

Releasing POTENTIAL

Autumn Term 2021



THE ST. BART'S
ACADEMY
TRUST

**EFFECTIVE
SUBJECT
LEADERSHIP**



Changes to the EYFS



High Quality Teaching

PLUS

Working With
Parents

Digital Worship

The DfE Reading
Framework



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Focus On The Core Business

During the summer both the DfE and Ofsted encouraged schools to focus on the key content of the National Curriculum – what pupils need to learn and how it is taught.

The optional guidance in the *Teaching a broad and balanced curriculum for education recovery* document suggested schools “prioritise teaching missed content that will allow pupils to make sense of later work in the curriculum”. At the same time Ofsted announced that inspectors would “need to consider whether leaders are using strategies that are having a positive impact on pupils’ learning.

In this issue we explore the elements of High Quality Teaching and the key role that subject leaders play in the design, delivery and evaluation of the curriculum. We also look at ways schools across the St. Bart’s Trust are working with parents.

We hope you find it useful.

The BTSA Team





1 $3^2 \cdot 3 \cdot 3$

2 $2^{-3} = \frac{1}{2^3}$

3 $\sqrt{64} =$

4 $3[8 + (4 + 5)]$

5 $\frac{2^5}{2^3}$

6 $3(4^2 + 1)$

Effective Subject Leadership

Experts In The Engine Room

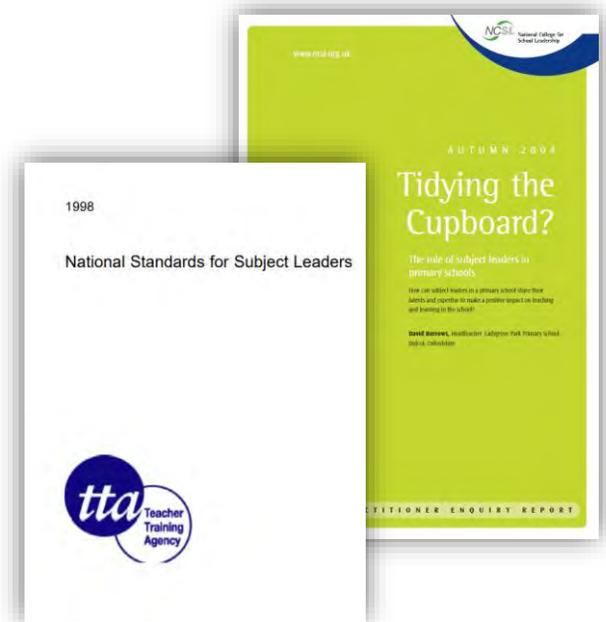
Effective Subject Leadership

The role of the Primary Subject Leader can be key to whole school change. John Collier shares his insight on the purpose, requirements and outcomes of effective subject leadership.

In the last issue of *Releasing Potential* I mentioned the first leadership responsibility I held – school ‘Art Co-Ordinator’. This experience gave me the opportunity to put one foot out of my insular classroom door into the whole school world that lay beyond. What was less clear to me then was the purpose of this role. There was (and still is) an expectation that because a teacher successfully passes their NQT year they are suddenly ready to lead a curriculum subject.

As a new subject leader the only professional development I was offered was a one day book-making course at a local training centre. I still have the products we made that day and over the years I have dipped back into the techniques we were instructed in. What I missed out on though was an opportunity to develop my leadership skills.

Years later I was given a copy of one of the few official publications written specifically for subject leaders, *Tidying The Cupboard?*. The title made me smile as I recalled those early days of doing just that. Many hours spent in the school stock room organising materials, auditing resources and ordering new. Other duties included creating displays around school, painting the backdrops for drama productions and running an extra-curricular Art Club for Key Stage 2 pupils. There was also the important job of covering Art lessons in other year groups. This was beneficial for me as I gained experience of teaching different age ranges, but a missed opportunity in terms of staff observing or even team teaching alongside me.



My RQT year coincided with the Teacher Training Agency publishing the *National Standards for Subject Leaders*, and in doing so they went some way in raising the profile of subject leaders in schools.

These standards were later incorporated into the Teachers’ Standards Framework (DfES, 2001) where the role was defined as – “subject leaders provide professional leadership and management for a subject to secure high quality teaching, effective use of resources and improved standards of learning and achievement for all pupils.”

It’s fair to say that twenty years later the core purpose of subject leaders remains the same, as does the balancing act between being a classroom teacher and subject leader. Schools need to prioritise supporting these ‘experts in the engine room’ in order to unleash their full potential.

At BTSA we have designed a range of training opportunities and resources to support new and experienced subject leaders.

Our *Effective Subject Leadership* session explores some of the ways that schools can support their subject leaders in making the most of their expert knowledge and skills. To begin with subject leaders need to be clear about the expectations of the role and be aware of their potential impact.

When done effectively there are a number of key outcomes that can be achieved -

1. A clearly planned and organised curriculum for each subject throughout the school.

Subject leaders are **Curriculum Architects** who create experiences that cater for all pupils and allow them to meet new knowledge when it is appropriate and that builds on foundational knowledge. Agreeing the key content and

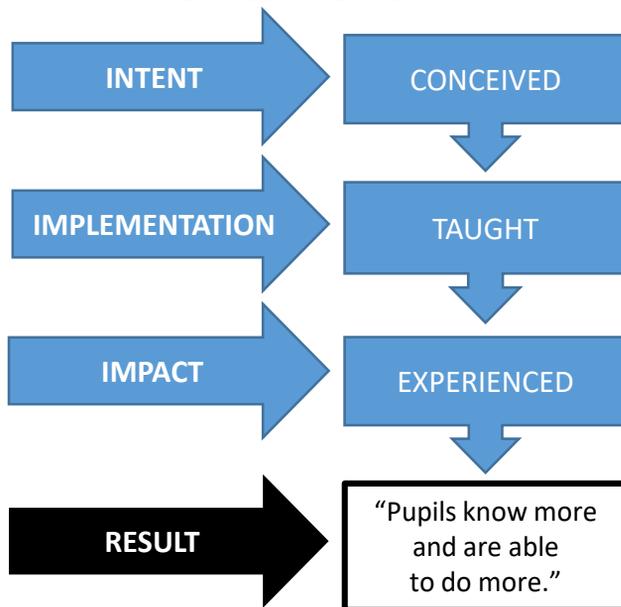
2. High standards, continuity and progression achieved and sustained. Subject leaders are **Role Models** for adults and children. They share the expectations they expect to see and promote high standards of attainment in their subject area. They passionately believe in the academic achievement of every child.

3. Successful implementation of policy into practice. Subject leaders are **Visionaries** who are clear about the purpose of their subject, the opportunities it can provide and the best ways that teachers can help all children learn.

Regular and systematic guidance to colleagues on content, methodology and resources. Subject leaders are **Ambassadors** who keep up to date on current developments including evidence from research on what works best in classrooms.

Clear assessment and recording of pupils' progress. Subject leaders are **Guardians** of the children in their care. They ensure pupil experiences impact on their life chances.

Ofsted's working definition of 'curriculum'



All subject leaders need to be clear about the **3 I's (Intent, Implementation and Impact)** of their curriculum area. Do they have a vision for how their subject should look across the school? Are they involved in staff development that includes the way their subject should be taught? Can they explain pupil outcomes at different phases and stages?

Opportunities to observe lessons, work alongside colleagues, talk to pupils and analyse their work are essential. Subject leaders need to be given directed time in order to carry out their role to the best of their ability.

Some may require extra support depending on their leadership experience. This may involve shadowing another member of staff or attending further professional development. We all also recommend collaborating with others in a similar role through our *Core Five* sessions and year group *Learning Networks*. There are also a number of national subject associations that provide help and advice.

Additional Resources

St. Bart's Trust schools have also benefited from working with Andy Philipps who over the past two years has developed a series of resources specifically designed to support Primary subject leaders. These cover Art & Design, Computing, Design & Technology, English, Geography, History, Mathematics, MFL, PE, PSHE and Science.

The structure for each subject is the same and they are updated termly to draw on the best practice and guidance shared by the DfE, Ofsted and professional subject associations. These materials have been tried and tested by many hundreds of subject leaders and numerous head and deputy head teachers.

The resources come in two formats -

Subject leaders resource files

These provide all subject leaders with:

- a list of key websites, including those of the professional subject association;
- key publications to support the subject leader/Programmes of Study;
- an exemplar progression map for each subject against the aims of the National Curriculum;
- a subject self-evaluation template and an exemplar drawing on previous subject specific guidance from Ofsted;
- a precise of (where published) the recent subject research reports from Ofsted;
- guidance on how to prepare for a subject specific deep-dive.

Subject leaders work book

This has been designed to enable subject leaders to keep a) a record of all the actions that they have undertaken in support of the subject they lead and b) a record of their evaluation of the impact of these actions.



The **BTSA Subject Leader Toolkit** contains a range of resources designed to support subject leaders in carrying out their role.

It includes-

- **Checklist for subject leaders**
- **Purpose of study statements**
- **Subject vision statement**
- **Aims of the foundation subjects**
- **Subject profile**
- **Action Plan**
- **Curriculum balance**
- **Sampling pupils' work**
- **Grade descriptors for the quality of education**
- **Suggested subject leader file content**
- **Links to professional subject associations**
- **Next steps**

St. Bart's Academy Trust employees can access the toolkit as well as a video and supporting resources by clicking on the image above.



Spotlight on Subject Leaders

We asked a range of staff from across the St. Bart's Trust to share their experiences of being a subject leader.



Charlotte Whitmore

Curriculum Lead

Cranberry Academy



How long have you been a subject leader?

I have been a subject leader for 13 years, including leading History and English. I am presently Curriculum Lead where I oversee all of the wider curriculum.

What are the key requirements of being able to do the job effectively?

1. Have a good knowledge of educational issues.
2. Keep up to date with expectations of the curriculum.
3. Lead and work in conjunction with individual subject leaders to identify strengths and development points for the subject.
4. Improve pedagogy and practice relevant to the curriculum areas across the school.
5. Support, mentor and coach individual leaders by arranging quality professional time together.

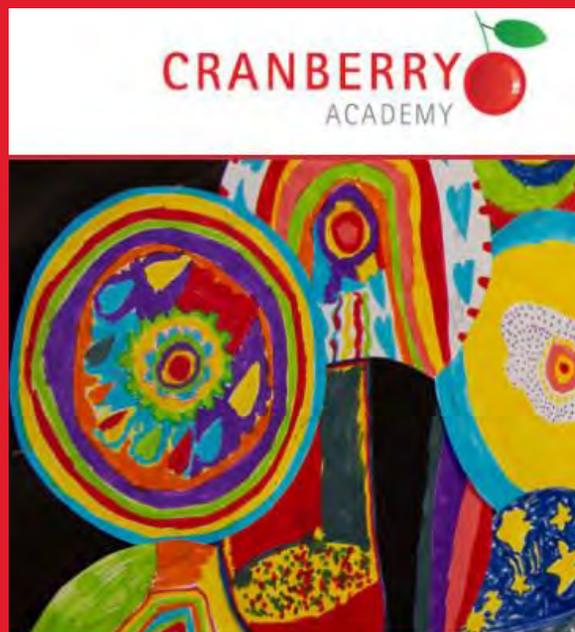
Share one thing you are proud of related to your role.

This term, I have had the opportunity to meet with all of my individual subject leaders to discuss strengths, development points and to discuss what they would like to see happen for the future of their subject areas.

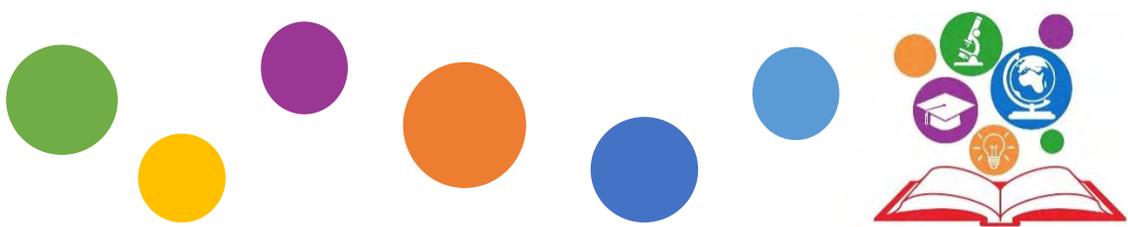
These discussions were both insightful and informative and really proved that they knew their subjects inside and out. This made me very proud of my team as this is something that we have been working on as a school.

What advice would you give new subject leaders?

Spend the time to get to know your subject across the school to ensure the curriculum is progressive before you make any changes. Speak to pupils about their thoughts about the subject as this can tell you a lot about the subject you are leading.



Curriculum



Mike Field

Assistant Principal
Saint Nathaniel's Academy

How long have you been a subject leader?

I have led subjects for 10 years. For 9 of those years, I led Computing. In 2019, I became an Assistant Principal in which I am also responsible for leading the Lower Key Stage 2 Phase, CPD and being a member of the RSE Team.

What are the key requirements of being able to do the job effectively?

In order to do the job effectively it is important that you have a clear vision of what you would like your subject area to look like. This should be informed by good practice and current research. I believe that it is vital that staff have clear communication and understand the rationale for new decisions or changes in a subject. It is important to set a positive example so that you embody your expectations. Enlisting support from colleagues is important as is encouragement and patience so that staff feel supported. Finally, it is important to evaluate the impact of your leadership and changes that have been made so that your subject can continue to progress.

Share one thing you are proud of related to your role.

I am proud to have led the implementation of 1:1 iPads at Saint Nathaniel's Academy for children from Year 1-6. The use of technology has hugely improved since I have led Computing and I was delighted that we were the first school in the country to be Awarded the NAACE Excellence In Technology Mark.

What advice would you give new subject leaders?

Be confident, try new things and if you need it, ask for help.



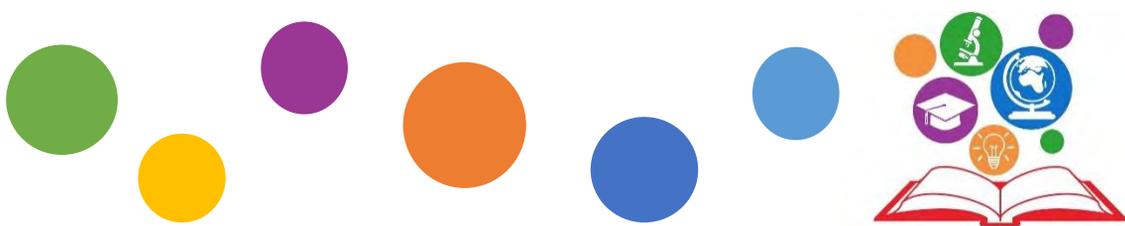
Computing

Our teachers have all been trained to use technology to enhance teaching and learning opportunities both within school and remotely. We will learn how to use iPads effectively to learn in new ways. Teachers will help us to be confident and responsible users of technology.

Rock, Paper, Scissors

Using BBC Microbits





Steffanie Shaw

Computing &
Digital Lead
Meir Heath
Academy



What are the key requirements of being able to do the job effectively?

I believe listening to your staff and pupils is essential. By this I mean, enquire where they believe the strengths and weaknesses are within your subject area. Knowing what needs to be developed and what your staff/pupils feel needs to be improved makes everyone feel valued. Then the changes you make will be accepted with a positive attitude and make the best impact across the school. Another key requirement, is communication (including good listening) which I probably do a little too much. Everyone who knows me will tell you I'm a bit of a chatterbox! It is also vital to stay organised - school life is busy, so update key documents, know your policies and monitoring cycles. I am an advocate for being innovative. Have a go, everything you try won't always work, but know the reasons why you wanted to implement it, why it was successful and had impact or why it didn't work. Finally, have patience. New initiatives take time, staff need time to make changes, pupils need time to see differences. Building quality teaching within your subject area will happen if you give it the space.

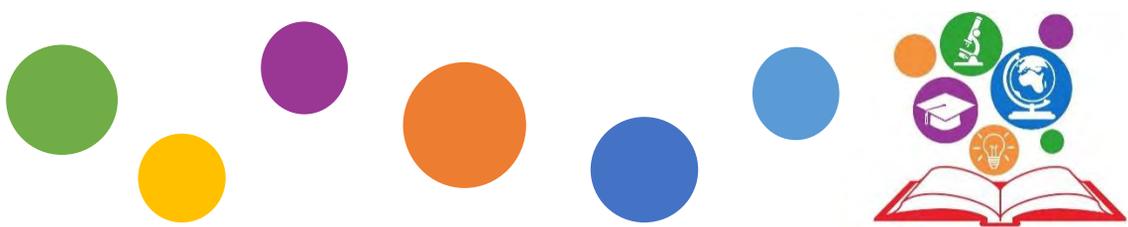
Share one thing you are proud of related to your role.

Within my subject, I am particularly proud of leading and driving the implementation of iPads. We are still very much at the start of our journey, but I am so proud of our team's positivity and open minded approach towards using iPads to enhance our curriculum.

I have implemented a new scheme of work for Computing, which has also allowed me to drive Computing forward. To showcase how the iPads can enhance learning, not only in Computing, but in every subject area, I designed and led an 'iPad Launch Week' which included every class from EYFS to Y6, demonstrating just how versatile, yet simple, the iPads can be within the classroom. To help teacher subject knowledge, all our teachers are Apple Teacher trained and each week staff are able to attend iLeaders meetings to share good practice or any problems faced while teaching. This has created an open and honest culture for staff.

What advice would you give new subject leaders?

If I were to give new subject leads any advice I would say it is integral to know your subject, so that you can be as hands on as possible. When Mrs Southern first approached me about becoming the Computing Lead I was very apprehensive, knowing how fast the digital world moves. However, the MAT have created an incredible network of leaders and teachers, for all subjects, which Mrs Southern directed me to straight away. I really don't feel that I would be at this point in my journey, was it not for the amazing network opportunities I have received along the way. Always know there is someone there, more than willing to help, we were all new to the role once! Be involved, ask questions, take any CPD opportunities linked to your subject, that you are able to. This will allow you to know the expectations across year groups and develop you as a leader. From recently attending free CPD myself, I was able to secure staff training for not only our Academy, but the whole Trust, so always try to have an open mind from what you can gain from CPD. Most of all be enthusiastic about your subject, as that enthusiasm will spread through your team and make a successful subject.



Mark Taylor
 Geography Lead
 Belgrave St.
 Bartholomew's
 Academy

How long have you been a subject leader?
 I am currently in my third year of leading Geography at Belgrave.

What are the key requirements of being able to do the job effectively?
 For me, it is important to enjoy leading the subject you have responsibility for. It's exciting to be able to shape how a school interprets and delivers a particular area of the curriculum but as it places extra demands on your time, being able to find a sense of enjoyment in the role is key.

Share one thing you are proud of related to your role.
 It has been fantastic to see how the children have developed more of an awareness and enjoyment of the subject over the past couple of years. Class teachers have got on board with what we are trying to do and the subject is definitely being enjoyed more by the children.

What advice would you give new subject leaders?
 Set realistic goals! Look at what developments will have the greatest impact and prioritise achieving those in the first year leading your subject. Not everything can be achieved in this first 12 months!

 <h1 style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">Geography</h1> 	
SUBJECT VISION MAT	
<p style="text-align: center; color: #FFD700;">Vision</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Our geography provision aims to inspire children's natural curiosity, equipping them with a deepening knowledge of the world in which they live.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: #FFD700;">Big Ideas</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Locational knowledge</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Place knowledge</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Human & physical geography</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Geographical skills and fieldwork</p>
<p style="color: #FFD700;">KS1</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Children become familiar with countries & seas of the UK as well as continents & oceans of the world. They contrast the UK to a non-European country. Weather patterns are introduced, alongside key geographical terminology. Opportunities are provided for map work and local fieldwork studies.</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">KS2</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Children expand their studies to focus on Europe and N & S America. They are taught more advanced physical geography, and explore the effects of human activities in the world. Children use the eight point compass, six figure grid references and fieldwork studies to further develop their understanding.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center; color: #FFD700;">Progress</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Units sequenced so that children build upon prior learning</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Key vocabulary introduced through every unit to progressively build upon the children's knowledge of geographical terms</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">End of unit assessments help teachers check knowledge retention</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">All year group teachers have access to the units from all other year groups</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: #FFD700;">Support</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Children have access to unit 'knowledge mats'</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Relevant resources provided for children to access and store through their personal iPads</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Staff CPD provided by Curriculum and Geography leads</p>
<p style="text-align: center; color: #FFD700;">Cross Curricular Links</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Maths: Statistics and directional language</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Computing: Use of digital technologies</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Art: Map drawing</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Science: Making observations and recording data</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: #FFD700;">Retrieval Practice</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Lessons begin with a recap of prior and relevant learning</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">Key concepts revisited eg. The UK in Y1 and Y3</p> <p style="color: #FFD700;">End of unit assessments provide children with the opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned</p>



Gemma Hankinson

Art Lead
Offley Primary
Academy

How long have you been a subject leader?

I have been Art subject leader at Offley Primary Academy for nine years. Prior to that I was Computing lead at my previous school for five years.

What are the key requirements of being able to do the job effectively?

To be an effective subject leader you first need to be passionate about your subject, open to new ideas and the positive impact your subject can have on a child's learning journey. This also helps when you are trying to engage staff and to have them share your vision and ethos. It is important to have a good understanding of what your subject currently looks like in your school. You need to know which areas are going well, how staff feel about teaching your subject, what the children enjoy and understand any barriers or limitations. It has helped me to have a clear vision for the teaching and learning of Art at Offley and to break this down into smaller goals on an action plan. Looking at good practice in other schools, reading current pedagogy and linking this to what the children need at our school all contributes to how Art continues to evolve.

Share one thing you are proud of related to your role.

One of the first accomplishments we have had is the continuous development of our sketchbook use. Initially, sketchbooks did not have a clear purpose but as this has become more of a focus for Art in schools, I was keen to promote their use.



They are still a work in progress, but we have come such a long way in terms of how they are used to enable pupils to feel able to think and act creatively, explore their ideas, and reflect on their artistic choices. Staff are also positive about how sketchbooks enhance teaching and learning and are always keen to share successes.

What advice would you give new subject leaders?

To not be afraid to ask for help and magpie ideas, whether that is from other staff, good practice in other schools or from research.



Kenny Bartonshaw

Computing & P.E. Lead
Kingsland C.E. Academy



Apple Regional Training Centre

How long have you been a subject leader?

This is my fifth year as a subject leader. I have led Computing and also seen the school become an Apple Regional Training Centre. This year I have taken on Physical Education for the first time.

What are the key requirements of being able to do the job effectively?

To have an understanding of the subject and to continuously seek CPD opportunities for yourself and for others within the subject. Develop an interest in your area of responsibility and identify how it can be taught/implemented further across the school. Identify areas of strength and development in the subject to enable an effective action plan that identifies and maps where you want to take it next.

Share one thing you are proud of related to your role.

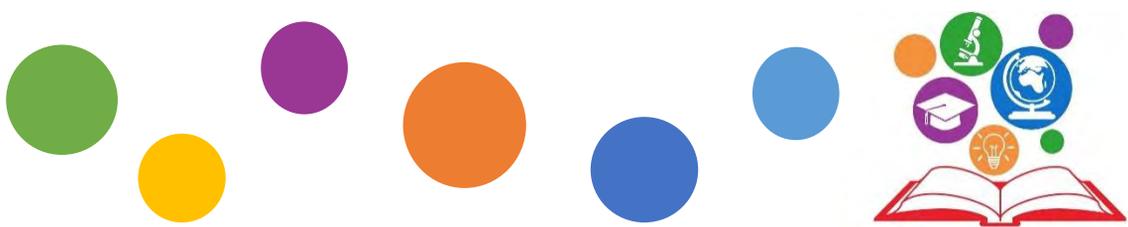
The positive impact on teaching and learning of implementing 1-1 iPads across KS1 and KS2. I am also proud that the work with computing and implementing technology across the curriculum has been shared locally, nationally and internationally.



What advice would you give new subject leaders?

- Don't try to do everything at once. Have an achievable long term goal but then break these into smaller short term/medium term goals.
- Identify colleagues that have shown good use of the subject and encourage them to share what they do.
- Regularly share best practice from across the school.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.





Tom Capewell

Physical Education
Lead
Hungerford
Academy



How long have you been a subject leader?

As an NQT (six years ago) I had completed a degree in P.E./Sports Pedagogy, so I requested to shadow the P.E. lead and learn what was needed to be an effective leader. During my RQT year, I shadowed the humanities subject lead, and then took over from her and faced an Ofsted inspection. The year after, I was made joint P.E. lead with an RQT. We led the subject together until she got her own subject. I have led P.E. on my own for two and a half years and counting.

What are the key requirements of being able to do the job effectively?

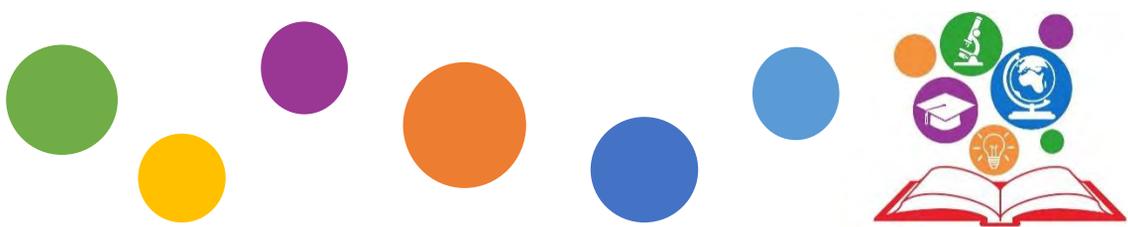
- Build strong relationships colleagues and establish a good line of communication.
- Gain a good understanding of staff ability within your subject; this will allow you to provide useful CPD.
- If you are not given your area of expertise you must still develop a good understanding of your subject's curriculum and use this to be confident in the decisions you are making.
- Be able to track progress of the children and fill any gaps in their learning.
- Gain a sound understanding of the needs of the children in each year group, certain children may be more or less confident in your particular subject.
- Be confident in your own ability to lead. If you do not have the correct resources then your subject will be negatively impacted
- Don't be afraid to communicate your thoughts and concerns to SLT as they want your subject to succeed as much as you do.

Share one thing you are proud of related to your role.

There are many things that I am proud of during my time as a subject lead. Seeing children grow with confidence within themselves and starting to love and enjoy taking part in physical activity, developing a subject that I am passionate about into a good subject and supporting the children during and after a lockdown when physical activity may have been at a low level. My proudest moment as a subject lead however, is giving all the children the opportunities to represent their school in a wide range on sports when they would not normally get the chance to do so; seeing their faces when they are at sporting events, win or lose, will always stay with me and will drive me to ensure this is something that happens every year.

What advice would you give new subject leaders?

If you are a new subject lead, you have to realise that you can't do everything all at once or on your own; you have to prioritise areas you feel are the most important and will have the biggest impact for the school and your subject and focus on them. If you feel you need help, then ask! There are many subject leads that have been doing it for years and have a vast amount of experience in schools and liaising with them may provide you with perfect advice, be open to new ideas. You also need to be passionate about your subject, this is your chance to shine! You may not be given your chosen subject but this shouldn't impact your ability to lead. You need to develop a good understanding of subject knowledge and enhance your own expertise in this area. Finally, lead your subject. All subjects need strong leaders and don't let the fact you're new to this stop you from achieving this, don't be afraid of making decisions and explaining your reasoning for it. Things won't always go according to plan, and this is okay, just be transparent with your colleagues.



Tom Lewis

Assistant Principal/
Maths Lead
Weston Coyney Infants

How long have you been a subject leader?

We have both been subject leaders since the beginning of our careers. Kath started out leading R.E. around 16 years ago, and has had a number of different subjects since then. Tom began as the Science leader 8 years ago and has moved into Computing and Maths.

What are the key requirements of being able to do the job effectively?

As subject leaders who work on a split site, we work very hard to communicate effectively with each other. In a full primary, one subject lead would be working with Maths from Foundation Stage up to Year 6, whereas we lead Foundation Stage to Year 2 and then Year 3 to Year 6. This means that communication is key.

We make action plans and III (Intent, Implementation and Impact) plans together with a focus on impact across the whole Federation. We also need strong consideration of each site's needs. A new initiative might be perfect for the Junior site, but will not suit the Infants. We meet regularly to share ideas and initiatives so that we can make them suitable and appropriate. For example, when introducing a new board for Maths vocabulary across the school, we focused on standard and non-standard examples. In KS1 this has become part of our working wall, and shows key terminology alongside concrete and pictorial representations. This is to continue our consistency of approach on both sites.



Kath Campbell

Assistant Principal/
Maths Lead
Weston Coyney Juniors

Share one thing you are proud of related to your role.

Across the Federation, we hold professional development at the heart of what we do.



Through our journey with the *Teacher Development Trust* to achieve a Gold award, we have demonstrated a constant focus on improving professional development by empowering staff to drive their own learning forward.

We have engaged with a variety of development programmes including 'Lesson Study' and research based in school. This sits alongside our CPD from BTSA to deliver the greatest impact to pupils in our Federation.

What advice would you give new subject leaders?

Read, read and read some more. Keeping up to date with new research supports your ability to lead your subject and to be aware of opportunities to develop new ideas in your school.





Early Years Matters

A summary of the recent changes to the EYFS framework



Early Years Matters

Since 1st September 2021, all Early Years providers must follow the updated Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. The changes to the statutory framework have been made to improve pupil outcomes at age 5 (particularly in early language and literacy) and reduce workload such as unnecessary paperwork, so staff can spend more time with the children in their care.

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS specifies the requirements for learning and development:

- the areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences for children in all early years settings
- the early learning goals that providers must help children work towards
- assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers)

The EYFS Seven Areas of Learning



The areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

The three prime areas

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These are the prime areas: • communication and language • physical development • personal, social and emotional development

The four specific areas

Providers must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are: • literacy • mathematics • understanding the world • expressive arts and design



Overarching principles of the EYFS

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings.

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates.

The safeguarding and welfare requirements cover the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

The safeguarding and welfare requirements are designed to help providers –

- create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.
- take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. They must: safeguard children; ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children; promote good health; manage behaviour; and maintain records, policies and procedures.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK](#)

THE MAIN CHANGES TO THE EYFS



The Learning and Development Requirements

Changes have been made to the wording in the guidance on educational programmes, meaning:

- They are longer and more in-depth, containing examples of activities that practitioners can undertake with children.
- There is a new focus on early language and extending vocabulary, with a range of examples on how to embed and develop vocabulary skills across the seven areas of learning and development.

Early Learning Goals (ELGs)

Changes have been made to the ELGs to make them clearer, more specific, and more focused on the main factors that support child development at the age of 5.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

There are some minor changes to the safeguarding and welfare section, including a new requirement to promote children's awareness of maintaining good oral health e.g. the effects of sugary food and drinks and the importance of brushing your teeth.



Development Matters (2021)

In line with the new changes, the DfE have also released an updated version of the *Development Matters* document. Although non-statutory, it is intended that the materials will support practitioners in implementing the statutory requirements of the EYFS. It sets out the pathways of children's development in broad ages and stages and offers a top-level view of how children develop and learn.

It can help schools to design an effective early years curriculum, building on the strengths and meeting the needs of the children they work with. It guides, but does not replace, professional judgement. The curriculum consists of everything you want children to experience, learn and be able to do. It also includes more guidance about children's communication and language. Language is the foundation of children's thinking and learning.

Development Matters identifies seven key features of effective practice

1. **The best for every child.**
2. **High-quality care.**
3. **The curriculum: what we want children to learn**
4. **Pedagogy: helping children to learn.**
5. **Assessment: checking what children have learnt.**
6. **Self-regulation and executive function.**
7. **Partnership with parents.**



“Every child can make progress, if they are given the right support. When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.”

There have been changes to the age bands, which have been widened and now comprise of three rather than six descriptors:

- Birth to 3 years old
- 3- and 4-year-olds
- Children in Reception

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

[CLICK HERE TO READ DEVELOPMENT MATTERS \(2021\)](#)



High Quality Teaching

Breaking down the six key elements
that promote learning



High Quality Teaching

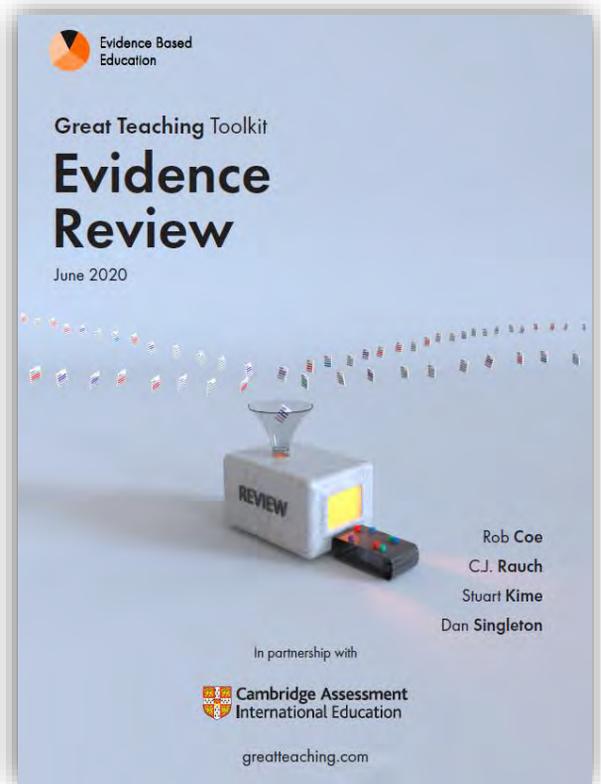
This academic year schools across the St. Bart's Trust will be focusing on performance management targets linked to *High Quality Teaching*. To support teachers and support staff in achieving their whole school targets BTSA have produced a number of resources that promote six key elements of classroom practice.

In June 2020 Evidence Based Education published their *Great Teaching Toolkit Evidence Review* which was sparked by the question – “What are the best bets for teachers to invest time and effort in if they want their students to learn more?”

Having reviewed existing research around teacher effectiveness the report identified four priorities for teachers who want to help their students learn more:

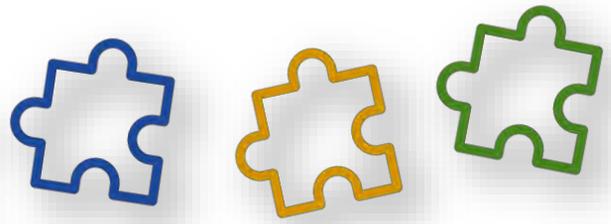
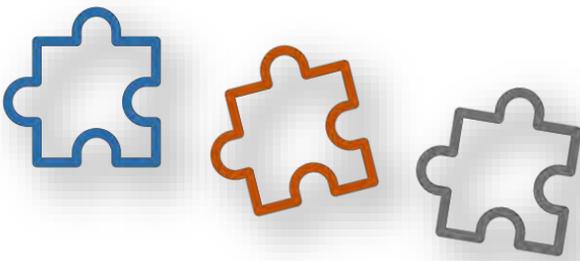
1. Understand the content they are teaching and how it is learnt
2. Create a supportive environment for learning
3. Manage the classroom to maximise the opportunity to learn
4. Present content, activities and interactions that activate their students' thinking

These priorities are presented as a model for Great Teaching comprising of the four dimensions and underpinned by a total of 17 elements. An 'element' is defined as something that may be worth investing time and effort to work on to build a specific competency, skill or knowledge. There is not implication that the complexity of teaching can be reduced to a set of techniques, but evidence suggests the route to expertise is likely to involve a focus on developing competencies, guided by formative feedback in a supportive professional learning environment.



Above: The *Great Teaching Toolkit Evidence Review* published by Evidence Based Education in June 2020. Click on the image above to view the document online. Below: The report contains A Model for Great Teaching which comprises four dimensions that can be prioritised by teachers in order to help their students learn more.





The Six Elements

In many ways, Dimension 4 represents the heart of great teaching: getting students to think hard about the material you want them to learn. It comprises six elements which are quite broad and inevitably overlapping. The elements are *Structuring, Explaining, Questioning, Interacting, Embedding* and *Activating*.



Structuring

Choosing, matching and sequencing learning tasks and signalling how they contribute to learning goals. Sharing learning aims and what success looks like. Presenting examples that demonstrate how aims have been met. Being clear about how learning fits in to the bigger picture.

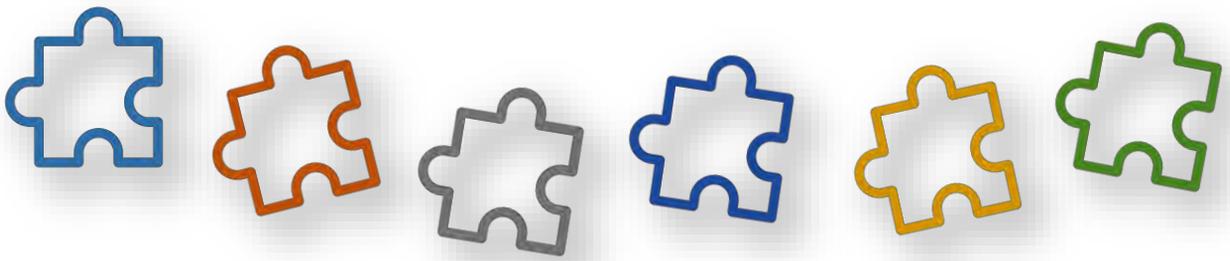
Explaining – presenting and communicating new ideas clearly, with concise, appropriate, engaging explanations. Connecting new ideas to previously learnt ones. Using examples that build connections. Modelling new skills or procedures with appropriate scaffolding and challenge.

Questioning – using questions and dialogue to promote elaboration and connected, flexible thinking among learners; using questions to elicit student thinking; getting responses from all students; interpreting, communicating and responding to assessment evidence appropriately.

Interacting – responding appropriately to feedback from students about their thinking/knowledge/understanding; giving students actionable feedback to guide their learning.

Embedding – giving students tasks that embed and reinforce learning; requiring them to practise until learning is fluent and secure; ensuring that once-learnt material is reviewed/revisited to prevent forgetting.

Activating – promoting metacognition; helping students to plan, regulate and monitor their own learning; progressing appropriately from structured to more independent learning as students develop knowledge and expertise.



In The Classroom

Structuring

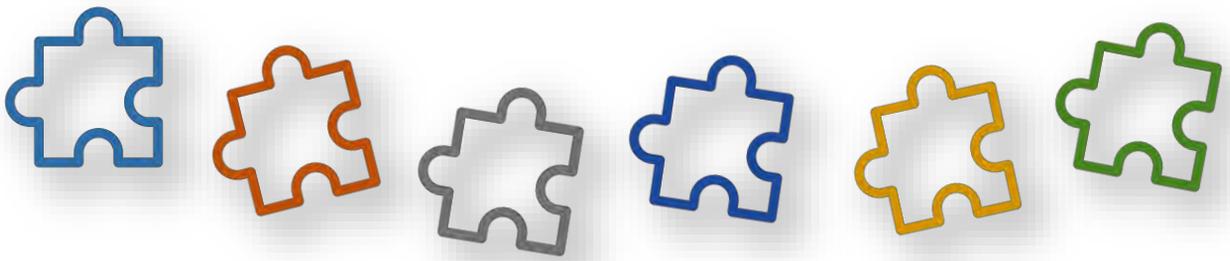
- Share the 'big' idea that the lesson or multiple lessons are addressing.
- Use live modelling, shared writing and deconstruction to show pupils excellent examples of work and how to produce them.
- Use the 'I, we, you' approach to modelling to remove dependence and allow pupils to complete individual work.
- Provide scaffolding for tasks. This may include prompt sheets, success criteria, writing frames, and worked examples.

Explaining

- Base explanations on pupils' prior knowledge.
- Ensure the explanation is not so complex that students do not understand it, but not so simple that it is uninteresting or does not give pupils new information.
- Use challenging subject specific terminology.
- Identify the core message or key information of your explanation and stick to this as closely and concisely as possible.
- Where possible, use questioning throughout your explanations to ensure that pupils have understood and identify any early misconceptions.
- This may also include the pupils explaining the concept back to the teacher and each other.
- Use concrete examples to make your explanations easier to understand and remember.
- Use analogies, metaphors and images to allow pupils to make mental hooks into what they already know. This helps them to better organise and remember the new knowledge.
- Present new information to students in small chunks.
- Where appropriate, combine explanations with modelling and worked examples .
- Make use of dual coding – this is the process of combining verbal (written text) and visual materials such as images, timelines, graphic organisers, and spider diagrams. This gives pupils two ways to remember the information and it is therefore easier to recall later on.

Questioning

- Involve a wide range of students with questioning.
- Questions to address common misconceptions and the key learning points.
- Allow for thinking time – always give all students 3 or 4 seconds to consider the question and the answer.
- Have high expectations for the quality of answers – expect well-structured sentences and language.
- Use prompts/scaffolding to deepen responses.
- Use higher-order questioning such as requiring students to clarify their thinking including the reasons behind their views and asking them to explain their answer further.
- Challenging students to consider other viewpoints or perspectives by asking for counter arguments or why things could be seen in a different way.
- Use hinge questions – these are questions that check the understanding of key issues and are used before the class/pupil moves on to more complex tasks.



In The Classroom

Interacting

- Use regular formative assessment to gauge pupils' understanding and use this to guide future instruction by addressing misconceptions or re-teaching where necessary.
- Use 'live' feedback as pupils are completing work to give immediate areas for improvement.
- Use whole-class verbal feedback to show common errors and misconceptions and discuss examples of excellent work.

Embedding

- Use guided practice and then move on to independent practice.
- Remove the level of guidance given to pupils, for example by starting with part-completion problems or by breaking problems down into more steps at first, moving to whole problems and more complex problems.
- Revisit topics sometime after first learning them.
- Use varied methods of retrieval practice.
- Use starter quizzes which include a range of topics to achieve interleaving.
- Require pupils to explain topics they have covered previously.

Activating

- Teach pupils those strategies that are more effective for independent study including spacing, retrieval practice and interleaving, in specific subjects. Model how to use these strategies and ensure they complete guided practice.
- Use strategies which require pupils to assess their own learning.
- Give pupils questions to consider when planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning.
- Encourage metacognitive talk in the classroom.

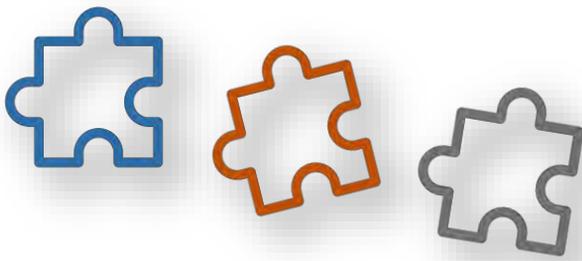
Further Support From BTSA

In order to help St. Bart's staff to release their potential we have a number of professional development modules and programmes that link with the six elements of High Quality Teaching.

All of these resources can be found on the St. Bart's Multi Academy Trust Central Hub and can be accessed at any time to suit you. Every session is built around the current evidence base and includes practical classroom resources to use straight away.

The ideal starting point is the High Quality Teaching folder itself which contains a 25 minute video, session slides and a range of supporting materials. Within this session you will find links to further CPD and wider reading. You can access the folder by clicking on the box below.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING RESOURCES FROM BTSA



Developing Teaching Programme

Our brand new *Developing Teaching* programme provides further support for teachers in their second to fourth year of teaching. The first two sessions are already available online with four more sessions to come in 2022. For more experienced staff our *BTSA Concise* modules are linked to the Teachers' Standards and build on the content of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Early Career Framework (ECF). You can browse the collection here -

DEVELOPING TEACHING RESOURCES

BTSA Bitesize Webinars

St. Bart's staff can also access our BTSA Bitesize webinars. Aimed primarily at school leaders and governors, these short online sessions provide a concise summary of the key themes covered in our *Developing Teaching* programme.

Dates for 2021-22 include –

- **Purpose & Sequencing**
(Tuesday 14th December 2021)
- **High Expectations & Communication**
(Tuesday 1st February 2022)
- **Modelling & Questioning**
(Tuesday 29th March 2022)
- **Metacognition & Self-Regulation**
(Tuesday 24th May 2022)
- **Feedback & Review**
(Tuesday 21st June 2022)

All the webinars run from 3.45 – 4.30pm.

To book a place please contact Maxine at office@btsa.org

BTSA BITESIZE RESOURCES



Developing Teaching Programme

Retrieval and Retention – Available online now
Be secure in providing starters that recap and review prior learning and consolidate knowledge.

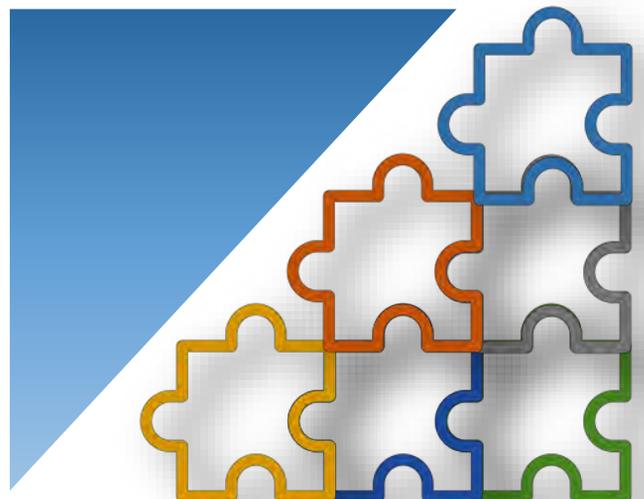
Purpose and Sequencing – Available online now
Be secure in explaining the purpose of the lesson and how it fits into the bigger picture and wider scheme of work.

High Expectations and Communication
Thursday 13th January 2022
Be secure in 'teaching to the top' with high and ambitious expectations and ensure instructions are concise, clear and encouraging.

Modelling and Questioning
Thursday 24th March 2022
Be secure in presenting new material in small steps, modelling explicitly and questioning to probe thinking, addresses misconceptions and drive understanding.

Metacognition and Self-Regulation
Thursday 19th May 2022
Be secure in communicating and teaching effective learning strategies that pupils can adopt themselves and promote independence.

Feedback and Review
Thursday 9th June 2022
Be secure in ensuring feedback is clear, manageable, specific and targeted and gained (as much as possible) from pupils during the lesson.





The Reading Framework
Teaching the foundations of literacy

The Reading Framework



In July 2021 the Department for Education published *The Reading Framework*. It has been designed to support schools in meeting the existing expectations for teaching early reading as set out in the national curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. We explore the key....

The Context

Reading is fundamental to education. Proficiency in reading, writing and spoken language is vital for pupils' success. Through these, they develop communication skills for education and for working with others: in school, in training and at work. Pupils who find it difficult to learn to read are likely to struggle across the curriculum, since English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching. This is why the government is committed to continuing to raise standards of literacy for all.

The aims of *The Reading Framework* are to:

- set out some of the research underpinning the importance of talk, stories and systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) in the teaching of reading
- provide practical support for high-quality teaching, including assessment and the importance of 'fidelity to the programme'
- support schools to evaluate their teaching of early reading, especially in Reception and Year 1, and identify how to improve provision if weaknesses are found
- explain the importance of systematic phonics teaching for older pupils who are at risk of failing to learn to read because they cannot decode well enough
- support schools working with parents to help their children learn to read

Key points are listed at the end of each section to support leaders and teachers audit their current practice.

“Reading can achieve something teachers and policymakers have been attempting for decades: to lesson or even eliminate the impact of early life disadvantage.”

Rt. Hon Nick Gibb MP



Above: The DfE's *Reading Framework* provides guidance for schools to meet existing expectations for teaching early reading. Click on the image above to access the framework online.

Section 1: The importance of reading and a conceptual model



Becoming a fluent, skilled and attentive reader starts at the earliest stages, before children encounter a book for the first time, partly driven by the quality of their parents talk with them that expands their vocabulary. Section 1 stresses the importance of developing children’s spoken language and it recognises that all talk is useful, especially when directed to the child specifically.

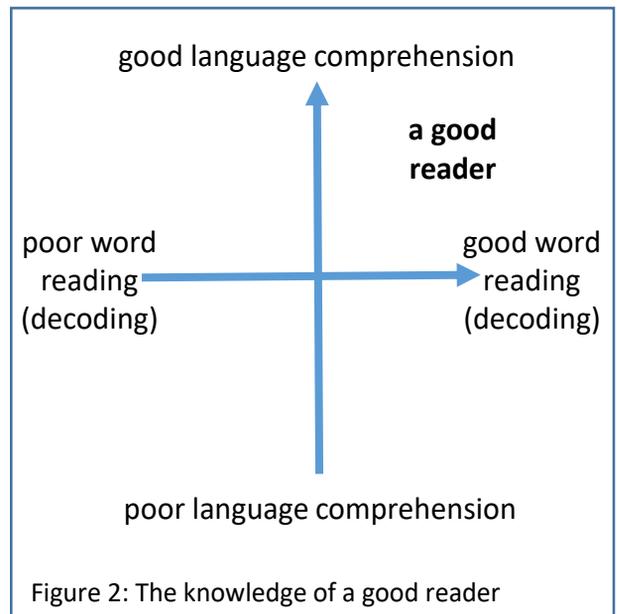
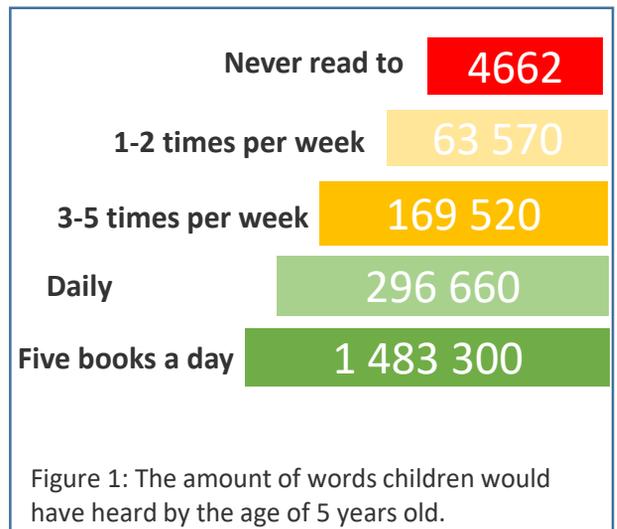
Researchers in the United States who looked at the impact of parents reading with their children published their findings in a news release (Figure 1). *The Reading Framework* states that “the only effective route to closing this gap is for children to be taught systematically to read as soon as they start school so that they do not have to rely on adults. Children who become engaged in reading can make huge progress in their literacy development simply through their independent reading, whatever the nature of their early experiences.”

The *Framework* recognises that not “all reading difficulties are caused by lack of conversation or engagement with books. Some parents provide the best possible opportunities...but their children still have more difficulty than most in learning to read. Schools should teach these children early and effectively, so that their difficulties do not restrict their full access to the curriculum and so that they also become engaged in reading.”

The DfE concludes that all educators have a fundamental role in ensuring all children learn to read and they recommend that reading is taught using *The Simple View of Reading* (Figure 2). This model was first proposed by Gough and Tunmer in 1986 and this is presented in the national curriculum programmes of study as ‘word reading’ and ‘comprehension’.

“I realised in a whiplash burst that those children, all mine for one year, might never reach their full potential as human beings if they never learned to read.”

*Reader, come home.
The reading brain in a digital world.
Maryanne Wolf (2018)*



Section 2: Language comprehension



Spoken language runs through the national curriculum programmes of study for English and all seven areas of learning and development in the revised Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.

The Reading Framework states that “teachers need to help children articulate their ideas in well-formed sentences by scaffolding, extending and developing their ideas.

The Framework suggests all children “need to practise their skills of listening to, talking with a partner and giving feedback to the group. Learning the routines of **back and forth talk** is particularly important for children who have not experienced such talk before they come to school.”

The progress of these children depends on adults engaging them in high-quality dialogue and direct teaching so that they can:

- articulate what they know and understand
- develop their knowledge across all areas of learning, using the vocabulary they need to support learning.

The document gives an example of how teachers might introduce, reinforce and consolidate new vocabulary starting with a class visit to a local fire station (right).

Section 2 also emphasises the importance of ‘Storytimes, Poetry and Rhymes’ and offers advice on -

- Choosing books and poems
- Living the story
- Thriving on repetition
- Role play
- Developing vocabulary and language
- Book corners
- Reading with children at home

“A language-rich environment is one in which adults talk with children throughout the day. The more children take part in conversations, the more they will understand once they can read and the more vocabulary and ideas they will have to draw on when they can write.”

The Reading Framework (2021)

‘Back and Forth’ Across The Curriculum

A visit to a fire station generates a range of vocabulary



Back in the classroom, adults use photographs to reinforce the language by recalling and naming features seen.



Later opportunities arise to repeat and consolidate the vocabulary in different contexts and subjects.



Section 3: Word reading and spelling



The Reading Framework reminds us that word reading and spelling are ‘reversible processes’. Reading involves blending sounds to say a whole word; spelling involves segmenting a whole word to identify the sounds in it. Section 3 covers a number of themes including –

- Principles underpinning the teaching of phonics
- Teaching a systematic programme
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Developing fluency
- Assessment

In England, the national curriculum requires maintained schools to teach reading using systematic phonics. When inspecting the curriculum, Ofsted’s inspectors evaluate the extent to which the ‘teaching (of) early reading and synthetic phonics is systematic and ensures that all children learn to read words and simple sentences accurately by the end of Reception.’

This section *also* provides a significant amount of detail covering the history and complexity of the English language. There is a breakdown of graphemes and phonemes, decoding, encoding and handwriting.

On this last subject, reference is made to the 2017 Ofsted *Bold Beginnings* report which looked at the Reception curriculum in a sample of good and outstanding primary schools. It found that ‘nearly all the headteachers in the schools (visited) did not teach a cursive or pre-cursive script in Reception’. One reason given was it slowed down pupil’s writing at a point where children found manual dexterity tricky and certain muscles were still developing. *The Reading Framework* suggests schools consider the advantages of delaying the teaching of joined handwriting.

“To teach word reading and spelling successfully, teachers need to understand the principles underpinning the teaching of word reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding).”

The Reading Framework (2021)



Bold beginnings:

The Reception curriculum in a sample of good and outstanding primary schools

Above: Ofsted’s *Bold Beginnings* report looks at the Reception curriculum in successful schools and how well it prepared 4 and 5 year olds for the rest of their education and beyond. It was commissioned by Amanda Spielman in 2017 as part of an Ofsted-wide review looking for fresh insight into leaders’ curriculum intentions, how these are implemented and the impact on outcomes for pupils. Click on the image above to access the report online.

Section 4: Children at risk of reading failure



The Reading Framework recommends that teachers should aim for all children to keep up with the school's chosen phonics programme, ensuring teaching time is sufficient for the content to be taught within the time-scales the programme sets out. The framework recognises that "some children need extra support from the beginning" and it emphasises the important role that assessment has in identifying those pupils that begin to fall behind their peers. Working with others to investigate possible reasons (such as a hearing or visual impairment, or speech, language and communication needs) can then lead to strategies to address the barriers to reading.

To enable children to keep up, they should be given extra practice with the emphasis being on:

- Consolidating the work the children have already met in their main class or group phonics session, with bite-sized steps so all of them can achieve success every day
- Revising grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs)
- Practising oral blending of spoken sounds to pronounce words
- Reading words by saying the sounds and blending them.

The children should also continue to read 'decodable' books, that is books that include only words with GPCs they have been explicitly taught, until they can blend sounds to read new words fluently and automatically.

Most children will catch up if they receive a few months of intensive individual or small-group teaching; they should not need extra support indefinitely. School leaders must take responsibility for making sure late arrivals into the school, particularly those who are new to the English education system or whose first language is not English make rapid progress.

"Pupils who cannot read well enough do not have full access to the curriculum. Those who fail to learn to read early on start to dislike reading. They read less than others – and less often – and do not accumulate the background knowledge and vocabulary from reading that their peers do. The word-rich get richer, while the word-poor get poorer."

The Reading Framework (2021)



Keeping Up From The Start

Extra practice in a small group or one-to-one (whether or not a specific reason has been found for why a child is not keeping up) should:

- take place in a quiet place, at a regular time every day so that the children become familiar with the routine
- be a school priority, with maximum efforts made to avoid disruption or cancellation
- be provided by a well-trained adult: teacher or teaching assistant
- be consistent with the school's mainstream phonics programme
- Include activities that secure the important phonic knowledge the children have not grasped.

Section 5: Leadership and management

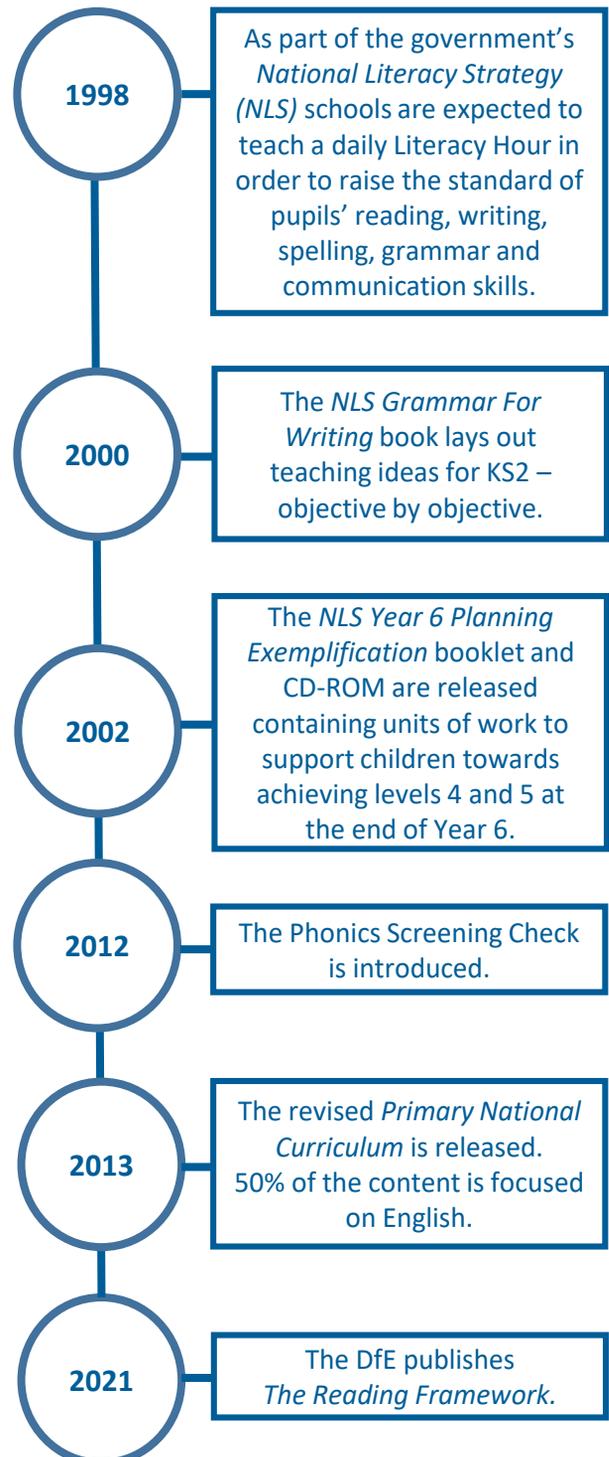


Headteachers are ultimately responsible for building the reading culture in their school and ensuring that the teaching of reading is as effective as possible. They have to make sure that all their staff have the knowledge, skills, understanding and professional support to teach reading effectively and thus transform children's life chances. This requires them to:

- believe that all children can learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities and be determined to make this happen
- adopt a rigorous, systematic programme that includes well-conceived and structured resources for teaching phonics
- make sure all children make sufficient progress to meet or exceed age-related expectations
- build a team of expert teachers who know and understand the processes that underpin learning to read, and draw on expert training, practice and coaching to achieve this
- ensure that ongoing assessment of children's progress in phonics is sufficiently frequent and detailed to identify those who begin to fall behind, and provide targeted support immediately
- Make efforts to involve families in supporting their children's reading
- Make sure children are taught to read from the beginning of their Reception year
- Develop a programme for reading aloud to children and encouraging a love of reading.

Headteachers should appoint a literacy (or reading) lead: someone who is an expert in the school's chosen phonics programme and can manage the teaching of phonics, reading and writing. Carefully constructed practice, sustained and developed, can help to make sure that all teachers become excellent teachers of reading, spelling and writing.

Primary Literacy Timeline



Section 6: Building on the foundations with older pupils – a summary



The Reading Framework focuses on the foundations of reading and writing. When these are secure, pupils can decode most written words and understand them in the context of age-appropriate literature and non-fiction. They can also write what they want to say in a way that others can read.

With a strong start in Reception and year 1, pupils' word reading and spelling rapidly become more accurate and automatic. Teachers can then spend more time developing pupils' reading comprehension and written composition. They should continue to read aloud to pupils every day to enhance their enjoyment of literature, increase their vocabulary and develop their language comprehension. Pupils should read often, in English lessons and across the curriculum: to learn from their reading, to read for pleasure and for specific purposes, and – with practice – to become more fluent, since fluency is important for comprehension.

As their reading becomes more fluent, the need for a systematic phonics programme for reading reduces. Spelling, however, is more difficult than decoding and an effective spelling programme will continue to teach further correspondences between phonemes and graphemes. To help them to learn how to spell new words they meet across the curriculum, teachers should draw pupils' attention to any unusual correspondences between spelling and sound.

When pupils can form letters correctly and easily, they should be taught how to join them and should practise their handwriting to increase its fluency, legibility and quality.

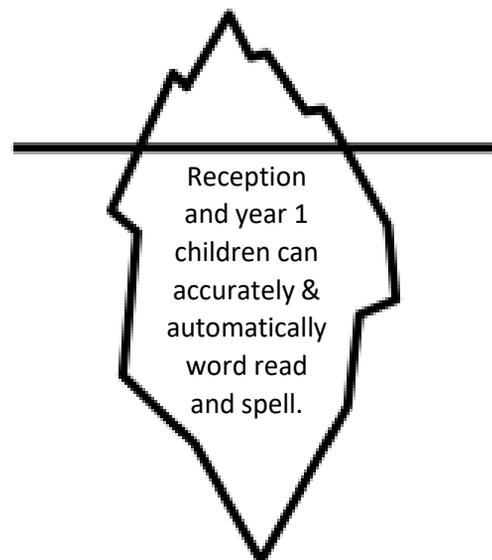
Grammar and punctuation become more important in teaching writing as pupils' spelling and handwriting improve.

“Pupils should read often, in English lessons and across the curriculum: to learn from their reading, to read for pleasure and for specific purposes, and – with practice – to become more fluent, since fluency is important for comprehension.”

The Reading Framework (2021)

Building On The Foundations

Teachers spend more time developing pupils' reading comprehension and written composition. They continue to read aloud to pupils every day to enhance their enjoyment of literature, increase their vocabulary and develop their language comprehension.



EEF Literacy Guidance Reports

To support schools in preparing for and improving Literacy, the *Education Endowment Foundation* have published a range of evidence based on the findings from their recent projects. Alongside their Teaching and Learning Toolkit there are three guidance reports focusing on Literacy in the Early Years and Primary phases.

Preparing For Literacy

This guidance report offers early years professionals seven practical evidence-based recommendations to provide every child – but particularly those from disadvantaged homes – with a high quality and well-rounded grounding in early literacy, language and communication.

Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1

This report focuses on pupils between the ages of 5 and 7. However, it may also be applicable to older pupils who have fallen behind their peers, or younger pupils who are making rapid progress. The second edition presents the same recommendations as the first, but offers additional examples, explanations and resources to provide direct paths of action from the evidence-based guidance to classroom practice. The recommendations represent ‘lever points’ where there is useful evidence about language and literacy teaching that schools can use to make a significant difference to pupils’ learning.

Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2

This report offers seven practical, evidence-based recommendations that are relevant to all pupils, and particularly to those struggling with their literacy. It focuses on pedagogy and approaches to support the literacy development of pupils between the ages of seven and eleven in Key Stage 2. However, teachers may also find it useful for older pupils who have fallen behind their peers, or younger pupils who are making rapid progress. The second edition of the guidance report offers additional examples, explanations, and resources to support educators to put the recommendations into practice.



Guidance Reports

Preparing for Literacy

Seven recommendations to support improving early language and literacy



Guidance Reports

Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1

Eight recommendations to support the literacy of 5–7 year-olds



Guidance Reports

Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2

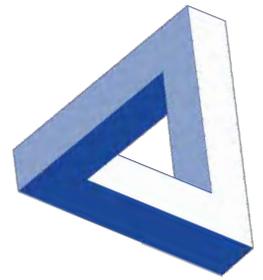
Seven recommendations to improve literacy teaching for 7–11 year-olds

Above: The EEF have published a range of *Literacy* guidance reports for Early Years and Primary settings. Click on the images above to access the reports online.



Completing The Triangle
How St. Bart's schools are
working with parents

Completing The Triangle



In their 2018 guidance report *Working With Parents To Support Children's Learning* the Education Endowment Foundation recommends schools 'critically review how they work with parents'. We asked three St. Bart's schools to share their strategies for engaging with and supporting parents.

The EEF states that "schools should be optimistic about the potential of working with parents", but recognises that the evidence on effective strategies that schools can use to engage parents in their children's learning is mixed. Working with parents can be challenging, and is likely to require sustained effort and support. Most schools say that they do not have an explicit plan for how they work with parents, and fewer than 10% of teachers have undertaken CPD on parental engagement.

The guidance report recognises that "some parents feel anxious about reading to their children, particularly if they struggle with their own literacy skills. Others worry that they can't afford the same sort of books or trips out that other families can. Schools also do not know how they can work with families most effectively."

By critically reviewing their aims and current approaches, the report suggests schools should focus on areas that have better evidence -

- Providing practical strategies to support learning at home
- Tailoring school communications to encourage positive dialogue about learning
- Offering more sustained and intensive support where needed

Over the next few pages we look at some approaches three Trust schools have introduced.

"Schools and parents have a shared interest in doing the best for their children. However, it is sometimes difficult to know where to start."

EEF Guidance Report (2018)



Above: The Education Endowment Foundation published their *Working With Parents To Support Children's Learning* Guidance Report in 2018. Click on the image above to access the report online.



Case Study 1

EEF Recommendation: Provide practical strategies to support learning at home
School: Cranberry Academy, Alsager

Vice Principal Jan North explains how Cranberry Academy have utilised their school website in order to support parents with home learning.

“We have updated pages for parents on how they can support their child at home. We have also provided families with wellbeing and safeguarding links. The promotion of reading and phonics has been particularly successful with a number of interactive elements being showcased online. This includes our virtual library.”

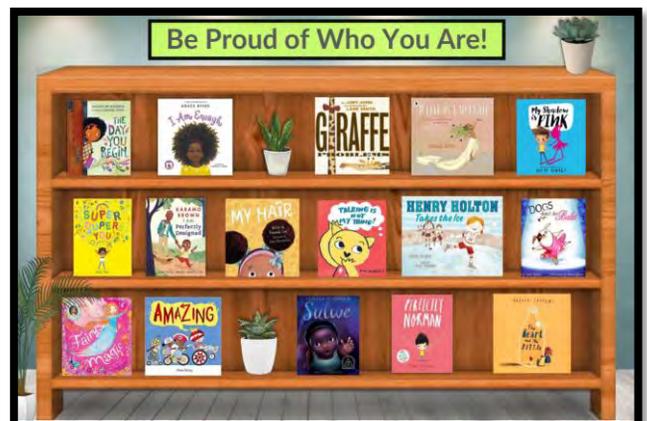
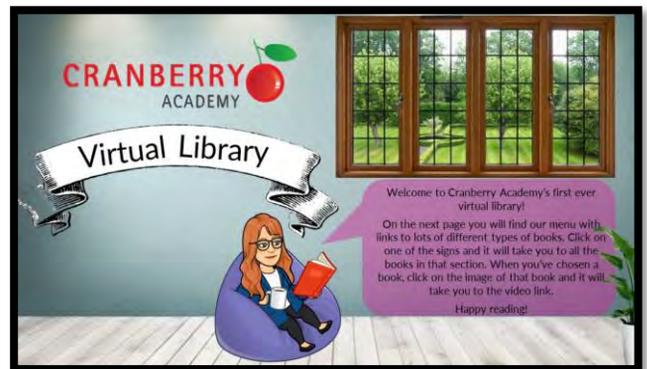
The Virtual Library

Parents and children can engage interactively with the Virtual Library. There are a number of themes included and by clicking on each book within the topic, users are taken directly to a video of the story. Some involve the author themselves reading their own work. This broad online collection provides a great opportunity for parents to share in the experience of listening to a story with their child and ask questions about the shared text.

The range of topics includes –

- Picture Books
- All Kinds of Families
- Everyone Is Welcome!
- Black Lives Matter
- Be Proud Of Who You Are!
- Little People, Big Dreams
- Empathy, Kindness and Compassion
- Similarities and Differences
- Feelings and Emotions

“The promotion of reading and phonics has been particularly successful with a number of interactive elements being showcased online.”





Case Study 1

As well as the Virtual Library, the school website now features a number of other strategies to support children's learning at home.

Story Time

This page contains a number of videos of the Principal reading different stories suitable for a range of children. These engaging clips model effectively how parents can use inflection and expression to encourage a life long love of reading. They begin with a reminder of key things to look out for in each story and a suggested follow up activity at the end.

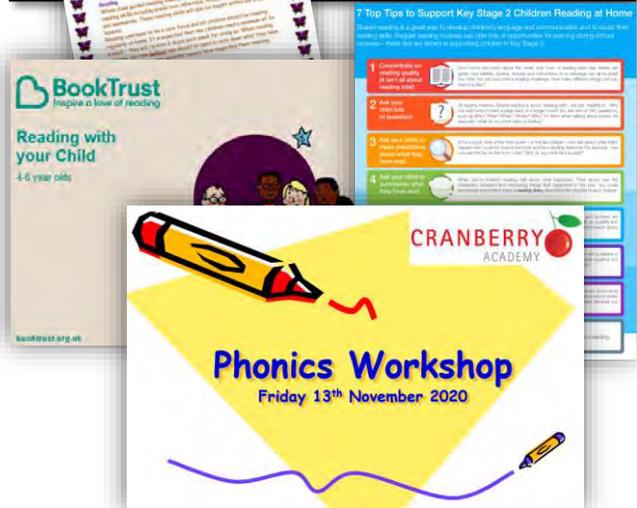
Staff Recommendations

This is a collection of videos of all the teachers discussing their favourite books. The recommendations are intended to encourage readers to explore a wider range of texts as they move through the school.

Online Phonics Workshops

Running alongside the reading content are resources designed to support parents with their knowledge and understanding of phonics. Regular online phonics workshops are delivered and a copy of the presentation is available as a download for anyone who missed the session or requires a recap.

More generally, each class teacher also produces a termly letter for parents that outlines the key learning being covered in school. This 'heads up' ensures the link between school and home life is strengthened further.



Right: The Cranberry Academy website includes Story Time and Book Recommendation videos as well as year group letters and resources to help parents support their children with reading at home.



Case Study 2

EEF Recommendation: Tailor school communications to encourage positive dialogue about learning
School: Knutton St. Mary's C of E Academy, Newcastle-Under-Lyme

Principal Julie Rowlandson explains how introducing a regular e-newsletter has engaged parents and other stakeholders.

“During the first school closure in Summer 2020, the school moved from predominantly paper-based, to email communication. Weekly newsletters were emailed to parents in PDF format and provided information about school events; celebrated success; offered support for children and families and were well received.

“Consultation with stakeholders in Spring 2021, including parents and Governors, demonstrated that all were keen to receive more information about life in the academy. Staff felt that more of the amazing things happening at Knutton St Mary's should be celebrated and shared with parents and the wider community.”

The aims of the newsletter are:

- 1: to inform stakeholders about the curriculum and enrichment opportunities at KSM;
- 2: to celebrate success;
- 3: to provide information in an easily accessible format (video, poster or text);
- 4: to increase parental engagement and involvement;
- 5: to offer guidance to parents to enable them to support their children's learning;
- 6: to develop links with the wider community;
- 7: to enable all stakeholders to be part of collective worship and to celebrate the distinctly Christian nature of the school;
- 8: to increase parental understanding of the role of St Bart's Multi Academy Trust in the life of the school.



Case Study 2

The newsletter is published on a weekly basis and includes a celebration of particular children's efforts; photographs from each class and of specific events, *Read Write Inc* parent videos to guide families to support early reading at home, curriculum updates, Early Years admissions information and electronic registration forms, information about wrap around care, plus electronic registration forms, safeguarding information and Covid-19 updates, key diary dates, menus for the following week, collective worship videos and prayer of the week, plus church news and information.

Video worship shared by other St Bart's academies have also featured and have been well received by parents and governors. Devices are available for parents to access the e-newsletter during weekly drop in sessions in the family hub, ensuring that all families are able to access the content.

The e-newsletter is texted and emailed to parents, staff and governors then tweeted. The read rate is monitored weekly and shows between 300 and 500 reads per week. Special editions such as sports day have proved most popular. Past newsletters are available on the academy website as information for prospective parents as part of the school's strategy to increase pupil numbers.

Parental feedback has been very positive with comments such as, 'It's good to know what they are doing in school and how I can help them with their learning'; 'Everything is in one place and it's easy to find'; 'I enjoy seeing photos of them in school'. Staff report that it helps them to know what is happening in other classes and subject leaders also have the opportunity to see the curriculum in action across the school on a regular basis.



Members of the Local Governing committee have commented: *'The weekly newsletter is an excellent form of communication that keeps parents and governors up to date with events that are taking place in school.'*; *'The content is interactive (a good mixture of text, pictures and video) and includes a wide range of news from across the year groups and phases.'*; *'The useful links provide further information linked to particular stories and interventions. This adds a further layer for stakeholders to explore. All in all, it showcases and celebrates Knutton life in a nut shell.'*



Case Study 3

EEF Recommendation: Offer more sustained and intensive support where needed

School: St. Michael's Community Academy, Crewe

Principal David Jobling explains how improvements to outdoor learning facilities and provision has impacted on pupil learning and parental engagement.

“Following a period of significant development during lockdown earlier this year, pupils at St. Michael's are enjoying using their newly upgraded and refurbished Forest School & Outdoor Learning area.

“The new facilities have transformed the opportunities that are available for children and young people to build teamwork, confidence and mindfulness, whilst also developing useful new skills and learning about the natural world.”



Left and above: The newly refurbished outdoor education area at St. Michael's Community Academy has given the pupils and their parents the opportunity to develop bush craft and fieldwork skills.



Case Study 3

Outdoor Education and Forest School Instructor, Darren Royle (left), is delighted with the results. *"We have had some form of outdoor education at St. Michael's going back for a number of years, but things really started to develop when we received lottery funding a couple of years ago to start to bring the Forest School up to its current standard. This has since been built upon further by planting additional trees and shrubs, installing pathways, den-building frames, a gathering point, and a sheltered area for working. I am delighted with the results and so are the children!"*

Since the start of the Autumn term parents at St. Michael's have also taken up the opportunity to become involved in outdoor education alongside their children, with Mr Royle running weekly sessions in the Forest School for those parents who have signed up. The half-term programme culminated with some bushcraft and fieldwork activities in Delamere forest.

"The outdoor sessions were a great way to get parents involved with their child's learning and were very well-attended", confirms Darren. *"The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and we are already looking forward to planning some Winter outdoor sessions for the new year."*

"The outdoor sessions were a great way to get parents involved with their child's learning and were well attended."





Come Together

Sara Goddard on the St. Bart's
Digital Worship programme



Come Together

Sara Goddard, Principal of Kingsland C.E. Academy in Bucknall, shares a new approach to religious worship that has been introduced across the St. Bart's Academy Trust.

During the recent Covid 19 pandemic we have all had to make many adaptations to the way that we worked as a school. One of the ways that we ensured that our children could engage with worship, as a church school, was by recording digital worship, which we shared direct to the children's iPads when they were at home.

This ensured that they were still worshipping and also they had the opportunity to watch it whenever they wanted to and the opportunity to watch it with their family. Activities linked to the worship theme were also shared with the children so they could complete them on their iPads. We followed a basic structure each week and members of senior staff and our clergy team recorded the aspects that were pieced together to create the worship.

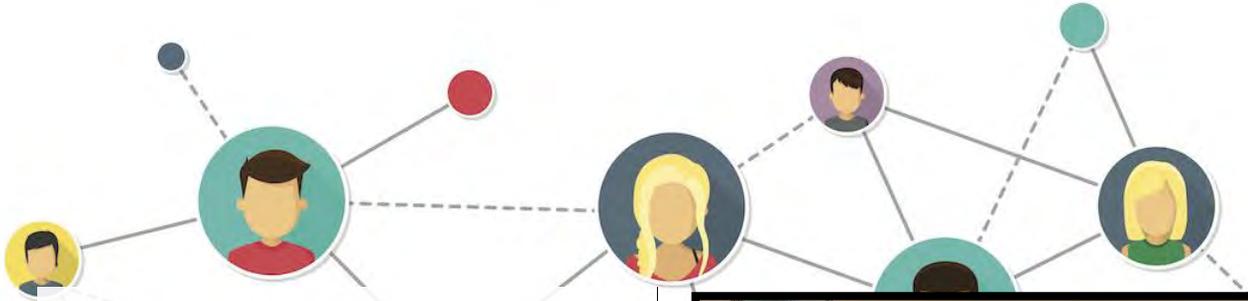
As the school returned together after lockdown we continued to record a weekly digital worship so that the bubbles could be maintained and also so that children could continue to see other adults and children in school. Our chaplain would record different classes contributing to the weekly worship, welcoming everyone to worship, teachers lighting the Kingsland candle and their class reminding everyone that Jesus is with us when we worship as we walk in His light.

The children were very engaged with the worship and looked forward to contributing when it was their turn. Some children asked if they could be part of our Year 6 Worship Team because they wanted "to be on the television like Rev. Dave."



We recorded a digital Christmas, Easter and Leavers Service which our children led. We included a short Christmas reflection recorded by Bishop Michael, Bishop of Lichfield, for our Carols by Candlelight with each child having a glow stick to light at home as they sang carols with their families. At Easter we took our Worship Team in small groups to St. John's Church and they led our service for us. For our end of year Leavers Service our children said goodbye and reflected in their time at Kingsland.

Each of these services was shared with our parents and the community online through Facebook. We were delighted that we had more views online than if we had welcomed families to join us in church or school for these events.



In discussion with the leaders in the Church Schools Principals group, it was decided that it may be a good chance to share the new found digital skills that we have developed through lockdown and the pandemic to allow all of the St. Bart's school family to record and share digital worship for each other.

This would mean that each school would have the opportunity to record and lead worship once throughout the year. We identified the themes that could be used through the different faith calendars and schools have the prospect to sign up to lead a worship of their choice.

This was also a good way of schools getting to know our family of schools better, alongside all of the pupil parliament and sports activities that we can join in with. Central leadership team members Chris, Lisa, Sean and Ian also very kindly recorded elements for our first St. Bart's digital worship, which was very well received by all. Children in our schools are now having the chance to become more familiar with each of our schools and our central team which is a real positive to come out of the recent times.

Over this academic year each of our family of schools will have the opportunity to lead worship and share their skills and hopefully our children will have a new and much wider audience for their digital skills. It is also a very practical and accessible way for our children to develop and deepen their understanding of the St. Bart's peace values, that we all strive to live out and display daily in our own schools.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far and we look forward to seeing the digital worships that are shared as the year unfolds and what further opportunities we may have to share together using digital technology.



HEADlines

To mark his upcoming retirement, this issue we interview Chief Executive Officer Chris Brislen about his 40 year career in education.

Name:

Christopher Brislen



Job Title:

C.E.O. St. Bart's Academy Trust

Why did you choose education as a career?

That is an interesting question. Looking back to over 40 years ago what I am clear about is that teaching was not my first choice career; that was the Army. However, despite passing my entrance exam for Sandhurst and being accepted for Officer training I failed my medical. So, having my first choice closed down I thought about teaching and applied to be a Secondary School Teacher and was accepted at St. Martin's College, Lancaster in 1980. I think my motivation was always to make a difference. It sounds quite fanciful when I say, I wanted to leave the world a better place than I found it, but I really did. I was (still am) quite idealistic and as it turns out quite determined and resilient. For me the children and young people have always come first and I have never compromised on ensuring they get the best deal available.

Where did you first start teaching and in which year group? Where did you first start teaching and in which year group?

On graduating from Lancaster I moved to Devon in September 1981 as a Humanities and RE Teacher at Ivybridge Community College, a 2000+ pupil Comprehensive. I taught Humanities and RE to all year groups from Y7 to Y13. I was a form tutor for a year 8 class and took them right through to Y11. This was my favourite role in school and I have kept in touch with many of the youngsters from this time.



Describe your journey into leadership.

My journey into leadership started in school. I think we underestimate the impact we have on young people by giving them responsibilities. I was proud to be a Team Captain (hockey), House Captain (Llewellyn House) and Tuck Shop Manager at school and this made me realise that you can bring about change, even if it was only adding toast to the snack time menu!

My first leadership role was my first job as an NQT. I have always seen leadership as a choice not a position and I soon realised that everyone can make a difference by choosing to be the change they seek. That philosophy has stayed with me throughout my career.

My first promoted post was as Head of RE at Victoria High School in Crewe and I followed this up with a further promotion to a larger faculty in a secondary school in Stoke. From here I made the decision to change my career path and moved into primary education as a class teacher at Leighton Park Primary in Crewe.

HEADlines

At Leighton I was soon promoted to lead Literacy and after 3 years secured a Deputy Headship at a school in Kidsgrove. I was appointed as Headteacher of my first Primary School in Middlewich some 3 years later. Throughout all this time I constantly sought to upskill myself, taking advantage of CPD opportunities and seeking additional qualifications. I took a M.Ed at Keele, a Diploma in Language and Literacy at MMU and was one of the first national recipients of the NPQH.

What has been the stand out moment of your career so far?

I think without a doubt the standout moment must be making a success of my role at Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy. The job was one fraught with difficulties from the beginning and tested me to the full. Its subsequent success has to be, therefore, the most rewarding experience of all. With the support of its wonderful governors and staff I was able to take further opportunities to make a difference in other schools and in other ventures.

Out of Belgrave's success we grew to be a National Support School, one of the first primary academies in the country, a cohort 2 Teaching School and eventually a MAT, which is one of the largest in the region.

On reflection, if I had to pick a couple of moments that summed up my career it would be the moment I was standing in the car park at the former John Baskeyfield VC CE Primary School in Stoke, the third worst performing school in England at the time, with Sean Thomson, discussing whether we would risk "career suicide" and take the school on.

Turning to Sean, we looked at each other and said, "Well if we won't do it, who will?" So that was that!

BELGRAVE ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S ACADEMY

Solar-powered school sets the pace in energy savings
Pupils start lessons at eco-friendly school

Primary will be first in city to seek specialist status

Top school to lead way for academies

School celebrates an outstanding Ofsted report
Pupils slay dragons with innovative ideas

School's new status a cause for celebration

World record bid blows pupils away

Bright pupils showcase their talents

Film teaches parents a lesson to help children

Fresh view on classics

Youngsters sign up to learn more skills

HEADlines



The icing on the cake happened the following Monday (my birthday as it happens), when I started at the school and got a call from Ofsted the same morning saying they were coming in the next day. I remember speaking to the HMI and sharing the only evidence I had found in the school, a scrappy bit of A4 paper with data that was clearly all wrong. I screwed it up there and then and threw it in the bin and said, "now we may begin!".

For the rest of the inspection I worked as an 'unofficial', additional inspector gathering evidence about my new school. It was a great experience and a brilliant failure (the school was truly awful) from which we were able to bounce back into the great school it has become. Once you reach the bottom the only way is up! Or maybe I am getting confused with that pop song by Yaz?

Risk taking is a constant feature of my career and I am proud that despite the challenges, so many friends and colleagues have bought into that over the years and signed up to 'making the difference'. It isn't easy but it is memorable.

How do you think colleagues would describe your leadership style?

This is a difficult question to answer, though I am sure my colleagues will have their own take on that!

Firstly, I believe I have a clear vision of what a great education looks like and a strong moral compass. I aim to do the right things and I aim to do them right. I like to think I communicate this well and lead by example. I am very determined and I am willing to learn from failures and when things go wrong, often seeing the funny side of what appears to be a hopeless situation. A colleague told me the other day that the best 6 months of his career was the 6 months working with me in a school in special measures. He said it was the best laugh and most fun he'd had in teaching. I am visiting him every week until he gets better.

I have always tried to be a principled leader and to act with integrity and honesty. I have never sought popularity, only respect and by and large I think that has been achieved.

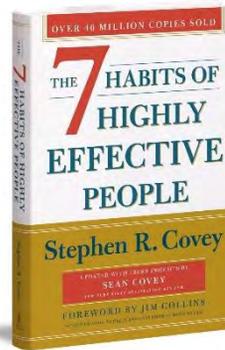
HEADlines

Of course, when you take on so many challenges you are not going to make everybody happy all the time. Taking tough decisions has consequences and sometimes there are unfortunate casualties in personnel but I have always been brave enough to take the decisions necessary to make the organisations better and ultimately to improve the education for the children.

A standing joke amongst colleagues is that in working with me “you are not going to die wondering”! I have a reputation for straight talking and whilst I try and do this in the right way, I know that it can be a bit annoying. Well, maybe more than a bit? Having said that I know I have made many, many lifelong friends throughout my career. Indeed I still keep in touch with many ex-pupils, some of whom are now in their late 40’s and early 50’s which is rather nice.

Just reflecting on style I am reminded of the ‘Leader’s Tool Box’. This sums me up best. I use the tools that I think best fit the job. I can be very, very, directive when needed. This is usually when things are particularly tough and a decisive and determined approach is needed. This is very much “leading from the front” and is frequently needed at the start of a difficult job. This style is probably the hardest and is emotionally the most draining, particularly when dealing with difficult staffing issues or pupil or parental behaviours.

However, even with this approach I try to actively listen, to take stakeholder views into account and build “the team”. The Stephen Covey 7 Habits of Highly Effective Leaders is burned into my psyche. None more so than “seek first to understand before being understood”.



“The Stephen Covey 7 Habits of Highly Effective Leaders is burned into my psyche. None more so than ‘seek first to understand before being understood’.”

Most people who encounter problems have the power within themselves to overcome them. I think one of my strengths is getting people to believe in themselves and ‘the project’. “If you believe you will succeed, you probably will. If you believe you will fail, you will probably be right.”

The strap line of our training organisation BTSA is *Releasing Potential* and I feel that I have demonstrated the ability to see the potential in others consistently in my career, often when they did not see it in themselves, or when they were at such a low point that they had lost belief that things will get better. I love the proverb, “Things will be alright in the end and if it is not alright, it is not the end”.

No one individual can build long term success, so team building and succession planning is always in my strategy. Thus I use mentoring and coaching to develop colleagues and build capacity. I believe I am a good delegator (whilst having an OCD approach to monitoring progress). I have seen so many colleagues develop their careers in working with me that it can’t just be luck. That many have stayed a long time is something that I will always be grateful for. Ultimately, I am a leader that is optimistic. In my profession I am well informed and have a deep understanding of and commitment to learning.

HEADlines

Teaching is a vocation. We change the world one child at a time. That combined with a steely determination, a sometimes irreverent wit (my jokes are of course brilliant) together with a boundless enthusiasm and energy have seen me through.

Describe the Trust using the title of a song.

That is easy: *Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life* – tee-dum, tee-dum, tee-dum, tee-dum!

Share a dream that you are yet to realise.

I want to walk the whole length of Hadrian's Wall.

What interests do you pursue when you are not at work?

I am an avid sports fan and follow my team, Liverpool FC. My dad's family are from Liverpool and *You'll Never Walk Alone* is my favourite song. Of course I sing it brilliantly, especially after a beer or two and in the company of a 50,000 choir!

I am part of a walking and rambling group and enjoy the countryside. I read a lot, especially historical fiction and am a member of a Book Club.

I also love music and have an extensive vinyl collection going back to my first LP, which was David Bowie's *Hunky Dory* in 1972. I enjoy spending time with friends and family and especially enjoy time spent with my grandson, who is a little gem.

What is your favourite staff room drink/biscuit combination.

I have been known to drink copious amounts of tea. Indeed, my recent switch to coffee had a big impact on India's trade deficit! I love custard creams!



Above: Chris Brislen with Baroness Floella Benjamin at the opening of the BTSA Hub in September 2013.



Behind the HEADlines

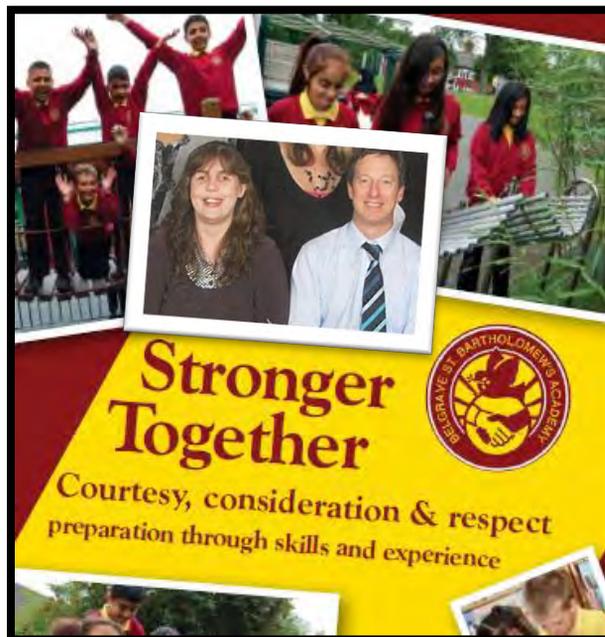
Members of the St. Bart's Academy Trust Central Leadership Team share their memories of working with Christopher Brislen.

Lisa Sarikaya
Chief Executive Officer
St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust
Executive Principal
Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy

"I first met Chris when he led the amalgamation of Dresden and Florence schools. I was on maternity leave when Chris started, prior to the opening of Belgrave, so I didn't really get to know him until we opened the school. That first year was extremely challenging as we had to bring together two diverse school communities in terms of the children, parents and staff. Chris's leadership and approach to overcoming problems and issues set us up for the future – we have always had a 'can do' attitude and failure isn't an option!

"When we opened Belgrave in September 2002 I was Foundation Stage Leader and I wholeheartedly believe that without Chris, that is the role I would still be doing. I never for one moment believed that I had it in me to be a school leader. Chris challenged me at every career opportunity that became available as he saw the potential in me.

"Chris and I have worked closely together for the last 15 years. We have different skills and a lot of people when they see Chris and I having discussions in meetings would think that we don't get on at all as we disagree a lot! We work so closely together that we can say virtually anything to each other. By the time we have finished arguing and discussing things we usually have got to the point where we have found a way forward that we both agree on.



"This has kept us safe as an organisation as we know where we are going and have found a way to get there. Chris often says that he has to come up with 10 daft ideas to get one good one past me. I think this comment completely underplays Chris's vision. We are the organisation we are today because Chris has continually looked forward to find the next steps and opportunities. Chris's drive and determination has led and shaped us to be what we are today.

"There are way too many lasting memories and Chris-isms to mention. I am the leader I am today because of Chris and I will never forget the support and guidance Chris has given me on the journey. Thank you Chris. Thank you for your vision, thank you for your ability and leadership to guide us at all times, thank you for making us what we are today. We are going to miss you."

Behind the HEADlines

John Collier

**Training and Development Officer
BTSA/St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust**

"I first met Chris when I was working at Dresden C.E. Primary. The school was going through an amalgamation process and Chris was going to be the Headteacher of a brand new school that would become Belgrave.

"I remember one afternoon I was packing up the books in the school library, ready for the move up the road. Chris had asked if he could help me out. We had a lovely time discussing education and family life. It was only when I spoke to other members of staff that we realised Chris was using similar opportunities to not only get to know his new colleagues, but to ensure his new team were placed in 'the right place on the boat'. He would often use this analogy when we recruiting staff. That and the fact he always looks for the three C's – character, competence and chemistry.

"When Belgrave opened I was teaching Year 6 and also responsible for Literacy across KS2. Forming a new school was incredibly exciting, but also quite nerve-wracking. We were setting the weather, creating the culture, whilst also making decisions both big and small. Questions like 'how was reading going to be organised across the school? and 'what happens if we have a wet playtime?'.
"

"The biggest challenge in bringing two diverse schools together was ensuring every child (and every family) felt included. It took a lot of hard work to build a school community we could proud of. It began with the promotion of our school code – *Courtesy, Consideration and Respect*. Almost two decades later it is incredibly satisfying to see the school continue to evolve.



Above: John Collier and Chris Brislen on a Year 6 residential trip in France in 2010.

"The high standards Chris insisted on from the outset can now be seen right across the St. Bart's Trust. His impact has been immense.

"I have so much personally to thank Chris for. Through his encouragement I went on to be an Advanced Skills Teacher, Vice Principal, Specialist Leader of Education, Director of Teaching and Learning for BTSA and an Expert Adviser for the Teacher Development Trust. Chris spotted my potential and opened my eyes to the most incredible career opportunities.

"Looking back I have so many happy memories, including the numerous drama productions (some of which Chris appeared in!), the training we delivered together in London, the Year 6 residential trip to France and the inspirational Headteacher conferences in Buxton. For one of these we made a spoof *Amarillo* video. It continues to make me smile today. Thanks Chris."

Behind the HEADlines

Eva Cerioni
Training and Development Officer
BTSA/St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust

"I vividly remember meeting Chris when I arranged for a tour around Belgrave St Bartholomew's who were advertising a teaching position back in 2008. As the Headteacher, he wowed me with his knowledge of the community, always putting the children first, and his pride in his staff team. I instantly knew that I would be submitting an application and hoped to be successful. The rest is history and I owe my career achievements to Chris. He always believed in me and challenged me to meet his high expectations. I had never met a leader like Chris before and I don't think I will ever meet anyone like him again!

"My first memory of the INSET day in September was him telling us that the National Curriculum is outdated, dead and buried (holding aloft said National Curriculum!), and that we needed to teach a more suitable and appropriate curriculum for our pupils to prepare them for jobs that hadn't even been invented at the time; he couldn't have been more right and I learned so much in terms of developing my own teaching practice and working with an amazing team of practitioners.

"When I decided to leave Belgrave, it was an extremely tough decision; Chris tried to make me stay (he didn't want me to leave, but fully supported and understood my reasons for wanting a new challenge). Looking back, I think Chris knew I would return one day in some capacity, so returning several years ago felt like fate. I am so grateful for the position I have been given and for the trust and autonomy I have in my role.



"I want to thank Chris for the constant guidance and for the faith he has always shown in my abilities. When I trained to be a teacher, I never imagined I could be working in the role I am now and I owe that to Chris. He saw potential in me and has given me the opportunity to release potential in others. He has been the mastermind behind so many changes in education and it has been a privilege to work with him. Thank you for everything, Chris. You will be missed but your legacy lives on through the wonderful SBMAT and BTSA."

Behind the **HEAD**lines

Sean Thomson

Hub Leader

St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust

"I first worked with Chris in my NQT year at Belgrave where I worked in Upper KS2 with the most amazing teachers. Chris was an inspirational leader and the 'no excuses' approach resonated through the school. The expectations Chris had of his team were higher than anyone I had met before. Chris led with passion and enthusiasm and got the best out of people. I believe that even then, the mantra of *releasing potential* existed.

"After five years at Belgrave I left to become a Deputy Headteacher at another school in Stoke. I remember Chris saying at the time he would keep in contact. Two years later he got in touch to discuss taking on a school in Crewe which was being sponsored by Belgrave.

"The school was Oakefield Primary, later to become St Michaels Academy, and this was the start of St Bart's. Chris asked me to consider being 'Head of School', working alongside him as the Executive Principal. Who knew at that point the sheer scale of things to come for St Bart's?

"The next two years were certainly tough, but also fun and enjoyable. Chris introduced me to colleagues David Jobling and Sarah Cope who at the time were working at the school. We laughed daily at the number of issues and the extremes we all had to deal with. One thing that never changed was the dedication, passion and energy Chris had to make a difference.

"I was certainly learning a lot and just two years later in 2013 I remember driving to John Baskeyfield Primary School in Stoke (later to become St Nathaniel's Academy) with Chris who offered me what he described as "the ultimate challenge".



"The offer was presented to me in a style I had become so accustomed to; "Do you fancy career suicide and become the Principal because if we don't do it, who will?" I believed in Chris and trusted that we would turn the school into a great school. I will always be thankful to Chris for believing in me so much to take on what was then the third lowest performing school in the country (Either that or he wanted to kill me off for not laughing at one of his jokes!).

"Five years later, several monitoring visits, an interim executive board, a governance revamp and an Ofsted thrown in, I was once again moving on. This time to Executive Leadership, again supported by Chris. His guidance over many years allowed me to identify and release potential in people just as Chris did with me.

"My move into the St Bart's Central Leadership Team as Hub Leader has been my biggest challenge but Chris has always been there to offer advice, guidance and analogies of course, which is always greatly appreciated. Chris has been there throughout my career in education, so it is certainly going to be very different without him. Thank you Chris for everything you have done over the past two decades, I hope to continue making St Bart's the best it can be, but it certainly won't be the same without you."

Behind the **HEAD**lines

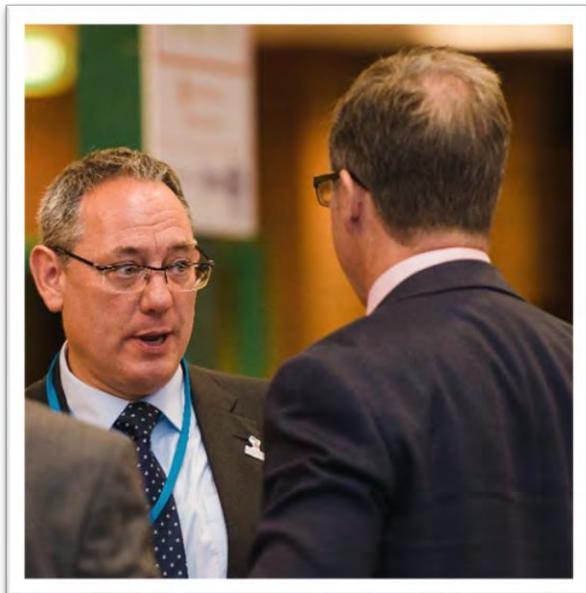
Ian Hunt

***Director of Standards and Effectiveness
St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust***

"I first met Chris in the Middlewich Little Chef in 2000. I had applied for a job as Deputy Head at Cledford Junior School. I flew over from the Philippines for the interview process. I had handed in my resignation as deputy head at the British School Manila and Catherine, and I were heading back to England as our son James was due. Relocating from the other side of the world, having no home, no job and a heavily pregnant wife certainly sharpened the interview skills! I was put through a very rigorous interview process by Chris and the team at Cledford – it was an exhausting couple of days. I was very pleased to be offered the job as I really brought into what they were trying to achieve.

"Even though that was Chris' first headship, you would never have known. He was one of the most dynamic and driven leaders I had ever met, and remains so to this day. His clarity of vision and what he wanted to achieve for the children, staff, and community was second to none. He was relentless and uncompromising in that drive to make the vision into reality. Chris would never accept no as an answer and was unswerving in his pursuit of his goals that would make a difference to the children. It was like being a cast member in the Kevin Costner movie *Field of Dreams*, "build it and they will come."

"The Cledford computer suite was a prime example of this, "what do you mean they only have them in secondaries? I want one for my primary children." Low and behold, out of a dingy, dank outdoor space, a new shiny, space age (at the time) computer suite rose from the swampy depths.



"We were the envy of Cheshire East and where Chris led, others soon followed. Thankfully, Chris also had some very strong team members around him who were also empowered to say no to some of the more bizarre and wacky ideas that Chris still comes up with to this day. Wendy Deacon, our amazing bursar at Cledford, had to say on many occasions with a slightly exasperated inflexion, "Chris, you can only spend it once!"

After, half a term of working with Chris, he decided that he wanted to take on another challenge and announced that he was off to do an Executive Heads job at Malfields before executive heads jobs really existed. I was somewhat flummoxed and asked, "what about me?". "Oh, you'll be OK, you can be Acting Head," replied Chris briskly, and that is another point about Chris, he weighs you up very quickly and if he trusts you, he will back you. Spotting talent is another of Chris's passions, and giving others the opportunities to thrive and flourish. He is always on the lookout and constantly building capacity and succession planning.

Behind the **HEAD**lines



“It is because of Chris, that I was empowered to take on the Acting Head’s position and then gain my first substantive headship at Goostrey.

“As a result of this I was headhunted to work in Hong Kong at Discovery Bay International School. I owe my leadership career to Chris and, on returning to the UK having spent 10 years in Hong Kong, I leapt at the chance to work with Chris again and the team at St Bart’s and become part of his vision for the MAT and BTSA. I feel very honoured and privileged to be part of the amazing SBMAT Team.

“Thank you for all you have done for me, Chris. Thank you for all you have done to build such a fantastic organisation, but most importantly, thank you for all you have done for the thousands of children’s lives you have made a difference too over a long and very distinguished career. I hope you enjoy the exciting new adventures that await.”

Josephine Edwards **PA to the CEO** **St. Bart’s Multi-Academy Trust**

“My earliest memory of Chris was when I was working at Mill Hill Primary School. We had a staff meeting one morning explaining that a group of headteachers would be coming to record a video for an upcoming Headteachers Conference to be held at Buxton.

“We were given no information on what the video was, so you can imagine my surprise when I walked Chris wearing a bright purple velvet suit! He then started walking down the corridor imitating Peter Kay in the *Is This Is The Way To Amarillo?* video.

“I have never laughed so much and thought to myself what a wonderful head teacher he was. If you have not seen it you need to check it out on YouTube! It will literally make your day.”

Coming Soon From BTSA

Spring 2022

January 2022

Tuesday 4th (9.00am–12.00pm) *Inspiring Change* with Steven Talbot

February 2022

Tuesday 1st (9.00am–12.00pm) *Let's Give A Voice To Variation* with Dave Benson

Tuesday 1st (1.30–4.00pm) Core Five English Network Meeting

Thursday 13th (9.00–11.00am) *Developing Teaching – High Expectations and Communication*

Tuesday 15th (1.30–4.00pm) Core Five Maths Network Meeting

Thursday 17th (9.00am–3.30pm) *Empathy and Fatigue* with Steven Talbot

March 2022

Tuesday 1st (1.30–4.00pm) Core Five Science Network Meeting

Wednesday 9th (9.00am–12.00pm) *Poetry of Play* with Gregg Bottrill

Tuesday 15th (1.30–4.00pm) Core Five R.E. Network Meeting

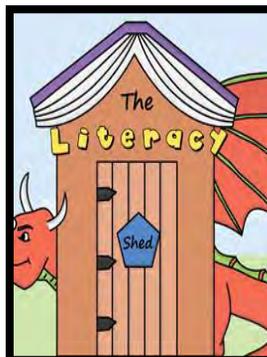
Thursday 24th (9.00–11.00am) *Developing Teaching – Modelling and Questioning*

Tuesday 29th (1.30–4.00pm) Core Five Computing Network Meeting

April 2022

Tuesday 26th (9.00am–3.30pm) *Enhancing Literacy Using Film and Image* with Rob Smith

For full details, prices and ways to book please visit our website or click the image below.





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