



PLYMOUTH CAST NEWSLETTER

2018/19

No.3: January 2019

“Our mission is to be a community of outstanding schools in which our pupils flourish in safe, happy and stimulating environments and leave us with the knowledge and skills, personal qualities and aspirations, to make the world a better place, inspired by the Gospel.”

CEO Updates

A warm welcome back and a happy new year to you all. This year, we're looking to build on the sense of momentum which was evident at the end of last year and make 2019 the year when Plymouth CAST comes strongly out of 'recovery mode' and into a confident mode of operation in which we are collaborating across the Trust for the benefit of our children and young people.

At the end of last term, I visited St. Paul's in Plymouth to bid farewell to **Maria Anderson** and thank her for her excellent work as Headteacher of the school since September 2014. In that time Maria led the school from Special Measures to Good, in the process transforming the quality of education at the school. We wish her every blessing and success as she takes up her new role as Headteacher of Elburton Primary School in Plymouth.

We also thank **Helen Brown**, who has stepped down as Headteacher in the Trust to join the ESM team full-time. Helen was appointed Headteacher of St. Catherine's, Bridport, in 2005 and then Head of St. Mary and St. Joseph's, Wool, in 2007, which was judged Outstanding both in Section 5 and Section 48 inspections. Many thanks from us all to Helen for her exceptional service to the Trust as Headteacher and we look forward to continuing to benefit from her experience as an ESM.

Thanks also to **Neil Maslen**, who has returned to the ESM team after just over a year as Headteacher at St. Boniface's College, Plymouth. St. Boniface's was placed in Special Measures in May 2017. Under Neil's leadership, very good progress was made and the June 2018 monitoring visit judged that effective action was taking place. Mary Cox has now taken over the role of interim Headteacher at the College. The majority of Mary's schools will now be covered by Neil, who will work with the ESM team in January and commence school visits in February.

Farewells
and welcomes

Plymouth CAST

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Later this term, we will be bidding farewell to two colleagues from the Central team. **Richard Thorns** will be leaving from his role as HR Manager at the end of January after four years of committed service. He has had a positive impact at a personal level on many staff in schools and in the central team. We wish him every blessing for the future. We also bid farewell to **Mark Woodhouse**, from the central finance team, who is leaving in early February to re-locate to Cumbria. We wish him and his family every blessing for the future.

We welcome two colleagues to new Headships in the Trust. Welcome to **Dawn Potterton**, who takes up her new role as Headteacher of St. Paul's, Plymouth. Dawn is coming from her role of Acting Headteacher at Cathedral school but had previously been on the staff of St. Paul's, so it is something of a welcome back for Dawn.

Welcome also to **Geraldine Christopher**, who takes up her new role as Headteacher of St. Mary and St. Joseph's, Wool. Geraldine is coming from Christ the King in Bournemouth where she was Assistant Head and RE lead.

Following a review of leadership and governance structures at the Mary of the Cross Federation in Plymouth (Holy Cross and Cathedral school), **Paul Cotter** will be the Headteacher of Holy Cross and **Mark Dyson** will be Acting Headteacher at Cathedral School, with thanks to Brendan at St. Joseph's for his support for Mark's deployment.

We also welcome **Paul Stewart** to the permanent position of Premises and Procurement Manager. Paul was fulfilling this role on an interim basis while continuing to work for Keyham Barton in Plymouth. He has now been appointed to the full-time role with the Trust and will continue the excellent work he has started to co-ordinate our approach to premises, health and safety and increasingly procurement. Paul will be at the next round of Headteachers' Briefings to provide important updates.

We wish them all every blessing and success in their new roles and they are assured of our support.

Clusters Pilot and Feedback

I'm delighted to announce that we have three cluster pilots ready to go from now until the summer, with three cluster co-ordinators. The pilots are as follows:

Cornwall (St Mary's Penzance, St. John's Camborne, St Mary's Bodmin, St Mary's Falmouth) – Co-ordinator: **Demelza Bolton**

Devon North (Our Lady's Barnstaple, St. John's Tiverton, St. Joseph's Exmouth, St. Mary's Axminster) – Co-ordinator: **Rob Meech**

Torbay (Priory Torquay, Our Lady of the Angels Torquay, St Margaret Clitheroe Brixham, Sacred Heart Paignton) – Co-ordinator: **Angela Folland**

Please remember that the **deadline for all feedback** on the Clusters proposal sent to schools on 19 November is 5.00 pm on **Monday 14 January**. All feedback will be considered carefully and a final proposal taken to the Board on 25 January.

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Vision and Values

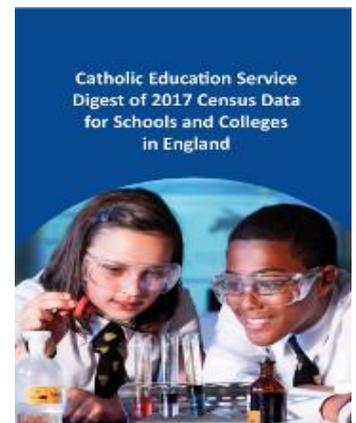
Thank you for sending out my letter to parents on our new vision and values. I have now asked a number of agencies to provide me with prices for creating a display of our vision, mission and Gospel values to be used throughout the Trust. I was also pleased to see the new vision working its way into our appraisal process and informing objectives. The next step on our journey will be the publication of a Strategic Plan. The format and content of this is being considered by a working group of Directors and should be ready to take to the Board in March. In the meantime, I'd like to hear from any of our schools about the ways in which you are implementing our new vision and values. Some short 'think pieces' for the next newsletter would be very welcome.



CES Census: The CES Census starts on 17 January in England, the same day as the DFE Census. Please note: although the CES deadline is Friday 15 February, we would like your returns for the CES and the DFE census by Friday 1 February. This will allow us to take updated data and KPIs to the ESG and CAST Board.

Schools can complete and submit their returns to CES during the support period which runs from the start date until Friday 15th February. The national completion rate for the CES Census in recent years has been a remarkable 100%. Please continue to support the Census.

<https://www.cescensus.org.uk/>



Safer Internet Day: Tuesday 5 February

The DFE is encouraging schools to engage with Safer Internet Day on 5 Feb. The aim is to inspire a national conversation about using technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively. The theme of the day will be "Together for a Better Internet" – empowering young people to take control of their digital lives. The UK Safer Internet Centre has published a range of age-related teaching resources, including short films that will help schools to prepare activities for a successful Safer Internet Day. Please visit:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2019>.



CEO Visits

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, I have now visited every one of our 35 schools and our nursery. It was a great privilege to get to know our schools first hand, meet the staff and pupils – and in some cases governors – and see for myself the inspiring work which goes on every day. I'd now like to begin a second round of visits, but with a more distinct focus, so that my visits can add specific value to our work. In the course of each visit I'd like to monitor the impact of CAST support and services in each school. There will be no need for any particular preparation but I would like to have this discussion with Heads, senior staff and, where possible, our Governors. Above all, I'll look forward to the opportunity again to meet our children and young people. If there are any specific events or liturgies you'd like to invite me to please try and book that in plenty of time.

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Policies

With this newsletter Heads will receive a new policy review document which provides you with a picture of the status of CAST policies – statutory and otherwise. Where it indicates that a policy is published on the CAST website, you can find it at http://www.plymouthcast.org.uk/web/plymouth_cast_policies/278257.

We're not quite at the stage of being able to link through from your websites to the policies on the CAST websites, but at least we have a more coherent picture of our policies. There are still gaps, but you will see from the timetable that we are moving quickly to resolve this. It is important to note that if a policy has passed its review date, it is still valid until a new version has been approved.

Leadership Audit

At the next round of Headteachers' Briefings I will be requesting that schools take part in a leadership audit. We need a full and accurate picture of the leadership strengths and potential in our Trust, everything from Head's expertise (e.g. coaching) to the potential of any colleagues to take part in the next cohort of Aspiring Heads. Details to follow.

Performance Tables

The primary schools' performance tables were published before Christmas. Our overall position as a Trust has improved significantly. We are now judged as Average for progress in reading, writing and maths, ranked 110 out of 260 Trusts. While this is historical data and our relentless focus is on our current pupils, it is another indicator of real progress. The progress for our disadvantaged pupils, however, especially in maths, was not as good and as we must ensure that these pupils are making rapid progress.

While many of our schools performed very well in their local authorities I am ambivalent about naming them, since I know that the circumstances of our schools are very diverse and the league tables do not always recognise the improvements which have taken place in a school. We do not as yet have a CAST-wide strategy for PR or marketing, but I know that many of you provide local media with stories of success and inspiration. I'd be grateful if you could send in any stories or coverage of your school in the local media.

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Governance

Last term we said farewell to two of our Directors: **Chris Coward** and **Canon Richard Meyer**. Chris served on the Board since January 2018 and brought with him extensive experience in the field of PR. Canon Richard served on the Board from May 2017. Canon Richard, who serves the parish of Bridport, reminded us at key moments of our Catholic mission and will be much missed for his wisdom and friendship. We wish them both every blessing for the future.

We welcome three new Directors to the Board:

Laura Sprackman, who previously served on the Board, is with us for another spell until March 2019. Laura brings with her extensive experience of finance and budget and provided cover for Karen Cook when Karen was Interim CEO.

Ann Harris OBE, who joined the CAST Board in September 2018. After graduating from La Sainte Union College of Education, Southampton in 1966, Ann spent her working life in education, following a varied path which included being a teacher, Headteacher, an adviser and inspector working for Berkshire Education Authority and running her own Consultancy Company. Finally, returning to the Headship of a school in challenging circumstances, in her mid-fifties. Throughout her career Ann worked at both local and national level, including representing primary phase on the National Curriculum working party for Physical Education, being a member of the British Broadcasting Corporation Primary Programmes Committee, contributing to television programmes for schools and writing materials for use by teachers. In 2005, she received an OBE for services to education.



Since retiring, Ann has been Chair of Governors at three schools: Manorside Primary, Bearwood Primary and Nursery and, more recently, St Mary's RC School in Poole. Recognised as a National Leader of Governance she became the Advocate for Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth in 2016. In this role she became a member of the steering group establishing education provision across the new authority of Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch.

Ann is a practising Catholic and plays an active role in her local Parish of St Catherine's, Wimborne. In 2012, she joined the Board of the St Vincent de Paul Society as National Vice-President. Returning for a second term in 2017, as Board lead on membership training. Ann is married with three adult children and eight grandchildren. In her spare time she enjoys painting, gardening, walking and taking holidays with her husband Paul.



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Jacqueline Vaughan. Jacqui also joined the CAST Board in September 2018. She has spent her career in both Further and Secondary Education. Her career in Further Education started as Lecturer in Plymouth College and then as Head of a Vocational Training Academy in Devon, which was judged to be Outstanding. Jacqueline completed a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership and Management and the University of Plymouth and in 2010 became an Assistant Head at Westlands School in Torquay where she led curriculum developments and timetabling. In 2012 Jacqueline became Head of Post 16 Education and oversaw the delivery and quality of Post 16 education in the school. During her school career Jacqueline worked at both local and national level including being part of a vocational steering group for the implementation of the 14-19 Diplomas in the South West.



Jacqueline now works for a non-profit organisation leading on education programmes and initiatives for Local Authorities, LEAs, schools and colleges across the wider south region. She has served as a Governor for both Primary and Secondary schools and is married with two children. Jacqueline is a practising Catholic and is a reader in her local parish. In her spare time she is an Assistant Director for a ladies acapella chorus which is run by her father, is learning to play the piano and enjoys caravanning with her extended family.

The full list of CAST directors can be found on the website at http://www.plymouthcast.org.uk/web/plymouth_cast_board_of_directors/277427

Lead Directors

The following directors have now been confirmed as leads in the following areas:

RE and Catholic Life	Fr Mark O'Keefe
SEND	Ann Harris
Governor Training	Ann Harris
Safeguarding	Jacqui Vaughan
Statutory Grants*	Sandy Anderson
Health and Safety	Graham Briscoe

**Statutory Grants includes Pupil Premium, PE and Sport Premium for primary schools and Year 7 Catch-up Premium for secondary schools.*

All schools should now have Leads on their Local Governing Boards for the same five areas. The intention is to develop as much training as possible for Directors and local Governors in these areas. See: Governors' Briefings below for more details.

Link Directors

With Directors leaving and new Directors coming onto the board, it has meant that the link Directors have had to be reviewed. A new list of Link Directors will be published in due course.

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Governors' Briefings

The next round of Governors' Briefings will take place in late February/early March. Please note that when the calendar for these briefings was drawn up last year, the date for the East briefing was set for Wed 6 March, without realising that this was Ash Wednesday. We have therefore moved this date to the following Wednesday, 13 March. Apologies for any inconvenience this may cause, but a number of Governors have been in touch quite rightly to question the original date. When we look at dates for 2019/20, we will ensure there are no such clashes.

The training focus for this round of Governors' Briefings will be **RE and Catholic Life and Safeguarding**. It would be very helpful if the leads in these areas from each local Governing Board could attend.

26 February (WEST – Cornwall)	St. Mary's, Penzance
4 March (WEST)	St. Paul's, Plymouth
5 March (CENTRAL)	St. Nicholas, Exeter
13 March (EAST)	St. Mary's, Dorchester

Please note that the sessions begin at 5.30 pm and run until 7.30 pm. There is an induction session for new Governors from 4.30 pm until 5.15 pm but this has to be booked in advance. Please ensure that you register your attendance on the calendar on the website in good time before the events.

Governors' Code of Conduct: Chair's Declaration

Would all Chairs of Local Governing Boards please remember to return the declaration that all members of their LGB have signed the Governors' Code of Conduct? I have suggested a deadline of the end of January, but if that does not fit with your schedule of meetings please let me know.

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SEND, Safeguarding and GDPR

SEND Strategy

Can I begin by thanking school leaders for the fantastic response to the request to complete SEND Reviews at the end of last term? The information has been really helpful in understanding what is going well and where extra focus is needed. As mentioned when the request for the reviews were made, I am being joined by Malcolm Reeve from Whole School SEND Consortium on 13 and 14 February to complete a Self-Review of the Trust's SEND provision. As part of the review, we will be visiting a selection of schools. Please watch this space for more information. If you would like to volunteer your school to be part of the review, please let me know.



Secondly, on the back of reviewing everything linked to SEND across the Trust, I have started work on a SEND strategy. To begin with I have been considering how it might be possible to utilise the opportunities that come out of the cluster proposal to help support and deliver the SEND strategy. Following discussions with Louise, I made contact with a selection of schools in each of the proposed clusters to ask them to volunteer their SENCOs to make up a strategy group. I realise this means that there will be some schools and some SENCOs who will be disappointed not to have been approached. However, the choices were made strategically on the basis of where there is potential capacity or particular skills we were looking for.

On the 11 January, I will be meeting with the SENCOs from the identified schools to begin discussing how we might deliver an effective strategy that meets the needs of our Trust, but at the same time allows flexibility to work together within the parameters of the local areas your schools are in. I will be asking the SENCOs to make contact with SENCOs in the other schools within the proposed clusters to begin finding ways to move this forwards. The SENCOs you are likely to hear from are:

- Jen Barnard from St Mary's Primary, Penzance (for the four Cornish Schools)
- Gemma Burns from Keyham Barton and Lisa Rogers from Notre Dame (for the Plymouth Schools)
- Eve Daunton from Our Lady's Primary, Barnstaple (for the North Devon schools)
- Kelli Reynolds from St Nicholas, Exeter (for the South Devon Schools)
- Helen Brown from Sacred Heart (for the Torbay schools)
- Sharon Betts from St Marys, Poole (for the East and West Dorset Schools, as they are already working collaboratively).

I am really pleased with the progress we have already made. I anticipate having more information to share in terms of a written SEND strategy by the end of this term. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

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Safeguarding

During the inspections that took place last term, the developments to safeguarding promoted by the Trust have stood up very well to scrutiny. Nevertheless, there have been some points that we can learn from. Please ensure that you have incorporated the Directors' page, which includes the s128 checks, that was sent to administrators by Helen Moram on 28 November 2018 into your school's Single Central Register (SCR). Can I also take this opportunity to remind you that all schools should have now transferred their employment checks to the new CAST SCR.

We are looking to ensure we have 100% 'on time' returns for SG forms this term. We will send out a reminder for each SG form a week before the deadline. This term we ask for the SG4 and SG5 forms to be submitted. Please refer to the checklist for the exact dates.

Finally, I wanted to remind you that your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be providing regular training for the local Governing Board to ensure they are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. If you need support, Kim can provide resources to DSLs to help deliver the training.



GDPR

You will shortly be receiving a Trust policy for Data Retention. This is a long and detailed policy on the expectations for keeping and managing personal data across the Trust. When it comes through to you, please make sure you, your staff and local Governing Board are familiar with our expectations.



Exclusions

I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of the need to inform the Trust whenever the decision to exclude a child is made. Currently, the expectation is that you copy the email sent to the local authority informing them of a fixed term exclusion to the safeguarding email account and your Education and Standards Manager (ESM) at the Trust. Furthermore, if the decision to permanently exclude a child is made, you must inform your ESM as soon as possible. The ESM is responsible, under the terms of the new scheme of delegation, to convene a panel to review the decision to permanently exclude a child. Watch this space for more information about how these processes will be improved in the future.

Matthew Barnes, Deputy Director of Education and Standards

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Education and Standards

Headteachers' Briefings

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Headteachers' briefings next week.

Please note that all Headteachers are expected to attend. If there is an exceptional situation where a Headteacher is not able to attend, they should either arrange to attend another date or send the deputy Headteacher.

Arrival from 09:00 for **09:30 – 13:00 secondary schools** and **09:30 - 15:30 primary schools** (Please note slightly later finish time).

Tuesday 15 January	West Area	St Boniface's, Plymouth
Wednesday 16 January	Central Area	St Nicholas, Exeter
Thursday 17 January	East Area	Christ the King, Bournemouth

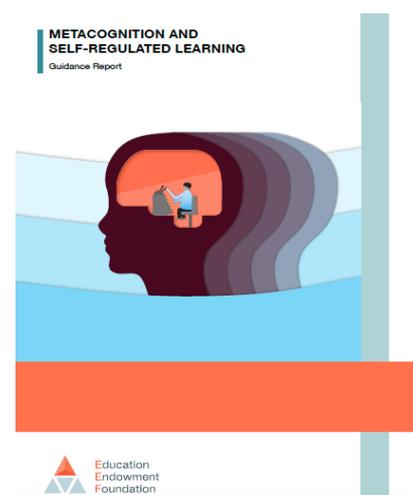
Agenda:

- 09:30 Reflection
- 09:35 Raymond Friel: General up-date
- 10:20 Paul Stewart: Health and Safety
- 10:50 Break
- 11:10 Louise Adams: Up-date to include Ofsted, E&S strategic planning, Equality Policy, Exclusions process,
- 12:30 Heads' Forum: leadership development, content and organisation of Heads' briefings, pilot cluster working, Education and Standards Improvement Plan
- 13:00 Lunch
- 13:30 PRIMARY SCHOOLS ONLY: Moderation, curriculum and assessment, including termly data collection
- 15:30 End

To support our work on curriculum and assessment, please bring a full set of books for a middle ability pupil from Years 2, 4 and 6.

PIRA and PUMA

Please submit your Pira and Puma standardised scores for the whole school (in whatever format you use) to Kim Wathen, copied to me and your ESM by Friday 18th January.



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Ofsted Inspections Summary

Autumn Term 2018 Inspections			
Month	Previous Grade	New Grade	As expected
October	Special Measures	Good	Yes
October	Requires Improvement	Good	Yes
October	Outstanding	Requires Improvement	Yes
November	Special Measures	Requires Improvement	Yes
November	Good	Good	Yes
November	Requires Improvement	Good	Yes

Well done to all our school Headteachers, staff, pupils and governors who have worked, and are still working, so hard to improve our schools – it is working!

Spring Term 2019 Inspections Due		
Month due	Current Grade	Anticipated Grade
October 18	Requires Improvement	Good
January 19	Requires Improvement	Good
January 19	Requires Improvement	Good
January 19	Requires Improvement	Good
January 19	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement
February 19	Special Measures	Requires Improvement
March 19	Requires Improvement	TBC
March 19	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement

ESM Changes

Following on from Raymond's section about our Headteachers, Neil Maslen is re-joining the E&S team and will be taking on many of Mary's schools. Helen Brown (from St Mary and St Joseph's Wool) has now joined the team full time.

In order to ensure as many of our schools as possible provide a good standard of education, we have had to make some changes to the current ESM organisation. You should already have been informed if your ESM is changing. I apologise for the inconvenience. Where possible, we are trying to retain consistency.

Deadlines for Census data

All schools are required to complete the DFE Census data and the CES Census this term. To avoid you completing documentation especially for us, please can you forward a copy of your DFE and CES returns to us by **Friday 1st February**. We appreciate that this date is in advance of the official deadlines. Please forward this information to Kim Wathen and Helen Moram

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INSET Dates

Please ensure that you have the following dates in your 2019/2020 calendar for CAST-wide INSET days. Apart from some discrepancy in the autumn, we will have common days in the spring and summer.

Autumn Term: Monday 28 October (Plymouth, Cornwall, Devon, Torbay) or Monday 4th November (Bournemouth, Dorset)

Spring Term: Monday 24th February (all schools)

Summer Term: Monday 1st June (all schools)

Interesting Ideas

As a team we often see and hear of interesting and useful ideas in our or other schools. We thought that sharing some of these in the newsletter might be helpful and encourage more of you to share some of the innovative approaches and ideas you have in your schools. Please let your ESM know if you have any thoughts for the next newsletter.

Louise Adams, Director of Education and Standards

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Finance and Resources update

The Trust's financial position has been under considerable scrutiny during the latter part of 2018, including a meeting with Lord Agnew to discuss progress in respect of the Financial Notice to Improve. Lord Agnew was pleased with the progress made to date, but recognises the fragility of the Trust position, which it is hoped will be improved by the recovery plans being presented by the most vulnerable schools. We are grateful for the work undertaken by those preparing these plans and a revised Trust wide re-budget reflecting the improved position is being prepared for the Board meeting in late January.



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

The Trust's accounts for 2017/18 have been approved by the Board and submitted to the ESFA. They are now published on the Trust website. As a result of the voluntary severance and redundancy arrangements a number of schools have now moved into negative reserves. Those schools not involved in the recovery plans to date who have negative reserves will be required to prepare a recovery plan, and I will be in contact with them in the next few weeks.

A new school business planning process is being developed and will be rolled out to all schools in late February to support long term revenue and capital planning and the budget setting process for 2019/20 forward. This planning process will be supported by the School Hub Business Managers who are now in place. The Plymouth cluster currently does not have a hub business manager, but this post has been advertised.

The ESFA published guidance in late December relating to additional funding for high needs and other funding for capital; the so called 'little extras' funding. The impact of these announcements will be advised to schools once they have been clearly interpreted.

Deadlines

The January school census impacts future funding and once it has been returned the data will be reviewed as part of the planning process. Confirmation of the Census day on 17 Jan and deadline for submitting to the DFE are on the Term 2 Checklist. Guidance on the Census can be found at -

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-census>



Karen Cook, Chief Finance and Operations Officer

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Premises Matters

Health and Safety Policy

The Plymouth CAST Health and Safety Policy Version 8 has now been issued. If you haven't already done so, please complete Appendix 3 "Further arrangements specific to (*your*) Academy".

Please remember to make this policy available to all staff, and refer to it for all Health and Safety organisational, system and general arrangements.

Update on H & S Reports

There are still a number of unresolved non-conformities across the Trust as a result of the School Health and Safety Audits. I will be in touch with all relevant schools to help support you in resolving them. In the meantime, if you need Health and Safety support or advice, please contact the Devon Health and Safety Help Desk on 01392 382027 in the first instance, or email me at paul.stewart@plymouthcast.org.uk

Training

A reminder that **EVOLVE training** has now been arranged with Brendan Stone of Babcock LDP. If your school does not have a qualified Educational Visits Coordinator, or if they are not familiar with the EVOLVE system, it is essential that your school sends somebody to attend this training. This is also a great opportunity if you require some refresher training on how to use the system. The dates again are as follows: -

22nd January at St. Boniface's College, Plymouth. 10am – 3:30pm

23rd January at St. Boniface House, Ashburton. 10am – 3:30pm

12th February at Sir John Colefox, Bridport. 10am – 3:30pm

We have also arranged **Asbestos and Legionella training** which will be delivered by the Devon County Council Health and Safety Team. The dates are: -

25th February 2019 at St. Boniface's College, Plymouth. 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

5th March 2019 at St. Boniface House, Ashburton. 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

19th March 2019 at Sir John Colefox, Bridport 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

If your school does not have an **employee** who has received this training, it is essential that you send somebody to attend. This could be either a Site Manager, Caretaker or Administrator. This is also a great opportunity if you wish to refresh your training.

To attend these training sessions, please book via the Plymouth CAST Calendar, click onto the date/training and follow the Eventbrite link.

Update on the new way of working with TDA

TDA now have their own facilities management tool called *tf cloud*. Designed and developed by The Technology Forge, it will become the new platform for reporting, monitoring and managing all of your school premises and maintenance issues. Once training has been delivered to the new School Hub Business Managers, access to this web based system will be rolled out across the Trust. In the meantime, please continue to report all your building and maintenance issues to TDA, but be prepared to fund from your School Maintenance budget those works that fall under the £500 threshold that are not already a SLA provision.

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Emergency Planning and Business Continuity

At the end of the year, I sent out to each school the Plymouth CAST Severe Weather Policy along with a Contacts Section for you to complete and use. Together, they form part of a bigger Emergency Plan and Business Continuity document that has been developed for each school to complete.

More information on this document and subject matter will be given at the Heads' Briefings next week, along with details on how we will support you in completing them.

As always, if you require any further information or support on any of these premises matters, then please get in touch.

Paul Stewart, Premises and Procurement Manager

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ARTICLES

Catholic Leadership, Values and Coaching

By Shelley England, Headteacher, Keyham Barton, Plymouth

Following the introduction of our new Vision and Values document, we are all being encouraged to find ways to ensure the beautiful Beatitudes guide what we do in schools. I couldn't resist the invitation to put my thoughts into the melting pot by sharing them in this newsletter.

Since my first dissertation, I have been interested in personal and professional development. I was happy when I undertook the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH), to find that any development in leadership is really about development in personhood. As a leader in a Catholic context, that has meant my faith as well. A total privilege, if a difficult journey – I thought I would be handed a formula, a system, tips and tricks on leading a school. (Which I was, but so much more besides). It has impacted on my wellbeing, sense of purpose and relationships not only in a work context, but at home as well.

The NPQH also opened up a library of recent research and writing on leadership which calls for us to counteract the challenging, ever changing landscape we inhabit today. What has struck me time and time again is how the current paradigm, which calls for empathy, understanding, responsibility, meaning, purpose and awareness, mirrors what our faith has been saying for thousands of years.

Back to values. I am delighted we are being encouraged to define ways we live our values out as it guards against them remaining mere words on a page. In the words of Fun Boy Three: "It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it" encouraged me to look at our values through the leadership style of 'coach' (not to be confused with an image of a man on the side of field screaming at and berating the players). Coaching has been proven to be highly successful in leading any change and improvement – particularly in the long term – it builds sustainability, motivation and momentum towards continuous development. It is also linked to innovation and retention.

Coaching believes we are full of latent, untapped potential and our true nature is towards goodness (no surprise: we are made in the image and likeness of God) and that our task is to have ownership of our path (vocation and become who we truly are). It seeks to raise people's awareness because what we are aware of, we can control; what we are unaware of, controls us. This empowers people to take responsibility for their lives, their path, their purpose.

A coaching style requires continual practice for most of us and although I understand the philosophy behind the coaching method, I am far from perfecting it in action. If anyone is interested in getting together to help develop a coaching practice in a safe space, please get in contact. I would love to hear from you. 😊

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*"Mentoring is imparting to you
what God has given me.
Coaching is drawing out
of you what God has given you."*

– Dale Stoll



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Metacognition

by Claire Brown, SENCO, St. John the Baptist, Dartmouth

Metacognition is “thinking about thinking”. It is knowledge and understanding of what we know and how we think, including the ability to regulate our thinking as we work on a task. Metacognition helps to shape ‘active’ rather than ‘passive’ learners.

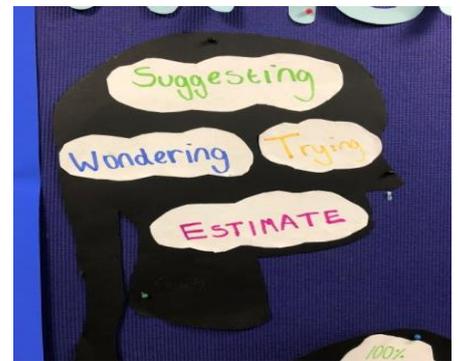
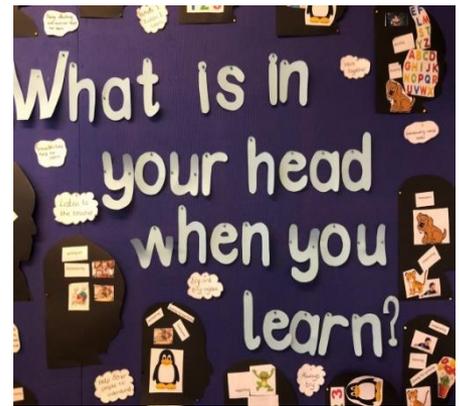
“Learning how to learn gives children a sense of control over learning and promotes **deep learning** rather than **shallow learning**. This is essential for lifelong learning.”

(Peter Tarrant and Deborah Holt, Metacognition in the Primary Classroom.)

Research by the Education Endowment Foundation has found that Metacognition and self-regulation approaches have consistently high levels of impact, with pupils making an average of seven months additional progress. These strategies are usually more effective when taught in collaborative groups so that learners can support each other and make their thinking explicit through discussion. All staff in St Johns have been trained and understand the benefits of a Metacognitive approach. We have been developing approaches in enabling pupils to purposefully direct their learning, increase motivation to try tricky tasks and to succeed. Maths was the main area of school improvement so it was decided to drive the development of metacognition through maths.

Following training on our September training day, displays were created at the beginning of term to promote the children’s understanding of Metacognition and to discuss their learning.

Following this staff and pupils agreed a ‘language of learning’. Prompts for children to record their daily learning and how they are learning in maths sessions were displayed in every classroom from Year 2 to Year 6. Early observations have revealed that the children are very intuitive in choosing metacognitive vocabulary to describe how they have been learning on a day to day basis.



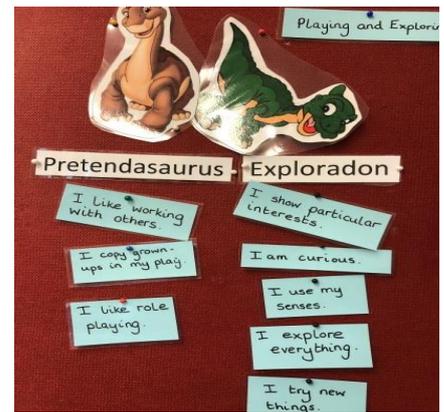
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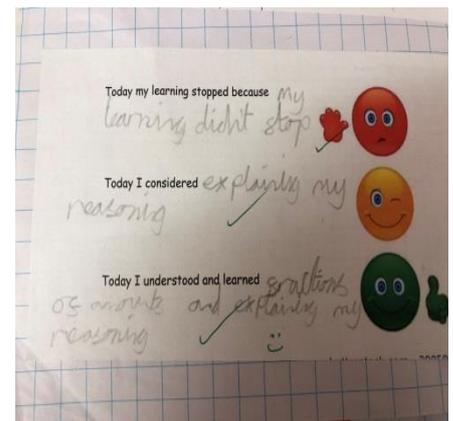
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In the younger years Metacognition has also been embedded using a slightly different approach. Our Reception and Class 1 teacher has produced an interactive animal themed Metacognition display using dinosaurs (Triatops, Pretendasaurus, Explanadon, Prideasaurus, Predictasaurus and Linkasaurus). The themes are linked to the characteristics of effective Learning in the Early Years' Goals. Whenever the children display any of these metacognitive traits and behaviours it is visually recorded with their photograph. Pupils are also given the opportunity to verbally explain how they are learning and this is recorded in their Maths book by an adult.



At St Johns we endeavour to continue to explore and expand our knowledge of Metacognition and how it positively helps children to understand how they learn. Our whole school approach will continue to develop by embedding Metacognition in our everyday practice. Lesson studies have been setup so that staff can visit each other's classrooms to see how Metacognition is being used and from this how they can move their own practice forward. We are developing our thinking and ideas by the introduction of Learning Exit Tickets (from Year 2 to Year 6). Exit Tickets are a feedback tool that students complete for a few minutes at the end of each lesson. They prompt students to think about how and what they learn, as well as what challenges they are still facing. Learning Pit Stops are also being used in lessons to enable children to be reflective about their learning.



A member of staff has been selected to be the leader in Metacognition and Feedback. She is given regular time out of class to develop policy and practice, working alongside her colleagues in these important areas. We have developed a Learning Policy linked to this work and also a new Feedback Policy to ensure that the feedback we give is having an increased impact on the learning for our children. The motto on our Feedback policy is 'Do less, achieve more'. The aim of this is to reduce teachers' workload and provide feedback that is more meaningful for the children and has impact.

Our next steps are to embed Metacognition in our everyday teaching by modelling 'learning phrases' in our thought processes and to facilitate the children in their use of these. Examples are:

'I notice that.....', 'I'm wondering.....', 'I'm thinking.....', 'I'm seeing.....', 'It reminds me of.....',

'I'm figuring out.....', 'What's the same?' 'What's different?', 'I'm making links.'

We now need to continue to take on Metacognitive practises that will not only move our practice forward, but benefit the children. Developing 'the language of learning' in other curriculum areas will be a future area of development for us. Metacognition is about the way learners monitor and purposefully direct their learning and increasing motivation to take risks, take on a tricky task and be motivated to succeed.

Following the very successful 'launch' of our metacognition strategy on 10 January, we look forward to this approach being adopted in all our schools and having a transformative effect on the learning of our children and young people, especially the disadvantaged.

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