

# LINK ACADEMY TRUST

SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER



As usual we had a very productive and exciting Spring Term in all our Academies and across the Trust- the final section of this newsletter celebrates all the activities that the children have experienced in our nine schools, here is the Trust news

FROM NICKY DUNFORD CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## **Woodleigh Federation joined The Link Academy on 1st March, making our Multi-Academy Trust nine schools.**

After a lot of 'hold-ups' and bureaucracy around the General Election back in the summer we were able to welcome the three Woodleigh Schools into the Link MAT, although it feels like they have been part of the team for some time now!

As the 1st March saw most of our schools shut due to the snowy weather there was very little opportunity to mark the occasion, however the schools are all beginning to make the most of and take part in training across the MAT just as a starter.

As part of the Trust the schools are now identifying their needs and we are making sure we fulfil these needs. Heads of School are having more time to focus on leading their schools, we are extending the levels of staffing where we can, supporting with what the Improvement and Inclusion Hub has to offer (see Bearnas website, where the IIH explains these courses) and offering more training opportunities for all staff as a starting point.

We will be looking at achieving further funding for Woodleigh schools too, to enable them to really give the children the very best learning experiences we can.

## **MAT Development and Improvement Fund over £70,000 awarded!**

We were successful in our application for a high level funding grant to enable the Improvement and Inclusion Hub which runs from Bearnas to be even more successful in supporting all children across the Trust, enabling them to be confident and overcome barriers to their learning.

Kath Simpson's time will be expanded to support schools, pupils and families even more and Alice Eeles (SEND expert) will join her in September to extend the support for special needs pupils, including our gifted and talented pupils. Children that have a disadvantaged background will be further supported and Heads of School will be able to use the extra staffing hours to ensure all children are progressing.

A further element of the bid will be used to develop a 'replica' Hub for the Woodleigh Schools where it is not viable for them to be part of the current Central Business structure.

We are very excited about this injection of over £70,000+ and will ensure it has a huge impact on the provision we offer for our children.

## Condition Improvement Fund Successes!

As usual we applied for a number of projects to improve the condition of our school buildings again this year and clearly we are getting better at doing so, as 3 bids were successful! It was also clear that, following the snow and subsequent burst pipes and boiler failures it was pretty desperate that we were successful.

1. Bearnese have been awarded £115,995 to replace boilers & heating distribution, together with obsolete lighting throughout the main school but not the School Hall. It will be brilliant that we don't have to come into school with our fingers crossed that the heating has fired up any more!
2. Harbertonford have been successful in achieving £210,836 to replace the school boiler and heating distribution system, replacing the hot & cold water services where they run within the floor and therefore removing the hall flooring and replacing it. Alongside this obsolete lighting will be replaced. It will make such a difference to Harbertonford!
3. Stoke Gabriel were successful again this year, with a bid of £57,509 which is an additional bid to last year's upgrade of the heating (£165K); this enables us to replace all the windows in the school, that will be a further improvement as the school moves from strength to strength.

Overall therefore we have achieved nearly £385,000 worth of improvements this year!

## A further ambitious project to build a Mezzanine Floor in the Sports Hall at Bearnese

We were not successful with the CIF bid for the project to build a Mezzanine Floor in the Sports Hall at Bearnese, which would give us the classroom space we so desperately need at Bearnese, so we have a working party now focussed on achieving this. Yvonne Short, Chair of the Local Governing Body arranged for Anne Marie Morris, the local MP to visit on the last day of term and she is now backing our appeal for the project to go ahead. Fingers crossed this helps us to gain the large sum of money needed for this project to go ahead.

## Directors Away Day

Every term the Directors meet with the Heads of School, Trust Business Manager, CEO, EP and representatives from the Local Governing Bodies to discuss the important issues that we need to focus on in the future. This term's meeting focussed to a large extent on the needs of our most vulnerable pupils and how we currently address these. This included the work that Kath is doing as leader of the Improvement and Inclusion Hub as we will be expanding the reach of this facility to support the Heads of School in delivering the most appropriate support we can for these children.

We also looked at the areas the MAT Review which is happening in the Summer Term will focus on and felt that we have a very positive picture to present.

## Career and Professional Development across the Trust

Heads of Schools have continued to meet for sessions of Professional Training, during the summer term this covered Effective Financial Management and more recently Budget Planning alongside School Improvement, this programme has ensured Leadership is developing consistency across our Trust; it also gives the opportunity for HoS to network with each other. Newly Qualified teachers and Early Career Teachers continue to meet and develop their skills within the Trust, with some teachers from other schools joining us.

The main Maths focus is now becoming embedded with the help of All Saints Teaching School Alliance continuing to coach and mentor staff in precision and incremental teaching and learning; this is having a significant impact on pupil's progress.

Other training, including the Lead Learners group and our Subject Leaders groups are also ensuring our practice continues to develop and grow as these teachers share expertise and receive expert support. Next year we will have a specifically designed course to ensure our valued Teaching Assistants are also receiving training to help them improve their skills and understanding, which will in turn mean they help children to progress even more successfully.

## Music Concert at Exeter's Northcott Theatre

Woodleigh Schools took part in a Music concert involving all the schools of Crediton Learning Community in the Spring term. It was amazing! Well done to all those children that took part and a massive thank you to the staff that must have spent hours of time rehearsing with the children. It was brilliant!

How about a Link Academy Concert of the same quality next year?!



## News from the Individual Academies- now nine of us.

Welcome Cheriton Bishop, Tedburn St Mary and Yeoford, so in alphabetical order, here's what we have been doing:

### **Bearnes Primary School**

The spring term was absolutely packed with memorable experiences at Bearnes Primary School. Isambard Kingdom Brunel himself visited the Key Stage Two classes to kick off a project on railways. Year five and six then made a railway trip to Dawlish to discover the attractions that brought Victorian tourists to our region in droves.

Meanwhile, Reception found that their teddy bear's picnic had been ruined by the elements and set about investigating waterproof materials! Ms Free, our year 1 and 2 teacher, organised a truly inspiring Sport Relief charity day which saw children, teachers and parents aerobically dancing on the playground and really working up a sweat! Between the regular academy competitive sporting events and the hour long swimming coaching some of our children have been doing this term, we must have the healthiest students in Devon! They will certainly need to be on top form now that we have decided on the amazing playground upgrades we will invest some of our sports grant funding in this year! Ms Graves provided a wonderful World Book Day and children's artefacts from the special homework challenges leading up to the event now proudly adorn our library (and are wowing visitors to the school). Several of our students have been attending therapeutic forest school sessions run by the Inclusion Hub and have reported back on what a wonderful experience it has been. The Avenue Church was the venue for the children's Easter assembly, where a song performed by our adorable Chestnut class (with Mrs Fitton accompanying them on her guitar) stole the show! I know that Reverend Gill was very impressed by the children's Easter quiz responses and the angelic behaviour of our children too! The Easter Bonnet Fashion Show ended the term with a bang; the children used materials donated by one of our families to create eggstravagant designs and a winner from each class was awarded a basket of Easter goodies! Our local MP visited the school on the very last day of term to see how she could help us to improve our learning spaces now that the school is more popular than ever.

The outside of the school hall is now looking fresh thanks to a donation of scaffolding from another of our wonderful families allowing us to reach the whole facade.

What an exciting term!



### **Cheriton Bishop Primary School**

We have had a really busy term at Cheriton Bishop! Years 3 and 4 have been learning about The Romans. They visited Exeter museum to find out about life long ago and even ventured down the secret tunnels which run under the main shopping streets of Exeter. Class 2 joined this trip as their topic was 'Down Under' and they enjoyed being 'down under' Exeter too! After half term, Class 2 also visited Plymouth Aquarium to find out about sea life 'down under'. Great topic work! Forest school began running in January, currently Years 5, 4 and 3 have had their turns. The children have loved this time and have made shelters and fires and enjoyed outdoor cooking.



Years 1 and 2 visited QE to take part in a multi-skills tournament with the other Crediton Schools. The QE students helped to create a very well organised event with every child taking part, well done all. The whole school, once again, took part in The Big School's Bird Watch. The children made bird feeders and then spent time outdoors bird spotting with different degrees of accuracy!

It was certainly enjoyed by all. We also celebrated book week and the children and staff came dressed as their favourite book character and took part in lots of book competitions. Year 5 and Year 6 have been extremely busy! They took part in a music concert in The Great Hall at the Northcott Theatre. They performed their songs in front of several hundred spectators - very impressive. Children in Year 5 and 6 also spent a week on residential at Grenville House in Brixham. In addition to climbing, abseiling, orienteering and paddling, they also had to make beds, wash up and make sandwiches. A plethora of new skills! Parents and friends were invited in for a Big Breakfast which was served by some of our older children and enjoyed by all. We also had our Easter assembly in the church which was jam packed! A fabulous end to a fabulous term!

### **Diptford CofE Primary School**

We have yet another busy term with lots of things going on. We said a sad goodbye to Mrs Neil who left us an amazing present-she has sponsored a horse at the mare and Foal Sanctuary where she now works as their Education Officer- we can't wait to visit him! We said hello to Mrs Lethbridge who is now leading both Diptford and Harbertonford- so we are gaining from the building links between our schools.

Our events and activities include:

'Open the Book' assemblies and Roots and Fruits sessions with Y5/6, really enriching our learning experiences

Parents evening

Year 3/4 Badminton, after some excellent coaching- great fun!

Y5/6 athletics where our children did really well- we are always so proud of how pupils in our schools acquit themselves out in the community Little Dippers went to visit the residents of Bascombe Court Nursing Home, I think everyone had great fun!

Children went to see KEVICC production of The Wizard of Oz, which was a super production and a real experience for our children

Y1/2 & 5/6 had fire safety talks

We reviewed our school values, involving the children and their opinions, their insights were exceptional and help to ensure our school reflects the ethos that makes our school such a good place to learn in!

Finally we all shared a lovely Easter service and enjoyed the snow! When we were finally able to get into school!



### **Harbertonford CofE Primary School**

Another very busy term for everyone at Harbertonford! We have taken part in many sporting events, including: KEVICC football, gymnastics, cross country, KS1 multi-sports and cycle cross- so we now all amazingly fit and great at team working! The Premier Sport led activities have also added to our sporting repertoire, as we have taken part in climbing and archery. We have also had some exciting Parkour taster sessions followed by a new Parkour club in school. As always we think of others and try to support charities so we had a Sports Relief bake sale, well done to all that helped to raise funds- every little helps in causes such as these. Y3/4 have had their big trips and visits this term including: a visit to Palmers dam, a visit to River Dart Country Park and a visitor from a South West Water representative to explain all about water and how it arrives in our homes, all of these extra experiences not only make learning much more fun, it also deepens our understanding of the topic we are focussing on our Early Years children have been really busy too, they had an exciting bike and picnic afternoon. They also experienced a very colourful Chinese New Year day which the whole school enjoyed. Our wonderful, hard-working PTFA set up a great 'winter disco' for the children- sometimes it is brilliant to just have fun with our friends (and raise funds of course)! We have focussed on a review of our values, involving the children and this is ongoing as it is so important that together we shape the way our school operates and our ethos. We ended the term with a lovely Easter Service followed by tea and cake at school- a fitting peaceful end to a very busy term. Thank you to everyone that supports us!



## Hennock Primary School

Hennock has had a very busy and exciting Spring Term, which culminated in a fantastic Easter Day that included pupils, parents and the whole of Hennock village. The children attended a church service in the morning and invited local members of the community (who organised a fun egg hunt for them) and displayed their Easter gardens for members of the congregation to enjoy over the Easter period. Once back at school our wonderful parents had organised a fun filled day of feeding lambs and baby bunnies, creating Easter crosses and bonnets, egg and Easter crafts and making/cooking hot cross buns in our own pizza oven. It really was an incredible day to end the term. We have had a successful term sports wise, coming second in our recent Inter-sport Dodge ball tournament, having Taekwondo sessions at school and our KS1 swimming sessions finishing in style with an Olympic themed experience day run by our Sport teacher Tim Flint.

Our School Council theme this year has been 'Making a Difference' and they have continued to do this with extraordinary vision and self-management. They are currently in the process of organising a whole school tree plant on local land as they are all very aware of the impact trees have on our environment and feel that if they plant one each this will indeed, make a difference to our planet. Even the smallest members of our school are taking part in a sponsored Muddy Puddle Walk to help make a difference to other children's lives with our Pre-school Leader Gemma Houghton.



I am very proud of them and how they care about the world that we live in. Here's hoping for some sun to aid our outdoor learning for the coming term!

## Landscape CofE Primary School

A busy term with many 5 star experiences! As part of our continuing commitment to our 5 Star Pledge, Classes 1 and 2 enjoyed a fabulous visit to the Theatre Royal Plymouth to see a performance of The Enormous Turnip ~ and it really was enormous!

They met the characters and puppets after the show and waved them goodbye in their turnip caravan! Children have had a variety of opportunities to represent the school in Sport this term: they have been able to take part in, cross country running, gymnastics, volley ball, the Central Venue football league, a Dodgeball tournament and dance ~ the dance club performed at South Dartmoor's Body language event. It has been a really successful term for the Eco Committee, who were awarded a bronze award by Eco Schools. The recent work that Miss Pooler and C4 have been doing on the REEL project (Renewable Energy Experiential Learning) will contribute towards our quest to achieve the Silver award; which we hope to gain by the end of this academic year.



Science week culminated in a Space Science Day. The children had an exciting day of exploration and discovery with Space-themed activities across the school. They ventured into the Space Odyssey dome for a planetarium experience and got super sticky making galaxy slime! They became rocket scientists investigating how fuel and temperature affect self-propelling bottle rockets and they created and tested protective landing packaging for Egg-nauts. A great day where parents got stuck in too! Our foundation children continue to visit Redmount Nursing home in Buckfastleigh. The children made and decorated biscuits (space style, to finish their topic!) which they then shared with friends at Redmount and fun with puppets. Other community links have been made this term. A local resident of Landscope runs a coffee morning each month and all donations go towards a chosen charity. Children from the Landscope Ethos Committee lived out our value of compassion taking cakes they had baked and engaging with the community and their charity focus. Sue Townsend (the organiser) has asked that we make this a regular event as the children brought life and smiles to those who attended.

We held a F.A.B. (Faith and Beliefs) workshop day based on our values, biblical texts and artistic representations of these. The artwork produced truly represents our values and the creativity of the children.

Classes 3 & 4 visited the mosque in Exeter for a guided tour, a briefing about mosques and the Muslim faith, a question and answer sessions and refreshments! Class 2 visited Buckfast Abbey to take part in Easter workshops and finally we held Mothering Friday ~our traditional pre Mothering Sunday celebration in St Matthew's Church, where children shared pictures and thoughts about their Mums and sang songs, all interwoven by the story. The afternoon was rounded off by children giving posies to their Mums. 'Warmed the soul' is how one mum described the service! A full and fun term.

### **Stoke Gabriel Primary School**

Stoke Gabriel have been putting their five star pledge into action this term and providing the children with memorable learning experiences. To promote healthy eating, Barbara our cook, has taken all of the key Stage 2 children for a trip to the local shop to buy ingredients for a healthy dish which the children have cooked in the school kitchen. Thank you for giving up your time Barbara! Our year 1 2 class, Dazzling Dragonflies has been investigating forces for real with a trip to Buckfastleigh on the Dart Valley Steam train. On the way there, they stopped off at the Totnes Rare Breeds farm to get some hands on experience of animals. The recounts that the children wrote of their day were a pleasure to read and showed just how exciting opportunities really do promote writing. Meanwhile, our year 3 4 class, Brilliant Butterflies, really brought their topic to life when they became Vikings for the day. They prepared Viking honeybread and ventured off to the local woods to spend an afternoon telling riddles and tales around a fire. They also heard the story of Beowulf and had a chance to build their own shelters. Earlier in the term, year 4 spent a night on the edge of Dartmoor for their winter one nighter residential. Their behaviour was impeccable and they were a real credit to the school.



Our first ever Charity week was a real hit and showed just how much support there is within the whole community here at Stoke Gabriel. All of the events were run by the children on the school council with a bit of help from adults. In total they raised over £250 pounds for their chosen charity of Children's Hospice South West.

### **Tedburn St Mary Primary School**

Once again Tedburn had an exciting and busy term with lots of exciting opportunities and experiences for all our children. January started off with a Brass band workshop for KS2 where the children learnt all about the different brass instruments, Mel Stride visited once again to present his award for his Christmas card competition winner and Forest School started again. Maths open mornings proved very successful, with lots of parents coming along to see how we teach the four rules across school. Classes 1 and 2 visited QE to take part in a Multi sports event and also had a visit from the Space Lab. The first half term ended with our Cultural week, with the children having the opportunity to learn about the festivals of Purim, Lantern festival, Losar and Maha Shivrati. The last half term was even more memorable as our Year 5 and 6 who went for a week on residential to Grenville house in Brixham along with children from Cheriton Bishop and Yeoford. The children had a fantastic week and came back with some wonderful memories. Year 5/6 also took part in the Crediton Learning Communities Pop of Colour and wowed the audience with their performance of Black and White by Michael Jackson. In amongst a few snowy days we finished the term with some lovely Easter celebrations in the church and an energetic Sports Relief with the children completing over 55,000 steps in an afternoon.



This term we have also worked hard to enhance our outdoor environment, especially in Class 1 where they have had a new two tier place house, new sand/water tray and building toys, all of which the children are thoroughly enjoying. We are also in the final throws of completing our outdoor classroom, ready for the children to use across the summer term.

## Yeoford Primary School

The Spring Term has been packed with exciting things happening at Yeoford Primary. Hedgehog Class (YR, Y1 & Y2) visited Paignton Zoo as part of their Science topic looking at grouping different types of animals which the children thoroughly enjoyed. A Multi-Sports event happened at the local secondary school, QE, and the children took part in a range of different sports and worked students from other schools as well as QE pupils. The children came back very enthused and wanted to do more of these activities at break-times. The whole school had an enjoyable Art Day based on the story the Naughty Bus and the children worked in house groups taking part in activities based on the book.



In Owl Class (Y3,4,5 & 6) Forest Schools started this term and the children loved using the tools, learning how to make fires and enjoyed learning more about nature. The children took part in a fabulous performance at Exeter University's Great Hall alongside the other schools in the Crediton area. They performed Brown-Eyed Girl and Hi-Ho Silver lining magnificently. The year 5 and 6 children went on residential with the Cheriton Bishop and Tedburn St Mary School at Grenville House for a week and took part in Abseiling, Kayaking, Problem-Solving and High Ropes. The children thoroughly enjoyed the trip and were extremely tired by the end of the week!

The school playground has been improved with Rubber Mulch put under our climbing frame so the children can use the equipment all year round - including the snow! The term ended with a wonderful Easter Service in the church showcasing work the children have done this term along with some beautiful singing.

**Finally can I thank all the parents who support our schools to be the best they can be, whether it is giving up the huge amount of time and dedication it takes to be part of the Governing Body, or running the Parents groups which**

**fundraise and support school events, right down to those of you that help us transport the children around or regularly hear readers.**

**Every little thing parents do to help makes a massive difference and we are so grateful for this as it improves the provision for all our children.**

**Hopefully the weather will continue to get warmer and we will have an equally successful summer term- which will no doubt be just as busy and fulfilling.**

**Nicky Dunford  
CEO**

