

A word from our CEO...

As we approach the Easter break, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible efforts and achievements across Esteem MAT this term.

Spring is a season of renewal, growth, and fresh opportunities—much like the journey our schools, staff, and students continue to take together.

This term has been marked by dedication, resilience, and inspiring stories from across our academies. From innovative learning experiences to meaningful community engagement and personal successes, there is so much to celebrate. In this newsletter, you'll find highlights of the fantastic work happening across our schools, as well as updates on key initiatives and upcoming opportunities.

Thank you all for your continued hard work and commitment to our shared vision. Your efforts make a real and lasting difference in the lives of our students. I hope you are able to take some time over the break to rest, recharge, and enjoy time with loved ones.

Wishing you a peaceful and enjoyable Easter.

Warm regards

Julian Scholefield - CEO



Stanton Vale Receive Glowing Ofsted Report

The way in which Stanton Vale School in Long Eaton supports pupils' personal development has been rated as Outstanding by Ofsted. The school was also judged as Good in all other areas – including the quality of education and behaviour, with staff described as kind, compassionate and highly skilled.

But the inspector singled out for praise the specific attention given to meeting pupils' individual needs.

The report, published this week, said: "Pupils receive an exceptional personal development curriculum. They are able to explore the world around them both in school and out in the wider community. Carefully planned experiences enrich their lives such as visits from the emergency services, trips to the Sea Life Centre and an adaptive aquarium experience."

Head teacher Emma Kehoe said she was delighted the report reflected the caring, aspirational and communicative approach of the school. "Stanton Vale is an amazing school where everyone is celebrated as an individual. I am proud of all the pupils and of course my colleagues for their hard work and achievements and this is reflected in the report.

"In particular, I'm proud that the communication was described as the golden thread running through the school, and the collaborative approach we take with pupils, parents, carers and external agencies was recognised."

Inspectors also said the school, which looks after pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe and moderate learning difficulties, autism and a range of other Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) was happy, welcoming and inclusive, where pupils were treated with humanity, dignity and respect.



WORLD BOOK DAY

World Book Day was a fantastic celebration across Esteem MAT, with our schools coming together to share the joy of reading and storytelling. From creative costumes to engaging activities, students and staff embraced the magic of books in so many wonderful ways.

Fountains High School took part in the sponsored "Ready, Steady, Read" and "Ready, Steady, Listen" challenge, which ran throughout the week. Students across the school took part by setting themselves reading goals or listening to stories if they were unable to read. Thanks to their incredible efforts, FHS raised an impressive £729 through sponsorships. Osborne Books generously matched their efforts with additional book donations, bringing the total to £1,164 worth of books for the school.

Esteem Valley Academy premiered their virtual Bedtime Stories series, posting a story a day in the week leading up to World Book Day.

Pupils at Esteem South Academy took the day as a great opportunity to begin writing their very own children's story book!

Thank you to everyone who participated and made this World Book Day one to remember!



Autism Accreditation Specialist Award Achieved

We're proud to announce that Holbrook School for Autism has been awarded the Autism Accreditation Specialist Award by the National Autistic Society. The award recognises our excellent practice across key areas:

Communication: Tailored support helps students communicate effectively using visuals, symbols, and individualised resources. The assessors particularly praised our innovative student panel and the thoughtful use of preferred communication methods.

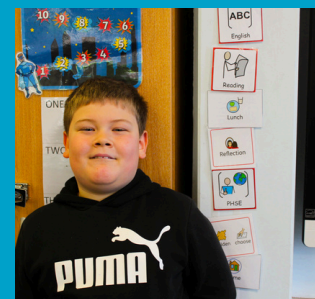
Functional Skills: Clear structures, consistent routines, and visual aids support students independence. The assessors highlighted how our students successfully develop skills through community experiences and adapted tasks.

Sensory Support: Thoughtful sensory experiences, including Forest School and sensory-based learning activities, significantly enhance student engagement and emotional regulation.

Emotional Wellbeing: Students benefit from a nurturing environment with proactive emotional regulation strategies and personalised support. Assessors noted the calm, respectful, and caring atmosphere across the school.

Student feedback was extremely positive, reflecting the impact of our dedicated, autism-specific approaches.

Holbrook are delighted by this recognition and remain committed to further developing their provision to meet their students needs.



News from Elmsleigh Infant & Nursery School

Elmsleigh are proud to celebrate their Arts Leader, Natalie Lyons' achievement of the Silver Artsmark Award! Her dedication and creativity has enriched the school's arts provision, providing exciting opportunities for all students. This award recognises her hard work and passion for promoting the arts throughout the school community.

The Year 2 residential trip to Standon Bowers was a fantastic adventure, fostering teamwork and resilience. Pupils tackled bouldering challenges, built dens, and navigated a blindfold walk, enhancing communication and trust. Evenings around the campfire encouraged storytelling and friendship. The trip provided valuable learning experiences in a fun and supportive setting. We are extremely grateful to the staff for giving up their time overnight to support this wonderful enrichment opportunity.

The Year 2 children who did not attend the residential enjoyed an exciting day of bushcraft activities at school. An external company led sessions on den building, fire making, and cooking over a campfire, including making hot chocolate. The children had a fantastic time, and we look forward to welcoming the bushcraft company back in the summer term.

**Artsmark
Silver Award**
Awarded by Arts
Council England





Visit from Member of Parliament

Jacob Collier (MP for Burton & Uttoxeter) recently visited Fountains Primary and High School to talk to School Councils about what it was like to be a Leader in Parliament. The visits included Q&A sessions, with questions such as 'When is he going to sort the pot holes in Burton?' and 'Did he know how to invent a triple bunk bed'? He was also excited to hear about the impact School Councils at Primary and High have, such as a pupil request to improve access for him around school and the subsequent fitting of an automatic door supporting independent access for all.



Eco Committee Project

Fountains Primary's Eco Committee recently learnt the importance of community responsibility and went out litter picking around Stretton. They managed to fill 4 black bin bags of rubbish in 30 minutes, immediately seeing the impact that they had and understood the worth of looking after our environment and protecting areas for everyone, including our wildlife.

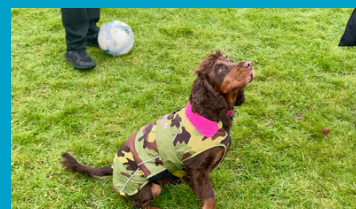


School Improvements

This term Fountains Primary have had some more school improvements and these improvements have been linked to the schools Health & Safety plans. Firstly, (funded by the Esteem MAT) they have had magnetic locks put onto all of the outdoor play areas. This has meant that 'Caribbean locks' are no longer used and in the case of a fire all internal fences and gates will be released. As well as this the school council recently bought up that pupils, who were not ambulant, could not move from the external buildings into the main building (to take the dinner register or go out to play after lunch) independently, due to the exit door not being a 'push and release door'. Therefore, the health and Safety committee decided that this needed to be a priority and this has now been fitted to the great delight of some of the pupils.



January kicked off with our Big School's Bird Watch, where our Academies counted birds on their school grounds and submitted the data to the RSPB national count. Staff also joined in from home with the Big Garden Bird Watch. Thanks to everyone who took part—your efforts help the RSPB understand bird populations across the UK.



We got great support from Jo Pettifer at Let's Go Zero. She joined our Climate Task Force Meeting in February to help our team create their Climate Action Plans, most of which are now done. She also spoke at the Executive Team Meeting, giving Headteachers and Central staff tips on how to support their Sustainability leads in schools.



Alfie at Stanton Vale School organised a tree planting morning, with help from the Environment Agency and Charlotte Brown and Chloe Taylor from the Central team. Students planted trees and added personalized tags they designed. Over 240 trees were planted, donated by the woodland trust, and supported by the Environment Agency, along with 240 tree spirals donated by Lakeside Garden Centre. Big thanks to Alfie Costello for organising the event and to the central team members who came to plant a tree or tag one in their forest school.



Lastly, a huge thank you to everyone who helped with our sustainability video. Without your support and allowing Emily Baldwin and Jazmin Bains to film at the schools, we couldn't have made it happen.

World of Work (WOW) Week at Peak School

Peak School have been learning all about the world of work in their first ever WOW Week! Throughout the week, pupils enjoyed a range of activities from dressing up in emergency service uniforms to helping the army build communication towers. Bowfell class visited Tunstead Quarry, exploring the massive front loader and dumper trucks. Scafell class went to Buxton Opera House and learnt about jobs in the theatre and Everest class visited Guilliver's Kingdom to learn about supported internships by Project Search. We even had a visit from a fire engine where pupils got to look at the engine and sound the siren. The sessions aimed to enhance learning about 'What is a Job?', enabling pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the world of work.



Esteem North's Outdoor Adventures

Havenswood is a specialist provision providing woodland outdoor adventure for everyone. The Esteem North Primary children have been visiting weekly to experience learning in the great outdoors. We have developed team building, crafts, cooking and climbing. We have experienced the forest through the winter and into spring and watched how it has changed. Along the way we have increased our confidence by climbing higher. The zip line has been a challenge, but we can now use it confidently and independently all the way to the top. We have helped and watched the Havenswood team develop the site further by making tractors and shelters. Part of the experience is to use tools safely and we have chopped wood and used the fire pit to make delicious snacks. The experience has been inspiring developing resilience, perseverance, communication and cooperation and has allowed all children access to the natural world where they can explore and develop their curiosity.



Staying Active at Esteem North

Esteem North Primary children have been working with Chesterfield Shape Learning Partnership to place sport and physical activity at the heart of our schools and communities to provide more young people with the opportunity to develop their confidence, competence and motivation towards a lifelong relationship with a healthy, active lifestyle. We have had expert coaches teaching the staff and children skills to deliver a wide range of sports. So far we have experienced boxing, golf and archery and are looking forward to widening our experiences further. We work on different skills for each sport throughout the half term so we can become more experienced and confident.



The Esteem North Primary children have been accessing Bikeability. This is a cycle training programme that teaches children practical skills and gives them the understanding and expertise they need to ride their bikes on the road. Bikeability is based on the National Standard for Cycle Training and seeks to embed four core functions into rider behaviour: Observation; positioning; communication and priorities. So far we have completed the first level:

- Level 1 takes place in a traffic free environment; focusing on preparing the rider through appropriate choice of clothing, troubleshooting the bike, and is then followed by basic bicycle control skills, including starting, stopping, pedalling, negotiating space and signalling.

This designed to have a long term positive impact on family cycling. The practical skills learnt, and the fun that is had should encourage children continue to cycle with their parents, where children can pass on all the great hints and tips learnt and carry on cycling as a lifestyle as they grow older, using the bicycle for leisure, commuting or utility as a sustainable and convenient way for getting around.

Our children really enjoyed practicing and became more confident and controlled riding the bikes. Here is the link for more biking opportunities <https://bikeability.org.uk/>

A Magical Trip to The Lion King Live

On the 12th of February, Mrs. Arrowsmith and Mr. Rainbird-Hitchins accompanied seven pupils from the Aspire Academy to the iconic Lyceum Theatre in London for a magical performance of The Lion King Live. The trip was not only an opportunity to enjoy a world-renowned show, but also an educational experience designed to deepen the pupils' understanding of theatrical makeup and how it helps to bring characters to life on stage.

The pupils were captivated by the vibrant costumes, impressive puppetry, and, of course, the stunning makeup that transformed the actors into the beloved characters of the Savanna. This hands-on exploration of how makeup is used to emphasize a character's personality and story arc left the students inspired and filled with excitement.

For many of the girls, this was their first-ever visit to London, making the day even more special. From the grandeur of the Lyceum Theatre to the bustling energy of the city, it was an unforgettable experience that combined education, culture, and a little bit of magic.



Stanton Vale Becomes a Behaviour Hubs Core Partner School

We are delighted to share the fantastic news that Stanton Vale School has successfully graduated from the Behaviour Hubs programme as a Core Partner school!

This achievement marks a significant milestone in their commitment to fostering positive behavioural practices and supporting the wider education community.

In order to achieve this, Stanton Vale has worked collaboratively with a Behaviour Hubs Lead School, developed and launched new approaches to behaviour, and attended training led by behaviour advisors.

As part of this success, they will receive a grant of £3,000, which will further support their ongoing initiatives to enhance behaviour strategies within our school.

Congratulations - This graduation is a testament to the dedication of the Stanton Vale staff and the commitment of our entire Trust community to fostering a positive and inclusive environment for all.



Hands-On Learning at Bransford Court Farm

Every week, Mr. Knowles and his group of pupil's head to Bransford Court Farm to get stuck into a variety of farm-related tasks. From path laying and fence repairing to cultivating the land, there's always something new to learn and do. This hands-on experience not only teaches valuable practical skills but also fosters a strong connection to the environment and the community.

Recently, the group took part in a special project to support the Woodland Trust's "Everyone Plant a Tree" campaign, which aims to plant millions of trees across the UK to help reach the 2050 carbon net-zero target. The boys were involved in planting hundreds of trees, contributing to this vital cause and making a real difference in the fight against climate change. It was inspiring to see the team working together to help create a greener future.

Farmer Phil and his team are constantly coming up with new projects and adventures for the group, ensuring that each week brings a fresh learning opportunity. As part of our school's sustainability partnership, there are many more exciting initiatives on the horizon, and we're thrilled to see how the students continue to make an impact on the farm and the environment. Stay tuned for more updates on their incredible work!



Esteem MAT ICT Service Updates

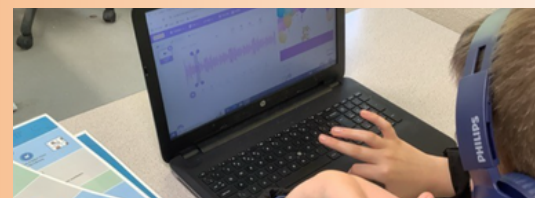
Welcome to The Aspire Academy who have now adopted support from the Esteem ICT service. The team have now taken over all responsibility for ICT infrastructure and day to day support. This will result in a real cost saving for the academy allowing them to re-invest in modern ICT equipment to further enhance the learning opportunities for students.



The Aspire Academy is in Worcester, so to minimise the need for onsite support we have purchased Splashtop Business to allow the ICT team to remotely connect to any device, anywhere! This is already proving a real success, as it not only allows for quicker resolutions for staff but also reduces the need for onsite visits which is not only a time and cost saving for the trust but also helps reduce our carbon footprint. If you have raised a Parago ticket, please ensure you check back for an update from the ICT team and maybe Splashtop can help save your day too.

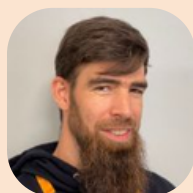


During the half term the ICT team were working hard to ensure that Bennerley Fields could migrate from an onsite server for data storage to Microsoft Teams. This enables staff to access their documents anywhere if they are connected to the internet. Staff are using Microsoft Teams rather than SharePoint to ensure validity of data and escape the peril of sync issues. Staff have adopted this new way of working and are starting to see the benefits that this way of working brings. This is moving the trust closer to our goals of removing servers from sites and making better use of cloud technologies.



Speaking of cloud technologies, it has been agreed at the last trust board meeting to move ahead with a proposal for a single tenancy. This will ultimately allow everyone in the trust to be able to communicate more effectively, share knowledge and resources and enable the ICT team to have a centralised management portal for security, audit and overall management. This aligns with the trusts vision and mission for 'Stronger Together'. We want to offer an environment where we can take advantage of cloud technologies to ensure the best possible outcomes for staff and students, whilst allowing academies to retain their identity. This is a very exciting time to be working in the ICT team as this will bring real benefits to everyone throughout the trust.

And finally, Derby Pride Academy have launched a new website. This has been a real collaborative effort between the ICT team, Emily Baldwin and staff at Derby Pride to bring the new site to life. You can check out the new site here [Derby Pride Academy](#) | [Determination Pride Ambition](#)



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Fountains High School Launches Student Support Team to Promote Wellbeing

Key Stage 4 students at Fountains High School have successfully completed their Wellbeing Ambassador training, marking the official launch of the Student Support Team (SST). This new initiative, developed during GRIT lessons, is designed to promote positive wellbeing and provide peer support across the school.

The training program, delivered in collaboration with the Mental Health Support Team, began on Monday and guided students through their roles as Wellbeing Ambassadors. As part of the process, they worked together to create the team motto: "Strengthening and growing together for healthy, happy minds." This motto reflects their commitment to fostering a positive and supportive school environment.

Throughout the week, students took part in interactive sessions focused on key areas of wellbeing. One session emphasized the importance of connection and how building meaningful relationships can improve mental health. Activities were designed to strengthen teamwork skills, helping students prepare for their role in supporting their peers.

Now fully trained, the SST has already scheduled its first official meeting, where members will begin putting their ideas into action. Their goal is to introduce new initiatives and strategies that promote wellbeing for all students at Fountains High School.

A big well done to all involved in this exciting project. The SST will play an important role in creating a caring and inclusive environment, and we look forward to seeing the positive impact they will have on the school community.



Exciting Progress on New Sports Hall at Fountains High School

We are delighted to share an exciting update on the construction of Fountains High School's new sports hall. The steel frames are now officially in place, marking a major milestone in the development of this fantastic facility.

Once completed, the sports hall will provide a modern and spacious environment for students to participate in a variety of sports, training sessions, and physical activities. This new space will support our commitment to promoting health, fitness, and teamwork, offering students more opportunities to engage in both curriculum-based and extracurricular sports.

To capture the progress so far, we have included photos showcasing the transformation of the site. It's incredible to see how quickly the project is taking shape, and we can't wait to watch it continue to develop in the coming months.

We will keep you updated on further developments as we move closer to the completion of this exciting addition to the school. Thank you for your continued support as we work towards creating an inspiring and dynamic space for our students to enjoy.



Esteem MAT HR Team Updates

As a team, HR have been taking some big strides in their operation, with the implementation of My New Term, the upcoming introduction of Habitude and a new HR system on the horizon, along with tailoring the right level of support across the trust.

“There have been some changes to the HR team recently and I thought it would be nice to take this opportunity for some introductions...”



Chloe Taylor, HR Business Partner –
ctaylor@esteemmat.co.uk

HR Team Leader.
HR Strategy development including Wellbeing and EDI
Policy Development.
Development of HR training and CPD.
Ongoing Project work to ensure the HR operations function is fit for purpose.
Partnering with Headteachers and SBMs to ensure the HR function within the schools is sound.

Toby Wing, HR Advisor –
twing@esteemmat.co.uk

HR Advisory Support for : Fountains High School, Fountains Primary School, Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School, Esteem South Academy, Stanton Vale School, Peak School & Esteem North Academy.
Specialisms – Recruitment and Wellbeing



Debra Sibley, HR Advisor –
dsibley@esteemmat.co.uk

HR Advisory Support for: St Clare's School, Derby Pride Academy, Esteem Valley Academy, Bennerley Fields School, Holbrook School for Autism, Bracken Hill School and The Aspire Academy.
Specialisms - EDI and Training & Development



Kaya Dhami, Junior HR Advisor –
kdhami@esteemmat.co.uk

HR Advisory Support for: Central Team
Compliance and Administration Support – Compliance of HR docs, SCR, systems support, maintenance of Westfield health, apprentice levy and production of contracts.
Ongoing project support to ensure an improved employee experience.



The Aspire Academy Win Gold in Kickboxing Tournament

On Sunday, 9th February, three talented pupils from the Aspire Academy had the incredible opportunity to compete in a kickboxing tournament at The Metrodome Arena in Barnsley. Not only did they represent themselves, but they also proudly represented the school community at the World Championship Organisation (WKO) British Open Championships 2024.

The pupils showcased the skills they have been diligently developing with Michelle from White Lotus, applying their hard work and training in a competitive setting. The day was filled with determination, discipline, and a true display of sportsmanship. The outcome was certainly a source of pride for everyone involved, with one pupil achieving an outstanding result by being confirmed as a Gold Medal Winner!

Although it was a long and intense day, the atmosphere was filled with joy and team spirit. The sense of camaraderie and pride in the achievements of the pupils was palpable, making it an unforgettable experience for them and for all who supported them. Congratulations – we are incredibly proud of your dedication and success!