

ACT AUTUMN TERM 1 NEWSLETTER

WWW.ACT-ACADEMYTRUST.COM



Friday 25th October 2024



A VERY WARM WELCOME

As we enter the new year, we are thrilled to now be a family of 4 schools and the exciting prospects that brings.

We sincerely hope that you found the Trust Day a good opportunity to meet colleagues from other academies and have the opportunity to network. Elizabeth's presentation gave us food for thought and we are carefully considering how we can have 'everyone at the table'.

We have been working hard on your feedback from the Trust day and looking at ways that we can implement what you have discussed. Some things will take some time implement after careful consideration and some we are able to action straight away. We have already set up the following:

- **Network meetings across schools**
- **Targeted CPD**
- **Opportunities for Support Staff to visit other schools**

Top News

Schools celebrate Mental Health Awareness Day

We welcomed all new reception children across our academies and they are all settling in well.



New CPD & Networking Offer has been published

Director of Education Update



As we continue to build a culture of excellence across the Trust, we have been working together to embed consistent, high-quality practices that support the success of every pupil. Over the past two terms, we have completed detailed, two-day deep dives in three of our schools, focusing on curriculum development, leadership capacity, and pupil progress. These deep dives have been instrumental in helping school leaders refine their approaches to ensure all pupils receive a rich, well-sequenced curriculum underpinned by strong leadership.

We have also introduced uniform templates for Academy Improvement Plans (AIPs) and executive summaries, providing schools with clear, consistent tools to map their progress and set ambitious goals. These documents offer a structured approach to planning and accountability, ensuring that every school has a robust strategy for improvement that aligns with the Trust's overarching vision.

Our CPD programme is already in full swing, offering tailored, high-quality sessions for staff and governors. These sessions focus on key areas such as teaching and learning and leadership and are designed to build capacity across the Trust. By investing in the development of our staff, we are helping to create a culture of professional growth that will benefit every pupil in our schools.

In addition, we are currently supporting the monitoring of reading provision in two of our schools to strengthen early literacy practices. This is a key priority for the Trust, as we seek to ensure that all pupils are given a strong foundation in reading, which will set them up for success in all areas of their learning.

Target setting is ongoing, with headteachers working closely with the central team to establish aspirational targets for pupil outcomes. These targets reflect our collective commitment to ensuring that every pupil is supported to achieve their full potential, with a strong focus on raising expectations and standards across the board.

Through these collective efforts, we are continuing to build momentum across the Trust. The progress made so far is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our school leaders and staff, and we look forward to the continued positive impact of our collaborative work. Together, we are laying the foundations for long-term success across the Trust. The progress so far is a testament to the dedication of our leaders and staff, and I look forward to seeing the continued positive impact of our shared efforts as we strive to ensure the best outcomes for all pupils.

It was great to meet so many of the Local Governors and Staff at the Inset day and hear what kind and level of information you would like to get from the Trustees.

Achievements and Milestones - The last few months have been a busy time for the Trustees, overseeing and providing feedback to the SLT on the growth of the MAT and putting in the checks to ensure that we are compliant. Of note, our SEN and Estates Trustees have been working closely with both the SLT and local representatives to ensure that we understand where we are now and what needs to be done in the short and medium term to provide stability.

Community Engagement - As highlighted by the Trust Inset day, the Trustees are building a stronger connection with the Local Governing Body (LGB) community specifically and the school's workforce in general. We will be continuing the current programme of (Trustee specific) newsletters every term and trying new forums like 'town hall' meetings to engage with LGB's more closely. This is to ensure that the voices of our stakeholders are heard and considered in every decision.

Strategic Planning and Trustee Governance

In addition to the hands-on efforts, your trustees have been working behind the scenes on strategic planning and governance. This forward-looking approach is laying the foundations for future growth, ensuring that we remain resilient, flexible and adaptive as we grow in size and complexity.

Looking Ahead - Looking to the future, we are pleased to have recruited an additional specialist Trustee who has experience and knowledge in reviewing, improving and shaping our trust financial forecasting and accounting. Dominic will join us in the coming weeks, and you will start to see visibility of him as we take opportunity to visit our various sites.



Director of Inclusion & Safeguarding



This half term Rebecca, the Director of Inclusion has spent time visiting each of the SENDCo's in our schools, to fully understand the internal processes of each school and building relationships with the SEND leaders. We have worked to streamline some processes, to make sure we do some things at the same time and not increasing unnecessary workload.

We have established a Trust SEND Network for our SENDCO's and have conducted our first meeting. This is a place to share our ideas, seek support and work collaboratively. Our SEND Trustee will attend these meetings and we look forward to offering support to all staff as a result of this partnership. Our SEND Trustee and the Director of Inclusion will also be out visiting schools in the next few weeks to get to know you all a little better.

On the Trust Inset day in September, we heard that many support staff were keen to learn from each other, and wanted to have the opportunity to visit other schools in our Trust. In response to this, we have begun to facilitate a support staff visits programme, where two members of each team at a time will be able to get out to another school to see good practice happening in an area of interest that they have identified. This will enable staff to form new professional links with staff in other settings and share ideas and resources. We intend to continue this through the year so if this is something you are interested in, please speak to your school's SENDCo.

Safeguarding Developments in the Trust this half term:

The Director of Inclusion and Safeguarding has spent this half term building links with the Designated Safeguarding Leads in each of the schools across the Trust. They are all now part of a half termly Network group, sharing ideas, training resources and good practice with one another. The Safeguarding Trustee has attended meetings to offer her knowledge and expertise, and is keen to build links with the Safeguarding Governors across the Trust.

The schools have been engaging in a Safeguarding Audit of their practice, and although they are all at different stages with this, we have all been working hard to ensure that our Safeguarding provision is prioritized and effective. This will continue to be a focus throughout this academic year.

What you all said about your academies

experiences
provision
learning
time
leading
feel
community
staff
support
values
pta
curriculum
family
everyone
sharing
willingness
together
network
team
energy
parents
colleagues
decisions
friendly
room
pupils
phonics
knowledge
provisions
cpd
children
people
value
nurture
links
behaviour
environment
teachers
positive
empowerment
trust
convd
concentration
fun



Life at Burrough Green has been so exciting this half term.

As well as the new EYFS children we welcomed into school in September, we have 3 new members of Year 1 and a new student in Year 3.

Writing - seven of our students have managed to get their writing published in a 'real book' – an incredible achievement!

At Burrough Green, to supplement our curriculum, the children will now access a Big Question Curriculum – this is designed to get to think about those huge issues whether it be access to clean water for all or considering more spiritual questions such as: If you have happiness does there have to be sadness? The question for the whole school this term is **Why do we recycle plastics?**

Mrs Leadbeter has led on 3 interactive (and very well attended) phonics mornings and a mathematics morning for our parents.

We have invited in grandparents to share a freshly cooked lunch with their grandchildren. It was so lovely to see you all enjoying a meal together – real community.

Mr Sandford has had the pleasure of taking Year 4, 5 and 6 to West Stow and Year 2 and 3 to Wandlebury for history trips. We immerse ourselves in everything Anglo-Saxon and Iron Age. On a fundraising front, we have raised awareness and funds for the following charities – MacMillan (afternoon tea), Jeans for Genes and a local foodbank (Harvest)



Brilliant Beginning at Buckden

In September we welcomed in 45 children into our reception classes and they have settled in really well, it has been lovely to see them in our whole school Collective worship.

The year 6 enjoyed an excellent 3 day residential at the beginning of term to Norfolk Lakes, where there was lots of team building activities includes water sports.

We had an author visit towards the end of September from Nazima Panthan, which was thoroughly enjoyed by upper school and they asked some very thoughtful questions. We were pleased to get some signed copies of her book for our library.

Harvest festival was a joy, such a generous contribution from our parent body of food that was all donated to Godmanchester Foodbank.

At the beginning of October we hold a non-uniform day where we all wore purple for a contribution towards Dravet Syndrome UK which is a charity that raises awareness about Dravet and also funds research. We also all learnt how to help someone when they have a seizure, which was a valuable piece of information for us all.

Year 4 have a trip to the Botanical Gardens planned for the last week of half-term.

On the last day of term we re-introduced Koinonia afternoon, where we invite our Parents and Carers into school, so that the children are able to share a piece of work they are proud of from this half-term, it is a lovely event that is enjoyed by all.



Sporting Excellence at Great Wilbraham



It has been a busy half term at Great Wilbraham. We have welcome two new teachers to our team; they have settled in wonderfully. We launched our new vision, 'With God, all things are possible' and introduced our pupils and staff to our core values: love, thankfulness, courage, and wonder.

Our new website is also now live, and we are delighted with the professional photographs that were taken. As a school, we have a shared understanding of our priorities and are working towards these every day. Our children are enjoying our revamped Collective Worship and our Year 6s are proving to be excellent 'worship leaders'.

We have welcomed in a newly elected school parliament and had our first meeting discussing our new vision and values as well as some exciting ideas put forward by the pupils. We have celebrated success at a recent tag rugby competition winning the small schools' event and moving to the next stage of the competition. It has been a busy half term, full of learning and it has been a joy for me to pop in and out of all our classes and watch our young people flourish.



St Michael's Aiming high!

We have celebrated harvest with all food donations going to Mary's Child charity-a charity set up to support our community by Carol. We have been on two residentials to Caythorpe and Bushcraft (year 5 and 6). Year 1 have been to the zoo and Year 4 spent an in role day in the trenches as part of their WW1 wow day!

School itself continues to serve its community and it was with great sadness that we closed the school for an afternoon so that we could attend the funeral of Reverend Carol Avery. She was our school vicar, governor, champion and friend.

Alongside these activities we have had building work to create a new learning space for our ASD pupils which will be officially opened after the Half term break and will be christened Dragonflies.



St. Michael's
Church School



CFO Business Update

My name is Amy. I am the CFO for the trust.

A warm welcome to you all and of course our two new schools who joined the trust in September. Our family of schools has now doubled and this is a really exciting journey we are now all on together.

It is my role to look after the operational side of the trust including finance, administration, premises, HR, Payroll and IT. I work very closely with our Estates Director, HR Manager and IT Consultant to achieve this.

This half term we have focused on embedding new systems in the schools and learning different ways of working within the academy trust.

Following on from feedback from the Trust day, the finance team held a meeting where by they could share ideas, resources and ask questions. They were also fortunate enough to meet our external auditor which gave an opportunity to ask questions and understand what the auditors role is.

I look forward to the next half term and meeting more staff as I visit schools. Have a lovely restful week.



We hope that you all have a well deserved rest over half term. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for all your hard work and commitment to the start of this year, it is greatly appreciated.

Amyson

