



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT NEWSLETTER

As the festive season is upon us at Esteem, we extend our thanks and gratitude to all our staff who continue to put the children and young people in our Academies at the heart of everything we do. We extend this thanks to our parents/carers, Governors and Trustees also and wish everyone a restful Christmas and New Year period. It's that magical time of the year when we come together to reflect on the past 12 months, appreciate where we have got to and anticipate the possibilities that lie ahead for our Trust in the coming year.

In this edition of the School Improvement Newsletter, we wanted to share some of the highlights from across the Trust in the last 4 months, a collection of some of our achievements, shared experiences and memories that bind us as a community of schools. This year has been nothing short of extraordinary; we had our first whole Trust INSET day, Derby Pride Academy joined us and we also have had 10 Ofsted inspections within a 12 month period. It has been a year filled with resilience, growth and the unwavering commitment to nurturing the potential within each of our pupils.

As we navigate the unique challenges and successes of the past year, one thing that is central to our ethos is that we are 'Stronger Together' and we look forward to welcoming new members to our Trust as we expand our footprint in the New Year. The spirit of collaboration is that defines the Esteem MAT family.

Wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas!

Warm regards,

Julian Scholefield - CEO



December 2023

- ✓ Good news stories across Esteem MAT
- ✓ Early Career Teaching - Tutor and Mentor training
- ✓ Academy in focus - Esteem North
- ✓ The Research Fellowship
- ✓ Careers & Enterprise - Community of Improvement
- ✓ Professional Learning and Development update
- ✓ Outreach at Fountains Primary
- ✓ Esteem MAT news update

And much more...

Good News Stories across Esteem MAT

Fountains Primary Awards



Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at Fountains Primary School

This term Sally Millman Jones (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion champion) has worked on the school achieving this Quality.

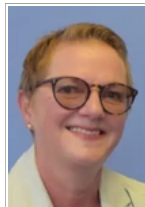
In order to achieve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Quality mark Sally had to provide evidence of our commitment and practice with respect to EDI in three key areas:

- Leadership and Management
- Staff CPD
- Teaching, Learning, Curriculum and Resources

In achieving a quality mark for our school, we have demonstrated the following outcomes:

- Leadership and Management: The Education for Equality Mark is made known to children, staff and the wider community and is used as a shared understanding for improving equality for children's education, well-being, school improvement, social justice and global citizenship.
- Staff CPD: The school provides high-quality CPD in relation to equality education, including that on unconscious bias in relation to good practice and parental engagement.
- Teaching, Learning, Curriculum and Resources: Every aspect of teaching, learning, the curriculum and resources are carefully planned to explicitly ensure that an anti-racist and gender equal approach is embedded throughout the school and has sustainable impact.

We think this is a great achievement and demonstrates the commitment we have when ensuring that all stakeholders are treated equally whilst being inclusive to all.



St Clare's – Mental Health Awareness

♥ Hello Yellow ♥ In October, St Clare's wore yellow to promote children and young peoples mental health. Staff got in to the spirit of the day with full yellow attire and planned lots of exciting activities whilst taking the time to speak to pupils and staff about the topic. Ted's outfit is the winner (far right)!



The Esteem MAT – Reserach Fellowship

We are delighted to announce that three more colleagues have completed the Research Fellowship in partnership with Nottingham Trent Uni. Andrew Maddox, Amanda Whittingham both from Fountains High and Sam Barker from Holbrook have been working on a year-long educational research investigation. On completion of the project, the colleagues complete 30-credits that can be used towards a Masters and as we have seen this year, the Trust is looking to sponsor more staff to complete their MA-Ed with the University in the future.

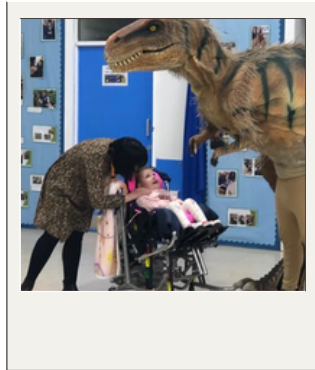
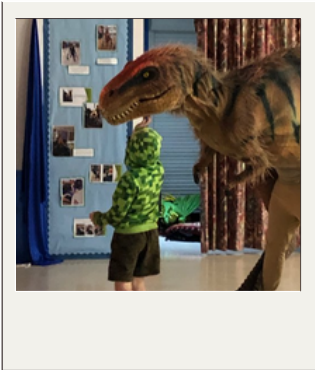
NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY



Good News Stories across Esteem MAT

Stanton Vale

The curriculum at Stanton Vale continues to come to life and this half term is no different. You'd be excused to think you'd walked on to the set of Jurassic Park however, 'dinosaurs' is the Academies theme this term and here are some pictures to bring those magical experiences to life for the children.



The fun doesn't stop there, on the 9th December, the Academy hosted its annual Christmas Fayre. As always, it was really well attended with some magical moments including live music, Santa's grotto and lots of stalls where the whole Friends of Stanton Vale community came together for some festive fun. Please see the video on the school's website or via twitter; https://twitter.com/stanton_vale

In other news at Stanton Vale, Tarina Chow - School Business Manager has made a national appearance in the FundEd magazine - Autumn edition discussing the importance of making meaningful connections with other SBMs, in order to deliver better value to the schools. Tarina goes on to share her experiences of working with social media platforms, keeping up to date the the ever changing educational landscape, embracing change and being able to seek and share advice as a community as key ingredients to being more effective in the role of the SBM.



EdTech

As part of the Digital Strategy, we have now launched our EdTech working parties and each Academy has a lead or group of leaders for bringing to life EdTech as a platform to enrich our pupil's curriculum and wider curriculum. The Artificial Intelligence sector continues to grow and as a Trust we need to be ready to best prepare our children for their future. The future of work...are we ready?! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59d3UZTUFQ0&t=4s>

Early Career Framework Teaching

As a Trust we are always looking to build relationships with other MATs, Academies, Schools and organisations in the best interests of the communities we serve. A great example of this has taken place this term and continues in 2024 with the Flying High Teaching School Alliance who recently delivered a training session to all tutors and mentors for ECTs across the Trust. The three sessions cover:

- What it means to be a mentor
- Styles and strategies for mentors
- Mentoring and coaching

Each session ends with action planning and reflections' and the feed back from session 1 was fantastic and is informing next steps for sessions 2 and 3.

Peak School



We are delighted to announce the appointment of Jo Howarth as the new Head Teacher of Peak School in Chinley. Jo brings an absolute wealth of experience from her knowledge of SEND, an existing Head Teacher currently who also used to be the Deputy Head Teacher at Stanton Vale. We look forward to welcoming Jo formally when she takes up her post in April 2024.

Good News Stories across Esteem MAT

Outreach in Staffordshire at Fountains Primary...the story so far!

Over the last 5 years, Fountains Primary School has been delivering outreach to over 50 schools and settings. These schools and settings have been private day nurseries, Infant and Junior schools, Primary, First and Middle school and High Schools. The highly skilled staff that have supported this outreach model has been Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Hope Mentors, Lego Therapists and Zones of regulation practitioners. This has been completed alongside members of the Leadership Team who have a vast amount of knowledge, qualifications and skills, comprising of Ofsted Inspector, NPQH/SL/ National SENCO qualification, EYFS experts, Communication experts, Behaviour specialists, Expert Team members within the wider Esteem Multi Academy Trust, PROACT SCIPr Instructors, Makaton Champions (Level 4) Senior Mental Health Lead and Equality and Inclusion Champions.



As a school, we have provided bespoke training and outreach support on the principles of de-escalating challenging and persistent disruptive behaviour, supporting staff with resilience, writing and implementing positive behaviour support plans, advising staff and leadership teams in schools on how to manage behaviour and promote inclusion rather than exclusion.

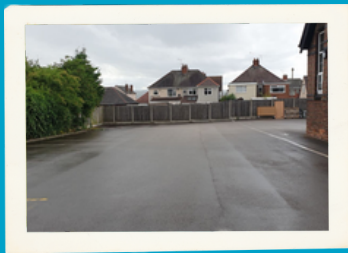
Outreach may also involve observing and advising on the inclusion of young people of all key stages, completing a written record/formal report with recommendations and supporting leadership teams on the adaptations that could be needed in equipment and environments to help support the wider inclusion of pupils. This is alongside setting up enhanced resource centres within mainstream schools.

The leadership team are also highly involved in an ongoing and 'emergency' response, advising to prevent exclusions in the form of telephone/ email and in person visits to schools. Support for parents is often called upon and supporting local SENCOs with the graduated response and the review of an existing Education Health and Care Plan.

In-reach is also often facilitated; this may be organising tours of the schools for both parents/carers and school staff, hosting training at our school, offering external school staff the opportunity to work alongside our staff or arranging a 'staff swap'. This ensures that new knowledge and skills are gained for both parties and further supports all of us with the strategies needed for the teaching and learning of all young people including those with additional needs in the area. Collaboration is the key!

All of this has ensured that we are seen as a beacon of excellence across East Staffordshire and more recently gained another Service Level Agreement to support schools with this ongoing support. A huge well done to all of our staff and wider stakeholders who contribute to the success of this and the impact it has on raising outcomes, not only for our staff and pupils, but for all in our wider school community as well. We look forward to what 2024 has in store as we work in close partnership with Fountains High to bring this offer to the next level and contribute more widely to the Education sector.

Esteem North Academy continues to grow as the number of permanently excluded pupils in Derbyshire increase, from circa 70 pupils in September 2021 to now over 220. This is likely to expand to around 280 once our new 4th site opens in January 2024. The new Service Level Agreement in place between Esteem and the LA, requires all permanently excluded pupils to be taken to roll from day 6 of their exclusion. An additional 43 LA pupils were presented to come to roll for the 1st September. We previously educated pupils from KS2 to KS4. However, pupils may now come to roll in any year group up to year 11. The KS2 provision was a dual registered 26 week nurture provision. We now therefore have a new primary provision in place to take from reception to year 6. This growth has resulted in an expansion of our staffing team with the structure more than doubling over the past few months.



This major increase has also resulted in exciting new developments over the summer to expand on our previous teaching capacity. We now have a primary teaching team. Our Barrow Hill site had a complete internal reconfiguration to accommodate a new PEX cohort, with phase 2 due to finish by Easter 2024. There is a new classroom, pupil toilets and space utilised to accommodate a site admin. Our Hasland site grew with the introduction of new temporary cabins (see the before and after above) housing an additional 2 classrooms and offices, located within our school car park. This has enabled pupil capacity to increase rapidly. At our High Peak site redecoration took place to refresh the main hall and corridors to make it a more inviting learning environment. Further work is planned to complete redecoration at this site by early 2024. Our sites also benefited from network improvements via the 'Connect Classroom' Gov.uk funding.

Outdoor Education: The outside gym equipment at Hasland eventually had its roof installed so the pupils can enjoy physical activities in poor weather.



Barrow Hill site – with our additional teaching capacity & newly decorated areas. This site previously consisted of 4 staff members and 2 classrooms. It now has 9 staff and 4 classrooms. The existing classroom area was altered to accommodate new pupil toilets accessed from the corridor.



Under-utilised space has been converted to allow for an admin area and a new Business Services post which was greatly needed. There will be a new entrance way to this site in early 2024 which will provide secure entry and safeguard pupils. (See the before and after below).



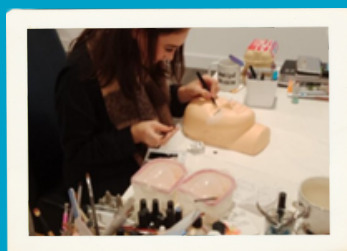
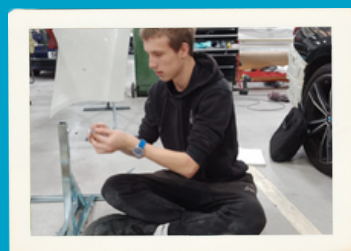
Academy in focus – Esteem North

Work experience

To support and enhance our curriculum and the future employment prospects of our pupils, we have been working hard to introduce an array of new activities during this academic year.

The continued development of our work experience package, offering our pupils the chance to work in accident repair centres, golf clubs and beauty clinics, children's nurseries, dog groomers to name but a few, with great feedback from both our pupils and our host businesses.

Pupils attend a work placement for one-day per week as part of their timetable. The work placement database continues to grow. If you know of any companies that may wish to support Esteem North and valley pupils, then please contact our work experience coordinator, Geraint.brown@nedsc.derbyshire.sch.uk.



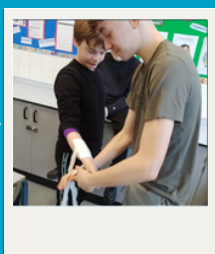
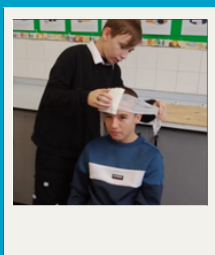
Alternative Provision

Places in the commissioned alternative provisions have been filled quickly this year due to the increase in pupil capacity. We continue to source new APs to provide quality experiences off site for our pupils.

Duke of Edinburgh

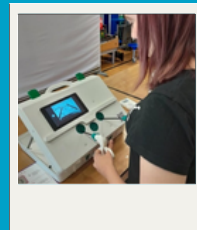
We are now delivering the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award programme to our KS3 pupils. Pupils recently completed a first aid course and learnt how to support those in need of first aid, including treating broken bones, bleeds and heart attacks.

In half term 2, all pupils will be attending climbing classes at the Outdoor centre in Sheffield, led by a qualified climbing instructor.



Personal Development

A group of pupils engaged in an off site visit in the summer term at the "Medical Mavericks" encounter to promote STEM activities.



Charity summer fun days

Parents and carers were invited in to engage in activities with their children. Pupils baked and prepared drinks for the visitors. Pupils enjoyed the traditional elements of a Tombola, raffle, face painting, plant sales and football knock outs.



RSPCA

We visited our local Chesterfield RSPCA centre recently, to donate £148 that the pupils had raised at our Esteem North Summer Gala. The school Ambassadors chose this charity and a group of our pupils took the donation to the centre, whilst also having a tour and meeting the dogs and cats!

ARMY CAREERS

Army Careers visited our Hasland and High Peak sites recently to talk to KS3 & KS4 pupils about opportunities in the Army. Some pupils are going on to make appointments to discuss the application process in more detail after being inspired by these sessions.

The journey continues for Esteem North!

Esteem MAT - Trust News

CPD Calendar

As a Trust, we firmly believe that between all our Academies and collaborative partners, we are able to provide high quality Professional Learning opportunities for all our staff. This academic year, the Expert Team colleagues have continued where they left off in 22/23 with providing a variety of CPD sessions for staff across the Trust, all of which have been recorded. A flavor of what has been covered so far is below:

- Learning and engagement through continuous provision – approaches for complex learners
- Revisiting emotion coaching
- Leading Pedagogy
- Auditing and planning for phonics
- Gatsby compliance and action planning
- Generic approaches to Autism

In term 2, please keep your eye out for details on the next set of online sessions:

- Numicon and Maths for lower-level learners
- Pre-requisite Maths skills
- 'If it's tricky, draw a piccie' – problem solving for everyone
- EEF high impact approaches – tasters for UQTs/ECTs
- The importance of reading
- Using free music technology across the curriculum
- Drumming and the brain – sensory approaches to music for all
- The diamond lesson (Taking risks with routine)
- Unlocking the power of memory – marking feedback and retrieval

Many thanks to all the Expert Team and Targeted Specialist Leaders who have planned and delivered these sessions.

Reading and Phonics

We are relaunching the Reading and Phonics strategy this term with our 'Reading Learning Community' to ensure that as a Trust we keep this skill at the centre of our curriculum. We want to ensure best practice in reading is based on the most current research and pedagogy. This learning community will support reading leads to address and plan for all aspects of reading alongside phonics provision.

Our relaunched approach has already begun and will continue on the INSET Day in January. The agenda being:

- DfE Reading Framework and current guidance on the teaching of reading
- Reading policies
- Pedagogical approaches to reading
- Writing the curriculum
- Language and vocabulary development
- Pre phonics and phonics
- Developing a love of reading in school
- Catch up and interventions
- Making all staff experts

We look forward to collaborating with Academy leaders and expanding this project in to Maths/Numeracy in 2024.



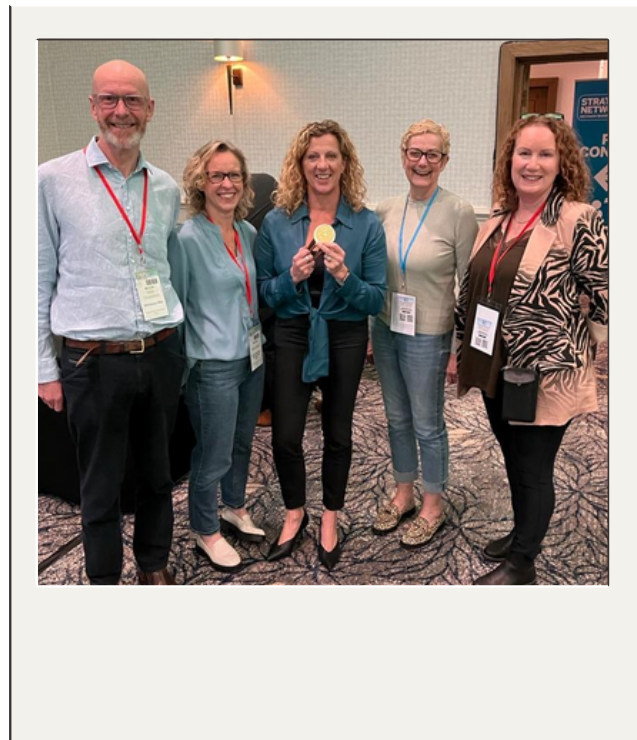
MAT Strategy Forum

In November this term, our very own Julian Scholefield, Karen Hayes, Sarah Gilraine and Kerry Ollett were guest speakers at the MAT Strategy Forum in Cheshire. The focus of the three day conference was to bring Leaders from across the education sector together to share ideas, collaborate and network on topics such as:

- What can we do to Support SEND?
- Let's go Zero - Making a Sustainable Difference
- Wellbeing Culture - Are we Doing Enough?
- The Effective Practice of Alternative Provisions

The workshop for Julian and Karen focused on Alternative Provision and they shared some key insights on:

- What AP and mainstream schools can do to prevent suspensions and exclusions
- How schools, trusts and local authorities can work together to commission high quality provisions
- Engaging with families to build trust in services and meet expectations
- Meeting the needs of pupils with SEND placed in AP
- Preparing vulnerable young people for their transition into adulthood



Sarah and Kerry shared details on how Esteem has and is Developing Expertise - Finding the Capacity to Include Everyone in School Improvement with a focus on:

- How to identify and retain talented staff
- Developing deep expertise in not just SEND provision - specialist and mainstream
- How this approach will result in real value for money

Not to be outdone, delegates also had the opportunity to listen to a keynote speech from Sally Gunnell - OBE - former European, World and Olympic Champion on Driving Resilience and Sustaining Performance.

The conference was a great opportunity for Esteem to share the work we do on a day-to-day basis on a national level whilst also listening and learning from others.

School Improvement Outreach & External Collaboration term 1

We continue to work with a number of MATs, Academies and Schools across the region and beyond. Some of these include:

- Bracken Hill, Kirkby
- Aspire Academy, Worcester
- Holly House, Chesterfield
- Victoria Community School, Burton
- Brackenfield Special School, Long Eaton
- The Bridge, Lichfield
- English Martyrs and St Joseph's, Saint Ralph Sherwin
- Birkett House, Leicester



Careers and Enterprise

From September 2023, the Trust is now working in formal partnership with the Careers & Enterprise Company as part of a Community of Improvement (COI). The benefits of this include having a Trust Leader for Careers and clear links to training, resources and funding that can be accessed by our Academy Careers Leads.

Stanton Vale and Fountains High have already signed up to be part of the COI and are part of the wave 1 pilot to review Careers in Special Settings due to the challenges we face to ensure our young people have access to work related learning opportunities. We also have access to a national data base and dashboard which also evaluates the success of our careers programme with all Academies now being on Compass+. This all links to our Beyond Esteem approach and is in sync with national priorities.

There is really interesting reflections from the CDI and their response to the education select committee inquiry in to careers. DfE have set out 3 key priorities too. Link below.

[David-Morgan.pdf \(talentinocareers.co.uk\)](#)

Also from CEC it includes their strategic shift and the new themes including the Auditing of these. Also links to the Ofsted Thematic review. Link below.

[Nicola-Hall.pdf \(talentinocareers.co.uk\)](#)

Please take a look at the links above if you are a careers lead in school and we look forward to meeting about this in the new term.



Ofsted Updates

During term 1, Ofsted have put on a number of online seminars led by existing inspectors with the premise of providing Academy Leaders with the details and narrative on specific themes which are included in the Ofsted Framework Handbook. Many Academy Leaders attended these sessions and one such training event was themed around attendance. The link below was a resource shared at the end of the session, which if you were unable to attend and you lead on attendance in school, you may find this incredibly useful as it is a one-stop-shop for guidance on how to monitor and improve attendance in schools.

https://linktr.ee/ofstedattendance?utm_source=linktree_profile_share

Curriculum Subject Development

Since April 2021, a series of reviews have been completed by Ofsted looking at the research evidence currently available about different curriculum subjects. The aim is that the reviews will support and inform those leading the thinking on subject education in schools. Many Leaders across the Trust have used these as reference points when planning the curriculum however, many colleagues have reported not knowing these reviews existed. The subjects currently offered include:

- Science
- Music
- Geography
- History
- PE
- Maths

There are also a number of research reviews in to Art & Design, English, Computing, PE, History, Music, Geography, Languages, RE and Science. Please see the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/curriculum-research-reviews>

Professional Learning and Development

Research Corner...

Andrew Maddox – FHS



The title of my research fellowship project was, “Experiential learning strategies and their impact on engagement in students with severe learning difficulties.” I chose this as this was an area of interest for myself having created an SLD specific cohort within my school and looking to create and develop an SLD specific curriculum. When conducting a literature review I also discovered a lack of research in this area, particularly linking the two ideas together which encouraged me to pursue this.

For this action research project, I first base-lined a sample of KS3 SLD students within the school looking specifically at their engagement when not using experiential learning. I then used Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model to plan, delivery and assess students in English over 3 cycles spaced over the summer term. For each lesson within the cycle, I assessed the student’s engagement at specific points to see what their engagement was using criteria I had created. I then collated and analysed the data to see if using the experiential learning model had had any effect.

When analysing the data over the three cycles, I discovered that overall engagement seemed to have increased when using the experiential learning model by a fairly significant amount based on the baseline taken before the project began. This was limited to one class within the school however and therefore was not a conclusive result. The next steps for the project would be to increase the sample size and look at different cohorts of students in different key stages across a range of schools to see if the data shows an increase in engagement in all or most cases.

I feel that this project has been a beneficial one for myself and my practise. Going forward I will use what I have learned here about experiential learning to plan and develop my lesson plans, as well as the curriculum as a whole, to ensure that I am giving SLD students the best education possible.

Professional Learning

The Professional Learning Offer – PLO is underway once again and so far this year we have hosted two groups of the Outstanding Leaders cohort. These are:

- Leading Learning, Developing Expertise (middle and subject leaders) – 16 participants
- Leading People, Driving Change (aspirant & developing senior leaders) – 11 participants

Both cohorts have had two face-to-face sessions in the Autumn term and the sessions are also being supported by the Expert Team and Targeted Specialists who are mentoring the colleagues in each group.

Our vision over two years ago was to support the accreditation of our training pathways. So, in good news, the PLO now has recognition from the CPD certification service and the materials for both cohorts are undergoing accreditation. Participants will therefore accrue accreditation for prior learning credits on completion of the modules.

In other news...

- The virtual CPD calendar continues to take place on a number of Tuesdays through the year from 4 to 5 pm. This is to support school level training to assist staff induction and the development of staff awareness and expertise in priority areas, including pedagogical expertise and need based practises.
- And finally, we continue to work in close partnership with Nottingham Trent University with the next step being Trust Academies hosting placements for students from the University.

If you would like to share any news articles, Teaching and Learning tips, advice around Leadership pedagogy or good news stories across the Trust, please contact mlucas@esteemmat.co.uk



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