

PLYMOUTH CAST NEWSLETTER – 22 February 2017

Dear Heads, Governors, Staff and Volunteers,

Welcome back from what I hope was a restful half term break. In this newsletter, providing a regular update on developments across CAST, the focus will be on:

1. A message from Chair of the Board regarding John Mannix
 2. Notice of Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors Leadership Conference
 3. Update on OFSTED Inspections
 4. Notre Dame – Public Speaking Competition
 5. Central Schools “Improving Writing Day”
 6. Compliance Inspection Service Level Agreements
 7. Date of Next Newsletter: 8 March 2017
1. In my recent newsletter I informed you that John was leaving Plymouth CAST on the 11th March. I should have added that without doubt John was the driving force behind the creation of Plymouth CAST Multi-Academy Trust. It was John who spelt out the vision that Plymouth CAST schools would become:
- where every parent would want their child;
 - where every school sector employee would want to work;
 - where children of all abilities and backgrounds flourish;
 - where all look to for good practice and innovation;
 - where vulnerable educational institutions look for support;
 - where ‘the gospel is preached at all times, where necessary, using words’ (after St Francis).
- It is this vision that has motivated me and I suspect many others in our work with the Trust. With perseverance and prayerfulness it is a vision which we will achieve.
2. With apologies for the short notice the Board of Plymouth CAST would like to invite all Head Teachers and Chairs of Local Governing Bodies to a Leadership Conference on Tuesday 14 March 2017. The venue is Exeter Racecourse and timings are 10.00am for 10.30am with completion by 4pm. A detailed programme and booking arrangements will be promulgated electronically as soon as possible. The purpose of the day is to create an opportunity for the wider Leadership of the Trust, including Head Teachers and Chairs of Local Governing Bodies to jointly review, discuss and comment on the planned activity designed to meet the challenges facing the Trust; in particular outcomes for School Improvement as a result of OFSTED inspection. This opportunity does not replace our intent to host the traditional Heads and Deputies conference in the Autumn; on the contrary, it is complementary and deemed appropriate under current circumstances of change and transition. Communication is the Key.
3. Ofsted Inspections

East

St Catherine’s, Bridport	Requirements Improvement
St Mary’s, Dorchester	Awaiting publication

Central

Our Lady & St Patrick's, Teignmouth	Awaiting publication
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West

Notre Dame, Plymouth	Awaiting publication
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4. Notre Dame Plymouth – Public Speaking Competition

Notre Dame Plymouth was invited to take part in a public speaking competition organised by Province 13 of the Catenian Association this month, with one student taking the top prize!

The Catenian Association is an International organisation of like-minded Catholics who are active in supporting the Catholic community, especially Youth. Competitions were organised in all areas of the UK by local Catenians and gives students involved an opportunity to gain confidence and boost their public speaking skills.

Entrants were between 16 and 19 years old, and had to speak for 4 minutes on a topic chosen from a list provided, and were judged against criteria such as delivery, oral skills, content and keeping to time.

Three students from Notre Dame went forward to the regional finals which were held in Plymouth on 4th February. Elise Irish, 16, Jade Abbott, 18, and Hannah Johnson, 18 all spoke confidently on their chosen topics and the standard of entries this year from other students was very high. Judges eventually decided that this year's winner of the Provincial Trophy was Elise who spoke on the topic of 'Is imagination more important than technology?' while Hannah came runner up with her topic of 'My biggest fear for the future is...'



Elise will go on to represent Notre Dame at the national final in Manchester on Sunday 10th September.

5. Central Area 'Improving Writing Day'



On Friday 10th February, 11 of the Central schools came together for a day of 'Improving Writing'. The day was held at St Nicholas Primary School in Exeter, and was attended by 82 teachers and head teachers.

The Training was provided by Jo Pearce, a current Head teacher at Watermoor C of E School in Cirencester, whose school-based experience includes English Subject Leader, Deputy Head Teacher and Head of Teaching and Learning. Jo has implemented storytelling and *Talk4Writing* across the curriculum and works with Pie Corbett on the Primary Writing project. <http://www.talk4writing.co.uk/>

The day began with the Head Teachers meeting the local Teach First representative, Liz Eashaw, who is offering to support schools in attracting Teach First ambassadors and trainees.

Then the writing kicked off with a series of interactive sessions, covering 'imitation to innovation', short burst creative writing, and a range of role playing and video examples. The teachers threw themselves into the exercises with gusto. The sessions demonstrated effectively how to use 'talk4writing' to enhance and improve writing outcomes. There were some moments of huge impact, including examples of reception pupils' handwriting, which gave the whole audience pause for thought.

Evaluations of the day were enormously positive...'

'Relevant, well presented, packed with ideas'

'Lots of ideas to be taken back to school, with real life examples'

'Really engaging, effectively delivered. Very personable leader with great credibility'

'Just what I needed to be inspired again, to help me with my half term planning'.



There have been a flurry of contacts since the day, from teachers and leaders hoping to take the training further, and to engage fully in the Primary Writing Project. Watch this space!

Thanks in particular to St Nicholas Primary for hosting the event. At lunchtime the teachers were able to visit the classrooms to find out how things are done at the school – another useful experience for all in attendance.

6. Compliance Inspection Service Level Agreements

As you know we will shortly be changing our facilities management provider. This means we need to confirm school requirements for service level agreements for compliance inspections such as boilers and portable appliance testing. Thank you to schools that have already responded. If you have not yet managed to complete this please do so by 1 March so we can finalise the contract. Several schools have indicated that they would like to contract for some services independently. This might be acceptable but please do not renew any contracts without CAST Support Office permission. This is for two reasons; we need to be sure schools are not paying more than they need to and; the changes to inland revenue rules under IR35 in April 2017 require certain checks to be made on the status of contractors and in particular their tax arrangements which if breached could lead to a financial penalty. We would naturally want to protect schools from this risk as both the legal employer and a Diocesan tenant.

7. Date of Next Newsletter: 8 March 2017

Marcus Taylor
Chief Operating Officer
for and on behalf of the
Senior Management Team

Distribution List

CAST Board Members
Chairs of the Local Governing Bodies (via Clerks)
Head Teachers
Clerks to Local Governing Bodies
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