

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

This issue of the multi academy trust newsletter is focussed on School Improvement and the work all our schools do, to develop their core offer and further improve the standards they deliver each and every day.

School Improvement aims to enhance school practices in order to create better student outcomes. It involves school leaders, staff and the whole school community refining a shared vision, conducting rigorous self-evaluation, creating a well-developed plan for improvement, and establishing reliable ways of measuring and monitoring change. Engaging in a robust school improvement process over a sustained period of time can yield positive results, including more effective school practices and improved student outcomes.

School Improvement is at the core of why our Trust is being created. After a few years working together informally to improve our schools, our key driving force was to create a more formal basis as the Mersey View Learning Trust (MVLТ). We have worked together to improve the curriculum delivery of core and foundation subjects. We work closely together to review our SEND plans and facilities to ensure that our curriculums and provisions ensure equity and full school life experiences for all.

Our aim is to ensure that every teacher thrives. Our school improvement leadership will oversee, coordinate and champion high-quality teacher professional development across the Trust, in conjunction with our external networks; it will be research-driven and based on exemplified success stories from other schools nationally and internationally. Our leadership CPD will work with external providers to support all our new and current leaders to be successful at their current job and prepare for the next.

By collaborating across our schools in peer-to-peer reviews and building a wealth of school data, we will underpin our regular quality assurance and external reviews – looking at both strengths and areas of development. The Mersey View Learning Trust gives an opportunity to bring together a range of leaders and specialists to develop more coherent place-based improvement approaches. As the Mersey View Learning Trust, we continue to work with our local partnership groups and wider local authority networks that have collaborated on school improvement.

The Trust has a clear view of what we need to do to recruit and retain teachers – working alongside the Teaching Hub and other DfE funded projects will allow us to share best practice and also train and cultivate our own future staff and leaders. Greatbach and Tate (May 2019) in their DfE report investigated how clusters of schools working together developed strategic alliances to meet local and national challenges. This report gives an insight to different structures the Trust could use to lead the School Improvement Projects and an evidence base of what schools and MATs were collaborating on in response to localised changes.

We will be making a long-term commitment to our partner schools to build confidence in the practice of teaching and planning long term to build networks of expertise and collaboration. As the Trust grows, this model will be used to widen our geographical impact of expertise and link in with other regional and local partners.



K. SEXTON CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER





ELSA TRAINING



FOREFIELD COMMUNITY INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL

The position of an ELSA in a school is an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant. There is a recognised training course aimed specifically at Teaching Assistants or other specialist school roles. ELSAs are specialists with a wealth of experience of working with children and young people. ELSAs are trained and regularly supervised by Educational Psychologists. The course tends to be 6 full days and covers many areas from emotional literacy to active listening.

ELSAs are warm, kind and caring people who want to make children and young people feel happy in school. Their aim is to help students reach their potential socially, emotionally and academically. They understand the barriers to learning that some children and young people might have and can help them with this.

They can support the children and young person's emotional development and help them cope with life's challenges. ELSAs will also help children and young people to find solutions to problems they might have.

An ELSA is not there to fix problems but to help them find their own solutions and offer that important support to a child or young person. Relationships are key in helping children and young people to feel safe and nurtured. ELSA is about creating a reflective space for the child or young person.

We are very fortunate that 5 of our highly skilled team of TAs have completed 5 training sessions to become qualified Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs). 3 of our team have completed the Early Years ELSA course, and 2 have completed the Primary training course, joining the 2 existing ELSA trained staff.

During the training sessions staff have developed their knowledge of how to build resilience, support children around loss, bereavement, family break-ups and managing and labelling emotions. They have developed knowledge of social and therapeutic stories, use of puppets, delivery of Lego therapy and play therapy.

Staff have found the sessions incredibly useful and are excited about supporting our children in school. Staff have already implemented some strategies such as reducing language to support children struggling with anxiety or working with puppets to explore different scenarios, this helps them to be removed from feeling that it is about themselves.

We now have a team of 7 trained ELSAs to offer emotional support to children from Nursery through to Year 2, which we are incredibly proud of. This will enhance and support our work around mental health and wellbeing in school as we work towards our Silver Attachment and Trauma Sensitive Setting Award.



COASTAL VOICES



**WATERLOO
PRIMARY**



Coastal Voices is a project being led by award winning charity 'Music in Mind' to capture and celebrate the heritage of a number of Britain's coastal towns. This has been running in 3 areas during 2024: Sefton, Grimsby and Dover.

Music In Mind is an award-winning charity that promotes the use of music and the arts as an aid to public health and wellbeing, learning and creativity. We work with local and internationally renowned artists to develop innovative and ground-breaking projects, that use music and the arts to raise awareness around important social issues and give a voice to the seldom heard. Waterloo Primary is one of only five schools across the Sefton region to be involved this year.

Music In Mind is delighted to announce the award from THE NATIONAL HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND for the Coastal Voice project. We will be partnering with 3 councils in Sefton, North East Lincolnshire and Dover, to explore the heritage, musicality and identity in the accents of the 3 regions. The yearlong project will culminate in a large scale multimedia performance with musicians from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and will leave a lasting legacy through the creation of augmented reality content, developed by Gazooky Studios, to be enjoyed by the public in outdoor locations in each town.

The project is based on the concept that, how we speak reveals so much about who we are. The model simply uses the medium of speech and dialect to open an exploration of the cultural heritage and identity of each place, unlocking the themes of immigration, diversity, industrial heritage, regeneration and aspiration.

We are delighted that our Year 5 pupils are involved in this project. Our pupils have recently worked with a local artist, to produce their own canvases inspired by our wonderful waterfront and Peter Blake's Razzle Dazzle Mersey Ferry design. On Friday, our pupils had an informative, guided coastal walk in the beautiful sunshine with John Dempsey from "Green Sefton".

We are looking forward to our work being part of a collaborative multimedia celebration of our Sefton coastline at the Atkinson Theatre, Southport, in October 2024 with musicians from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra performing.





ENRICHING LIVES

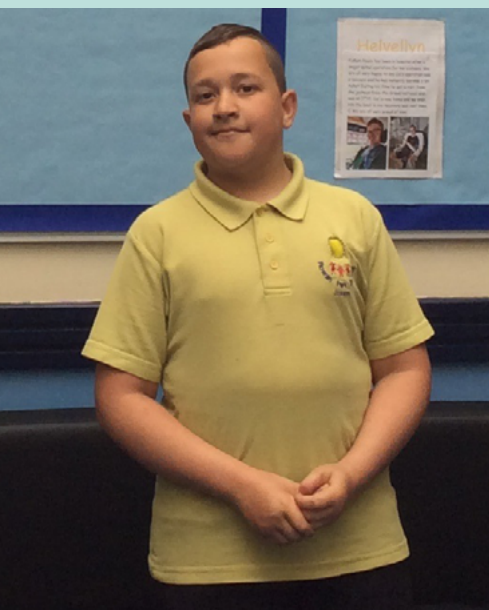


**FOREFIELD
JUNIORS**

During the month of May, we will have taken half of our pupils away on residential visits to experience adventurous activities. Our annual visit to Ambleside with Year 6 is long established. So much so, that many of our parents recall fond memories of five days away from home and are now sending their children on the trip!

This year we decided to extend the invitation to Year 4, who spent three days at Robinwood Activity Centre in Todmorden. Every school recognises the value of such experiences. It is impossible to quantify the impact – but we know that the children ‘grow’ during their time away, gaining valuable life lessons as well as making fantastic memories. We often say, “Nobody is going to remember question 9 on the maths paper in twenty years’ time, but you will remember being away from home and spending precious time with your friends.” Residential visits offer the opportunity to see the children outside of school, outside of lessons and often outside of their comfort zone! When we arrive back in school, exhausted but still smiling, the magical memories could fill several books and there are simply hundreds of photographs.

None of this would be possible without the dedication and commitment of our school staff. This year, some will have spent eight days away from their families to care for our Forefield family. It is simply amazing to see the care and devotion – often starting before breakfast and going on long into the night! I’m not sure of many other professions where staff would be so willing to give up their own time, for no extra pay. In addition, the staff remaining in school, plugging the gaps and keeping everything running smoothly are no less deserving of our thanks. It is a team effort and all of the schools in The Mersey View Learning Trust are blessed to have so many people prepared to go ‘above and beyond’ the everyday demands of their roles to ensure that children can make lifelong memories.



WORK EXPERIENCE



ROWAN PARK



Rowan Park's 14-19 department have recently been completing work experience placements and have developed a range of skills along the way.

Work experience for young people and students

Spending time in a workplace can help young people find a job and decide which career they would like to follow. 'Work experience' usually means spending a short time in a workplace, where students can learn by:

- joining in with everyday tasks
- shadowing people to find out what their job involves
- trying out short assignments
- learning to do some tasks on your own
- listening and talking to people as they work
- getting feedback from managers and colleagues

Work experience is usually unpaid and does not follow any formal training programme. It can last from a day to a few weeks. It is different from an apprenticeship, traineeship or a work placement as part of a programme of study.

We were very excited to send Yathu, Ellie, Emily, Millie and Kelsie to Kristival Nursery in Crosby as part of our work experience offer. They arrived on Tuesday morning and started working closely with the nursery children, helping with their snacks and during their structured learning times. Ellie and Emily enjoyed handing out the snacks to the children and Yathu and Millie handed out the children's bottles for their drinks. Kelsie enjoyed playing with the children and teaching them how to share.

Cairngorm class enjoyed taking part in Teaching Assistant work experience roles around both Rowan Park and Rowan Tree this week. They were responsible for supporting younger pupils in their learning, keeping them safe and remaining professional at all times. Charlie D who went to Dragonflies class at the Rowan Tree this week said "We signed in and wore a badge so the pupils knew I was staff. It was really good because they were learning about dinosaurs and were digging for bones. I helped a boy called Oliver dig for fossils. After, I went outside and taught the children how to play football and kick the ball. I had a really good time."

Jake, Alex and Caleb took on the role of teaching assistant at our Rowan Park site this week and enjoyed supporting pupils in their classes.

Joe B from Helvellyn class has been incredibly helpful this week in supporting his teacher Abi Howe in developing our careers area and library in secondary. He made the new book stand with support from his TA, Patrick. He printed and laminated new lettering for our display boards and cut each one carefully to be placed on the display. After, he put up new backing and bordered the display board. He has been brilliant this week at developing his skills in DIY, laminating and display arranging.

GREAT TEACHER TOOLKIT



CHESTERFIELD
HIGH SCHOOL

At Chesterfield High School, we place a huge emphasis on Continuous Professional development. This year we have invested in the Great Teacher Toolkit (GTT). This is an online, interactive, research-based programme, aimed at improving the teaching and learning within our classrooms.

This year we have all completed universal modules and started to utilise student voice, to focus on our personal areas for development.

Next year, we will use technology to record particular components of lessons and self-reflect on our practice, as we continue to drive progress and attainment. Representatives from the MAT have been introduced to the programme and are committed to deploying the GTT to assist in developing colleagues' skills within the trust.

What is it?

The Great Teaching Toolkit (GTT) is a professional development programme, which will enable Chesterfield Teachers to “know more and achieve more”

GTT is a set of tools that;

1. Help teachers **understand** and **focus** on the things that matter most for promoting student learning
2. Create the conditions in which all teachers can steadily **learn** to be even more effective in their practice
3. Provide rich, actionable **feedback** to support reflection, self-assessment, coaching & teacher learning

How it helps US to ‘achieve more’?

“Raising the quality of teaching within existing schools is probably the single most effective thing we could do to promote both overall attainment and equity”

(Coe et al, 2020)

How does it help me to ‘know more’?

Know more about my current practice and teacher skill set: Achieved through self-evaluation, and student voice

Know more about education research that is up to date: Achieved through participation in accredited CPD

Know more about our curriculum /delivery quality: Achieved through deliberation with staff and student voice

What's in the Toolkit?

Feedback tools

- Student surveys
- Staff survey
- Video observation

Suite of courses

- Teachers
- Leaders

What is worth learning for teachers? A Model for Great Teaching

01 Understanding the content

- 1.1 Deep and fluent content knowledge
- 1.2 Curriculum knowledge: sequencing
- 1.3 Knowledge of tasks, assessments, multiple explanations
- 1.4 Knowledge of student thinking: misconceptions

02 Creating a supportive environment

- 2.1 Relationships with students, cultural sensitivity
- 2.2 Student-student relationships & climate
- 2.3 Promoting learner motivation
- 2.4 High expectations, challenge and trust

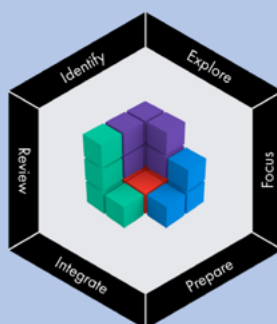
03 Maximising opportunity to learn

- 3.1 Managing time and resources to maximise productivity
- 3.2 Clear and consistent rules, expectations, consequences
- 3.3 Preventing & responding to disruption, showing awareness

04 Activating hard thinking

- 4.1 Structuring: matching tasks, scaffolding, signalling objectives
- 4.2 Explaining: presenting & connecting ideas, modelling examples
- 4.3 Questioning: promoting hard thinking, assessing
- 4.4 Interacting: giving, receiving and responding to feedback
- 4.5 Embedding: practising, reinforcing & spacing learning
- 4.6 Activating: building independence, supporting metacognition

Process: Working through a GTT development cycle



- Identify element of Great Teaching to work on, e.g. Questioning
- Explore the underlying principles of that element
- Focus on a specific aspect of practice you want to improve
- Prepare and adapt a strategy to use
- Integrate the strategy into your practice
- Review the impact the strategy is having in your classroom

Great Teaching Toolkit

Overview of courses offered in the GTT

Foundation course: Orientation and learning about learning

Courses for leaders

(over three terms, working with colleagues to plan implementation)

Assessment Lead Programme
(Curriculum Leaders)

Behaviour and Culture Programme
(Progress Leaders)

Science of Learning Programme
(Open Invite: See C.J.L.)

Courses for all teachers

(over eight weeks, after identifying a specific focus for improvement)

- Creating a supportive environment
- Maximising opportunity to learn
- Structuring
- Explaining
- Questioning
- **Interacting**
- Embedding
- Activating

Great Teaching Toolkit

NATIONAL, PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (NPQs)



VALEWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

At Valewood we have always maximised school improvement training, to further improve the outcomes of all of our learners. These past couple of years have been no exception.

With a wealth of funded and subsidised NPQs, our Governing Body has ensured that all senior staff and key subject leaders have had the opportunity to access these high quality, nationally accredited programmes.

Our Reception Lead, Miss Metcalfe, has recently completed her final assessment for her National Qualification in Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL). As a previously identified 'Good Practice EYFS Lead' in Sefton, she has been steering forward a school improvement strategy to engage our youngest learners, post-pandemic, with excellent results. As our work with nursery provision continues to strengthen, we know that the children coming into Reception can have the best start to their school life.

Our English Lead, Miss Eglin, has completed and passed her National Professional Qualification in Leading Literacy (NPQLL). Miss Eglin has been leading on progression in oracy, reading and writing, from Reception to Team 6. With high quality texts as stimuli, our school improvement work, in raising attainment in writing, is gaining momentum. Working alongside our Mersey View Learning Trust colleagues, looking at sampling writing and moderation, this has been a great piece of work, this past term.

Our SENDCo, Mrs O'Hara has also completed and passed her National Professional Qualification in Senior Leadership (NPQSL) and, although she is currently on maternity leave, the systems and provision she has embedded at Valewood continue to run smoothly, as Miss Metcalfe and Mrs Wright take the lead.

Mrs Wright, is approaching her final term, ahead of SENDCo Accreditation and, given the high percentage of children with SEND at Valewood, she has joined our SEND Team with a keenness and with a real purpose.

Mrs Parr, our Deputy Headteacher, is currently mid-way through her National Professional Qualification in Leading Behaviour & Culture (NPQLBC). Having just secured another GOLD assessment with UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award (April 2024), we are in a good place to enable the learning of this NPQLBC to take further shape, under Mrs Parr's leadership.

We believe that we can all learn from each other at Valewood and that we do, indeed, bring out the best in each other. As Ms Tantouri, Headteacher, has also just completed her final assessment of her National Professional Qualification in Executive Leadership (NPQEL) much of the work detailed in these modules can be seen in action, daily, at Valewood. Teamwork is strong and everyone's purpose to get the most out of the children is evident both inside the classroom and beyond, in the many off-site activities the children actively take part in, including Forest School.

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CONTINUED

NATIONAL, PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (NPQs)



VALEWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

We are all learners at Valewood and we will continue to prioritise high quality continuous professional development for all within our school community. We have taken advantage of both our local North West Maths Hub, where Mr Burns, our Primary Mastery Specialist, has been working with regional schools since 2020 and, also, our English Hub where we have accessed phonics support and reading development training which has impacted positively on outcomes for all staff and children at school.

As we move to incorporation, we are very much looking forward to the coordinated approach to CPD that our MVLT will bring, to enable all our staff groups to thrive – our office staff; our teaching assistant team and non-teaching staff; our pastoral support staff; our site management staff and not forgetting our Local Governing Board. If our staff are thriving, loving their own learning and professional development, this can only impact positively on the future outcomes of all of our children and families. Long may this drive for school improvement continue!

OUR VISION STATEMENT

- **MERSEY VIEW LEARNING TRUST DELIVERS LEADING QUALITY LEARNING IN A SAFE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENT.**
- **WE EMPOWER PEOPLE TO BE READY FOR THE FUTURE, MEETING NEEDS AND RAISING ASPIRATIONS.**
- **WE ARE VISIBLE, ACCOUNTABLE AND TRUSTED.**
- **WE COLLABORATE, CARE AND INSPIRE TO ENRICH LIFE FOR ALL.**