was Alistair Smith's laser-sharp analysis of the human condition, for others it was the high-octane, sunglasses-toting dance routines of the Gospel Oak 'elite'. However, the 'why' was always the same – it was the way it made them FEEL.

"It put a smile on my face – I'd love to dance like that again" came one response;

"Everything he said resonated with a boy in my class...I feel like I've got a different approach to try with him on Monday now" came another

There couldn't have been a more appropriate vehicle to launch a document that sought to capture and define a distinctive culture than an emotional juggernaut in the centre of Birmingham, driven by 800 people – all behind the same wheel.

Here's a little task for you – take a read of these words and consider where you think I have drawn them from:



Now the obvious answer would be the CENTRAL's Distinctive Culture document, right? I have already referenced it, after all! Well...you would be partially correct but it's not the whole story. The words above were actually drawn from Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook and, more specifically, across Section 2 in the Evaluating Judgement of three strands – Personal Development, Leadership & Management and Behaviour & Attitudes.

However, now play a quick game of 'spot the word' here across the detailed element on 'People' within our Distinctive Culture document:



Did you find them all? The synergy here is quite remarkable and rather powerful. Friday, ultimately, was all about PEOPLE.

Our people. Covering every school and community from Tipton to Worcester; spanning the breadth and range of every

role imaginable; inclusive of a diverse representation of backgrounds, ethnicities, religions and preferences; spanning decades from retirement-aged Trustees to our pupils in touching-distance of reaching double figures...we were bound together by FEELING. The feeling of something collective. The feeling of something imperceptible yet so powerful as to almost be spiritual.

The human connection was the common factor that we all walked away, that afternoon, feeling a sense of renewal. In one of the most powerful speeches of the day, which encapsulated that power of humanity connected, Jo Goodman referenced Sonia Thomson's book 'Berger's An Ethic of Excellence in Action'. The development of our people; deeply and profoundly personal.

Lee Card
Principal of Oldbury Park Primary School



Three Years On

St Stephen's C of E First School

St Stephen's joined the Central Regions Schools Trust three years ago in October 2019! We were the Trust's first sponsored academy. The school was immediately taken under the wing of Diane Smith, who enabled us to get started. Sarah Allen supported our Early Years, both Di and Sarah proved to be a fantastic support. Michelle Pickering has been our School Improvement Advisor throughout our time as part of CENTRAL and has also been instrumental in guiding our journey with the Trust.

The Trust vision, 'Supporting Social Justice through Exceptional Schools,' marries beautifully with our own, Christian vision that 'Every child is special in the Eyes of God and we teach that all people, should love, care for, respect one another and our planet.' It has shaped our practice for the better. Staff are sharply focussed, and we hold the children at the centre of all decisions we make.

Our Curriculum is unrecognisable since joining the Trust. We have been given access to excellent CPD which we have used to ensure all our teachers are teaching an inspiring curriculum, enabling all our pupils to succeed.

Lorna Weatherby, Head of School at Sutton Park, introduced the school to 'Thrive.' This has revolutionised how we approach personal development at St Stephen's. We now have a dedicated Mental Health Lead and Thrive Practitioner, Elaine Ralph, who supports our most vulnerable pupils across the school. We have a wonderful dedicated Thrive Room where Elaine nurtures our pupils and gives them the skills they need to interact, articulate their feelings and really 'Thrive' as part of their curriculum offer.

Sam McMonagle has driven our Teaching and Learning Lead and Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Lead, Sarah Barrett, giving her the

tools to link her SENDCo Role to meet the needs of all our pupils across the curriculum. She ensures our children access a broad and balanced curriculum whilst still enabling them to have their needs met, through expert teaching.

Our children are given rich opportunities as part of the curriculum to ensure they get to go to a wealth of wonderful places and do so many things they may not have tried before. From Spectacular Sports Days with climbing walls, archery, human tabletop football to laser quest to performing at the Palace Theatre! Thank you to Mr Wake, our Year 4 teacher, and our professional dance coach, Cassie Rivett, for enabling dance productions to happen with such flair and expertise.

St Stephen's have gained so much from joining the Trust and we look forward to many more years to come.

Sarah Callanan
Principal of St Stephen's
CE First School



Curriculum development at CENTRAL

Deepening Knowledge, creating the conditions for Attributes to be nourished, strengthening Skills and providing rich Experiences for our pupils (KASE)

Our journey with curriculum is ongoing. As John Tomsett puts it in his Book series 'Huh: Curriculum Conversations'- it is everlasting work. Our current journey started back in 2018 as the Trust was growing; we wanted to look at subject curriculum integrity within Primary and moving to a three-year KS3 at Secondary and so we started to rethink our approach to curriculum.

Looking back:

Our journey in 2018 started with looking at what we meant by curriculum and the purpose of schools. We wanted pursuit of wisdom- and knowledge- rich work but we also wanted to develop skills, and support this by nurturing work such as development of attributes and experiences. We wanted children to develop knowledge in subjects, unlock key concepts and big ideas and question the world around them critically and with knowledge. We wanted them to enjoy learning and the richness of subjects alongside developing skills and attributes to support them throughout life.

Schools enable pupils to engage in great thoughts/ideas and key concepts within subjects. What makes knowledge rich isn't just knowing lots of stuff but in how knowledge is organised – the progression in subjects and order of the curriculum and then how that is delivered. We all wanted the school culture to enrich and we recognised that our curriculum choices would enable this and how we deliver (pedagogy) would be key to developing such a culture. Knowledge is essential in enabling us to think critically and creatively- once we all agreed this it became an exciting journey- we weren't

arguing skills over knowledge or vice versa- we wanted to excite and enthuse learners through great curriculum journeys.

Some of the work has made us reevaluate our subjects- and the beauty of the subject: KS3 is more than preparing pupils to manage and pass exams at KS4 (preparation is part of it but not the whole of it). Primary curriculum, likewise, is about the joy of subjects and building knowledge of key concepts that unlock the content. The curriculum work also put front and centre, the importance of subject leaders as engine rooms of schools: the co design leads in secondary are key people who have driven their curriculum work and moderation alongside their colleagues /subject leaders from across all schools. The subjects leads at Primary (who often wear many hats), are key drivers for curriculum development and the integrity of subjects- not topics- but distinct subjects, which link with other subjects, but each has a journey within its own right.

We have latterly started working with John Tomsett co author of Huh curriculum books with Mary Myatt. John identified the problem we sometimes face in developing subjects / curriculum development as we don't always have enough knowledge of the subjects we manage and even those we teach as it depends on the areas we specialised in within our degrees. Professional subject expertise has become vital to our work; all secondary subjects belong to professional organisations and use these links to great advantage- even asking them to review our curriculum documentation such as the Geography Association looking at our

Geography curriculum intent and overview! Primary leaders have tapped into the work from Unity Research partnership on curriculum development, and both sectors have linked into strong curriculum hub work coming out of Teaching School Hubs, such as in computing.

We know we want the best for our pupils and of course we want their outcomes to be as strong as possible for their own success and growth. We understand that each key stage builds upon the previous and prepares for the next. But most importantly we recognised in this work that our subjects take pupils beyond qualifications- they won't all opt for all subjects when they get to secondary- we are educating them for life and the love of our subjects and subject learning is integral to this.

We also realised through working together that, if the curriculum is important and an integral part of the culture we want to create and the conditions of high expectations then, we need make time for collaborative curriculum work. There is never enough time for this but we endeavour to make it a priority. I wish we could have fortnightly meetings with co design teams but that isn't possible- however, we meet regularly in subject teams in secondary and within subject teams and year teams for Primary and encourage strong subject curriculum work to be privileged time within schools. We work closely with Professional Associations and the CPD opportunities stemming from regional and national hubs and we acknowledge that curriculum development is a never-ending process.

Looking Forwards:

And so our journey continues. We now have co design teams in almost all subjects in secondary with cross phase groups such as SEND, PSHE, Disadvantaged /Pupil Premium, Reading and Teaching and Learning. Subject and Year teams meet regularly in the Primary phase and link into the CUSP CPD from Unity research school. Subject CPD and links to professional organisations are key and continue to be a priority. We now work with John Tomsett on our Distinctive Culture and part of this framework is about high expectations though our curriculum work and delivery. Acknowledging that this is hard and everlasting has actually been quite a relief. It is a shared endeavour and expertise is needed and drawn upon. But is it also intellectually rewarding and a profession like Teaching should be challenging intellectually as it is a complex business requiring strong subject knowledge. It is cliched but we are on a journey and it is a privilege to be on it with such committed and intelligent staff. Such tricky work needs proper, 'good' robust conversations and we started this in 2018- managed to continue them, albeit over teams, in the craziness of 2020 and 2021 and will continue to do so as we move forwards.

Samantha McMonagle
Executive School Improvement Leader



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